



SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS PERMANENT JUDICIAL
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

**Texas Court Improvement Program (CIP)
FY 2015 Self-Assessment and Hearing Timeliness Report**

December 16, 2015

State Court Improvement Program 2015 Annual Self-Assessment Report

The purpose of this report is to create an opportunity to reflect on what you are doing, why you are doing it and if efforts are having the intended results. Questions are designed to solicit candid responses that help you identify what is working well, areas that need improvement and the type of support that would be most helpful. This is intended to be a helpful tool for you and a helpful tool for us to identify how best to use our resources.

The report is made of 7 sections with corresponding questions. Section I allows you to identify two high resource and or high priority projects and discuss them in-depth from a CQI perspective. Section II focuses on current priority areas and driving forces within your state that may be affecting your work. Section III requests a concise accounting of projects/activities in specific topical areas. Section IV focuses on collaborative efforts. Section V centers on CQI needs. Section VI asks you to do a self-assessment of your CIP's current capacity. Section VII provides a space for you to report on your timeliness and other performance measures.

I. CQI Analyses of Projects

Identify **two (2)** of your highest priority/highest resource CIP projects that were in some stage of the CQI process in FY 2015. Review and respond to the questions below about these projects. We understand you may be early in the process and may not be able to answer all of these questions. If applicable, indicate where you were in the process when the fiscal year ended and what plans you have for furthering the work.

Project # 1

Briefly describe the project and indicate the approximate date the CIP began working on it.

Response: Trial Skills Training (TST): A hands-on training designed to improve the litigation skills of less-experienced child welfare law attorneys in order to raise the caliber of legal services to children and families in child protection cases. TST utilizes a Texas-specific case scenario with adapted pleadings, forms, witness summaries, medical records / documentary evidence, sworn affidavits, and statutory court reports. The course covers all elements of a final trial including voir dire, jury selection, opening statement, direct and cross examination of live lay and expert witnesses, introduction of evidence, making and responding to objections, and closing arguments. Attorneys' acceptance into the TST is contingent on their referring judges' approval. Parent, child, and state attorneys benefit from lectures and demonstrations from trained faculty comprised of senior attorneys and judges, followed by personal coaching. The Texas CIP began working on this initiative in 2011; the pilot training was held in October 2013 and there have been four additional TST events to-date, training over 100 attorneys.

1. **Identify and assess needs.** Think about why you decided to focus on this issue. What is the need you were trying to address? What are the outcomes you were hoping to achieve? What evidence (e.g., data) did you have of the need for improvement?

Response: Informally, judges and attorneys reported deficits regarding trial skills among attorneys practicing child welfare litigation. A 2011 study on legal representation in Texas also revealed that many survey respondents, which included judges, attorneys, CASA volunteers, caseworkers, and prosecutors, noted the lack of trained attorneys representing children and parents. When asked what type of training parents' attorneys most needed, a majority of judges surveyed during the study responded that evidence and procedure appeared to present big challenges. At the time that the Trial Skills Training was created, there was no Texas-specific trial skills training for child welfare cases. CIP hypothesized that a Texas-specific trial skills training tailored for child welfare cases would ideally lead to better advocacy during contested child welfare litigation, which in turn, would lead to better outcomes for children and families.

2. **Develop theory of change.** Do you have a theory about the causes of the problem? What is your "theory of change" (how do you think your activities/interventions will improve the outcomes)?

Response: TST is just one part of an overall effort by Texas CIP to increase the availability, quality and relevancy of training and resources, which can lead to higher quality legal representation. The CIP determined that a child welfare trial skills curriculum, which was based on a typical CPS scenario, but that also incorporated Texas-specific statutory and case law, would help attorneys representing the State of Texas, parents, and children in child welfare cases improve their advocacy and litigation skills as well as outcomes for children and families.

3. **Develop/select solution.** How did you select your activities/interventions (e.g., evidence-based, empirically supported, best-practices, etc¹.)

Response: The Texas CIP conducted research regarding legal representation that included an inquiry about trial skills training specific to child welfare cases. Based on the input of experts, the decision was made to develop and execute a 2-3 day experiential training for a small group of attorney attendees, at least one time annually.

4. **Describe the implementation of the project.** What did the CIP do to implement the project? What did others (e.g. judges, attorneys) do? Did you do anything to ensure fidelity of the implementation (that is, anything to ensure the program was implemented as it was supposed to be)?

¹ Definitions for evidence-based, empirically-supported and best-practices are available in the appendix.

- a. If the project has not yet been implemented, please briefly describe your intentions/plans for implementation.

Response: The project has been implemented and is ongoing. To start the project, the Texas CIP organized a group of experienced court stakeholders to develop the curriculum based on other successful trial skills programs such as the National Institute of Trial Attorneys (NITA). After a period of development, faculty were identified and received training from a NITA-trained expert on how to effectively teach and coach trial skills. The course was piloted and reworked based on feedback and evaluation. At each subsequent TST, CIP has solicited extensive feedback and has made changes and improvements in response.

5. *Describe any monitoring/evaluations/assessments of your project and how you intend to apply the findings.* How are you monitoring implementation and changes? What data collection tools/methods did you (will you) use to assess effectiveness? What evidence is there that the activities/intervention were effective? What evidence is there that the activities/intervention were implemented with fidelity? Describe how evaluation/assessments were used to inform the project. Does the intervention need to be adjusted, stopped? Does the problem still exist? Was your theory of change supported?
 - a. If the project has not yet been evaluated/assessed, please briefly describe your intentions/plans for evaluation/assessment.

Response: Attorneys interested in attending each offering of the Trials Skills Training complete an application, which includes several questions regarding experience in child welfare, with bench and jury trials, general knowledge and skills related to trial skills. Attendees are also asked to complete a post-training survey at the conclusion of the TST to provide extensive feedback about the program, including the skill level of the faculty, the content, course presentation order, agenda flow, course length, lectures, demonstrations, practice sessions, attendee dress, types of witnesses, and training location. A comparison of pre- and post-training trial skills knowledge is conducted to ascertain knowledge gains. Separate in-person faculty and student debriefs are conducted on the final day of the course, and changes are made accordingly. Students also complete evaluations on each speaker, lecture, and demonstration content which also informs changes in curriculum, agenda order, witnesses, presentation materials, and the curriculum at future trainings.

Due to the large number of attorneys who handle the cases in Texas and the relatively small number of attendees who may be accommodated at the twice yearly trainings, there continues to be a need for the training. This need is also evidenced by judicial feedback about the continued need and support for the training, especially for inexperienced attorneys entering the field of law.

One additional method of evaluation being considered is a follow-up survey to each attendee's sponsoring judge to inquire about changes in trial skills after the training. It is believed that a follow-

up survey regarding changes in trial skills will better determine whether the TST intervention was successful and the theory of change supported.

6. Is this project a priority for you in 2016? Yes No

7. Would you like a CQI consult around this project? Yes No, not at this time.

Project # 2

Briefly describe the project and indicate the approximate date the CIP began working on it.

Response: Since 2010, the Texas CIP has supported an initiative to improve educational outcomes of children and youth in foster care. Initially, the long-term goals were to see more youth in care graduate from high school and go on to successfully complete post-secondary education.

1. **Identify and assess needs.** Think about why you decided to focus on this issue. What is the need you were trying to address? What are the outcomes you were hoping to achieve? What evidence (e.g., data) did you have of the need for improvement?

Response: According to national studies, youth in foster care frequently have poor educational outcomes compared to the general child population. When compared to the general student population, foster youth are more likely to be suspended or expelled, score lower on statewide standardized tests, are more likely to repeat a grade, are less likely to graduate, and are more likely to drop out. Data exchanged by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) pursuant to a memorandum of understanding in place since 2010 support the findings of the national studies. Specifically, according to the exchanged data, students in care were less likely to leave school because they graduated and more likely to leave school because they dropped out than their peers who were not in foster care. Of those who did graduate, they were far more likely to graduate at the minimum program and far less likely to graduate under recommended and distinguished achievement programs than the general student population. Compared to the statewide student population, youth in foster care were more likely to serve in-school and out-of-school suspension than their non-foster peers. Also, although little data regarding post-secondary outcomes exists in Texas, national studies have found that only 2.9% of students in foster care go on to attend and complete post-secondary education. Please link here to an infographic that represents the Texas data work:

<http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/46343/Texas-Blueprint-Data-Workgroup-Infographic.pdf>

2. **Develop theory of change.** Do you have a theory about the causes of the problem? What is your "theory of change" (how do you think your activities/interventions will improve the outcomes)?

Response: By focusing attention and resources on education outcomes, in addition to other child well-being factors, child and family well-being will receive a more heightened focus and be more thoroughly considered by child welfare workers, judges and lawyers. Consequently, child and family well-being will improve. Focus on improving education and other child and family well-being issues will also result in changes to laws, policies, and practices that enhance well-being.

3. ***Develop/select solution.*** How did you select your activities/interventions (e.g., evidence-based, empirically supported, best-practices, etc.).

Response: As the Texas CIP previously had success bringing stakeholders to the table, particularly through the exercise of judicial leadership, to discuss solutions to child welfare systemic issues, a high-level Education committee was created to form recommendations for state-wide improvement of educational outcomes. A report with over 100 recommendations was released in 2012. Since that time, the Texas CIP has lead an effort to implement many of the recommendations, resulting in changes to law, policies, and practices.

4. ***Describe the implementation of the project.*** What did the CIP do to implement the project? What did others (e.g. judges, attorneys) do? Did you do anything to ensure fidelity of the implementation (that is, anything to ensure the program was implemented as it was supposed to be)?
 - a. If the project has not yet been implemented, please briefly describe your intentions/plans for implementation.

Response: In 2010, the Supreme Court Children’s Commission established an Education Committee to identify contributing factors and potential solutions to address the poor educational outcomes of children and youth in foster care. The result of this statewide collaboration was the creation of the Texas Blueprint: Transforming Education Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care (“Texas Blueprint”) in 2012 and the first phase of implementation of the recommendations that ended in December of 2014 (“Phase I”).

The Texas Blueprint Implementation Task Force (“Task Force”) was charged with the prioritization of over 125 Texas Blueprint recommendations. In doing so, the Task Force created the Data and Information Sharing, School Stability, and Training and Resources Workgroups. Members of the three workgroups and the Task Force worked closely together over the two-year Phase I implementation period and monitored the initiation or completion of over 80% of the Texas Blueprint recommendations.

In February 2015, the Texas Children’s Commission approved the creation of a standing Foster Care and Education Committee to continue implementation of the Texas Blueprint recommendations during the Phase II implementation period.

All work during each phase of this project has been guided by timelines developed at the beginning of the phase. Also, the Texas Blueprint has provided the roadmap for further interventions.

5. ***Describe any monitoring/evaluations/assessments of your project and how you intend to apply the findings.*** How are you monitoring implementation and changes? What data collection tools/methods did you (will you) use to assess effectiveness? What evidence is there that the activities/intervention were effective? What evidence is there that the activities/intervention were implemented with fidelity? Describe how evaluation/assessments were used to inform the project. Does the intervention need to be adjusted, stopped? Does the problem still exist? Was your theory of change supported?
- a. If the project has not yet been evaluated/assessed, please briefly describe your intentions/plans for evaluation/assessment.

Response: A logic model was created at the beginning of the initiative which established short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes. Later, the Texas CIP worked with a consultant to develop a CQI chart based on the recommendations of the Texas Blueprint. A shortened version of this chart was used to assign the status of each recommendation. Also, the Texas CIP has worked extensively with DFPS and TEA regarding the exchanged educational data and determining whether a particular academic year might serve as a baseline year as it occurred after several significant interventions on this project took place. Additionally, there has been discussion of using data to target interventions in jurisdictions or school districts where data indicates there is a high need for an intervention. As educational outcomes of students in care are still poor, the intervention needs to continue. The theory of change was supported by the deliverables produced as part of this project.

6. Is this project a priority for you in 2016? Yes No
7. Would you like a CQI consult around this project? Yes No, we are already receiving TA from the ABA on this project.

II. Trainings, Projects, and Activities

For questions 1-9, provide a *concise* description of work completed or underway in FY 2015 (October 2014-September 2015) in the below topical subcategories. For question 1, focus on significant training events or initiatives held or developed in FY 2015 and answer the corresponding questions.

For questions 2-9, indicate (*yes/no*) if you worked on a project or activity in this area. If the answer is yes, that you conducted a project or activity in the area, please complete the table. If the answer is no, skip to the next question. For each project/activity, please provide a brief description, categorize the project by selecting one of the sub-categories available in the drop down box (e.g., for quality hearings, the sub-categories include *court observation/assessment, process improvements, specialty/pilot courts, court orders/title IV-E, mediation, appeals, other*) and identify the stage of your work by selecting the appropriate state from the drop down box (*identifying and assessing needs, developing a theory of change, selecting a solution, implementing your project, or assessing/evaluating your work*)².

Questions 2-9 ask you to describe the purpose of the project or activity and how the project or activity will contribute to continuous quality improvement (CQI) in the identified area. Please use the “other” categories to include specific projects that are important to you but do not necessarily fit as part of the CQI process. ***If you have a project/activity that fits into multiple categories (e.g., youth engagement and well-being), please choose the category you think fits it best and only report the project once.***

1. Trainings

<i>Topical Area</i>	<i>Did you hold or develop a training on this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>How did you evaluate this training?</i>
Data	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			
Hearing quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges (Annual Child Welfare Judges Conference)	Informed decision-making; improved judicial practices	Pre and post conference surveys
Improving timeliness/permanency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges (Annual Child Welfare Judges Conference)	Informed decision-making; improved judicial practices	Pre and post conference surveys
Quality legal representation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Attorneys: 1. Trial Skills Training (TST);	Improved legal representation	Pre and post training surveys on most events, but

² A description of each stage of work is available in an appendix to this document.

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. State Bar of Texas webinars 3. ABA and NACC Scholarships to national conferences 4. State Bar of Texas Child Abuse & Neglect One-day Event 5. Keeping Infants and Toddlers Safe 		not all; process CQI on TST and scholarships provided by CIP to attorney recipients
Engagement & participation of parties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges (Annual Child Welfare Judges Conference)	Informed decision-making; improved judicial practices	Pre and post conference surveys
Well-being	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges (Annual Child Welfare Judges Conference)	Informed decision-making; improved judicial practices	Pre and post conference surveys
ICWA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges (Annual Child Welfare Judges Conference)	Informed decision-making; improved judicial practices	Pre and post conference surveys
Sex Trafficking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges (Annual Child Welfare Judges Conference)	Informed decision-making; improved judicial practices	Pre and post conference surveys
Other: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legislative Update 2. SIJS 3. Child Welfare Agency Executive Panel 4. Child Fatalities 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges (Annual Child Welfare Judges Conference)	Informed decision-making; improved judicial practices	Pre and post conference surveys
Child Protection Law Bench Book	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges and Attorneys	Informed decision-making; improved judicial practices; high quality legal representation	Piloted BB project, elicited feedback from Judges and made content and statutory changes
Jurist In Residence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges and Attorneys	Informed decision-making; improved	

			judicial practices; high quality legal representation	
Family Justice Conference (Child Abuse / Neglect Track)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges	Informed decision- making; improved judicial practices;	3 rd Party Surveys
Scholarships to Annual NCJFCJ Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges	Informed decision- making; improved judicial practices;	3 rd Party Surveys

2. Data Projects. Data projects include any work with administrative data sets (e.g, AFCARS, SACWIS), data dashboards, data reports, fostering court improvement data, case management systems, and data sharing efforts.

Do you have a data project/activity? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Ongoing enhancements to Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS)	Case management systems	Implementation
Texas Blueprint Data Workgroup	Agency Data Sharing Efforts	Identifying/Assessing Needs
NCSC Weighted Caseload Study	Other	Identifying/Assessing Needs
Mediation	Other	Identifying/Assessing Needs

Do you have data reports that you consistently view? Yes No

If **Yes**, around which topics?

- Hearing quality Timeliness Permanency Well-being Education Engagement of youth Engagement of Parents Other Engagement Quality Legal Representation ICWA DCST Runaway Youth Other: _____
 Other: Child Welfare Agency Annual Data Book

3. Hearing Quality. Hearing quality projects include any efforts you have made to improve the quality of dependency hearings, including court observation/assessment projects,

process improvements, specialty/pilot court projects, projects related to court orders or title IV-E determinations, mediation, or appeals.

Do you have a hearing quality project/activity? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Well-being Project (follow-up from 2014 Hearing Observation Project)	Process Improvements	Implementation
Mediation	Mediation	Identifying/Assessing Needs
Assistance to Texas Legislature regarding Statutory changes to help improve quality of legal representation, and court / attorney handling of CPS cases	Process Improvements	Implementation
Legal Representation Workgroup	Other	Implementation
Child Protection Law Bench Book	Other	Implementation
Jurist in Residence Letters	Other	Implementation

4. Improving Timeliness of Hearings or Permanency Outcomes. Timeliness and permanency projects include any activities or projects meant to improve the timeliness of case processing or achievement of timely permanency. This could include general timeliness, focus on continuances or appeals, working on permanency goals other than APPLA, or focus on APPLA and older youth.

Do you have a Timeliness or permanency project/activity? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Child Safety – Parental Child Safety Placement	General/ASFA	Identifying/Assessing Needs
Child Protection Law Bench Book	Other	Implementation
Culture of Permanency Partnership	General/ASFA	Develop Theory of Change

5. Quality of Legal Representation. Quality of legal representation projects may include any activities/efforts related to improvement of representation for parents, youth, or the agency. This might include assessments or analyzing current practice, implementing new practice models, working with law school clinics, or other activities in this area.

Do you have a quality legal representation project/activity? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Legal Representation Workgroup	Other	Identifying/Assessing Needs
Texas Board of Legal Specialization in Child Welfare	Other	Implementation
County / Jurisdictional Parent Representation Project	New Practice Models	Evaluation/Assessment

6. Engagement & Participation of Parties. Engagement and participation of parties includes any efforts centered around youth, parent, foster family, or caregiver engagement, as well as projects related to notice to relatives, limited English proficiency, or other efforts to increase presence and engagement at the hearing.

Do you have an engagement or participation of parties project/activity? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Notice & Engagement Alert	Foster Family Engagement	Implementation
Video Conferencing	Youth Engagement	Implementation
Parent Resource Group	Parent Engagement	Identifying/Assessing Needs

7. Well-Being. Well-being projects include any efforts related to improving the well-being of youth. Projects could focus on education, early childhood development, psychotropic medication, LGBTQ youth, trauma, racial disproportionality/disparity, immigration, or other well-being related topics.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on well-being? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Trauma Informed Care Study	Trauma	Identifying/Assessing Needs
Judicial Workgroup Addressing Disproportionality	Racial Disproportionality	Implementation
Texas Blueprint: Education Outcomes	Education	Implementation

8. **ICWA.** ICWA projects could include any efforts to enhance state and tribal collaboration, state and tribal court agreements, data collection and analysis of ICWA compliance, or ICWA notice projects.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on ICWA? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Tribal Relationships / Partnerships	Tribal Collaboration	Implementation
Statutory Changes	Other	Implementing Changes

9. **Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (PSTFSA).** PSTFSA projects could include any work around domestic child sex trafficking, the reasonable and prudent parent standard, a focus on runaway youth, focus on normalcy, collaboration with other agencies around this topic, data collection and analysis, data sharing, or other efforts to fully implement the act into practice.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on PSTSFA? Yes No

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Participation on Statewide Taskforce	Sex Trafficking	Identifying/Assessing Needs
Statutory Changes	Sex Trafficking	Implementation

III. Priority Areas & CIP Resources

- a. What would you consider your top **two** priority areas for FY 2016?

- Data projects Hearing quality
 Timeliness/permanency Quality of legal representation
 Engagement of Parties Well-being
 Preventing Sex Trafficking & Strengthening Families
 ICWA Other: _____

- b. Are there any outside driving forces that determine your priorities or consume a lot of your time? (For example, legislative involvement or directives, budget

concerns, consent decrees and class action litigation, highly publicized child fatalities, unaccompanied minors, etc.)

Response: Legislative Involvement in odd-numbered years, budget concerns related to the congressional handling that endangers the stability of CIP funding, high number / volume of people in Texas involved / engaged in sex and labor trafficking and combating same.

IV. CIP Collaboration and Participation in Child Welfare Program Planning and Improvement Efforts

10. For FY2014, you described how the CIP planned to assist with and participate in round three of the CFSR and program improvement process. We are interested in your progress or any changes to this plan.

- a.** Has your plan changed? If so, how?
The plan has not changed.
- b.** How have you moved this plan forward in FY2015?
Held 3 stakeholder engagement sessions in FY2015 to elicit feedback about specific CFSR factors
- c.** What barriers have you encountered (if any) in increasing your participation with round three of CFSR?
None
- d.** Have you received any technical assistance on this issue? If so, what was it and how was it helpful to you?
No.

11. For FY2014 you described how the CIP will assist with and participate in the CFSP/APSR processes with the child welfare agency in an ongoing fashion. We are interested in your progress or any changes to this plan.

- a.** Has your plan changed? If so, how?
The plan has not changed.
- b.** How have you moved this plan forward in FY2015?
CIP provided content to the Child and Family State Plan in April 2015.
- c.** What barriers have you encountered (if any) to working with the child welfare agency in the CFSP/APSR process in an ongoing fashion?
None
- d.** Have you received any technical assistance on this issue? If so, what was it and how was it helpful to you?
No.

12. How are you involved, if at all, with the child welfare agency's CQI efforts?

- Contributing data Receiving data Jointly using data
 Collaborative meetings Collaborative systems change project(s)
 Other: _____

V. CQI Current Capacity Assessment

a. How is the CIP progressing with CQI overall? Please provide a brief description of how you integrate CQI into your work.

Response: The Texas CIP has increasingly integrated CQI into its work. The annual CIP application now includes a logic model for all Texas CIP initiatives, which sets forth short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes, as well as data sources for each. CIP staff is at times challenged with how to CQI certain projects as it is not as clear or as easy for some projects as it is for others.

b. Do you have any of the following resources to help you integrate CQI into practice?

- CIP staff with CQI (e.g., data, evaluation) expertise - very limited
 Consultants with CQI expertise a University partnership
 Contracts with external agencies to assist with CQI efforts
 Other resources: _____

c. Describe the largest challenges your CIP faces with implementing CQI into your work.

Response: CIP staff lacks CQI / Data collection and analysis expertise, and lack of staff bandwidth to gather data and conduct analysis of available data. Limited expertise in relaying information gathered in data collection to stakeholders.

d. Please review the list of capacities below. Select the **three** capacity areas that you would like to increase your knowledge of or enhance your ability to do in the next fiscal year.

- CQI generally Data collection methodologies
 Data analysis Understanding/applying data

- Evaluation design
- Policy change implementation
- Collaboration w/agencies
- Participation in CFSR process
- Participation in CFSP/APSR process
- Awareness of evidence-based practices
- Leadership
- Currently available data (e.g., AFCARS)
- Training evaluation
- Tool development
- CQI commitment (buy-in)
- Data-driven decision-making
- Performance measurement
- Community partnerships
- Research partnerships
- Data systems
- Tracking implementation/changes

Evaluation/CQI efforts specific to:

- Preventing Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act
- Quality legal representation
- Timeliness/Permanency
- Engagement/Presence of Parties
- Hearing quality
- Well-being
- ICWA

Other: _____

Other: _____

VI. Self-Assessment – Capacity

We would like you to assess your current capacities related to knowledge, skills, resources, and collaboration by responding to the following 3 sets of questions.

1. Please indicate your level of agreement to the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have a good understanding of CQI.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand how to integrate CQI into all our work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am familiar with the available data relevant to our work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand how to interpret and apply the available data.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The CIP and the state child welfare agency have shared goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The CIP and the state child welfare agency collaborate around program planning and improvement efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have the resources we need to fully integrate CQI into practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have staff, consultants, or partners who can answer my CQI questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. How frequently do you engage in the following activities?

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>
We use data to make decisions about where to focus our efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We meet with representatives of the child welfare agency to engage in collaborative systems change efforts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We evaluate newly developed or modified programs/practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

We use evaluation/assessment findings to make changes to programs/practices.

CQI is integrated into all our projects.

3. Please review the descriptions of the different levels of collaboration. Using the scale provided, please indicate the extent to which you currently interact with each other partner identified below.

	Networking 1	Cooperation 2	Coordination 3	Coalition 4	Collaboration 5	
Relationship Characteristics	--Aware of organization --Loosely defined roles --Little communication --All decisions made independently	---Provide info to each other --Somewhat defined roles --Formal communication --All decisions made independently	--Share information and resources --Defined roles --Frequent communication --Some shared decision making	--Share ideas --Share resources --Frequent and prioritized communication --All member have a vote in decision-making	--Members belong to one system --Frequent communication is characterized by mutual trust --Consensus is reached on all decisions	
	No Interaction at all 0	Networking 1	Cooperation 2	Coordination 3	Coalition 4	Collaboration 5
State Child Welfare Agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tribal Child Welfare Agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tribal Courts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Department of Education/ School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Law enforcement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Juvenile justice agency (e.g., DOJ)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Behavioral/mental health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Substance abuse/addictions management agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

VII. Timeliness Data & Performance Measurement

The purpose of asking all the CIPs to report on timeliness measures has been to prompt you to identify available data, examine how you are currently doing, and make comparisons to how you have done in the past on specific measures. The goal is to help you identify where you are and encourage you to use data in a meaningful way in your systems change efforts. As such, we have restructured the timeliness requirements so that you can still report on the timeliness measures but have the option to report on other measures that you have found particularly meaningful in your work.³

1. **Timeliness.** Provide a narrative below describing where you are getting data and how you are calculating the timeliness measures you report. What is your universe of cases (e.g., what is your sample, exit or entry cohort, etc.)? Is the data from the agency (e.g., SACWIS), from a court case management system (e.g., Odyssey) or from another source? Do you have any concerns with the accuracy of the data?

	Baseline Measure (FY 2013)	FY 2014	FY 2015	CIP Projects Targeting Measures (if applicable) <i>[If this measure was targeted by an intervention (e.g., efforts made to improve timeliness), please list the project or activity here]</i>
Required Timeliness Measures				
4G. Median Time to First Permanency Hearing	5.3 mo.	5.3 mo.	5.3 mo.	The median time is the statewide median; no specific project has been developed to improve this particular measure.
<i>Median Time to Subsequent Permanency Hearings BEFORE Final Order</i>	3.5 (1 st) 3.0 (2 nd) 2.8 (3 rd) 2.5 (4 th) 1.8 (5 th)	3.5 (1 st) 3.1 (2 nd) 3.0 (3 rd) 2.4 (4 th) 2.1 (5 th)	3.5 (1 st) 3.0 (2 nd) 3.0 (3 rd) 2.4 (4 th) 2.2 (5 th)	The median time is the statewide median; no specific project has been developed to improve this particular measure.

³ The OJJDP Toolkit that includes these performance measures is available online at: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/publications/courttoolkit.html>

<i>Median Time to Subsequent Permanency Hearings AFTER Final Order</i>	2.8 (1 st) 5.1 (2 nd) 5.1 (3 rd) 4.8 (4 th)	2.8 (1 st) 5.2 (2 nd) 5.1 (3 rd) 5.1 (4 th) 7.4 (5 th) 4.8 (6 th) 3.7 (7 th)	2.8 (1 st) 5.1 (2 nd) 5.2 (3 rd) 5.1 (4 th) 9.0 (5 th) 4.1 (6 th) 4.0 (7 th)	
4H. Time to Termination of Parental Rights Petition Because Texas files for TPR at the same time it files for removal from the home, 4H and 4I are calculated using the date that adoption is identified as the primary permanency goal (and reunification is no longer the goal) prior to the final order date.	6.3 mo.	6.0 mo.	6.0 mo.	For FY2015 , the median time to from the date that adoption was identified as the permanency goal (meaning that reunification had failed, and termination or relinquishment followed) and a final order was issued.
4I. Time to Termination of Parental Rights				See above
4A. Time to Permanent Placement				According to the tool kit, this is the median time from filing of the original petition to legal permanency. In other words, how long to achieve legal permanency, following the filing of the original petition. For Texas, the this measure is calculated by considering all children who exited the custody of the Department of Family and Protective Services in FY2015, how long it took from the time they entered foster care to exit foster care, and to what status. See below.
<i>Optional Measures</i>				
<i>Median Time to Reunification</i>	12.0 mo.	12.2 mo.	12.2 mo.	The median time is the statewide median. This measure may be impacted by the results of the Targeted Intervention associated with 4A (see below).

<i>Median Time to Adoption</i>	24.1 mo.	24.2 mo.	22.9 mo.	The median time is the statewide median. This measure may be impacted by the results of the Targeted Intervention associated with 4A (see below).
<i>Median Time to Guardianship</i>	11.8 mo.	11.8 mo.	11.8 mo.	The median time is the statewide median. This measure may be impacted by the results of the Targeted Intervention associated with 4A (see below).
<i>Median Time to Emancipation</i>	43.2 mo.	38.9 mo.	39.2 mo.	The median time is the statewide median. This measure may be impacted by the results of the Targeted Intervention associated with 4A (see below).
<i>1B. Percentage of Cases that Re-enter within 1 year</i>				Not tracking

1. **Other Measures.** What other measures do you collect that you find particularly useful?

Do you currently or have you recently collected any data on quality legal representation or quality court hearings that you would be willing to discuss and share?

Not from FY2015, but from prior years, which has been shared.

Targeted Intervention for Measurement 4A: Time to Permanent Placement

When the state files a petition for removal and is awarded temporary managing conservatorship (TMC) of a child, the Texas Family Code requires that unless the court with jurisdiction over the case has commenced a trial on the merits, the court must dismiss the suit affecting the parent-child relationship filed by the Department within 12 months of the date that the court first granted the Department temporary managing conservatorship of the child (Texas Family Code Section 263.401). A court may grant an extension of time and extend the agency's temporary managing conservatorship for up to 6 months in extraordinary circumstances or when a child is on a trial home visit. The purpose of the statutory timeframe is to ensure prompt resolution of the child's case so that a child can achieve timely permanency by safely returning home or, when that is not possible, exiting to a relative taking permanent managing conservatorship (PMC) or terminating parental rights and moving forward with adoption.

For the last several years, 40 percent of all cases have been extended beyond the original dismissal date. In order to determine how to make systemic changes to help ensure children are exiting foster care more quickly, ideally within 12 months, Texas needs to better understand which cases are being extended, the reason for the extension, and the impact the extensions are having. Anecdotal information from staff and judges suggest that they believe cases are extended due to delays in services being set up or parents needing additional time to comply with court orders. However, if extensions are not, in fact, supporting significant gains in reunification, Texas needs to examine why and whether extensions are truly warranted.

To more effectively target intervention that will achieve permanency within the first 12 months after removal, the Children's Commission will partner with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to better understand cases that are being extended and, based on the analysis, make recommendations on needed changes. The analysis will consider race and ethnicity and will also include recommendations for systemic reform.

This project will consist of three primary parts:

1. Descriptive analysis of cases that had were extended in state fiscal year (SFY) 13 or 14 including
 - a. How often cases were extended beyond the statutory deadline due to extraordinary circumstances that did not involve a child being on a trial home visit
 - b. The legal disposition for all cases that were not extended
 - c. The ultimate legal disposition for cases that were extended, and the time to achieve the ultimate disposition or outcome
- b. Statistical analysis of:
 - a. Cases that had a final order at 12 months resulting in permanency (exit from foster care) in SFY 13 or 14 to evaluate
 - b. The outcomes of cases that were extended (no final order exiting foster care) to determine whether reunification or other
 - c. An outcome other than reunification and whether it reflected the original concurrent plan or evidences another pattern.

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

Definitions of Evidence

Evidence-based practice – evidence-based practices are practice that have been empirically tested in a rigorous way (involving random assignment to groups), have demonstrated effectiveness related to specific outcomes, have been replicated in practice at least one, and have findings published in peer reviewed journal articles.

Empirically-supported- less rigorous than evidence-based practices are empirically-supported practices. To be empirically supported, a program must have been evaluated in some way and have demonstrated some relationship to a positive outcome. This may not meet the rigor of evidence-base, but still has some support for effectiveness.

Best-practices – best practices are often those widely accepted in the field as good practice. They may or may not have empirical support as to effectiveness, but are often derived from teams of experts in the field.

Definitions for Work Stages

Identifying and Assessing Needs – This phase is the earliest phase in the process, where you are identifying a need to be addressed. The assessing needs phase includes identifying the need, determining if there is available data demonstrating that this a problem, forming teams to address the issue.

Develop theory of change—This phase focuses on the theorizing the causes of a problem. In this phase you would identify what you think might be causing the problem and develop a “theory of change”. The theory of change is essentially how you think your activities (or intervention) will improve outcomes.

Develop/select solution—This phase includes developing or selecting a solution. In this phase, you might be exploring potential best-practices or evidence-based practices that you may want to implement as a solution to the identified need. You might also be developing a specific training, program, or practice that you want to implement.

Implementation – the implementation phase of work is when an intervention is being piloted or tested. This includes adapting programs or practices to meet your needs, and developing implementation supports.

Evaluation/assessment – the evaluation and assessment phase includes any efforts to collect data about the fidelity (process measures: was it implemented as planned?) or effectiveness (outcome measures: is the intervention making a difference?) of the project. The evaluation assessment phase also includes post-evaluation efforts to apply findings, such as making changes to the program/practice and using the data to inform next steps.