



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

**Supreme Court of Texas
Permanent Judicial
Commission for Children,
Youth and Families**

September 22, 2017

Meeting Notebook

The State Bar of Texas – Texas Law Center

1414 Colorado Street

Austin, Texas 78701

**Supreme Court of Texas
Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families**

**September 22, 2017
Meeting Notebook**

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Supreme Court of Texas
Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families
State Bar of Texas – Texas Law Center
Austin, Texas
September 22, 2017
9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Meeting Agenda

- 9:30 Commencement / Opening Remarks – The Honorable Eva Guzman
- 9:45 First order of business – The Honorable Eva Guzman
1. Adopt Minutes from May 12, 2017, Tab 2
- 10:00 Recognize Visiting Guests from Nevada
- 10:30 Commissioner Updates
- 11:15 Break
- 11:30 Commissioner Updates cont'd
- 12:15 Working Lunch
- 12:30 Executive Director Report / Vote to adopt FY 2018 Budget
- 12:45 Special Presentation:
Post-Secondary Data Presentation, Judge Rob Hofmann and Dr. Monica Faulkner
- 1:30 Collaborative Council Input
- 2:00 DFPS / CPS Update
- 2:30 Jurist In Residence Report
- 2:45 Office of Court Administration
- 3:00 New Business

2018 Meeting Schedule

February 9, 2018 at State Bar of Texas

May 4, 2018 at State Bar of Texas

Adjourn

INSERT - TAB 1

CHILDREN'S COMMISSION MEMBERS

Hon. Eva Guzman, Chair
 Hon. Harriet O'Neill, Chair Emeritus
 Hon. Rob Hofmann, Vice Chair
 Paula Bibbs-Samuels
 Allison Billodeau
 Kristene Blackstone
 Hon. Gary Coley

Sheila Sturgis Craig
 Rep. Helen Giddings
 Dr. Andy Keller
 Hon. Lawrence Lujan
 Hon. Michael Massengale
 Hon. Piper McCraw
 Hon. Mary Murphy

Cindy Patrick
 Hon. Ronald Pope
 Hon. Frank Rynd
 Hon. Peter Sakai
 Hon. Michael Schneider
 Luanne Southern
 Vicki Spriggs

Terry Tottenham
 Hon. Carlos Villalon
 Lt. Col. Travis Walters
 Sen. Royce West

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

EXECUTIVE

Hon. Eva Guzman,
Chair
 Hon. Harriet O'Neill,
Chair Emeritus
 Hon. Rob Hofmann
Vice Chair
 Hon. Michael Massengale
 Hon. Michael Schneider
 Vicki Spriggs

*Staff: Tina Amberboy
 Monica Mahoney*

BASIC PROJECTS

Hon. Michael Schneider
Chair
 Sarah Crockett
 Mary Christine Reed
 Carolyne Rodriguez
 Tanya Rollins
 Hon. Peter Sakai
 Hon. Cynthia Wheless

*Staff: Kristi Taylor
 Dylan Moench
 Monica Mahoney*

TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS

Vicki Spriggs, *Chair*
 Jason Hassay
 Hon. Gilford Jones
 Elizabeth Kromrei
 Robert Nolen
 Hon. Virginia Schnarr
 Hon. Carlos Villalon

*Staff: Patrick Passmore
 Monica Mahoney*

*OCA Advisory:
 Darrell Childers
 Anissa Johnson
 Casey Kennedy
 Tim Kennedy
 Mena Ramon
 David Slayton*

TRAINING PROJECTS

Hon. Michael Massengale, *Chair*
 Hon. Mark Atkinson
 Tymothy Belseth
 Cathy Cockerham
 Barbara Elias-Perciful
 Debra Emerson
 Hon. Richard Garcia
 Tracy Harting
 Pam Kemp
 Tanya Rollins
 Fairy Davenport Rutland
 Hon. Ellen Smith
 Elizabeth Watkins

*Staff: Milbrey Raney
 Dylan Moench
 Andrea Vicencio*

FOSTER CARE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Hon. Rob Hofmann, *Chair*
 Joy Baskin
 Hon. Alyce Bondurant
 Briana Dovi
 Lori Duke
 Dr. Monica Faulkner
 Maya Guerra Gamble
 Dr. David Gardner
 Dr. Deena Hill
 Andy Homer
 Kelly Kravitz
 Hon. Aurora Martinez-Jones
 Kristine Mohajer
 Hon. Cathy Morris
 Jon Olson
 Wanda Peña
 Michael Redden
 Carol Self
 Ian Spechler
 Julie Wayman
*Staff: Jamie Bernstein
 Andrea Vicencio*

COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Tymothy Belseth
 M. Lynn Chamberlin
 Irene Clements
 Bill Connolly
 Sarah Crockett
 De Shaun Ealoms
 Barbara Elias-Perciful
 Debra Emerson
 Laura Figueroa
 Mike Foster
 Will Francis

Mara Friesen
 Sadie Funk
 Helen Gaebler
 Teal de la Garza
 Christine Gendron
 Christina Green
 Sandra Hachem
 David Halpern
 Ashley Harris
 Bruce Kendrick
 Knox Kimberly
 Kelly Kravitz

Richard Lavallo
 Tracy Levins
 Madeline McClure
 Hon. F. Scott McCown, ret.
 Gabriella McDonald
 Susan McDowell
 Pamela McPeters
 Kate Murphy
 Katie Olse
 Jon Olson
 Anu Partap
 Kelly Powell

Mary Christine Reed
 Carolyne Rodriguez
 Tanya Rollins
 Johana Scot
 Janet Sharkis
 Andrea Sparks
 Ian Spechler
 Jeanne Stamp
 Gloria Terry
 Kenneth Thompson
 Arabia Vargas
 Kelly White

STAFF

Tina Amberboy, Executive Director
 Kristi Taylor, Assistant Director
 Jessica Arguijo, Communications Manager
 Jamie Bernstein, Staff Attorney
 Monica Mahoney, Administrative Assistant
 Dylan Moench, Staff Attorney
 Patrick Passmore, Grant Administrator
 Milbrey Raney, Staff Attorney
 Andrea Vicencio, Administrative Assistant
 Hon. Darlene Byrne, Senior Judicial Advisor
 Hon. Dean Rucker, Jurist in Residence
Office of Court Administration

INSERT - TAB 2

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES
MINUTES OF MEETING
May 12, 2017
9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
State Bar of Texas – Texas Law Center
Austin, Texas

ATTENDANCE

Commissioners	Attended	Did Not Attend
Chair, Hon. Eva Guzman, Justice, Supreme Court of Texas, Austin	✓	
Chair Emeritus, Hon. Harriet O'Neill, Justice, retired, Law Office of Harriet O'Neill, Austin		✓
Vice Chair, Hon. Rob Hofmann, Judge, 452nd District Court, Mason	✓	
Paula Bibbs-Samuel, Parent Representative, Slaton		✓
Allison Billodeau, Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor, Austin		✓
Kristene Blackstone, Associate Commissioner for Child Protective Services, Dept. of Family and Protective Services, Austin	✓	
Hon. Gary Coley, Judge, 74th District Court, Waco	✓	
Sheila Craig, Associate Commissioner, Center for the Elimination of Disproportionality and Disparities, Health and Human Services Commission, Austin	✓	
Hon. Helen Giddings (by proxy David Feigen), Texas House of Representatives, District 109, Dallas	✓	
Dr. Andrew Keller (by proxy Michelle Harper), President and Chief Executive Officer, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Dallas	✓	
Hon. Lawrence Lujan, Chief Judge, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, El Paso	✓	
Hon. Michael Massengale, Justice, First Court of Appeals, Houston	✓	
Hon. Piper McCraw, Judge, 469th Judicial District Court, McKinney	✓	
Hon. Mary Murphy, Presiding Judge, First Administrative Judicial Region, Dallas		✓
Cindy Patrick, Senior Program Officer, Meadows Foundation, Dallas	✓	
Hon. Ronald Pope, Judge, 328th District Court, Richmond		✓
Hon. Frank Rynd, General Counsel, Archdiocese Galveston-Houston		✓
Hon. Peter Sakai, Judge, 225th District Court, San Antonio	✓	
Hon. Michael Schneider, Judge, 315th District Court, Houston	✓	
Luanne Southern, Senior Director of Texas Strategic Consulting, Casey Family Programs, Austin	✓	
Vicki Spriggs, Chief Executive Officer, Texas CASA, Inc., Austin	✓	
Terry Tottenham, Of Counsel, Norton Rose Fulbright US L.L.P., Austin	✓	
Hon. Carlos Villalon, Associate Judge, Child Protection Court of the Rio Grande, Edinburg		✓
Lt. Col. Travis Walters, State Public Affairs Officer (FTUS), United States Air Force, Fort Worth	✓	
Hon. Royce West, Texas Senate, District 23, Dallas		✓
Senior Judicial Advisor		
Hon. Darlene Byrne, Judge, 126th District Court, Austin	✓	
Collaborative Council		
M. Lynn Chamberlin, Sr. Assistant County Attorney, Harris County Attorney's Office	✓	
Irene Clements, President, National Foster Family Association, and Consultant, Butterfly Marketing, LLC, Pflugerville		✓
William B. Connolly, Attorney, Connolly & Shireman, L.L.P., Houston		✓

	Attended	Did Not Attend
De Shaun Ealoms, Parent Program Specialist, Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin	✓	
Barbara Elias-Perciful, President, Texas Lawyers for Children, Dallas		✓
Debra Emerson, CPS Director of Permanency, Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin		✓
Laura Figueroa, The Arbitrage Group, Inc., Katy		✓
Mike Foster, Administrator, Central Texas Table of Grace		✓
Will Francis, Government Relations Director, National Association of Social Workers/Texas Chapter, Austin	✓	
Mara Friesen, Deputy Director for Child Support, Office of the Texas Attorney General, Austin	✓	
Sadie Funk, Executive Director, Texas Alliance for Infant Mental Health, Austin		✓
Helen Gaebler, Senior Research Attorney, William Wayne Justice Center for Public Interest Law, The University of Texas School of Law, Austin		✓
Teal De La Garza, Attorney, Bill De La Garza & Associates, P.C.	✓	
Christina Green, Director of Public Affairs, Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Austin		✓
Sandra Hachem, Senior Assistant County Attorney, Harris County Attorney's Office, Houston	✓	
David Halpern, Director, Promise Mentor Program, Seedling Foundation, Austin		✓
Ashley Harris, Independent Consultant, Austin		✓
Bruce Kendrick, Director of Outreach, Embrace Texas, McKinney		✓
Knox Kimberly, Vice President for Advocacy and Education, Lutheran Social Services of the South, Austin	✓	
Kelly Kravitz, Foster Care Education and Policy Coordinator, Texas Education Agency, Austin		✓
Richard Lavallo, Legal Director, Disability Rights Texas, Austin		✓
Tracy Levins, State Development Specialist, Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health, The University of Texas, Austin		✓
Madeline McClure, Executive Director, Texas Association for the Protection of Children, Dallas		✓
Hon. F. Scott McCown, Clinical Professor and Director of the Children's Rights Clinic, The University of Texas School of Law, Austin		✓
Gabriella McDonald, Pro Bono and New Projects Director, Texas Appleseed, Austin	✓	
Susan McDowell, Executive Director, Life works, Austin		✓
Pamela McPeters (by proxy Dimple Patel), Director of Public Policy, Texas Association for the Protection of Children, Austin	✓	
Katie Olse, Executive Director, Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services, Austin	✓	
Dr. Anu Partap, Assistant Professor in Pediatrics, Southwest Medical Center, Dallas		✓
Judy Powell, Communications Director, Parent Guidance Center, Austin		✓
Mary Christine Reed, Director, Texas Foster Youth Justice Project, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Austin	✓	
Carolyne Rodriguez, Independent Consultant, Austin	✓	
Johana Scot, Executive Director, Parent Guidance Center, Austin	✓	
Janet Sharkis, Executive Director, Texas Office for Prevention of Developmental Disabilities, Austin		✓
Andrea Sparks, Child Sex Trafficking Unit Administrator, Office of the Governor, Austin		✓
Jeanne Stamp, Senior Program Coordinator, Texas Homeless Education Office, Charles A. Dana Center, Austin		✓
Gloria Terry, Coalition President, Texas Council on Family Violence, Austin		✓
Kenneth Thompson, Fatherhood Program Specialist, Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin		✓
Arabia Vargas, Chair, Bexar County Child Welfare Board, San Antonio		✓
Kelly White, Executive Director, LIFT Alliance		✓

Attending Committee Members and Guests

Mari Kay Bickett, former Chief Executive Officer, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

Scott Constantine, Managing Attorney, The Family Helpline, Texas Legal Services Center, Austin
Meagan Corser, Legislative Analyst, Texas Home School Coalition, Austin
Dr. Jennifer Delaney, Guest of Hon. Rob Hofmann
John Delaney, Guest of Hon. Rob Hofmann
Dr. Rick Delaney, Guest of Hon. Rob Hofmann
David Feigen, Legislative Director, Office of the Hon. Helen Giddings, Austin
Michelle Harper, Vice President of Child and Family Policy, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Dallas
Blixen Hofmann, Guest of Hon. Rob Hofmann
Brooke King, Texas Council on Family Violence
Brandon Logan, Director, Center for Families and Children Texas Public Policy Foundation, Austin
Shannon Ramsey, Transitional Living Services Lead, Texas Dept. of Family and Protective Services, Austin
Anita Stuckey, Grant Specialist, Texas Legal Services Center, Austin
Henry Whitman, Commissioner, Texas Dept. of Family and Protective Services, Austin
Trevor Woodruff, Deputy Commissioner, Texas Dept. of Family and Protective Services, Austin
Sarah Worthington, Staff Attorney, Texas Foster Youth Justice Project, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Austin

Attending Staff

Tina Amberboy, Executive Director, Children's Commission
Jessica Arguijo, Administrative Assistant, Children's Commission
Jamie Bernstein, Staff Attorney, Children's Commission
Anissa Johnson, Program Specialist VI, Office of Court Administration
Tim Kennedy, Video Conferencing Project Manager, Office of Court Administration
Monica Mahoney, Administrative Assistant, Children's Commission
Dylan Moench, Staff Attorney, Children's Commission
Patrick Passmore, Grant Manager, Children's Commission
Mena Ramon, General Counsel, Office of Court Administration
Milbrey Raney, Staff Attorney, Children's Commission
Hon. Dean Rucker, Jurist in Residence, Children's Commission
Kristi Taylor, Assistant Director, Children's Commission
Andrea Vicencio, Administrative Assistant, Children's Commission

CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING REMARKS, Justice Eva Guzman

Justice Eva Guzman called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m.

Recognition of Guests

Justice Guzman welcomed special guests Commissioner Hank Whitman and Deputy Commissioner Trevor Woodruff of the Department of Family and Protective Services, and Michelle Harper, Vice President for Child and Family Policy at Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute in Dallas.

Commissioner Membership Changes

There were no changes to the Commissioner membership.

Collaborative Council Membership Changes

Justice Guzman announced that Will Francis, the Government Relations Director at the National Association of Social Workers, Texas Chapter, joined the Collaborative Council.

Committee Member Changes

Justice Guzman announced that Shannon Ramsey's retirement from Child Protective Services (CPS) at the end of May 2017 and the end of her service on the Foster Care & Education Committee.

Justice Guzman also announced that Judge Aurora Martinez Jones, Associate Judge in Travis County, joined the Foster Care & Education Committee School Discipline Workgroup as chair

Staff Member Changes

Justice Guzman announced that Daniella Salazar, a candidate to receive a Doctor of Jurisprudence in 2019 from the University of Texas School of Law, would serve as a summer intern at the Children's Commission.

Court Improvement Program Funding Update

Justice Guzman and Tina Amberboy gave an update on the funding of the Court Improvement Program (CIP). Ms. Amberboy updated Commissioners on the status of the federal CIP funding, noting that the Budget Bill was signed by the President in late January and the Children's Bureau expected to send the remaining two-thirds of the CIP funds that were not distributed in October 2016 to states in July. Ms. Amberboy reminded members that the CIP expired in October 2016 and was not fully reauthorized by the Congress. Justice Guzman announced that the Supreme Court of Texas included funding for the Children's Commission as an exceptional item in the Court's budget. Ms. Amberboy explained that due to the unknown status of Commission funding, the Commission staff will proceed with caution regarding use of current funds and projects. Ms. Amberboy noted that a better update is expected at the next Commission meeting.

Adoption of February 10, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Justice Guzman directed members to Tab 2 and noted that members had the opportunity to review the minutes. Justice Guzman asked if there were any other corrections or discussion. There were no corrections or discussion points raised.

ACTION: Justice Guzman asked for a motion to adopt the meeting minutes of the February 10, 2017 meeting. Vicki Spriggs motioned to adopt the minutes; the motion was seconded. The attending members voted to approve and adopt the meeting minutes unanimously.

COMMISSION MEMBER UPDATES

Hon. Rob Hofmann reported on the work of the Foster Care and Education Committee, highlighting the recent publications, [*Transition Planning Guide for Students in Foster Care Receiving Special Education Services*](#) and [*Information Sharing Between Child Welfare and Schools: Maintaining Privacy and Promoting*](#)

[Educational Success](#). Judge Hofmann announced that the [Texas Higher Education Foster Care Liaisons Information & Reference Guide](#) would be published in June 2017 and that a data report which details education outcomes from the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) would be published in late summer 2017. Judge Hofmann announced the Education Reach Conference would be held in Commerce, Texas on June 12-13. Also, that the National Council on Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) requested Texas' assistance with the Education chapter of a white paper regarding congregate care. Ms. Jamie Bernstein and Mr. Ian Spechler were expected to provide input. Judge Hofmann announced Travis County Associate Judge Aurora Martinez-Jones as chair of the newly formed Discipline and Behavioral Health Workgroup of the Foster Care and Education Committee. The workgroup's first meeting was scheduled for July 25, 2017. Members of the workgroup include representatives from DFPS, TEA, academia, and various advocacy groups, such as trauma-informed care, restorative practices, and special education.

In Region 9, Judge Hofmann reported on the 6th Annual Child Protection Court Training that was recently held in Kerrville, Texas, with over 200 attorneys, CASAs, and other advocates in attendance. Judge Hofmann also reported on a recent Partners in Permanency and Stability (PIPS) meeting in San Angelo, Texas. As a result of the PIPS meeting, advocates were able to find emergency housing in some unused dorm rooms at Angelo State University (ASU) to temporarily place 4 children recently removed from their family in the area. Ultimately, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed to allow use of ASU dorm rooms for emergency placement housing for future instances. Dr. Javier Flores of ASU helped facilitate this placement and has shared the idea with Howard College in Big Springs, Texas.

Vicki Spriggs shared that Texas CASA recently hosted its Capitol Day Primer, as well as a luncheon in April 2017 to recognize two honorees in the child welfare arena, Justice Eva Guzman and Senator Jane Nelson. Justice Guzman was the recipient of the Texas CASA Champions Award. Ms. Spriggs reported that the local CASA program leadership meeting was held in early May 2017. Mr. Tim Kennedy and Mr. Patrick Passmore presented on the videoconferencing capabilities which Texas CASA hopes to utilize across the state.

Ms. Spriggs updated the Commission on the Texas CASA Child Outcomes Volunteer Effectiveness (COVE) study. The first of three phases of the COVE study had been completed and the second phase was in progress. Ms. Spriggs gave an update on data that was discussed at the February 10 Commission meeting, regarding the first phase of the study on the selection bias study that examines which cases are more likely to receive a CASA volunteer. The selection bias study initially revealed that Latino children were underrepresented in those children assigned a CASA volunteer, but after further inspection into the data the researchers found that a skewing of information was related to the data from one particular court. After the data for the court was removed, the statewide data showed that children were appointed equally across Texas. Texas CASA planned to complete and release the entire study in 2018. Ms. Spriggs reported on the continued efforts of Texas CASA's diligent work to keep children with families and find families through the Collaborative Family Engagement (CFE) and the formal agreement with the consulates of Mexico in Texas to find families.

Mr. Passmore shared the work of the Data and Technology Committee, noting it last met on April 13, 2017. Mr. Passmore reported that since the JIR letter and ARL regarding the Notice and Engagement Tool was published in December 2016, users have continued to increase, now totaling 596 – a 99% increase. The number of video-enabled courts continues to increase as well: since the February meeting, 12 additional courts, 6 additional placement facilities, and 11 local CASA offices have been added. Mr. Passmore directed members to tab 3 for a complete update on the committee.

Hon. Michael Schneider reported on a meeting on March 14, 2017 with Jamie Bernstein and the Harris County GIRLS Court regarding the juvenile record sealing initiative and the possibility of taking the project to a statewide level, as well as tying the initiative’s goals into the Commission’s work in the CPS system and potentially with crossover youth. The records sealing initiative is an effort in partnership with the Houston Bar Association and The Juvenile and Capital Advocacy Project (JCAP) at the University of Houston Law Center. Ms. Bernstein noted that since the meeting in Houston she has spoken to DFPS and is learning about their sealing process and also following several legislative bills that might impact an approach to an initiative. Judge Schneider also noted that he recently received a phone call from Sheila Jackson Lee about addressing the sealing issue at the federal level.

Judge Schneider reported on some of the Basic Committee projects discussed on the committee’s last call on April 13, 2017, including the upcoming Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-Informed Care (SCTIC) on July 28, featuring a presentation from the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI) on its findings of trauma-informed care (TIC) programs in Texas; the Judicial Workgroup addressing Disproportionality (JWD) in-person meeting scheduled for November 14, 2017 during the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference (CWJC); the work of the Tribal/State Collaborative Workgroup on a recent Jurist in Residence (JIR) letter and Attorney Resource Letter (ARL) to share links to ICWA-related resources; the DFPS Tribal/State Meeting hosted by the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas in Livingston, Texas on May 31, 2017; and a potential roundtable to be hosted by the Commission and DFPS to address the implementation of Senate Bill 11.

Judge Schneider attended a meeting in April 2017 in Harris County regarding data sharing between DFPS, MHMRA of Harris County, and the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) to expand the sharing of statistics and documents between systems. Judge Schneider also recently attended the National Juvenile Justice Summit with Riley Shaw from Tarrant County District Attorney’s Office, Scott Griffith from Office of Court Administration, Mike Turner from TJJD, and Chief Justice Nathan Hecht, as representatives of Texas at the Summit. The Texas workgroup created an action plan regarding document sharing on a statewide level. Judge Schneider noted that he has volunteered to serve as the liaison between the workgroup and the Commission.

Judge Schneider reported on the continued work in Harris County with the crossover youth population, noting that monthly meetings are held to staff cases and work collaboratively with local CPS and juvenile probation systems. Judge Schneider also reported that Harris County is working with Georgetown University to develop a permanent model for Harris County, largely modeled after the programs in Bexar and Travis counties.

Judge Schneider commented that the 315th Court is exploring the possibility to contract with Disability Rights Texas to represent children with disabilities.

Justice Guzman noted that the Commission may be able to begin working with Harris County on the crossover youth projects and sealing project in the future, depending on the Commission's funding.

Justice Michael Massengale reported on the work of the Training Committee, which last met on April 18, 2017. Justice Massengale announced six upcoming trainings:

- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Annual Conference scheduled for July 16-20 in Washington D.C.
- The Child Protection Legislative Update Webcast scheduled for July 24, 2017.
- Child Abuse and Neglect Track 1-Day CLE within the Annual Advanced Family Law Course on August 9, 2017 in San Antonio, Texas. Subsequent video replays will be held in Houston, Dallas, and South Padre Island.
- The National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC) Annual Conference, scheduled for August 10-12, 2017 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Dylan Moench will attend on behalf of the Commission. The 2018 NACC Conference will be held in San Antonio, Texas on August 22-24, 2018.
- A Trial Skills Training (TST) Live Webcast is scheduled for August 29, 2017 offering 6 hours of MCLE content on Trial Skills in CPS Cases. The webcast training will replace the second TST in-person training of 2017.
- Child Welfare Judges Conference (CWJC), scheduled for November 13-15, 2017 at the Hyatt Lost Pines Resort in Bastrop, Texas. The Commission will send an announcement with details as they become available.

Justice Massengale announced the new Texas Board of Legal Specialization (TBLS) Child Welfare Law Specialization (CWLS) approved by the Supreme Court of Texas on February 14, 2017. Justice Massengale reported on the most recent Trial Skills Training (TST) held on May 8-10, 2017, which was held in a new venue at the Embassy Suites Conference Center in San Marcos, Texas. Justices Eva Guzman and Jeff Brown gave opening remarks at the training. Justice Massengale announced that Judge Dean Rucker will conduct a judicial evaluation of the May TST graduates to measure the effectiveness and long-term impact of the training.

Ms. Cindy Patrick reported on the work of organizations in North Texas that have collaborated to learn more about the child welfare system. Ms. Patrick reported on a recent meeting with United Ways of Texas and the DFPS Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) division in March 2017 to discuss PEI's programs and the crossover of programs funded both by PEI and the philanthropic community. Ms. Patrick announced the development of the Better Together Fund, aimed primarily at organizations in the Dallas area to support hiring consultants, gathering boards, and legal costs regarding merging initiatives.

Ms. Michelle Harper reported on behalf of Dr. Andrew Keller on the work by Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI) to conduct interviews across the state on trauma-informed care (TIC) best practices and programs in Texas and present findings on July 28, 2017. MMHPI received funding from the Rees Jones Center to support child placement agencies (CPAs) across the state to provide intensive Medicaid services including skills training, medication management, and crisis planning. Ms. Harper noted that the Stephens Group report stated there are currently over 4,000 children in the child welfare system who could benefit from intensive Medicaid services. Legislation followed by MMHPI included HB 74 and Senate's legislation that would potentially allow for the startup costs to providing Medicaid services.

Ms. Harper announced the upcoming lecture series in Judge Darlene Byrne's courtroom to update attorneys on intensive Medicaid services available to children in the child welfare system. Justice Guzman offered to share updates from MMHPI on the intensive Medicaid services through the Commission's distribution lists as they become available.

Lt. Col. Travis Walters military voice in the room, some thoughts along those lines – help soldiers, sailors and airmen primary focus is helping families, secondary focus: when soldiers have issues at home, it affects combat readiness at work. Helping military families helps protect the nation. Also remarked that the recent change in the federal administration may produce an increase in deployments. Lt. Col. Walters noted that deployments can often times exacerbate currently existing issues in the home, and an increase of military families in courtrooms is possible as well.

Justice Guzman remarked on the efforts for veterans issues, including the Access to Justice (ATJ) Veteran's Gala held in May 2017 which raised over \$560,000. Richard Mithoff, an attorney in Houston, set up a foundation for veterans to access legal services. The Commission's funding situation has put a military summit on hold.

Judge Byrne noted that Texas has the largest population of children in military families. Judge Byrne also commented on the positive experience of the Texas Challenge Academy for a youth in her court. Lt. Col. Walters informed the Commission that there are Challenge Academies across the nation, each run by the state's National Guard, and is a voluntary program that does not require participants to have eligibility to enter military following the program.

Hon. Lawrence Lujan reported that the need for experts for Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) hearings continues to be an issue for DFPS. Judge Lujan noted that he can provide a point of contact for help with this issue. Judge Lujan commented that he has received reports of tribes not responding to notice and outreach, and asked that those experiencing this to please notify him so he can provide data to the National American Indian Court Judges Association (NAICJA) related to this issue. Judge Lujan also stated a list of designated tribal agents for service and notice is available online at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/03/02/2016-04619/indian-child-welfare-act-designated-tribal-agents-for-service-of-notice>.

The El Paso County probation system review is being conducted in conjunction with the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice and led by the RFK Children's Action Corps. Judge Lujan noted the broad goals include continuous quality improvement, benchmarking the organization against best practices, engaging stakeholders, reporting and analysis, and establishing the El Paso County Juvenile Justice System as a best practice leader. Specific focus is on clinical interventions to reduce the high risk referrals, assuring that juvenile offender accountability is not law enforcement-focused, a probation system review to align best practices, an extended review of the youth court system, and providing swift justice and preventing delays in justice. Judge Lujan suggested two points of contact for more information: Judge Yahara Lisa Gutierrez of the 65th Judicial District and Marc Marquez, Deputy Chief of Operations for the El Paso Juvenile Probation Department.

Judge Lujan reported on the Clergy in the Court for Kids Program, started by Judge Gutierrez and met on May 1, 2017. Judge Lujan noted that the program seeks to educate faith-based leaders in the El Paso area on CPS hearings so that these leaders might observe or participate in the hearings and determine how they might help the children in the community. Judge Lujan can also provide two points of contact for the program. Judge Lujan announced the DFPS Tribal/State Collaborative meeting at the Alabama Coushatta Tribe of Texas on May 31, 2017. Judge Lujan directed members who have questions they would like considered or topics to be discussed at the meeting to contact Tanya Rollins of DFPS or Kristi Taylor of the Commission. Judge Lujan reported that the Tribal/State Collaborative calls continue to occur monthly.

Judge Lujan suggested that perhaps the Commission could consider regular meetings with military partners (base commanders at three military bases in Texas), similar to the State/Tribal meetings and monthly calls.

Hon. Gary Coley announced the completion of the eight Trial Skills Training (TST) on May 8-10, 2017. Judge Coley reported on the crossover model in McLennan County, noting there are more children involved than have been in past with an average of over 20 kids, and 5 – 10 potential children to add each month. Judge Coley remarked on the Heart of Texas Human Trafficking Coalition's work, and announced a website is now available at <https://www.hothtc.org/>. The Coalition is hosting a trauma-informed care training on May 11-12, 2017 for an estimated 300 attendees.

DFPS UPDATE, Commissioner Henry Whitman discussed the 10 Point Plan and the Department's goal to have zero children staying in offices. Whitman also discussed many legislative bills that will affect the Department, including HB 4, HB 5, and SB 11. Commissioner Whitman commented on the importance of kinship care and the goal to place fifty percent of children with relatives. Regarding HB 5, Commissioner Whitman commented on the benefits of DFPS becoming a stand-alone agency, and noted that under the current version of the bill the child care licensing and regulators would stay together under the Department. Regarding SB 11, the Commissioner explained that four catchment areas have been identified and that the next single source continuum of care (SSCC) will be implemented in Region 2, and the following into Region 8. Commissioner Whitman noted the outreach from philanthropic partners in Region 8 to help support implementation of the SSCC.

CPS received funding in early 2017 to give raises for investigators, case workers, and faith-based safety services (FBSS) workers. Commissioner Whitman noted that Senator West's involvement was instrumental in ensuring the Department received the funds immediately, rather than waiting for September 1.

Commissioner Whitman discussed the efforts to enhance leadership development strategies, especially in the mid-management positions. DFPS has bolstered leadership training and now requires an examination for service supervisors, program directors, and program administrators. Upon eighty percent satisfaction on the exam, staff are eligible to interview with a board, which includes representatives from CPS and other DFPS divisions such as Adult Protective Services and Child Care Licensing.

Commissioner Whitman reported that case worker turnover rates are down: Conservatorship caseworkers from 22% to 19%; Family Based Safety Services from 25% to 19%; and Investigators from 33% to 21.5%. The Commissioner explained that each month the Department promotes 25-28 supervisors and hands out the Commissioner Award of Excellence. Fewer than forty awards have been issued to date. The Department celebrates the promotions on the last Tuesday of each month with guest speakers and by inviting family members to attend.

Commissioner Whitman discussed the Department's initiatives regarding sex trafficking, and reported that all special investigators are now under one director at state office, Jim Sylvester, in the Child Abuse Neglect Special Investigations (CANSI) division. The Commissioner commented on the importance of law enforcement to address the sex trafficking issue. All special investigators have received new training and will go in the field with case workers on Priority One cases and help ask the right questions during investigations. The special investigators will also offer training to the case workers, including forensic interviewing. Commissioner Whitman announced a meeting with state and federal agencies on May 18, 2017 to conduct a roundtable on the sex trafficking issue and instituting the use of crime analysts to assist with investigations. Commissioner Whitman noted that in instances when sex trafficking crosses the state lines, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's agents will be involved as well.

Mr. Terry Tottenham expanded on the Access to Justice (ATJ) Veterans program and fundraising efforts, and noted that if members know of an organization interested in enhancing Mithoff's endowment to contact Mr. Tottenham by email. Mr. Tottenham notified the Commission that ATJ recently received a report from four legal aid providers about immigration arrests of undocumented immigrants who have not committed serious crimes and in some instances U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents are arresting parents near schools after the parents have dropped off their children. Mr. Tottenham commented on the ICE policies and the direct impact the issue will have on the child welfare system.

Hon. Darlene Byrne reported as the Senior Judicial Advisor to the Commission. Judge Byrne announced that Travis County is in the process of transforming court dockets and that Casey Family Programs

helped bring 40 stakeholders together to hold a strategic planning session to create a docket that will accommodate the area's increasing population and CPS caseloads. Judge Byrne reported on Travis County's work with NCJFCJ and the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy (National Campaign) to convene 80 individuals from the community for training on teen pregnancy and discussion on what can be done and what is currently being done in Texas regarding evidenced-based services, health education, and reproductive rights education for children. Judge Byrne reported on the plan established for Travis County to develop data on children who are at risk for pregnancy, presently parenting or presently parenting one and at risk for second pregnancy. Goals include educating the community on the evidenced-based prevention services available to the pregnant child or a young man who is a father-to-be. Judge Byrne announced that Travis County will host a community-wide education event on October 22, 2017 from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. in Austin.

Judge Byrne reported on a project with Casey Family Programs, National CASA, and NCJFCJ regarding DFPS normalcy service and enrichment activities for the children in the child welfare system. Judge Byrne noted that the juvenile justice system has several services aimed at enrichment, but not matched for the children in foster care. Texas will work on collaboration and an assessment tool to help provide enrichment activities for children in the foster care system. Judge Byrne announced the NCJFCJ Annual Conference on July 16-19, 2017 in Washington, D.C. and reminded the Commission that NCJFCJ is currently seeking committee membership and that as of July 2017, there will not be a board member from Texas on the NCJFCJ Board.

Hon. Piper McCraw reported that the Collin County district courts have consolidated the CPS cases to be heard by four district judges, and has recently hosted a Poverty Simulation for all the systems involved in CPS cases. Judge McCraw also reported that Collin County has begun to hold brown bag lunches similar to those of Travis County and the meetings have been well attended. Judge McCraw announced that more children are attending Permanency Hearings in Collin County and has moved the hearings to one day and taking steps to create a child-friendly environment at the courts. Judge McCraw reported that Collin County now has a veteran's court that will hear CPS cases as well.

Justice Guzman and Judge Rob Hofmann recognized the service of Shannon Ramsey to the Commission's Foster Care and Education Committee.

Ms. Sheila Craig reported that the legislature removed funding for the Center for the Elimination of Disproportionality and Disparities (Center) from HHSC's budget. Ms. Craig noted that the Center to date had provided training to over 17,000 staff and communities across Texas, had over 200 collaborative partnerships, and had provided technical assistance to help organizations examine policies and practices to identify where disparities exist and then develop initiatives to eliminate those disparities. Ms. Craig reported on the Center's work with DFPS to develop a curriculum on equity, Together We Can, and on the work with CPS regarding cultural competency training.

Ms. Craig reported on the Center's healthcare training on the national standards of the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) to over 2,000 trainees, including doctors, nurses, community

health workers, and other health care professionals. Ms. Craig commented further on the Center's work surrounding women's health to provide guidance on better birth outcomes through workshops in communities in South and East Texas, as well as the Center's assistance to help agencies and organizations identify gaps when developing initiatives related to women's health. Ms. Craig noted the Center's efforts to hold community conversations to get feedback from the community on potential initiatives and what barriers are present regarding women's health in the community. Ms. Craig reported on the Center's work with Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) to develop cultural competency plans for Medicaid managed care organizations and publish the Texas Model Guidebook and Texas Equity Impact Analysis Tool.

Hon. Peter Sakai reported on the community-based efforts in Bexar County. The Infant-Toddler Court Program recently had its one year anniversary, and to date 10 parents and 17 infants and toddlers have graduated from the program. Judge Sakai noted that Bexar County was able to raise 1.5 million dollars through their public-private partnership for the program. Judge Sakai also reported on the PMC Program that is dedicated to normalcy activities, including funding to attend band and summer camps, tutorials, extracurricular activities at school, and a couple of international trips. Judge Sakai also updated the Commission on an effort to pay court appointed attorneys to represent family members who have custody as in a PCSP agreement to draft custody orders in appropriate situations, especially when parents refuse services from the beginning.

Ms. Luanne Southern announced that Casey Family Programs Texas Team has held several meetings in Austin to discuss technical assistance units, advocacy, public policy, and knowledge management among other topics. Ms. Southern reported on the Texas Team's work with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago to do a data analysis on an estimated 900 kids in Texas with complex needs such as a mental health diagnosis, primary healthcare issues, or behaviors that are preventing placement. Ms. Southern noted that a meeting with the Department is scheduled in June 2017 to discuss DFPS initiatives regarding children with complex needs, develop ideas to meet the needs of the children, and identify practices that DFPS is currently funding and proposing to fund after the legislative session.

Ms. Southern also reported on an initiative in Dallas County to assist children who have been in foster care for an extended period and are unable to achieve safe permanency, which started in January 2017. Ms. Tina Amberboy, Judge Robin Sage, and Judge Patricia Macias have held meetings with Casey and DFPS staff in the Dallas region, and Casey has been assisting new Regional Director in Dallas. Ms. Southern noted forthcoming meetings with the Meadows Foundation and other foundations to coordinate efforts. Ms. Southern updated the Commission on Casey's assistance to the DFPS Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) to develop a strategic plan and noted that Casey plans to continue engaging with the PEI division. Casey will also provide assistance to three specific regional teams of DFPS for the agency's leadership initiative, including Region 7, Region 6, and Region 3.

Executive Director Report

Ms. Tina Amberboy announced that the Commission will host a Collaborative Council meeting in 2017 and continues to develop plans for the meeting. Ms. Amberboy directed members to a handout available

on the meeting materials table for an update on the progress to establish a Research Center. Ms. Amberboy announced the Keeping Infants and Toddlers Safe (KITS) Conference on June 22-24, 2017 in Stafford, Texas. Ms. Amberboy informed the Commission that an amended Court Improvement Program (CIP) Application and Self-Assessment will be submitted to the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) by June 30, 2017.

Presentation on Texas Board of Legal Specialization (TBLS)

Mr. Dylan Moench gave a presentation on the recent changes at the TBLS to include a law specialization in child welfare. More information is available at: <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/2070/tbls-arl.pdf>. The Supreme Court of Texas order is available online at: <http://www.txcourts.gov/media/1437204/179014.pdf>.

COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL REPORT

Mary Christine Reed, Texas Foster Youth Justice Project reported on an issue that Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA) continues to hear about cases involving the provision regarding personal identification documentation for older foster youth and remarked on the current legislation addressing this issue. Ms. Reed noted the DFPS staff are often times unaware of the policy to provide the documentation, or do not follow through with providing assistance to access the documents.

Johana Scot, Parent Guidance Center remarked on the recent positive public voice regarding parents and the numerous legislators focusing on child welfare during the 85th Legislative Session. Ms. Scot noted that the Parent Guidance Center has been available to give input to Legislators proposing bills related to child welfare and the family code.

Sandra Hachem, Harris County Attorney's Office reported on the State Bar of Texas Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) Committee's discussion on creating a child welfare section. Ms. Hachem welcomed the Commission's input and directed members to email her.

DFPS UPDATE continued, Associate Commissioner for CPS Kristene Blackstone reported that DFPS has split Dallas and Fort Worth into two separate regions, and a new management team has been implemented in Dallas. The Regional Director in Dallas is Matt Gilbert.

Ms. Blackstone remarked on the placement issues with high needs kids and the crossover population from the juvenile justice that are being cared for by CPS staff, and reported that DFPS continues to work with providers on the capacity issues. Ms. Blackstone updated the Commission on the capacity needs assessment for the catchment areas to identify which children are being placed and which are not in communities across the state. The Department worked with the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services (TACFS) to develop a webinar to update providers on the capacity report, available on the DFPS website at: [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About DFPS/Reports and Presentations/CPS/documents/2017/2017-01-01 Foster Care Needs Assessment Report.pdf](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About%20DFPS/Reports%20and%20Presentations/CPS/documents/2017/2017-01-01_Foster_Care_Needs_Assessment_Report.pdf).

Ms. Blackstone announced the Network of Nurture initiative's kickoff event held in early May 2017 in Travis County, attended by all child placing agencies (CPAs) in Travis County in an effort to standardize requirements for babysitters across all local CPAs. Ms. Blackstone notified Commissioners that CPS is working with Disability Rights Texas, Texas CASA, the Children's Commission, judges, attorneys ad litem, the Department of Aging and Disability Services, and other agencies to develop a protocol for emergency facility closures. The Department is increasing training for supervisors, all the way up to the Regional Director level, to create high-performing teams that can adapt readily to changes.

Ms. Blackstone also reported on other divisions of the Department, noting that the Child Care Licensing (CCL) division will start tracking any incidents that meets the definition of a serious injury beginning in mid-June. The Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) division rolled out new Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES) programs in Tarrant, Denton, Johnson, Ellis, Bell, Montgomery, Galveston, Brazos and Bexar counties. The HOPES programs provide intensive in-home support services to families with children age 0 – 6. Ms. Blackstone reported on a recent study with the University of Texas to measure the effectiveness of the Department's PEI division, which analyzed seven years' worth of data and revealed that 97% of clients who completed PEI services had no subsequent or future instances of child maltreatment. On March 24, 2017, PEI held a Fatherhood Matters Summit with providers across the state. Ms. Blackstone announced the upcoming CPS Faith-Based Summit that will be held in Waxahachie for the North Texas communities on June 7, 2017. Ms. Blackstone commented that CPS has hired nearly all staff positions that were requested in the DFPS critical needs ask in December.

Ms. Blackstone updated the Commission on the DFPS initiative to provide medical exams for children within 72 hours of removal in the Dallas and Lubbock areas. Ms. Blackstone reported that the pilot in Dallas has completed and the program will continue with Dr. Partap, and that pilot in Lubbock began in March 2017.

JURIST IN RESIDENCE REPORT

Hon. Dean Rucker updated members on the 85th Legislative Session. For a full update, please visit the website at: <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/83450/85th-session-legislative-update-july-21-final.pdf>. Judge Rucker announced that the Child Protection Law Bench Book will be updated for the session in November 2017.

OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION UPDATE, Ms. Mena Ramon

Ms. Ramon updated the Commission on the Office of Court Administration's (OCA) legislative appropriation request for implementation and funding of four additional Child Protection Courts, noting that the request does not look favorable to pass in the Legislature. Additionally, OCA will be taking a six percent cut this session, cutting funding for a few programs including the Exoneration Commission and the Guardianship Program.

NEW BUSINESS

Justice Guzman announced the next 2017 Commission Meeting date: September 22.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

INSERT - TAB 3



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

Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families

Report to Commission

September 22, 2017

The State Bar of Texas – Texas Law Center

1414 Colorado Street

Austin, Texas 78701

September 22, 2017

I. Goal: Encourage judicial leadership, accountability, and appropriate oversight of child protection cases to improve safety, permanency and well-being of children and families.

I.A. Objective: Participate and provide resources to statewide collaborative efforts to improve child safety.

I.A.1. Strategy: Collaborate and support agency and partner efforts to examine, secure, assess and improve child safety.

Progress Report

Activities:

- *Serve on the DFPS Prevention Advisory Committee*
- *Support implementation of the recommendations issued by the Protect Our Kids Commission*

The Prevention Advisory Committee convened by the Prevention and Early Intervention Division of DFPS was a key recommendation from the Protect our Kids Commission (POK). The POK Commission was established by Senate Bill 66 during the 83rd Legislative Session and was charged with identifying promising practices and strategies to address and reduce fatalities from child abuse and neglect and recommending a comprehensive statewide strategy for reducing those fatalities. The PAC includes representatives such as pediatricians, judges, child welfare agency representatives, prosecutors, medical examiners, provider groups, and policy experts in prevention and community advocacy.

9/22/17 Update:

CC staff attended PAC meetings on 2/17/17 in Houston and 7/21/17 in Austin. PEI's budget for fiscal years 2018-19 includes modest increases for four programs (shown below) and flat funding for all other state-funded programs.

STAR	\$1.34 million additional per biennium
HIP	\$1.6 million additional per biennium
Texas Home Visiting	\$800,000 additional per biennium
Nurse-Family Partnership	\$5 million additional per biennium

Amendments to the Family Code require the Department's five-year Strategic Plan for PEI services to identify strategies and goals for increasing the number of families

receiving PEI services each year. Also, the Department must identify geographic areas which have a high need for PEI services, but do not already have PEI services available or have unevaluated PEI services in the area. The Department must develop strategies for community members to improve the early recognition of child abuse or neglect and improve reporting. Also, the Department must conduct efficacy review of any PEI services that have not previously been evaluated for effectiveness. In addition, **House Bill 5** moved the Department of Family and Protective Services outside of the Health and Human Services system. Effective September 1, 2017, DFPS became an independent agency, and PEI continues to be part of it.

The Department is now required to publish the statewide aggregated child fatality report by March of each year. The report must contain information regarding about abuse or neglect, the age and sex of the child, and the county in which the fatality occurred. The Department is also now required to collect near fatality data, which is defined as a case where a physician has certified that a child is in critical or serious condition, and a caseworker determines that the child's condition was caused by the abuse or neglect of the child. The Department must designate employees to serve as after-hours investigators and responders in certain geographic areas with demonstrated need. The Statewide Child Fatality Review and Investigation Committee must now include appointees from the Speaker of the House, Lieutenant Governor, and the Governor. The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) must develop and make available training for justices of the peace and medical examiners regarding inquests in child death cases. DSHS must also evaluate available child fatality data and use it to create public health strategies for the prevention of child fatalities.

Each member of the state Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT) must be a member of the CFRT in the county where the committee member resides unless the member is the appointed representative of a state agency. County and local child fatality review teams can now join with adjacent counties regardless of population in order to establish a combined CFRT. Local teams are now required to review and analyze the collected data to identify demographic trends, including whether there is a disproportionate number of child fatalities in a particular population group or geographic area.

	<p>DSHS must now provide local CFRTs with electronic access to preliminary death certificates for deceased children, and county commissioners' courts must adopt regulations relating to the timeliness for conducting an inquest into the death of a child. The regulations adopted must be as stringent as the standards issued by the National Association of Medical Examiners unless the commissioners court determines that it would be cost prohibitive for the county to comply with those standards. Also, there is a new duty on the medical examiner or justice of the peace in the county to notify appropriate county CFRT members of a child's death not later than the 120th day after the date the death is reported.</p>
<p>I.B. Objective: Support the improvement of education outcomes for children in the conservatorship of DFPS to increase opportunities for educational progress, leading to a more productive and stable adult life.</p>	
<p><i>I.B.1. Strategy: Implement the Texas Blueprint.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Promote improved collaboration between education, child welfare, and courts</i> - <i>Develop and promote cross-system training opportunities to increase awareness about the educational needs of students in foster care</i> - <i>Encourage the use of state and local data to drive decision-making and improve education outcomes</i> 	<p>The Foster Care and Education (FC&Ed) Committee was established in 2015 to continue the implementation of the Texas Blueprint recommendations, issued in 2012.</p> <p>There are five FC&Ed workgroups: Data, Postsecondary, Special Education, Local Collaboration, and School Discipline. The Data Workgroup focuses on improved information-sharing and data collection between DFPS and the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The Postsecondary Workgroup focuses on issues of college or career readiness, identification of students currently or formerly in care, supports to encourage better outcomes beyond high school, developing resources to assist new foster care liaisons at institutions of higher education, and data exchange between DFPS and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The Special Education Workgroup focuses on the over and underrepresentation of students in foster care in special education as well as transition planning in the child welfare and special education contexts, training and designation of surrogate parents, and best practices surrounding confidentiality. The Local Collaboration Workgroup focuses on strategies to promote collaboration at the local level. The School Discipline Workgroup will explore strategies to reduce exclusionary discipline for students in foster care and promote improved behavioral health in the education setting.</p>

The CPS Bench Book also includes a chapter and checklist on education issues which have been updated for the 2017 version.

9/22/17 Update:

The Foster Care & Education Committee met on June 16, 2017 to review workgroup progress. The Local Collaboration, Postsecondary, Data, Special Education, and School Discipline Workgroups met on May 16th, May 23rd, June 14th, and July 14th, and July 25th respectively.

Children’s Commission staff and several Postsecondary Workgroup members participated in the 8th Annual Education Reach for Texans Convening June 12-13, 2017 in Commerce, TX. A comprehensive Information and Reference Guide for Foster Care Liaisons at Texas Institutions of Higher Education, developed by the Foster Care & Education Postsecondary Workgroup, was released at the convening. Information from the first data exchange between DFPS and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) was also presented for the first time at the convening.

On June 29th, DFPS, TEA, and the Children’s Commission presented at the statewide P-16 Professional Development Conference, a collaborative designed to create education pathways from pre-Kindergarten through college. DFPS, TEA, and the Children’s Commission also gave a presentation on July 12th centered on transition planning and surrogate parents at the TCASE Interactive Conference with an audience of foster care liaisons and school district directors of special education.

The new School Discipline Workgroup met for the first time on July 25th. The first meeting included presentations on the background of the Texas Blueprint and its implementation, the impact of trauma, the special education discipline framework, and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The workgroup engaged in a mapping activity to identify existing laws, polices, practices, resources, and tools to address the behavioral needs of students in foster care.

I.C. Objective: Promote awareness of and embed a culture and practice among the judiciary and legal community around Trauma Informed Care so that the legal and judicial community is aware, educated and supportive of the concept and application.

<p><i>I.C.1. Strategy: Partner with Trauma and Mental Health advocates and agencies to ensure the legal and judicial community is aware, educated, supportive of, and implementing and applying principles of Trauma Informed Care in the respective disciplines.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Raise awareness about Trauma Informed Care through training and educational opportunities.</i> - <i>Lead a Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-informed Care to create a trauma-informed child welfare system that better meets the needs of children who have experienced trauma.</i> - <i>Partner with Texas trauma-informed workgroups and collaboratives</i> - <i>Develop and support Trauma Informed Care and Practice training for stakeholders involved with children and families in CPS cases.</i> 	<p>Pursuant to SB125 from the 84th Legislature, DFPS launched a comprehensive assessment that includes a trauma screening on September 1, 2016. The CANS (Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment) is used in conjunction with a Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (FSNA) to provide a comprehensive assessment for family service planning.</p> <p>The CC also continues to support DFPS's shift to a trauma-informed care system and in addition to developing and promoting an attorney training about trauma-informed care, will include a session on Trauma Informed Courts at the annual judicial conference in November 2016.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>In July 2017, the Children's Commission launched the Statewide Collaborative on Trauma Informed Care (SCTIC), which aims to elevate trauma-informed policy in the Texas child welfare system by creating a statewide strategy to support system reform, organizational leadership, cross-systems collaboration, and community-led efforts with data-informed initiatives to develop champions, consensus, and funding. SCTIC began with a planning group with the Children's Commission, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI), Texas CASA, and the Department of Family and Protective Services.</p> <p>SCTIC held a statewide meeting of TIC stakeholders on July 28, 2017 to review MMHPI's completed report on the TIC environment in Texas, bring stakeholders together, and build consensus. After the presentation there was a question and answer session with the authors, an open discussion of the report, and an active invitation to generate new ideas about collaboration and education about the importance of TIC across all systems which interact with children and families involved with child welfare in Texas.</p>

	<p>To help achieve their goals, the SCTIC established four Strategic Workgroups: Child Welfare System Reform, Chaired by Andy Homer, Texas CASA; Organizational Leadership, Chaired by Renee Calder Price, DePelchin; Cross-systems Collaboration, Chaired by Christine Gendron, TNOYS; and Funding, Data & Evaluation, Chaired by Katy Bourgeois, Mission Capital.</p>
<p>I.D. Objective: Promote awareness of and provide training, resources, and support for addressing Human Trafficking and specifically domestic child sex trafficking so that the judicial system can assist in preventing and responding to the commercial sexual exploitation of children in DFPS' conservatorship.</p>	
<p><i>I.D.1. Strategy: Collaborate with state and local partners to prevent and address commercial sexual exploitation of foster youth.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Work with Child Welfare Agency to improve identification of children who are victims or at high risk of becoming victims of human trafficking, including dual status population</i> - <i>Provide training and resources related to judicial and legal system handling of HT and CSEC cases.</i> - <i>Participate with Office of Attorney General and Statewide HT Task Force as well as the Office of the Texas Governor.</i> 	<p>The CC is focused primarily on providing information to judges and attorneys responsible for child welfare cases to raise awareness of human trafficking as it impacts children involved with the child welfare system.</p> <p>In FY2016, the CC sponsored trainings and updated the Child Protection Law Bench Book to include recent legislation regarding human trafficking and a one-page checklist on human trafficking added to the Bench Book as an additional resource for judges. Through JIR correspondence, the CC also relayed important information to judges hearing child welfare cases about the intersection of child welfare and human trafficking.</p> <p>The CC also participates in the nationwide Capacity Building Center for Courts Constituency Group to learn about best and current practices to prevent and respond to trafficking of children and youth in foster care and attends local, state, and national training events, including the Family Focused Treatment Association conference sessions on human trafficking to stay informed about successful strategies to combat trafficking and develop expertise to relay information to judges and attorneys as needed.</p> <p>In addition to serving on the Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force, the CC also works with the Office of the Texas Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team and the Office</p>

	<p>of Court Administration to develop strategies to improve judicial handling of child welfare cases where children or youth are at high risk of becoming trafficking victims.</p> <p>09/22/17 Update:</p> <p>On June 5-7, 2017, Commission staff attended the NCJFCJ Domestic Child Sex Trafficking Institute. The training provided judges from around the country with practical tools and strategies to identify and support children and youth with experience in commercial sexual exploitation. This information will be used to inform future training opportunities in Texas. Children’s Commission staff also participated in the Heart of Texas Human Trafficking Coalition meeting on July 20, 2017. The CC will continue to work with child welfare and court stakeholders to build capacity to address trafficking throughout the state.</p>
<p>I.E. Objective: Promote the value of mediation in CPS cases, which may, in turn, help children and families exit the child welfare system more quickly.</p>	
<p><i>I.E.1. Strategy: Establish an understanding and framework regarding availability, quality, support, cost, training, and usefulness of mediation in CPS cases.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess mediator training availability and needs - Assess potential costs, resources spent by counties, and funding sources for CPS mediation 	<p>In September 2014, UT applied for a grant to help determine the best practices and cost-effectiveness of mediation for Travis County, Texas. This project also aimed to develop a cost formula that could be applied to other counties in the state and to provide a research framework and questions that can be used by other counties.</p> <p>Due to data delays associated with the SACWIS / child welfare system, the project was unable to be completed. UT produced a cost benefit report, however (linked here: http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/54517/Model-Court-Cost-Analysis-Memo-FINAL.pdf)</p> <p>In April 2016, the CC surveyed 85 judges about the availability, frequency, usefulness, funding options and benefits of mediation in CPS cases. That survey was analyzed by UT and the results were presented at the Child Welfare Judicial conference in November 2016.</p>

	<p>9/22/17 update:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission is in the process of identifying proposed members of the Mediation Workgroup and will send out invitations in the Fall of 2017.</p>
<p>I.F. Objective: Collaborate with the full continuum of providers, including health and mental health providers, to identify ways to enhance effective and efficient services and supports for children in foster care and their caregivers.</p>	
<p><i>I.F.1. Strategy: Partner and collaborate with the residential provider community.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CC Staff will serve on the Public-Private Partnership for Foster Care Redesign - Confer and attend meetings of the Texas Chapter of the Family Focused Treatment Association and other child placing collaboratives 	<p>CC Executive Director continues to serve on the DFPS Public Private Partnership, which is the DFPS committee that provides advice and input into the state’s Foster Care Redesign effort, now referred to as Community Based Foster Care.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>E.D. attended the July 2017 PPP meeting and has conferred extensively with the legislature, providers and other stakeholders regarding Community-Based Care and Foster Care Redesign.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission will partner with the provider community regarding implementation of Community Based Care and its impact on the judicial system and courts, and will attend a day-long session on implementing Community-Based Care sponsored by the Texas Alliance of Child & Family Services on September 14, 2017.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The Children’s Commission will also participate on two CBC subcommittees hosted by DFPS that will focus on CBC Performance Measures and Quality Case Management and Continuity of Care and Process Evaluation.
<p><i>I.F.2. Strategy: Support Texas CASA in its mission to support child welfare reform through support of local CASA volunteer advocacy programs, and statewide advocacy</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p>	<p>9/22/17 Update:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Conduct a Child Welfare Primer for advocates and system stakeholders on child welfare issues, successes and opportunities, including how to involve former and current foster youth in the court process and child welfare policy development.</i> - <i>Produce a white paper of recommendations and goals for increased youth voice and engagement in Texas.</i> - <i>Promote increased awareness and use of the OCA video conferencing system among CASA programs to enable youth participation.</i> - <i>Plan and convene an event to further discuss implementation of cross-system trauma informed approaches with children and families in child welfare. Major activities of this project will be structured to further the work of the SCTIC workgroups.</i> - <i>Update the Texas CASA Educational Advocacy Toolkit.</i> 	<p>Texas CASA has applied for a grant to conduct a Child Welfare Primer for advocates and system stakeholders on child welfare issues, successes and opportunities. This year’s primer will include former foster youth, foster youth providers and child welfare subject matter experts along with court staff and child welfare system for the purpose of elevating youth participation and voice in their court case and in child welfare policy development. Promote increased awareness and use of the Office of Court Administration video conferencing system among CASA programs to enable youth participation in court proceedings.</p> <p>The grant also covers the planning and convening of an event to further discussion implementation of cross-system trauma informed approaches with children and families in child welfare. Major activities of this project will be structured to further the work of the SCTIC workgroups.</p> <p>The grant covers efforts to compile new information, laws and policies and provide for the editing and graphic formatting to update the Texas CASA Educational Advocacy Toolkit with the support of the Texas Supreme Court Children's Commission.</p>
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<p>II. Goal: Promote, expand, and share best and promising child welfare and court practices and resources to improve judicial administration and strengthen the child welfare system.</p>	
<p>II.A. Objective: Create opportunities to bring together subject matter experts, judicial and executive branch leaders, and key policy makers so that important and urgent issues are examined and recommendations and solutions are identified.</p>	
<p>II.A.1. Strategy: Work with DFPS and other stakeholders to identify topics for Round Table discussions.</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Form workgroup to define the purpose and goal of each Round Table and solicit participation from experts to promote substantive discussion - Develop meeting materials and agendas - Secure facilitator and location - Handle RSVPs and travel reimbursements - Produce a written report within 4-6 months - Consider implementation strategies based on the report and recommendations 	<p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission did not conduct a Round Table in FY2017. Potential Round Table Topics for FY2018 include implementation of Community Based Care and its impact to the judicial system and courts, as well as an analysis of justification for removal and burden of proof.</p>
<p>II.A.2. Strategy: Host House Bill 7 Appellate Rule Task Force</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish need for workgroup, identify workgroup members - Establish workgroup goals, meeting schedule, type of support required - Identify deliverables and select a solution - Report to Supreme Court - Report to Legislature 	<p>In August, the Commission launched an Appellate Rule Task Force pursuant to House Bill 7 (The Task Force on Rules of Procedure in Suits Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship Filed by a Governmental Entity). The TF is charged with examining four issues: Jury Submission (whether the use of broad form jury submission in termination of parental rights cases filed by DFPS be eliminated), Motion for New Trial and Notice of Appeal, Court Reporters and Reporter Records, and Increase of Parental Termination Appeals.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>The workgroup met in person on August 18, 2017 and held a follow-up conference call on September 18, 2017. The committee will meet in person or via conference call throughout October and November. The Children’s Commission will produce a report</p>

	to the Supreme Court of Texas by December 1, 2017 and to the Texas Legislature by December 31, 2017.
II.A.3. Strategy: Host Pleading Practice Workgroup to examine DFPS pleading practice and possible reform	Progress Report
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish need for workgroup, identify workgroup members - Establish workgroup goals, meeting schedule, type of support required - Identify deliverables and select a solution - Report to Governor and Workgroup Members 	<p>During the 85th Legislative Session, attempts were made to statutorily reform the pleading practices utilized by the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) when filing a Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship (SAPCR) seeking termination of the parent-child relationship or conservatorship of a child. Generally, the issue deals with use of language in these SAPCRs naming all known and alleged parents of a child. SAPCRs frequently include pleadings for termination of parental rights on multiple grounds as well as pleadings for conservatorship of a child in the alternative. At the time of filing the SAPCR, the applicability of some of these grounds to the case may be unknown. The practice also varies depending on the jurisdiction where the SAPCR is filed.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update</p> <p>The workgroup will meet in person on October 30, 2017. The Children’s Commission will produce a report to the Governor and Workgroup members by February 28, 2018.</p>
II.B. Objective: Ensure availability of quality judicial resources such as the Bench Book, Jurist in Residence (JIR) support and JIR correspondence and communicate to ensure judges are equipped to make informed, educated decisions, and use best practices in conducting hearings that will contribute to better outcomes for children and families.	
II.B.1. Strategy: Maintain, update, and support a high-quality Child Protection Law Bench Book for CPS Judges (Bench Book).	Progress Report
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain a Bench Book that outlines the state and federal statutory requirements for judges handling child protection cases, including topical sections and checklists - Include tips and best and promising practices throughout Bench Book - Annually update Bench Book with new information, as needed - Disseminate updated Bench Book at annual child welfare judicial conference, annual college for new judges, and upon request 	<p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>The current Bench Book is being updated with all applicable legislative changes and will be finalized in November for distribution at the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference, November 13-15, 2017.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Maintain an updated Bench Book on the CC’s website</i> - <i>Ensure all statutory citations are maintained and connected to an online resource</i> - <i>Track distribution of Bench Book</i> 	
<p>II.B.2. Strategy: Provide JIR support to the judiciary and child welfare system.</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Partner with retired judges with child welfare experience to serve as JIRs</i> - <i>JIRs will participate in conference calls, meetings, and conferences as requested/needed</i> - <i>JIRs will release communiqués and letters on emerging, pertinent, and changing policy, laws, and practice of interest to judges hearing CPS cases</i> - <i>JIRs will market scholarship and conference attendance opportunities</i> - <i>Publish JIR letters with CC drafting and research assistance</i> - <i>With CC assistance, distribute to CPS judge listserv, and post JIR letters on the CC website</i> - <i>JIRs will provide judicial technical assistance to Children’s Commission, as needed</i> - <i>JIRs will help recruit, retain, and advance judicial leaders</i> 	<p>The Jurist in Residence (JIR) position was created to foster judicial leadership and promote greater expertise among child protection judges. The JIR acts as a consultant, trainer, and speaker to provide expert and seasoned judicial advice on matters affecting courts and legal system handling of child welfare cases and issues. Additionally, informational letters and “blasts” concerning items of interests, such as training events, are routinely issued.</p> <p>Additionally, the JIR assists with the development of curriculum for the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference and moderate several sessions of the conference, reviews updates to the Child Protection Law Bench Book, and attends and participates in events on behalf of the CC, including Round Tables and Trial Skills Trainings.</p> <p>The JIR activities will remain much the same for FY2018, with additional emphasis on elevating judicial leaders with particular expertise and interests related to child and family well-being and improving the child welfare system.</p> <p><u>9/22/17 Update:</u></p> <p>Judge Dean Rucker continues to serve as JIR and regularly consults on amendments and additions to the CPS Judge’s Bench Book as well as other pressing or emergent issues brought to the CC’s attention by DFPS or other stakeholders. Judge Rucker provided extensive review and edits to the Commission’s 85th Legislative Update, as well as presented a legislative update through a State Bar of Texas webcast on July 24, 2017. Judge Rucker also chairs the Legal Representation Committee, the Texas Board of Legal Specialization Advisory Committee, the Supreme Court HB7 Task Force on Appellate Rules, and the DFPS Pleading Practice Workgroup.</p> <p><u>JIR Letters and Announcements issued between May 2017 and September 2017</u></p>

- 9/8/17 Undocumented Caregivers in Texas
- 9/1/17 Scholarships for the 2017 Texas CASA Conference, New Laws Effective September 1, 2017, 2017 Legislative Update Now Available in the TexasBar CLE Online Classroom
- 8/31/17 Message from the Department of Family and Protective Services About Hurricane Harvey
- 8/18/17 Education Considerations for the 2017-2018 School Year
- 8/4/17 Announcement of Trial Skills Webcast
- 8/2/17 2017 Child Welfare Judges Conference Registration Opens
- 7/26/17 Family Justice Initiative Survey
- 7/21/17 2017 Child Protection Legislative Update from 85th Texas Legislative Session
- 7/14/17 Announcement of Webcast: Child Protection Legislative Update from 85th Texas Legislative Session, July 24th 1:00-3:00 p.m.
- 6/23/17 Texas Higher Education Information and Resource Guide for Foster Care Liaisons
- 6/16/17 Texas Board of Legal Specialization (TBLS) Child Welfare Law Certification Exam
- 6/2/17 Save the Date: 2017 Child Welfare Judges Conference
- 5/26/17: Deadline Extended: Scholarship Opportunity for Child Abuse and Neglect Conference 1-Day Track and Video Replays

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5/12/17: Best Practices for Residential Interventions for Youth and their Families: Resource Guide for Judges and Legal Partners with Involvement in the Children's Dependency Court System
<p>II.C. Objective: Ensure availability of high-quality attorney resources such as Attorney Resource Letters, an attorney webpage on the CC website, and other relevant events to improve court-related outcomes for children and parents through legal representation that is trained and informed.</p>	
<p><i>II.C.1. Strategy: Develop and distribute Attorney Resource Letters (ARLs) that communicate or announce changes in law, policy or practice and inform attorneys of training and other events.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Develop and maintain a distribution list of any / all attorneys known to the CC to work on child protection dockets throughout the State of Texas</i> - <i>Publish communiqués and letters on emerging, pertinent, and changing policy, laws, and practice of interest to attorneys handling CPS cases</i> - <i>Post ALRs on the CC website</i> - <i>Provide shorter communications (Attorney Blasts) with attorneys regarding specific training opportunities and other matters of interest</i> 	<p>In May 2016, the CC created a distribution list of more than 3,000 attorneys to inform legal practitioners of training and scholarship opportunities and to relay information about issues related to child welfare.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>The following ARLs were distributed between May 2017 and September 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9/8/17 Undocumented Caregivers in Texas - 9/1/17 Scholarships for the 2017 Texas CASA Conference, New Laws Effective September 1, 2017, 2017 Legislative Update Now Available in the TexasBar CLE Online Classroom - 8/18/17 Education Considerations for the 2017-2018 School Year - 8/4/17 Announcement of Trial Skills Webcast - 8/2/17 2017 Child Welfare Judges Conference Registration Opens - 7/26/17 Family Justice Initiative Survey

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7/21/17 2017 Child Protection Legislative Update from 85th Texas Legislative Session - 7/14/17 Announcement of Webcast: Child Protection Legislative Update from 85th Texas Legislative Session, July 24th 1:00-3:00 p.m. - 6/23/17 Texas Higher Education Information and Resource Guide for Foster Care Liaisons - 6/16/17 Texas Board of Legal Specialization (TBLS) Child Welfare Law Certification Exam - 5/26/17: Deadline Extended: Scholarship Opportunity for Child Abuse and Neglect Conference 1-Day Track and Video Replays - 5/12/17: Best Practices for Residential Interventions for Youth and their Families: A Resource Guide for Judges and Legal Partners with Involvement in the Children's Dependency Court System
<p><i>II.C.2. Strategy: Create and maintain an Attorney Resource webpage.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create an Attorney Resource page and link from CC homepage - Post relevant links, pages, reports, resources on the page - Maintain and update the page periodically 	<p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>A webpage has been created to feature the Attorney Resource Letters and timely announcements. To view this webpage, link here:</p> <p>http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/training/attorney-education/attorney-resource-letter.aspx</p>
<p><i>II.C.3. Strategy: Assist child welfare and legal stakeholders with implementation of laws related to sealing juvenile records.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>

<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner with local and state organizations who have expertise in sealing juvenile records - Assess how the Children’s Commission can increase awareness among judges, attorneys, and child welfare stakeholders about the new sealing law effective September 1, 2017 - Create training, resources, and tools for attorneys, judges, stakeholders, and youth as needed - Support local record sealing projects 	<p>Youth involved in the juvenile justice system often rehabilitate, but the juvenile criminal record, if not sealed or restricted, can become a major barrier to obtaining financial aid, housing, public benefits, higher educational, and licensing opportunities, and employment. During the 85th Legislative Session, a comprehensive bill was passed to automatically seal records of juveniles for misdemeanors under certain circumstances.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission held a conference call with Judge Michael Schneider and Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid (TRLA) on September 13, 2017, to discuss how the CC can learn from the juvenile sealing project underway in Harris County under Judge Schneider’s direction and benefit from lessons learned through the TRLA statewide sealing efforts.</p>
<p>II.D. Objective: Maintain and enhance the Children’s Commission website to provide an easily accessible, user-friendly resources for the judiciary, attorneys and the child welfare community to obtain information and best practices in their interactions with children and families.</p>	
<p>II.D.1. Strategy: Maintain and enhance usability and function of the Children’s Commission website.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On a regular basis, update the website with recent, up-to-date, and pertinent content and work with OCA for website support - Provide links and resources related to each of the projects outlined in the Strategic Plan - Provide a portal for website visitors to submit inquiries or sign up for CC mailing lists and notification features - Use technology, such as Twitter, to communicate important news announcements and spread awareness about key events - Provide CIP grant application information and updated applications and forms 	<p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>In May 2017, the CC completed a thorough review and launched an updated and restructured website. This change includes updating the site to the most recent online platform, and becoming mobile-user friendly.</p> <p>The refreshed layout includes the addition of two focus areas to direct the CC’s target audience to areas of interest: “For Judges” and “For Attorneys”. The redesign includes additional features found on the home page to highlight timely CC announcements such as JIR and ARL letters, and other items that are currently in focus.</p>
<p>II.E. Objective: Support county, state, and national child welfare leaders and organizations to enhance the opportunity to gain knowledge and competency and share experience and expertise with and throughout Texas.</p>	

<p>II.E.1. Strategy: Provide assistance to local jurisdictions, DFPS, and other state and national partners.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Secure speakers and/or provide funds for meeting support and facilitation</i> - <i>Make presentations at training events, as requested</i> - <i>Evaluate the effectiveness of the assistance</i> 	<p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>CC Staff has made several presentations to various groups in FY2017, including:</p> <p>Foster Youth Transition Centers Partner Conference - March 9, 2017</p> <p>Education Reach for Texans Convening - June 12, 2017</p> <p>P-16 Statewide Professional Development Conference - June 29, 2017</p> <p>TCASE Interactive - July 12, 2017</p> <p>Texas Network of Youth Services – June 29, 2017</p>
<p>II.F. Objective: Support the use of best practices in court case management.</p>	
<p>II.F.1. Strategy: Evaluate the quality, impact and usability of the Office of Court (OCA) Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Collaborate with OCA on the management, programming, and testing services for CPCMS</i> - <i>Monitor bug fixes or enhancements required based on input from CPCMS users</i> - <i>Participate in the CPCMS Advisory Group to determine the nature and priority of CPCMS enhances and bug fixes</i> - <i>Monitor equipment and software purchases required for proper and efficient operation and maintenance</i> 	<p>CPCMS is a case management system that is unique to Child Protection Courts. It has been in use since 2009. OCA provides project management, programming, and testing services for CPCMS. OCA staffs a CPCMS Advisory Council of CPC judges, OCA staff and Children’s Commission staff to identify and discuss various enhancements and issues.</p> <p>CPCMS is in its eighth year of service and is currently in maintenance mode. User-generated bug reporting has significantly decreased. . OCA continually works on the architecture to streamline how documents are stored so that document storage can be accomplished outside the CPCMS database. An upgrade to CPCMS was deployed in May 2016. CPCMS now uses the State Bar of Texas attorney database to identifying each attorney by his/her bar number and the name associated with that bar number on the SBOT website. Implementation of this upgrade identified and corrected</p>

	<p>approximately 2,600 duplicate attorneys in the CPCMS database. OCA has modified CPCMS to use the SBOT attorney data to prevent any duplicate entries from occurring in the future.</p> <p>Another feature of CPCMS is data collection, which may be useful in monitoring outcome measures which in turn provide judges with meaningful feedback regarding court practices that affect safety, permanency, and well-being.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>OCA continues to maintain CPCMS by releasing software updates in response to user and system generated error reporting. OCA released 4 CPCMS upgrades in FY17: October 27, 2016, Version 6.4, Release 6, November 17, 2016, Version 6.4 Release 7, March 30, 2017, Version 6.4 Release 8, July 17, 2017, Version 6.4 Release 9. Plus a domain change to txcourts.gov</p> <p>On July 28, 2017, the CPCMS Advisory Group was joined by Dylan Moench to discuss and address questions about legislative changes that affect CPC courts and CPCMS. OCA is working on a version release to incorporate monitored return and how extensions will impact due dates.</p> <p>The next Advisory Group meeting has been scheduled for September 29, 2017.</p>
<p><i>II.F.2. Strategy: Explore feasibility of providing support for specialty courts such as family treatment, crossover youth, and permanency dockets.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborate with judges who handle specialty court dockets - Develop and provide resources and tools helpful to specialty court judges 	<p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>There is no activity to report at this time.</p>
<p><i>II.F.3. Strategy: Survey availability and functionality of dual status courts, including utilization of a practice model.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review information on the volume of cases and circumstances of dual status youth in Texas. 	<p>9/22/17 Update:</p>

- *Provide training and resources to judges, attorneys and other child welfare stakeholders, as appropriate and upon request.*

On July 13, 2017, the Children's Commission staff observed the dual status docket in Travis County and met with staff from the Harris County Dual Status Initiative to assess statewide efforts to administer cases with children and youth involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

III. Goal: Facilitate and institutionalize collaboration, communication, and respect between the judicial system and child welfare partners.	
III.A. Objective: Promote and support institutional collaboration among high-level state, legislative, and judicial leaders, as well as among multi-disciplinary child welfare stakeholders so there is open and continuous dialogue between and among the various child welfare partners.	
<i>III.A.1. Strategy: Provide a forum and opportunity for child welfare stakeholders to collaborate, communicate, and share information about child welfare practices, policies, needs, and strengths.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Maintain a statewide multidisciplinary judicial commission</i> - <i>Hold regular CC meetings that will include child welfare stakeholders</i> - <i>Promote active participation by judges, the CC Executive Director, and DFPS in the federal review process</i> - <i>Ensure the visible and joint involvement of a Supreme Court of Texas Justice and the DFPS Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner of CPS, Deputy Assistant Commissioner of CPS and other state level executives</i> - <i>Maintain a collaborative council of child welfare advocates, stakeholders, and state agencies to promote collaboration in development and implementation of CIP initiatives</i> - <i>Conduct bi-weekly collaborative calls involving a variety of stakeholders and participants</i> - <i>Share information through CC website, judge and attorney distribution lists, and commission meetings and commission-sponsored events</i> 	<p>The CC will work to develop and achieve shared goals and activities detailed in the CC Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Current collaboration efforts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DFPS leadership has a standing position on the Children’s Commission. - At least one state-level DFPS staff member is on every CC committee. - Participation in a bi-weekly collaborative conference call with child-welfare stakeholders, including executive staff of DFPS, OCA, CASA, and other child welfare stakeholders. - DFPS and the CC regularly collaborate on the CFSP, APSR, CFSR, PIP and CIP-SP. - DFPS members have the opportunity to present at each CC meeting to provide information regarding DFPS initiatives and efforts. - The CC ED and CC Staff serve on the State PIP Team, the statewide Foster Care Redesign Public Private Partnership Committee, the Prevention Advisory Council and many other DFPS-sponsored workgroups and subcommittees. - Joint Court/DFPS attendance at the CIP Annual Conferences. - DFPS leadership attends the annual child welfare judicial conference. <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>The CC continues to hold bi-weekly calls with stakeholders, and continues to conduct regular subcommittee and workgroup meetings to help advance CC strategies.</p>

	<p>The E.D. and A.D. have continued to confer with DFPS and the Administration of Children and Families to discuss the results of the 2016 Child and Family Services Review and resulting Program Improvement Plan.</p> <p>The PIP will include a joint project (described further in Section V.A.1) in its PIP. Also, the CC will include questions on its Child Welfare Judges Conference pre-conference survey related to barriers to relative placements and pleading practices of the Department. These responses also will be included in the State PIP. The PIP will also include details regarding expansion of the online notice and engagement service for CPC courts and video conferencing services for children and families.</p>
<p>III.B. Engage in policy and procedural improvements that advance child welfare system functionality, promote effective and equitable services, and ensure justice for all parties.</p>	
<p>III.B.1. Strategy: conduct the following activities and perform CQI evaluations, as appropriate</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Serve as facilitator and convener of substantive discussions related to child welfare matters, and produce related reports with recommended changes to judicial, attorney, child welfare, and advocate practice, as well as state policy and statute</i> - <i>Monitor, evaluate, and consult on proposed legislation for impact to the judiciary and the child welfare system, and provide research and testimony to the Texas Legislature, as requested</i> - <i>Confer regularly with the Department of Family and Protective Services, federal Administration of Children and Families officials, other CIPs, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, National Center for State Courts, National Association of Counsel for Children, National Conference of State Legislatures, and American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law on issues affecting child welfare policy and practice in Texas and nationally</i> - <i>Speak and present publicly in a variety of settings to audiences including congressional staff, national organizations, private foundations, state leadership, state legislators and staff, attorneys and advocates, and all levels of the Texas Judiciary, including the Supreme Court of Texas</i> 	<p>Throughout the fiscal year, the CC serves as facilitator and convener of Round Table discussions, CIP committee and subcommittee meetings, and conference calls related to the short and long term projects in the strategic plan, as described in this report.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update</p> <p>In 2017, the CC monitored and evaluated legislation filed for impact to the judicial administration of child protection cases, and provided testimony and resources papers to the Legislature upon request. The CC staff published an 85th Legislative Session Child Protection Update on July 21, 2017, and produced a live legislative update through the State Bar of Texas on 7/24/17. The webcast is described in further detail below.</p> <p>At all times, the CC collaborates with the welfare agency as well as national and state judicial and advocacy organizations.</p>

IV. Goal: Promote high quality court proceedings that safeguard due process, child and family involvement, and effective legal representation of parties.	
IV.A. Objective: Improve legal representation so that parents, children, and the State of Texas experience high-quality court hearings.	
<i>IV.A.1 Strategy: Work locally and nationally to improve all aspects of legal representation for parties.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Participate with Casey Family Program, ABA, and other CIPs to reform Texas legal representation system</i> - <i>Maintain a Legal Representation Committee and relevant, pertinent subcommittees, as appropriate</i> 	<p>The CC serves on the advisory committee of the Family Justice Initiative, which is a national group of key legal experts focused on improving legal representation nationwide. The goals of the FJI is to positively impact permanency through improved representation, to build consensus on how to define permanence, removal avoidance, reunification, and strengthening families, and to identify what professionals in the legal system do that impacts permanency and strengthening families.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>Three workgroups have been formed: Research and Data, Quality Representation, and Communications. Texas will serve on the Research and Data workgroup and has also volunteered to work on the State Focus Workgroup, when that workgroup launches.</p> <p>CC staff met with the ABA and other states participating in the project on April 27, 2017 at the ABA Parent/Child Attorney conference and attended a national conference call on May 10, 2017. CC Staff attended a Research and Data workgroup call on June 6, 2017. The group discussed as its goal, building an evidence-based model of legal representation for children and parents in child welfare proceedings, and the short, medium, and long-term steps necessary to achieve that goal.</p> <p>In furtherance of those goals the CC sent out both an ARL and a JIR on July 26, 2017 sharing the Foster Justice Initiative’s surveys for parent’s and children’s attorneys and has worked with the workgroup on the design of the CC’s pending Legal Representation Study surveys..</p>

<p><i>IV.A.2 Strategy: Work through the Legal Representation Committee and Training Committee to identify training needs, develop and host training events, and support efforts to ensure high quality legal representation for parties.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Please see activities under Section III.A for training activities</i> - <i>Host meetings and conference calls related to legal representation, due process, local community relationships, financial impact of legal representation, and legislative and policy considerations</i> - <i>Target subjects and opportunities for additional training focused on improving legal representation</i> - <i>Support the efforts of the TBLS Advisory Committee as described in IV.C.1</i> 	<p>The CC will maintain a Legal Representation Committee for FY2018</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>The CC's Legal Representation Study subcommittee held its first meeting on July 21, 2017. The subcommittee discussed the purpose, goals, and timeline of the study. Prior to the meeting, members received drafts of 11 separate survey tools created by Children's Commission staff to give members time to prepare proposed edits and additions. During the meeting, the subcommittee debated, edited, and refined surveys for court-appointed attorneys, attorneys for the Department, judges, parents, foster parents, relatives, children, CASA volunteers, CPS caseworkers, and court administrators. Additional surveys were proposed for mediators and CASA supervisors. Members set a deadline of August 4, 2017 for any further subcommittee input regarding the surveys and agreed to submit the surveys to a test audience for each survey before finalization.</p> <p>The subcommittee also discussed a plan for implementation of the surveys and drafting of interview and focus group questions. The next meeting of the Subcommittee will be October 27, 2017.</p> <p>The LRC also held a full meeting on August 25, 2017 to discuss updates on attorney training and attorney resource letters, receive a report from the DFPS Representation Subcommittee, review a CC presentation on the 2017 ABA and NACC conferences, and receive an update regarding the Texas Board of Legal Representation and the new LRS study.</p> <p>Projects generated by the LRC meeting included: an Attorney Resource Letter updating attorneys for children on their new obligations to assist clients with identification documents; a Jurist in Residence letter and CLE webinar for judges regarding how to engage children at court; attorney training on how to practice trauma informed advocacy when representing children or parents who have been the victims of trauma;</p>

	<p>a JIR and ARL regarding how to place children with a safe parent across national borders; and using data from the Family Helpline to train DFPS investigators and attorneys on the fault out from improperly closed cases.</p> <p>The next full LRC meeting will be on October 19th, 2017.</p>
<p>IV.B. Objective: Develop, adopt and promote standards of practice for attorneys representing parties in child protection cases so that attorneys are encouraged to gain a higher level of expertise and provide high-quality legal representation.</p>	
<p><i>IV.B.1. Strategy: Support establishment of a State Bar of Texas Child Protection Law Section.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Serve on the Child Protection Law Section Council</i> - <i>Partner with the State Bar of Texas to provide support for the Section</i> - <i>Collaborate with Section leadership and members to promote the new Section, create educational materials, promote membership in the section, and fund scholarships and CLE efforts, as appropriate</i> 	<p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>A Committee to Develop a Child Protection Law Section was formed to complete the application process for establishing a Child Protection Section of the State Bar. The Committee has received over 400 signatures of attorneys willing to join the proposed section and has met twice since August to complete the application, draft by-laws for the section, and propose officers and council members. Proposed officers will be: Justice Debra Lehrmann, Chair; Tiffany Crouch Bartlett, Chair-elect; Sandra Hachem, Secretary; and Mark Briggs, Treasurer. The application for the section is due October 1, 2017 and the next meeting of the Committee is September 12, 2017.</p>
<p>IV.C. Objective: Establish a specialization through the Texas Board of Legal Specialization so that attorneys who wish to achieve a higher level of understanding and expertise can provide higher caliber of legal representation.</p>	
<p><i>IV.C.1. Strategy: Staff and support a Texas Board of Legal Specialization Advisory Committee.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Staff and support TBLS Advisory Committee meetings and activities</i> - <i>Draft a TBLS exam for child welfare specialization, if requested</i> - <i>Work with TBLS Staff to offer the board specialization exam, if appropriate</i> - <i>Work with TBLS Staff to administer exam, if appropriate</i> 	<p>On February 14, 2017 the Texas Supreme Court officially recognized Child Welfare Law as the 20th area of certified legal specialization and the process of writing the exam and administering the applications has now begun.</p>

	<p>TBLS has approved the membership for both the Child Welfare Law Advisory Commission and the Child Welfare Law Exam Commission. Judge Dean Rucker is the chair of the Advisory Commission which will consider applications to become board certified in child welfare law and will have authority to review and suggest changes in standards going forward. Dylan Moench was recently named the chair of the Exam Commission which is writing and will also grade the exam.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>The Exam Commission held its first meeting March 27, 2017. At the meeting the commission discussed finalizing the exam specifications, creating exam questions that meet TBLS standards, and developing a strategy for ensuring that the exam questions match the exam specifications. The Exam Commission held its second meeting August 9, 2017 to finalize a strategy for exam creation, agree on standards for question design, and assign responsibilities for exam writing. The Exam Commission will hold its third meeting October 2, 2017 to review and finalize the exam questions before turning in final drafts to TBLS on October 16, 2017.</p>
<p>IV.D. Objective: Create, distribute, maintain, support, and evaluate resources for parents involved in CPS cases so that parents can gain more equal footing and support for their rights once they become involved with CPS.</p>	
<p>IV.D.1. Strategy: Support Family Helpline and Parent Resource Guide.</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain and update the Parent Resource Guide on the CC website and online (LawBox, Reprints) - Support and evaluate the Family Helpline - Continue to staff a committee focused on improving Parent Representation in CPS cases 	<p>The Parent Resource Guide was completed in May 2015 and is accessible in print and online on the CC website as well as many on other CC partner and advocate websites, in English and Spanish.</p> <p>In FY2017, the CC partnered with Access to Justice and the Children’s Justice Act to fund the Texas Legal Services Corporation to establish the Family Helpline, which provides easy, statewide access for parents and family members to basic information, education, and resources addressing parental rights as they relate to CPS Investigations, the provision of Family Based Services, Parental Child Safety Placements, Chapter 34 non-parent agreements, termination of parental rights, custody, access, visitation, service plans, the court’s role in conducting hearings and</p>

	<p>oversight, right to legal counsel, non-offending parents, minor parents, incarcerated parents, survivors of family violence, intergenerational issues, and other variations.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update</p> <p>Following its opening in early 2017, the Family Helpline has steadily increased its volume and as of June 30, the Family Helpline had received 440 unique callers with issues affecting 816 children and 1,380 family members, relatives, and fictive kin. The Children’s Commission has received an application from the Helpline seeking funding to hire an additional full-time attorney in fiscal year 2018. The Children’s Commission will consider the application at its 9/22/17 meeting, and if approved, the hiring process for this position will begin this fall.</p> <p>The Parent Resource Group will hold its second meeting in November 2017 to discuss updates on projects discussed in April, along with new projects such as updating the Parent Resource Guide after the 85th Legislative Session, and possible collaboration on certain projects with a State Bar of Texas Child Welfare Law Section if that Section is successfully established in 2018.</p>
<p>IV.E. Objective: Improve and expand engagement of families and caregivers in court hearings so that court hearings are higher quality and more meaningful for the families and children involved.</p>	
<p><i>IV.E.1. Strategy: Promote and improve availability and use of the OCA Notice and Engagement tool.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Market OCA web tool that allows establishing a user ID, searching for a child / case, and setting timely email alerts</i> - <i>Periodically re-issue announcement to various audiences</i> - <i>Develop a survey tool to assess the usefulness, effectiveness and accuracy of the system</i> - <i>Monitor the number of users and hearings included in alerts sent by the system</i> 	<p>The project involves using non-confidential case data to provide email notice to users about upcoming hearings. All parties involved in CP cases continue to struggle with securing consistent and timely notice of scheduled hearings from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). This issue includes the foster placements and DFPS service provider facilities where the children/youth are in placement and results in many parties not being able to attend scheduled court hearings. OCA will monitor the system login and search information, Notices will be monitored to evaluate whether the correct hearing data is populating according to search criteria, and reports/data will be produced and provided to the CC.</p>

9/22/2017 Update:

The marketing effort conducted in December has had a significant impact on the number of registered users. In FY 2017, 441 additional users registered bringing the total to 718. The table below identifies the quantity and type of users.

Person Type	New Users for FY17	Total Users
Father	3	3
Mother	3	4
Adoptive Parent	4	9
CASA Volunteer	41	51
Case Worker	106	210
Foster Parent	122	163
Guardian	1	6
Guardian Ad Litem	13	24
Intervenor	1	1
Non-relative Custodian	1	1
Possessory Conservator	1	2
Relative	4	6
Sole Managing Conservator	0	2
Symbolic Relative	1	2
Volunteer Advocate	4	15
Attorney	136	219
Total Users	441	718

Continuing the effort to promote an effective and efficient means of receiving hearing notification, a survey to assess the usefulness, effectiveness, and accuracy of the

	<p>system was sent on July 18, 2017. The survey consisted of seven questions to gauge user satisfaction, one additional feature question, and one open ended comment/suggestion section.</p> <p>A total of 267 users responded to the survey with 57% being very or extremely satisfied with the system. Users were also polled on whether it would be beneficial to receive hearing notification via text message. 63% of respondents identified that receiving notifications via text message would be beneficial. This feature will be added in FY18. The most frequent comment/suggestion given in the survey was to expand the use of the tool to more counties and courts. Currently the hearing notification tool is limited to those courts using CPCMS. In FY18, OCA will begin exploring options and developing a process intended to communicate with other case management software to communicate hearing dates from courts other than those using CPCMS.</p>
<p>IV.F. Objective: Improve and expand engagement of youth in court hearings so that youth feel more involved and assured that their voice is heard and important to the decisions being made about their lives.</p>	
<p><i>IV.F.1. Strategy: Elevate the importance of youth voice, youth presence and youth input in the outcome of their case.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Emphasize the importance of youth voice and youth presence in court</i> - <i>Provide training about the importance of youth voice</i> - <i>Include foster youth and former foster youth as part of judicial training events</i> - <i>Promote bench cards and other resources and tools that judges can use to appropriately involve youth in court hearings and permanency planning</i> 	<p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission will work with Texas CASA and Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) In FY2017 on efforts to expand involvement of youth and youth voice is court proceedings as well as practice and policy matters. Please see Texas CASA Grant (Section I.F.2).</p>
<p><i>IV.F.2. Strategy: Promote and improve the availability and use of the Video Conferencing (VC) hosted and maintained by the Office of Court Administration (OCA).</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p>	<p>9/22/2017 Update:</p>

- Provide funding for OCA to host and support the hardware and software required to facilitate VTC between courts and residential placements
- Work with OCA to refine and publish the procedures and protocol between OCA, DFPS, Courts, and other users
- Monitor OCA's efforts to maintain an updated set of instructions for participation and provide to end-users, a list of Residential Treatment Centers, courts, and other facilities with internet infrastructure and capability
- Monitor OCA hearing logs that include the date, time, participating court, type of hearing, participating placement, length of hearing, any problems with the transmission quality or technological barriers
- Work with OCA and others to expand capability and feasibility for use beyond court hearing

OCA has completed the Collaborative Video Conferencing web-link that serves as a resource page for video conferencing. The web page includes an up-to-date list of all facilities and participating courts with video conferencing capabilities including their location and contact telephone number. The Children's Commission will be circulating a Jurist in Residence and Attorney Resource communication on September 22, 2017, highlighting the Collaborative Video Conferencing web-link.

May 3, 2017: OCA and Children's Commission staff attended the Texas CASA Executive Director & Program Director Retreat and presented on the video conferencing system availability. Following the presentation, an area was designated for Program Directors to learn more about and register to use the video conferencing system. Eight CASA offices registered to use the system at the meeting. OCA and Children's Commission staff will be available to demonstrate the system and register users at the Texas CASA Annual Conference on October 19.

Fiscal Year 2017	TOTALS
Video Hearings Conducted	191
Children/Youth Participation	149
Courts Participating	20
Placement Facilities Participating	57
Placement Facilities Video Enabled	94
Courts Video Enabled	44
CASA Offices Video Enabled	19
CASA Offices Using Video	4

V. Goal: Collect and analyze court and child welfare-related data to develop solutions to improve outcomes, quality, and sustainability of Children’s Commission strategies.	
V.A. Objective: Use agency administrative data to improve permanency outcomes for children who achieve permanency.	
V.A.1. Strategy: Examine agency data to improve outcomes for kids who achieve permanency to ensure permanency in less than 12 months.	Progress Report
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TX CIP will make data request to child welfare agency requesting list of children discharged within 12 – 18 months of removal to reunification, relative placement or guardianship in FY2016. Additional data will be requested to examine when the child was placed in his/her last placement prior to exiting the system, and whether a monitored return was used. - CIP will also request data on the number of placements for each child in who exited foster care within 12 – 18 months of removal in FY2016 - TX CIP will review and analyze data with staff, child welfare agency partners, and other relevant stakeholders. - TX CIP will develop a survey to send to stakeholders to share information about the project, solicit feedback on root causes of the delays in permanency, and request possible solutions or practices that could counter the delays. - TX CIP will disseminate findings from the data analysis and survey and solicit feedback through publications, training opportunities, and commission meetings. - TX CIP will host 3-5 roundtables, including an all-site kick off (potentially), to review data and support development of local plans to improve timeliness of permanency. - TX CIP will develop strategies to support local teams in monitoring fidelity to their plans and ensure they are modifying and adjusting as they learn more about what is working. 	<p>Starting in FY2017, CIP programs were instructed to become familiar and make use of the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data. All CIPs and Child Welfare agencies were required to jointly design and implement one project using available child welfare data that focuses on improving a specific safety, permanency or well-being outcome for children and families. Texas CIP and DFPS decided on the CFSR Outcome related to permanency within 12 months of entry into foster care, otherwise known as the “percent of children achieving permanency within 12 months.”</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>Children’s Commission staff attended the annual CIP meeting in Denver in May 2017, and developed an action plan which was shared with DFPS. The Department and the Children’s Commission have agreed to meet monthly in FY2018 to determine what data is available and appropriate for the project, conduct an analysis, discuss barriers and practice improvements, develop suggestions and recommendations, as well as a plan for how to share the information and support jurisdictions who wish to implement the recommendations.</p>
V.B. Objective: Engage in CFSP/APSRR/CFSR/CIP partnership with DFPS so that CIP and DFPS can better understand and improve the content, processes and uses of the various reports.	
V.B.1. Strategy: CIP/CFSP/CFSR workgroup	Progress Report

<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Meet or hold conference call at least once per quarter</i>- <i>Review and provide input, as appropriate, in the development of the CFSP, APSR, CFSR, PIP, CIP Strategic Plan</i>	<p>A Workgroup comprised of CIP staff and child welfare agency staff has been created to confer, evaluate, and inform the development and execution of the Department's Child and Family State Plan, Annual Progress and Services report, Child and Family Services Review, Program Improvement Plan, and Court Improvement Program's Strategic Plan.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>The E.D. and A.D. have continued to confer with DFPS and the Administration of Children and Families to discuss the results of the 2016 Child and Family Services Review and resulting Program Improvement Plan.</p> <p>The CC will include questions on its Child Welfare Judges Conference pre-conference survey related to barriers to relative placements and pleading practices of the Department. These responses will be included in the State PIP. The PIP will also include details regarding expansion of the online notice and engagement service for CPC courts and video conferencing services for children and families.</p>
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VI. Goal: Develop, support and fund high-quality, appropriate training for judges, attorneys, and child welfare partners.	
VI.A. Objective: Provide high-quality and easily accessible training resources for judges and attorneys to ensure that attorneys and judges are educated and knowledgeable in order to employ best practices in providing legal representation and in conducting hearings.	
VI.A.1. Strategy: <i>Plan, fund, conduct, and evaluate at least one judicial conference.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner with TCJ to design curriculum and agenda for conferences - Determine budget, number of attendees - Conduct periodic planning calls, including creation of workgroup to plan agenda - Determine attendee criteria - Coordinate with OCA about inclusion of Child Protection Court staff, space requirements, and agenda development. - Identify topics and speakers - Develop program agenda - Approve attendee list to ensure judges with the greatest need and interest are able to attend - Survey participants for increases in knowledge and other feedback - Evaluate conference planning process, the actual event, and participant feedback - Use feedback into improve future conference planning, as appropriate 	<p>The Children’s Commission collaborates with Texas Center for the Judiciary to design specialized judicial education and training opportunities for active, retired and former Texas appellate, district and county court at law judges, as well as associate judges and court personnel through its grant with the TCJ. Each year TCJ plans at least one annual child welfare judicial conference.</p> <p>Also, the Children’s Commission will sponsor a half-day track at the annual Family Justice Conference.</p> <p>In addition, for FY2018, the Children’s Commission and TCJ will confer on a possible Education and/or Trauma Summit for the summer of 2018.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>CC Staff continues to meet monthly with TCJ to plan the 11th annual Child Welfare Judges Conference which will be held on November 13-15, 2017, at Hyatt Lost Pines in Bastrop. Topics for 2017 include a keynote from Family Finding founder Kevin Campbell as well as presentations on the following topics: Interventions and Pro Se Litigants; ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act)/Foster Care and Education outcome data; 85th Legislative Update; Community Based Care and Senate Bill 11; Case Law Update; DFPS Data Presentation and Breakout Sessions; Judge-Ordered and Medically Fragile Placements; Parent Resources, Faith-Based Initiatives; SIJS; Constitutional Rights of Children; Domestic Child Sex Trafficking; Attorney Accountability; Local Innovations; and a Foster Parent Panel.</p>

<p>VI.A.2. Strategy: Provide judicial scholarships to state and national conferences and training events.</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine budget, number of attendees - Determine attendee criteria - Approve attendee list to ensure judges with the greatest need and interest are able to attend - Survey participants for increases in knowledge and other feedback - Evaluate scholarship planning process, and participant feedback - Incorporate feedback into subsequent year's planning, as appropriate 	<p>The CC may provide scholarships to the annual NCJFCJ conference in FY2018.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>The CC reimbursed a handful of judges who attended the NCJFCJ conference in Washington DC but did not formally sponsor a scholarship initiative.</p>
<p>VI.A.3. Strategy: Partner with organizations or independently produce attorney training content and provide scholarships and financial support to attorneys to attend national and state conferences and training events.</p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>State Bar of Texas (SBOT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with SBOT to develop one day of MCLE content on CPS-related topics for live taping and subsequent archiving in the online CPS classroom - Identify dates, content, speakers for the one-day event - Publicize CLE on CC website and through other methods such as JIR and Attorney Blasts, at Commission meetings, and other events - Provide scholarships based on financial need to attorneys in order to access the SBOT online classroom <p>ABA/Advanced Family Law/NACC and Misc. Attorney Scholarships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine which conference scholarships will be awarded in FY2017, criteria for award, and amount of scholarship - Market scholarship and conference attendance opportunities through the Attorney Blast / Resource Letter system - Determine budget, number of attendees - Determine attendee criteria - Approve attendee list to ensure attorneys with the greatest need and interest attend 	<p>In partnership with the State Bar, the CC makes several online courses available to court-appointed attorneys and state and DFPS attorneys, including the one-day Child Abuse and Neglect track from its annual Advanced Family Law conference. Also, once each year the CC works with SBOT to webcast a day-long, 6 MCLE hours' worth of training for attorneys who represent children, parents, and the state of Texas in CPS proceedings. The SBOT's online classroom of CPS-related webinars is available at a reduced rate to attorneys representing children and parents, and there are scholarships available through the Commission and through the Bar for attorneys who represent the State of Texas and need financial assistance to access this online training.</p> <p>The CC also administers three different attorney scholarship opportunities: (1) The State Bar of Texas (SBOT) Child Abuse and Neglect 1-Day Workshop; (2) The bi-annual ABA Parent Attorney Conference and Children and the Law Conference held in Washington D.C.; and (3) the NACC Annual Conference.</p> <p>For all scholarships, the CC determines scholarship criteria and deploys an application process that includes pre- and post-conference evaluations to identify or confirm the knowledge gained, new practices attendees plan to implement and/or a current</p>

- *Create application process, evaluate each scholarship event and process and makes changes, as appropriate*
- *Award scholarships pursuant to defined process, and collect evaluation data from attendees for increases in knowledge and other feedback*
- *Amend scholarship process, as necessary, and make recommendations regarding the 2017 funding*

practice they plan to change. The surveys also inquire about additional topics of interest to help inform planning for future conferences.

9/22/17 Update:

Regarding webcasts: CC Staff partnered with SBOT and with speakers to plan and produce two live, statewide webcasts this summer with a total of 18 speakers to produce and tape 7.5 total hours of MCLE content at the State Bar studio.

On July 24th, 2017, the CC's E.D. Tina Amberboy, JIR Judge Dean Rucker, and CC Staff Attorney Dylan Moench presented a 1.5 hour MCLE entitled "Child Protection Update: 85th Legislative Session." A total of 395 viewers tuned in to the live webcast from across the state. The SBOT has archived this broadcast and it is now available for online viewing in the CPS Practice Area of the TexasBar CLE Online Classroom. Additionally, the three speakers drafted responses to questions which were submitted by the viewers during the live taping, and these were distributed to the attorneys and judges who submitted the queries, as well as posted as additional materials to the webinar itself. CC Staff worked with the SBOT to provide group discounts to CASAs and DFPS Regional Attorneys, among others, as well as discounts to court-appointed attorneys. Scholarships were available through the SBOT for prosecutors, and judges viewed the webcast for free per the SBOT's policy.

Additionally, on October 3, 2017, members of the CC's Trial Skills Faculty along with Justice Michael Massengale, Chair of the CC's Training Committee, will present six hours of MCLE total in two, three-hour webcasts on basic and advanced trial preparation and trial skills in CPS cases for all practitioners on the CPS docket. The sessions are titled "Preparing Your CPS Case for Trial: Position Yourself to Win" and "Basic and Advanced Trial Skills in CPS Litigation: Persuade and Prevail." Publicity for these webcasts will be coordinated across the SBOT and the CC and will be sent via JIR and ARL. Some or all of the content of these webcasts and archived webinars may be considered in some jurisdictions to satisfy the educational requirements for court-appointed attorneys under Texas Family Code Sections 107.004 and 107.0131. Following the live broadcast, the content of the webcasts will be archived and maintained on the Texas Bar CLE's Online Classroom in the CPS Practice Area and

	<p>will be available for viewing at a discount to court-appointed attorneys, with scholarships available to prosecutors through the CC or through the SBOT.</p> <p>Regarding scholarships: The Child Abuse and Neglect Track 1-Day CLE within the Annual Advanced Family Law Course live MCLE was presented on August 9, 2017 in San Antonio, Texas. Subsequent video replays will be held in Houston on Friday, September 22nd; Dallas on Friday, September 29th; and South Padre Island on Friday, October 13th, 2017. The CC awarded 119 scholarships overall to qualified attorneys from across the state to attend the live CLE or the video replays. CC Staff attended the live presentation. The CC requires pre- and post-event surveys of awardees to track gains in knowledge as part of the awards process and we will share the results of these following the final video replay in the fall.</p> <p>The NACC Annual Conference was held August 10-12, 2017 in New Orleans. Due to budget constraints, the CC did not offer general scholarships; however, a CC Staff member attended on behalf of the CC. The NACC's 2018 conference dates are August 22-24, 2018 in San Antonio, and the CC will reach out to the NACC to collaborate wherever possible on training Texas attorneys. The CC anticipates offering scholarships to this 2018 Conference to increase the number of Texas attorneys in attendance.</p> <p>The ABA biannual conferences for Parent Attorneys and Child Attorneys was held April 25-26 and April 27-28, respectively, in Tyson's Corner, VA. CC staff attended and the CC awarded scholarships to two attorneys who have served the CC in various capacities and who brought the conference content back to their jurisdictions. Due to budget constraints, the CC did not offer general scholarships for these conferences.</p>
<p><i>VI.A.4. Strategy: Reimburse exam and recertification fees for attorneys and judges who pass the NACC CWLS exam or qualify for recertification.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The CC will enter into a grant agreement with NACC to provide reimbursement</i> - <i>NACC will collect the \$300.00 application or \$350.00 examination fee from the applicant</i> 	<p>The CC offers reimbursement of either the CWLS Application Fee or the Certification Exam Fee for Texas attorneys and judges who successfully qualify for and pass the Child Welfare Specialist Exam. The scholarship includes the NACC Red Book Training to help applicants prepare for the exam, a copy of the Red Book to each applicant,</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NACC will administer the exam and report to the CC a list of Texas examinees who have passed the certification exam - CC will reimburse NACC funds on a first-come, first-serve basis to applicants that pass the exam through the end of the grant period - NACC will provide the names of the Texas attorneys and judges who are awarded certification or recertified and the total number of Texas attorneys and judges who applied to be certified during the calendar year - NACC will share any information or feedback it receives or solicits about the quality, subject matter, and process of giving the exam - NACC will also provide the passage rate of Texas applicants 	<p>offering and scoring the exam, and reimbursing successful applicants either the \$350.00 exam fee or the \$300 application fee.</p> <p>Additionally, assistance is available to Texas attorneys and judges who are seeking recertification of their CWLS every five years, which is reimbursed at \$180. As of June 2017, the program is open in 43 states and there are over 600 CWLS across the country. Texas is currently in the top five states for number of certified attorneys/judges.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>The FY17 CWLS grant application was completed in July 2017. Changes made to the grant language no longer limit scholarships to only the exam fee but provide the option of covering either the exam or application fee. This change was made to provide additional assistance to attorneys and judges to become specialized by allowing CC funds to be used in conjunction with other scholarship opportunities offered by NACC and other organizations.</p> <p>For FY2017, the Commission has provided funding to cover the exam fee (\$350) or the application fee (\$300) for up to 17 judges or attorneys who pass the certification exam before September 30, 2017. Additionally, the Commission will provide recertification fee reimbursements (\$180) for 7 attorneys or judges. An update will be provided at the next Commission meeting on the FY17 CWLS results.</p>
<p>VI.A.5. Strategy: Support regional and local training events throughout the state, as needed and upon request.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborate with local sponsor/convener on the conference agenda, audience, budget, marketing, and evaluation - Help ensure notice of the event to judges and attorneys - Ensure the sponsor applies for CLE, if appropriate - Analyze survey results from evaluations distributed by the organizers - Conduct CQI of the process and training content 	<p>There are no activities planned at this time. In the past, the CC has funded the Harris County Keeping Infants and Toddlers Safe Conference.</p>

<p>VI.A.6. Strategy: Help sponsor the DFPS Regional Attorney Training.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborate with DFPS on the budget, location and event evaluation - Provide notice to judges of the DFPS training event, if appropriate - Analyze any survey results obtained by the organizer - Conduct CQI of the supporting role and process used in deploying the training 	<p>With the CC's help, DFPS has been able to hold regular, annual regional attorney training events for its approximately 100 attorneys and staff who provide legal representation to the State of Texas.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update</p> <p>The next Regional Attorney Conference will be November 2-3, 2017 in San Marcos. CC Staff will attend. Topics will include: The 85th Legislative Session and Children's Rights Litigation; Using Data to Predict Abuse and Neglect; Addressing the Opioid Crisis; and Understanding Secondary Trauma.</p>
<p>VI.A.7. Strategy: Host two Trial Skills Training (TST) events each fiscal year.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convene two, 3-day TST events that include lectures, demonstrations, and practice sessions with live witnesses - Include hands-on practice of trial skills with the assistance of professional, live witnesses, videography, and coaching by trained faculty - Allow faculty review of individual attorney's filmed practice session for additional feedback - Evaluate each TST event - Edit and update TST curriculum and materials, as necessary 	<p>TST is an 18.50 MCLE hour, hands-on training designed to improve the litigation skills of child welfare law attorneys in order to raise the caliber of legal services to children and families in child protection cases. It includes a fictional CPS fact pattern, with a complete case file covering all Texas-specific statutory hearings building up to final trial. It provides parent, child, and state attorneys litigation exercises in the CPS context, including lectures and demonstrations from trained faculty comprised of senior attorneys and judges, followed by personal critiques and coaching. Caseworkers, Pediatricians, and a Parent Therapist serve as live witnesses.</p> <p>Materials are updated and new faculty is recruited and trained with each event. Extensive internal and external CQI is involved with each event. The Children's Justice Act covers the cost of participants who represent the state in CPS proceedings.</p>

	<p>To measure long-term effectiveness and impact, judicial evaluations of the TST graduates was developed.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>Due to budget concerns earlier in the year, the CC is planning to produce only one TST in 2018 instead of two trainings. A venue has been secured, and the training will take place in San Marcos again, from July 25-27, 2018. Instead of a second TST, the CC will be producing the two webcasts referred to above in order to reach a wider audience with practice tips on basic and advanced trial preparation and trial skills in CPS cases. This will have the added benefit of allowing our dedicated TST faculty volunteers to travel and be away from their own work a bit less in 2018.</p> <p>Also, the reimbursement request process for the cost of the prosecutors is underway with CC staff having submitted the required paperwork for TCJ to pass on to the CJA Task Force.</p>
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VII. Goal: Reduce racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system.	
VII.A. Objective: Support efforts to address disproportionality and disparities in the Texas child welfare system so that children of color do not experience disparate effects and outcomes that prolong their stay in foster care.	
<i>VII.A.1. Strategy: Educate judges and consider data in helping address disproportionality and disparities among children and families involved in child protection cases.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Develop and promote judicial and attorney training on how to apply training and tools designed to reduce institutional racism and bias</i> - <i>Partner with system stakeholders to include disproportionality in cross-systems trainings and in issue-specific workgroups, including one Poverty Simulation Workshop</i> - <i>Help connect judges and lawyers to data about their communities and to experts who can help develop disproportionality efforts at the local level</i> - <i>Liaise with the Texas Health and Human Services State Advisory Coalition for Addressing Disproportionality and Disparities</i> - <i>Staff and monitor the Judicial Workgroup Addressing Disproportionality Workgroup (JWD) including conducting quarterly strategy meetings with the JWD Co-Chairs</i> - <i>Include information about Disproportionality and bias in the CC CPS Judicial Bench Book</i> 	<p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>The JWD was instrumental in the success of the Supreme Court’s Beyond the Bench: Law, Justice and Communities Summit. A recording of the Summit and the Summit Toolkit can now be found on the Supreme Court’s website. Articles about the event and the Summit content are currently being published in the Texas Bar Journal, the newsletter of the NCSC, and submitted to others.</p> <p>The JWD will hold a call-in meeting in October and an in-person meeting in November 2017 at the Child Welfare Judicial Conference.</p>

VIII. Goal: Recognize and respect tribal sovereignty, protect the best interests of Native American children and promote stability of Native American children and families.	
VIII.A. Objective: Establish, strengthen and support meaningful and respectful relationships with tribal nations and promote awareness, education, and application of the Indian Child Welfare Act so that Indian children and families experience equitable and respectful treatment in keeping with their customs and beliefs.	
<i>VIII.A.1. Strategy: Continue the mutually respectful and ongoing relationships with Texas' three federally recognized tribes and other tribal nations living in Texas.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partner with system stakeholders to promote ongoing knowledge and understanding of the ICWA and its importance - Work with national ICWA and leading organizations on understanding and implementation of new Federal Rule and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Guidelines - Continue to support the role of Peacemaker or Tribal Judge as Children's Commission member - Staff and monitor the Tribal/State Workgroup meetings, strategies, timelines, and work product for FY2017, including monthly strategy meetings with tribal partners and DFPS - Partner with DFPS to support the biannual tribal/state collaborative meetings - Assist with any CIP grant application, as requested and appropriate - Further connections with Alabama-Coushatta, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, and Kickapoo tribes through the DFPS tribal/state meetings, Annual Conference of the Native American Section of the State Bar, and other networking opportunities - Continue to collaborate with the National Center for State Courts and the participants of the CIP ICWA Constituency Group 	<p>The Tribal/State Collaborative Workgroup meets monthly via conference call continue to develop new trainings to educate judges and attorneys about amendments to the Texas Family Code that requires judges to ask all parties present at each Adversary, Status, and Permanency hearing whether the child or the child's family has any Native American heritage and identify any Native American tribe with which the child may be associated.</p> <p>CC staff is currently participating in a national consortium of state leaders who work with tribes through their Court Improvement Programs.</p> <p>9/22/17 Update:</p> <p>In the past year, the Department of the Interior has released binding regulations and advisory guidelines to the Indian Child Welfare Act to ensure greater protection for Indian children as defined in ICWA. The Child Protection Bench Book is being amended to reflect these changes. The revised edition will be available in November.</p> <p>The Tribal/State Collaborative Workgroup continues to have monthly calls. One participant shared that the last weekend in September will bring many local celebrations of Texas' American Indian Heritage Day. In Dallas, the celebration will include representation from DFPS to recruit foster families.</p>

<p>IX. Oversee and administer the Court Improvement Program (CIP) funds to assess current and future needs of the courts, endeavor to increase funding available to the Children’s Commission and leverage funds with strategic and statewide partners.</p>	
<p>IX.A. Objective: Execute strategies of the Supreme Court Children’s Commission to help strengthen courts and the child welfare system to improve outcomes of safety, permanency and wellbeing.</p>	
<p><i>IX.A.1. Strategy: Engage in activities integral to the Children’s Commission’s functions and operations.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Develop annual strategic plan for Texas</i> - <i>Submit the required application to the Administration of Children and Families for CIP funds</i> - <i>Coordinate pass-through grants to sub-recipients</i> - <i>Oversee project management of short and long-term projects and initiatives</i> - <i>Publish reports, newsletters, judicial directives, policy and data analysis, and Commission website content</i> - <i>Plan and conduct quarterly Commission meetings with detailed progress reports, agendas, presentations, and budgets</i> - <i>Submit regular reports to the federal Administration of Children and Families and to the Supreme Court of Texas</i> 	<p>In FY2018, the CC will receive 2.0 in state appropriated funds for the 2018-2019 biennium. These funds will be combined with federal CIP funds, some of which will be passed through to grant recipients such as Texas CASA, Office of Court Administration, and Texas Center for the Judiciary, Texas Legal Services Corporation, as well as grants for training events to DFPS, State Bar of Texas, American Bar Association, National Association of Counsel for Children, and others. The CC will confer regularly with national organizations and other CIPs, and will submit annual reports to the ACF and to the Supreme Court of Texas. The CC will also hold Commission meetings every four months throughout each year of the five-year plan, and will continue its bi-weekly collaborative call with DFPS and other child welfare stakeholders. CC Staff will continue to serve on the Public Private Partnership, Prevention Advisory Council, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Texas Reach, and many other stakeholder workgroups and subcommittees formed under the leadership of its child welfare partners. The CC will publish an updated Report to Commission in advance of each Commission meeting and will continue to publish JIR and ARL letters, project reports, meeting minutes, meeting agendas, and follow up reports for all short-term and long-term projects. The CC will participate in regular calls with ACF and DFPS regarding the CFSP, APSR, CFSR and PIP and CIP Strategic Plan.</p>

INSERT - TAB 4

**Children's Commission
Financial Report**

FY 2017 BUDGET

Carry Forward from FY 2016	\$ 1,642,749
FY 2017 Distribution	\$ 1,758,419
Available for FY 2017	\$ 3,401,168

FY 2017 OBLIGATIONS

	Budget	Expenses To-date
Indirect	\$ 964,375	\$ 920,100
Staff Directed Projects	\$ 173,662	\$ 134,366
Grants	\$ 684,451	\$ 403,777
Scholarships	\$ 37,481	\$ 23,070
	\$ 1,859,969	\$ 1,481,313
Federal Fund Balance as of 9/14/17		\$ 1,919,855
FY 2017 Est. Outstanding Encumbrances		\$ 235,000
Estimated FY 2017 Carry Forward		\$ 1,684,855

PROJECTED FY 2018 BUDGET

Estimated FY 2017 Carry Forward	\$ 1,684,855
FY 2018 Projected Federal Distribution	\$ -
FY 2018 State Appropriation	\$ 1,000,000
Projected Amount Available for FY 2018	\$ 2,684,855

FY 2018 BUDGETED OBLIGATIONS

	Budget
Indirect	\$ 924,790
Staff Directed Projects	\$ 179,000
Grants	\$ 926,781
Scholarships	\$ 130,500
	\$ 2,161,071

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FY 2018 Grant Application Summaries

Organization:	Texas Legal Services Center
Project:	Family Helpline
Grant Amount:	\$190,696
Project Description:	The Family Helpline Project provides callers with telephonic and online support in understanding the CPS process. The Helpline assists anonymous callers including parents who are not represented by an attorney, relatives and kinship caregivers. The Helpline answers questions about investigations, family-based safety services, temporary managing conservatorship and foster care placements. Benefits of the program include reduced caseworker time explaining issues that may be suitable for the Helpline attorneys. The Helpline and DFPS work closely to understand and evaluate trends, barriers, and common misunderstandings.
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue coordination with sponsors, DFPS, CPS, TCFV, and OAG re CPS processes. - Continue expansion of mailing and distribution of bilingual materials to additional regions - Promotes Helpline and Children's Commission's sponsorship through radio spots with Public News Service - Gather monthly metrics - Schedule and attend quarterly (or semi-annual) check-in with stakeholders - Submit reports as required
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Travel Data Management System Update Promotional Items/Printing Phone Lines & Computers IT Setup & Support
Organization:	Texas CASA
Project:	Youth Engagement, Educational Advocacy and Trauma-Informed Care Work
Grant Amount:	\$49,530
Project Description:	<u>Child Welfare Primer</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote awareness of current needs and practices to spur organizational efforts to elevate youth voice in court system and development of child welfare policies and practices affecting youth. - Support organizational efforts to build and sustain youth engagement and involvement. <u>FY19 Trauma Summit - (Planning)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further trauma-informed child welfare system efforts and promising practices in Texas by partnering with the Children's Commission in planning in FY2018, and hosting in FY2019, a convening of strategic stakeholders. <u>Texas CASA Educational Advocacy Toolkit</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote better educational outcomes and successful educational experiences for children and youth in care.
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct a Child Welfare Primer for advocates and system stakeholders on child welfare issues, successes and opportunities, including how to involve former and current foster youth in the court process and child welfare policy development. - Produce a white paper of recommendations and goals for increased youth voice and engagement in Texas.

FY 2018 Grant Application Summaries

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote increased awareness and use of the OCA video conferencing system among CASA programs to enable youth participation. - Plan an event to further discuss implementation of cross-system trauma informed approaches with children and families in child welfare. Major activities of this project will be structured to further the work of the SCTIC workgroups. - Update the Texas CASA Educational Advocacy Toolkit and distribute to the CASA network, court system participants and other child welfare stakeholders
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Travel Graphic Design
Organization:	Texas Center for the Judiciary
Project:	Judicial Training
Grant Amount:	\$345,809
Project Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve the quality and timeliness of court proceedings by providing training and technical assistance to judges hearing CPS cases. - Enhance judicial expertise on particular topics related to well-being, child and family safety, and permanency in order to improve outcomes for children and families. - Improve judicial procedure in CPS cases to ensure due process, timeliness to case resolution, and permanency. - Facilitate collaboration between the judiciary and system partners represented in the courtroom. - Support judicial best practices through education and information sharing.
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold the FY17 Child Welfare Judges Conference. The conference will include a half day training for Child Protection Court judges and a day and a half training for their coordinators. TCJ will work with the Office of Court Administration (OCA) to facilitate this portion of the training. The Child Welfare Judges Conference is scheduled for November 13-15 and will be held at the Hyatt Lost Pines near Bastrop. The conference typically trains 90-100 judges. The conference will also include collaboration with DFPS and Texas CASA. - Fund a child welfare track at the 2018 Family Justice Conference. This conference typically reaches 110-125 judges and specifically target general jurisdiction judges. TCJ staff will work with the Children's Commission to develop three sessions for a child welfare breakout track. The 2018 Family Justice Conference will be held at the Hyatt Lost Pines on January 22-23. - Plan either or both an education summit or a trauma summit for judges and possibly other stakeholders involved in the child welfare system. The conference will be held in June of 2018 The number of trainees is uncertain at this time, but is estimated at 125 – 150. - Work with NCJFCJ and the Texas Governor's Office to plan a Judicial Institute on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking. The conference will be held in August of 2018 and will train approximately 25-35 judges. - Begin planning process for the FY18 Child Welfare Judges Conference. The FY18 Conference will take place in November of 2018. The exact dates and conference location is TBD.

FY 2018 Grant Application Summaries

Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Travel Supplies Speaker Fees
Organization:	Office of Court Administration
Project:	Office of Court Administration (OCA)
Grant Amount:	\$269,470
Project Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue maintenance and enhancements, as needed, of the Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS), including continuance of the established governance structure, which determines the maintenance and enhancement needs. - Continue the expansion of video conferencing end-points. This allows for additional children and other interested parties to participate remotely in court hearings. For FY2018 OCA proposes expanding the scope of participation to include the courts that preside over juvenile justice cases and the facilities (secured and non-secured) under control or contract to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department. This will provide video access for those children and youth involved in dual status cases. - Increase the number of residential treatment facilities, courts, and children attending hearings remotely. This will be measured by the number of RTCs, courts, and children that use the video conferencing system. - Expand the location of video conferencing end-points to local CASA program offices to allow CASA volunteers to improve their contact with the children/youth in placements. - Improve the flexibility and ease of conducting video conferencing sessions between the courts and the placement facilities. This will be accomplished through the inclusion and use of mobile client technology (android and apple iOS devices). - Continue to expand the use of the Notice and Engagement web tool, including maintenance and enhancements, as appropriate. The service provides notice to appropriate (involved) parties of scheduled court hearings in the CP Specialty Courts using the CPCMS system. Enhancements scheduled for FY2018 include adding SMS text as an option for participants to receive hearing notifications. Begin development of an application programming interface (API) to communicate hearing dates between non-CPCMS courts and the notice tool, if possible.
Project Activities:	<p><u>CPCMS Enhancement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct semi-annual governance meetings to establish priorities for CPCMS enhancements and to report status of governance activities. - Provide at least four (4) software releases during the fiscal year. <p><u>Video Conferencing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue scheduling and coordinating remote hearings for existing remote users including test calls. - Increase the number of participating courts by 10, increase the number participating DFPS service provider sites by 5 during the fiscal year. - Conduct an outreach to specific local CASA program offices that are interested in participating in the video conferencing project. Video conferencing capability will be implemented where possible. Increase the number of participating local CASA program office by 20. - Conduct an outreach to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) to establish an interdepartmental relationship to collaboratively bridge our collective

FY 2018 Grant Application Summaries

	<p>video conferencing resources in their six secured facilities and other appropriate facilities under contract to the TJJD.</p> <p><u>Notice and Engagement Tool</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- System login and search information will be monitored.- Notices will be examined to evaluate whether the correct hearing data is populating according to search criteria.- Reports/data will be produced and provided to the Children's Commission.- Add new feature which will give users the option to also receive text based notifications.- Explore modifying search criteria to include the "Cause Number" and loosen requirements for "exact spelling" of child name so that cases can be found using partial names.- Begin developing application programming interface (API) to communicate hearing dates between non-CPCMS courts and the Notice and Engagement tool, if possible
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Travel Equipment (Web Cameras, Cellular Hotspot Devices, Programmer Software) Lifesize UVC Video Server Maintenance