



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

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

February 8, 2019
Meeting Notebook

Texas Law Center – State Bar of Texas
1414 Colorado Street, Room 101
Austin, Texas 78701

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

**February 8, 2019
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

February 8, 2019

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
- Adopt Minutes from September 28, 2018, Tab 2
- 9:50 Commissioner Updates
- 11:00 Break
- 11:15 Office of Court Administration Update
- 11:30 Commissioner Updates, Continued
- 12:15 Working Lunch
- 12:45 Executive Director Report / Voting Matters
- 1:15 Presentation on Blueprint for a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System
- 2:00 Break
- 2:15 Collaborative Council Member Input
- 2:30 DFPS / CPS Update
- 2:45 Jurist in Residence Report
- 3:00 New Business / Adjourn

2019 Meeting Schedule:

May 31 - 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Supreme Court of Texas;
September 27 - 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the State Bar of Texas

INSERT - TAB 1

CHILDREN'S COMMISSION MEMBERS

Hon. Eva Guzman, Chair
 Hon. Harriet O'Neill, Chair Emeritus
 Lt. Col. Sonya Batchelor
 Erin Bennett
 Paula Bibbs-Samuels
 Kristene Blackstone

Hon. Susan Brown
 Hon. Darlene Byrne
 Hon. Gary Coley
 Sheila Sturgis Craig
 Dr. Andy Keller
 Hon. Lawrence Lujan

Hon. Piper McCraw
 Hon. Selina Mireles
 Cindy Patrick
 Hon. Frank Rynd
 Hon. Peter Sakai
 Hon. Michael Schneider

Luanne Southern
 Vicki Spriggs
 Hon. Carlos Villalon
 Sen. Royce West

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

EXECUTIVE

Hon. Eva Guzman,
Chair
 Hon. Harriet O'Neill,
Chair Emeritus
 Hon. Rob Hofmann
 Hon. Piper McCraw
 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: Tina Amberboy
 Dylan Moench
 Monica Mahoney*

TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS

Vicki Spriggs, *Chair*
 Elizabeth Kromrei
 Hon. Virginia Schnarr
 Hon. Carlos Villalon

*Staff: Patrick Passmore
 Monica Mahoney*

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

TRAINING PROJECTS

Hon. Piper McCraw, *Chair*
 Hon. Mark Atkinson
 Tymothy Belseth
 Denise Campbell
 Cathy Cockerham
 Teal de la Garza
 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*
 ShaLynn Andrews
 Joy Baskin
 Hon. Alyce Bondurant
 Lori Duke
 Dr. Monica Faulkner
 Maya Guerra Gamble
 Dr. David Gardner
 Andy Homer
 Kelly Kravitz
 Hon. Aurora Martinez Jones
 Kristine Mohajer
 Hon. Cathy Morris
 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
 Mike Foster
 Will Francis
 Mara Friesen

Sadie Funk
 Helen Gaebler
 Teal de la Garza
 Christine Gendron
 Sandra Hachem
 David Halpern
 Ashley Harris
 Lisa Harst
 Felix Herrera
 Alex Hunt
 Bruce Kendrick

Knox Kimberly
 Kelly Kravitz
 Richard Lavallo
 Tracy Levins
 Hon. F. Scott McCown, ret.
 Gabriella McDonald
 Susan McDowell
 Pamela McPeters
 Kate Murphy
 Katie Olse
 Jon Olson

Judy Powell
 Mary Christine Reed
 Carolyne Rodriguez
 Tanya Rollins
 Johana Scot
 Janet Sharkis
 Andrea Sparks
 Ian Spechler
 Jeanne Stamp
 Gloria Terry
 Kenneth Thompson

STAFF

Tina Amberboy, Executive Director
 Jamie Bernstein, Assistant Director
 Jessica Arguijo, Communications Manager
 Tiffany Edwards, Executive Assistant
 Jocelyn Fowler, Staff Attorney
 Monica Mahoney, Program Specialist
 Dylan Moench, Staff Attorney
 Patrick Passmore, Grant Administrator
 Milbrey Raney, Training Director
 Andrea Vicencio, Executive Assistant
 Hon. Michael Massengale, Senior Judicial Advisor
 Hon. Dean Rucker, Jurist in Residence
 Hon. Rob Hofmann, Jurist in Residence
Office of Court Administration

INSERT - TAB 2

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES
MINUTES OF MEETING
September 28, 2018
9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Texas Law Center – State Bar of Texas
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	✓	
Lt. Col. Sonya Batchelor, General Council, Texas Military Department, Austin	✓	
Paula Bibbs-Samuels, Parent Representative, Slaton	✓	
Kristene Blackstone, Associate Commissioner for Child Protective Services, Dept. of Family and Protective Services, Austin	✓	
Hon. Susan Brown, Presiding Judge, 11 th Administrative Judicial Region, Houston	✓	
Hon. Darlene Byrne, Judge, 126th District Court, Austin	✓	
Hon. Gary Coley, Judge, 74th District Court, Waco	✓	
Sheila Craig, Associate Commissioner, Health and Human Services Commission, Austin	✓	
Heather Fleming, Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor, Austin	✓	
Hon. Helen Giddings, Texas House of Representatives, District 109, Dallas		✓
Dr. Andrew Keller, (by proxy Phil Ritter), President and Chief Executive Officer, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Dallas	✓	
Hon. Lawrence Lujan, Chief Judge, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, El Paso	✓	
Hon. Piper McCraw, Judge, 469th Judicial District Court, McKinney	✓	
Hon. Selina Mireles, Associate Judge, 4 th and 5 th Administrative Regions Cluster Court, Laredo	✓	
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 (by proxy Andy Homer), Chief Executive Officer, Texas CASA, Inc., Austin	✓	
Hon. Carlos Villalon, Associate Judge, Child Protection Court of the Rio Grande, Edinburg	✓	
Hon. Royce West (by proxy Graham Keever), Texas Senate, District 23, Dallas	✓	
Senior Judicial Advisor		
Hon. Michael Massengale, Justice, First Court of Appeals, Houston	✓	
Collaborative Council		
Tymothy Belseth, Research Coordinator, Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, The University of Texas, Austin		✓
M. Lynn Chamberlin, Sr. Assistant County Attorney, Harris County Attorney’s Office	✓	
Irene Clements, President, National Foster Family Association, and Consultant, Butterfly Marketing, L.L.C., Pflugerville	✓	
William B. Connolly, Attorney, Connolly & Shireman, L.L.P., Houston		✓

	Attended	Did Not Attend
Sarah Crockett, Public Policy Coordinator, Texas CASA, Austin	✓	
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., Houston	✓	
Christine Gendron, Executive Director, Texas Network of Youth Services, Austin	✓	
Sandra Hachem, Senior Assistant County Attorney, Harris County Attorney's Office, Houston	✓	
David Halpern, Director, Promise Mentor Program, Seedling Foundation, Austin		✓
Ashley Harris, Director of Policy and Community Engagement, United Way of Texas, Austin	✓	
Lisa Harst, Strategic Partnerships Associate, Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, 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		✓
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, LifeWorks, Austin		✓
Pamela McPeters, Director of Public Policy, Texas Association for the Protection of Children, Austin	✓	
Kate Murphy, Senior Policy Associate, Texans Care for Children, Austin	✓	
Katie Olse (by proxy Jesse Booher), Executive Director, Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services, Austin		✓
Jon Olson, Director of Equity and Inclusion, Office of Minority Health Statistics and Engagement – HHSC, Austin		✓
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	✓	
Tanya Rollins, State Disproportionality Manager, Department of Family and Protective Services, 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		✓
Ian Spechler, Attorney, formerly with Disability Rights Texas, 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		✓

Attending Committee Members and Guests

Justin Hayward, Youth Representative, Texas Network of Youth Services, Dallas
Andrew Homer, Director of Public Affairs, Texas CASA, Austin
Alex Hunt, Attorney & Counselor at Law, Hunt Law Firm, P.L.L.C., Katy
Graham Keever, Legislative Director, Office of Senator Royce West, Austin
Crystal Leff-Piñon, Managing Attorney, The Family Helpline, Texas Legal Services Center, Austin
Megan Legband, Legal and Public Policy Intern, Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Austin
Bryan Mares, Policy Fellow, Texas CASA, Austin
Marcellina Melvin, Director of Program Implementation for Child and Family Policy, Meadows Mental Health Institution, Houston
Linda Phan, Director of Public Policy, Texas Council on Family Violence, Austin
Karlene Poll, Attorney, Kuhn Hobbs, PLLC, Austin
Kristen Regalado
Phil Ritter, Chief Operating Officer, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Dallas
Shelby Simpson, Intern, Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin
Natalie Sowinski, Associate Director of Training and Research, Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services, Austin
Ruth Thorton, Chief of Staff to IV-D Director, Office of the Attorney General, Austin
Victoria Walsh, Assistant Director of Child and Family Policy, Meadows Mental Health Institution, Austin
Elizabeth Watkins, Family Justice Director, Williamson County Attorney's Office, Georgetown

Attending Staff

Tina Amberboy, Executive Director, Children's Commission
Jessica Arguijo, Administrative Assistant, Children's Commission
Jamie Bernstein, Assistant Director, Children's Commission
Tiffany Edwards, Executive Assistant, Children's Commission
Jocelyn Fowler, Staff Attorney, Children's Commission
Anissa Johnson, Program Specialist, Office of Court Administration
Tim Kennedy, Video Conferencing Project Manager, Office of Court Administration
Monica Mahoney, Program Specialist, 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

CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING REMARKS, Justice Eva Guzman

Justice Eva Guzman called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Recognition of Guests Justice Guzman welcomed special guests Phil Ritter, of Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute; Andy Homer of Texas CASA, in attendance on behalf of Vicki Spriggs; and Graham Keever in attendance on behalf of Senator Royce West.

Christine Gendron, a Collaborative Council member was asked to introduce her guest, Justin Hayward. Mr. Hayward spoke to the Commission about his experiences as a former foster youth, specifically noting the issues of over medication of foster children, aging out, and youth homelessness.

Graham Keever announced Senator West's preparation for the upcoming Legislative Session and continued work with foster parents. Mr. Keever invited anyone with ideas to please see him, as they are always looking for new initiatives to sponsor.

Commissioner Membership Changes

Justice Guzman announced three new Commissioners: Judge Susan Brown, Presiding Judge of the 11th Administrative Judicial Region and Judge of the 185th Judicial District Court in Houston; Judge Selina Mireles, Associate Judge of the Child Protection Court in Laredo; and Lt. Colonel Sonya Batchelor, General Counsel of the Texas Military Department in Austin.

Committee Member Changes

There were no committee membership changes.

Collaborative Council Membership Changes

There were no Collaborative Council member changes.

Staff Member Changes

Ms. Tina Amberboy announced that the Children's Commission hired a new Executive Assistant to fill the position vacated by Monica Mahoney when she transitioned to a Project Manager position. Tiffany Edwards started with the Children's Commission on May 29, 2018, and will assist Tina Amberboy, Dylan Moench, and Jocelyn Fowler.

Adoption of May 4, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Justice Guzman directed members to Tab 2 of the Meeting Notebook and noted that members had the opportunity to review the May 4, 2018 minutes. Justice Guzman asked if there were any corrections or discussion, and none were noted.

ACTION: Justice Guzman asked for a motion to adopt the meeting minutes of the May 4, 2018 meeting. A motion was made to adopt the minutes; the motion was seconded. The attending members voted to approve and adopt the meeting minutes unanimously.

Presentation on 2018 Legal Representation Study

Mr. Dylan Moench provided a presentation about the Children's Commission's 2018 Legal Representation Study. Dylan shared highlights of the study and noted more participants were reached in the 2018 study than the previous Commission study on legal representation held in 2011. Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers were not represented in the 2011 study but represented one thousand responses in the 2018 study. More statistics and the full study can be found here:

<http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/83923/2018-legal-representation-report-final-online.pdf>.

Presentation on Education of Children Placed in Residential Treatment Settings

Ms. Jamie Bernstein updated the Commission on her primary project, improvement of educational outcomes of children in foster care. Judge Rob Hofmann is the Chair of the Commission's Foster Care and Education Committee. The FC&E Special Education workgroup identified the need to examine special education services provided to children and youth in residential treatment. The Commission held a Round Table discussion in April. The *Education of Children & Youth Placed in Residential Treatment Round Table Report* was released in September 2018 and documented the conversations from the Round Table. Judge Hofmann, who was the moderator for the Round Table, noted this is the beginning of the conversation. The full report can be found here with complete statistics. <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/83937/rtc-rt-report-final-92818-online.pdf>

COMMISSION MEMBER UPDATES

Hon. Rob Hofmann spoke to the Commission on reorganizing the Foster Care and Education Committee's workgroup structure to more of a project-based structure. The 2nd Foster Care and Education Summit took place on July 9-10, 2018. The Summit included over 200 participants sorted into regional teams of judges, attorneys, CASAs, CPS staff, educators, and youth currently or formerly in foster care. Judge Hofmann also announced the new Supervised Independent Living (SIL) program at Texas A&M campuses in Kingsville and Corpus Christi. Judge Hofmann noted that David Halpern joined with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) and Texas Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS) for a one-hour CLE on Postsecondary Readiness and Opportunities during the Commission's live webcast on September 11, 2018. The Committee's Postsecondary Workgroup, alongside the Higher Education and the Sam Houston State University, created a video for youth and caregivers to highlight the Foster Care Tuition and Fee Waiver program. The video is available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnJynT4gjl0>. Judge Hofmann also announced he recently testified at the Texas Judicial Compensation Hearings.

Hon. Darlene Byrne updated the Commission on her work with Casey Family Programs regarding a court ordered services tool which is intended to prevent children from being removed to foster care. Judge Byrne also noted that data is being collected on how the tool is being used. Judge Byrne also expressed her desire to develop resources to help judges deal with death and secondary trauma related to presiding over child protection cases, remarking that there were multiple deaths recently in her jurisdiction and the caseworkers, as well as the attorneys and guardians ad litem working those cases have been emotionally affected as have the children and families involved. Judge Byrne would like to develop a process to help deal with multi-disciplinary crisis events in the court systems.

Hon. Michael Massengale was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from Justice Guzman on behalf of the Commission for his dedication and hard work with the Commission as its Training Committee Chair. Under his leadership, the Trial Skills Training Program completed its ninth year in July 2018. Justice Massengale also serves on the Texas Access to Justice Commission.

Ms. Sheila Craig updated the Commission on the status of the Office of Minority Health Statistics and Engagement (OMHSE). Ms. Craig reported that although OMHSE pursued a number of organizations for funding, the complete funding needed to continue operations was unsuccessful and OMHSE closed on September 1, 2018. Most of the former OMHSE staff have been placed within other agencies or have gained employment in the private sector. Ms. Craig announced she is with the Health and Human Services Commission's Contract Oversight Office. Resources and tools from OMHSE were provided to stakeholders before operations ceased, including the Train the Trainer curriculum and training in culture diversity. Trainings are available on the Texas Health Steps website at <https://www.txhealthsteps.com/>. The OMHSE received a 5-year grant to focus on chronic disease and obesity, which is in its fourth year. OMHSE reached more than 3,000 participants and was aware of about 1,200 who needed further assistance; of those, 700 have received further medical services. Ms. Craig presented at the Texas Child Care Administrators Conference in Austin and at the 2018 Virginia Fire Equity & Diversity Conference in Richmond, Virginia, both in October 2018. Ms. Craig also reported that she would be presenting at the Judicial Summit on Mental Health in October 2018 and speaking with the Ontario Canada Children's Aide Society about the Texas Model developed by OMHSE.

Hon. Carlos Villalon updated the Commission about his invitation and attendance at the Casey Family Program 21st Century meeting, the primary purpose of which was to discuss early intervention and prevention programs. Judge Villalon expressed his hope for others in the state to join the initiative. Judge Villalon also reported on his involvement with trauma-informed care in the Rio Grande Valley, noting the continued work as part of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Implementation Site Project. He also updated the Commission about the annual Multidisciplinary Advocacy Training Conference on Child Abuse scheduled for October 2018. Judge Villalon discussed issues surrounding Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) cases, specifically the need for review of the application process, delay of services to children in permanent managing conservatorship (PMC), and issues surrounding check points and access to RTCs or other services. Judge Villalon lastly reported PMC numbers have declined in his area.

Lt. Col. Sonya Batchelor addressed the Commission as her first meeting. Lt. Col. Batchelor remarked on the military's resources for those involved in a CPS case or other legal matters and for those in need of medical and mental health services. Lt. Col. Batchelor offered her contact information for those who would like to know more.

Hon. Gary Coley reported on readdressing the Dual Status Youth Court and his goal to assign CPS workers to work with dual status youth. Judge Coley informed the Commission of his participation in the Judicial Summit on Domestic Child Sex Trafficking. Judge Coley announced the upcoming Heart of Texas Human Trafficking Coalition meeting in November 2018 and reported that a survivor of sex trafficking would be in attendance. Judge Coley noted also that an estimated 4,000 students from his area have heard about the dangers of trafficking, and that the Polaris Project will host a training in October to advise on how to handle cases that require a translator. Judge Coley also discussed labor trafficking crimes in the Waco area involving local restaurants employing undocumented persons and forcing them to work and live in poor conditions.

Ms. Cindy Patrick announced the Meadows Foundation support for Infant and Toddler Courts in Texas and mentioned that Meadows had received a grant for a new ITC court in Dallas. Ms. Patrick also noted the North Texas consortium of philanthropy is looking at funding efforts to enhance broadband connections to rural communities. Improved broadband connections would give rural communities access to telemedicine and telepsychology services and grant children in those communities access to health care providers in different regions.

Mr. Phil Ritter, on behalf of Dr. Andy Keller, reported the Judicial Commission on Mental Health will host the Judicial Summit on Mental Health in October 2018, immediately followed by the MMHPI Engage and Excel Conference.

Mr. Ritter went on to update the Commission on national mental health discussions involving children, specifically affected by Hurricane Harvey and the Santa Fe shooting, noting that a Hurricane Harvey Task Force has been meeting to discuss the mental health needs of children in affected areas. Grants from organizations such as American Red Cross and Rebuild Texas have also been distributed to address needs in the affected regions and schools. Mr. Ritter updated everyone that Senator Jane Nelson's had announced priorities for the next session and her intent to introduce the Child Psychiatry Access Program (CPAP) to address treatment of mental health needs in pediatrician care settings.

Hon. Lawrence Lujan updated the Commission on a community stakeholder meeting in El Paso to discuss the strengths and challenges for children and caregivers in the El Paso community. Judge Lujan reported the number of volunteers with CASA of El Paso is growing, adding 12 volunteers recently. Judge Lujan informed the Commission on the Braden Aboud Memorial Foundation of El Paso which assisted local CASA with backpacks and school supplies for children. The El Paso Center for Children held a donation drive in partnership with Senator José Rodríguez to benefit homeless and at-risk youth. Judge Lujan also noted a collaboration with Senator Rodríguez, the Texas Veterans Commission, and the Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic to collect hygienic items and outer layer clothing such as ponchos, and to offer counseling to those in need.

Mr. Andrew Homer, on behalf of Ms. Vicki Spriggs, reported the Texas CASA Conference will be held in Denton, Texas in October 2018. Mr. Homer noted the 2019 CASA Calendars were distributed, and Mr. Homer updated the Commission on the Collaborative Family Engagement (CFE), which is entering its fourth year. The CFE program started in three counties and has grown to 48 counties. The National CASA Association sent out new guidelines for training, and Texas CASA programs, including CASA of Travis County, are revamping training based on the new guidelines. The new guidelines include topics on cultural competency, lessons from family engagement, and more emphasis on trauma-informed care. The guidelines are available on the Texas CASA website.

Hon. Michael Schneider announced the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department and DFPS formalized a structure for dual status youth. Both agencies now have full time staff, consisting of 5 Juvenile Probation employees and 5 DFPS staff within each organization. Over 400 staff within those two new departments have received training on handling dual status cases. Starting in October 2018,

the Harris County District and County Attorney offices will receive training on dual status youth. Judge Schneider also reported two diversion programs have been developed, specifically geared toward children in CPS who have criminal charges. DFPS and the probation department share data to make sure all youth in the diversion programs are qualified as dual status. Judge Schneider explained the data shows 15% of the children in DFPS conservatorship will become involved with the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department. Judge Schneider announced a youth advisory board that includes 6 former foster youth in its membership. Judge Schneider also reported Houston Independent School District now has a dual status youth manager and that there are 79 youth considered dual status in Region 6A.

Judge Schneider announced a collaboration with KIPP Sunnyside High School, which refers the most children to the Houston juvenile system, and the Harris County Youth Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program. Judge Schneider noted the LEAD program trains law enforcement to deal with specific issues. The goal of Harris County LEAD is to defer youth from the juvenile system.

Judge Schneider addressed questions from an investigative series in *The Dallas Morning News*, "Pain and Profit," a 6-part series about Medicaid, including allegations of children in DFPS care who have not been getting proper insurance coverage. Judge Schneider, Judge Angela Ellis and Judge Katrina Griffith adopted an order in January 2018 that requires DFPS to notify the court and attorney ad litem immediately each time that insurance coverage is denied. Since the standing order was signed, there has been a significant decrease in coverage denial. Judge Schneider offered to share the order with any interested judges or practicing attorneys ad litem.

Judge Schneider also reported on a research project being developed with Columbia University regarding children in the Texas foster care system and medications prescribed. A report on the research project is forthcoming.

Hon. Piper McCraw announced that the Children's Commission awarded 20 judicial scholarships for judges to attend the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges annual conference, which took place in July 2018 in Denver. Several scholarships were also awarded to 58 attorneys to attend the National Association of Counsel for Children and the Red Book Training, which certifies in Child Welfare Law. The Children's Commission also provided scholarships to 59 attorneys to attend the Child Abuse and Neglect one day live CLE, that was held in August 2018. The 9th Trial Skills Training took place in San Marcos in July. There were 64 applicants of those 21 represent parents, children or the state of Texas. The Annual webcast, done in partnership with the State Bar of Texas, was held on September 11, 2018 and is available on line. There were 614 viewers, the highest numbers to date. Discounts were given to court appointed attorneys, CASA and scholarships to other viewers, including attorneys representing the Department of Family and Protective Services. Judge McCraw recognized and thanked Jamie Bernstein and Dylan Moench for their informative presentations.

Judge Selina Mireles joined the Commission for her first meeting, and updated on her work in Webb, Zapata, Jim Hogg, and Duval counties. Webb County recently held their 3rd annual Graduation and

Retention ceremony, which involves children who are in foster care to recognize their academic achievements during the school year. Judge Mireles also shared that children in her court are allowed to participate in training and vocational programs at the community college where they have opportunities to engage in a variety of activities such as flying drones, learning how to print in 3D, and learn about the field of health care. Judge Mireles noticed no one was taking advantage of the tuition waivers and felt this would be a great opportunity for the children to have exposure to the community college setting and lock in the tuition waiver. Judge Mireles also introduced a "Student of the Month" type of reward. Judge Mireles noticed that children in foster care were rarely selected by the school as Student of the Month and so she instituted a Student of the Month program in her court. One child in foster care is recognized once per month for good citizenship. The award includes allowing the child to act as Bailiff for the day and up to \$30 to do something they like

Judge Mireles also recently started a Permanency Achievement Court, modeled after Judge Katrina Griffith's court in Harris County. A goal of the program is to allow children to be interactive in the court setting by going through a mock trial, acting out the various roles in the courtroom and process. Judge Mireles believes this helps children have a better understanding of what everyone does, and what education is needed. There was also an opportunity for the children to participate in an interactive game of "Life." The children received a salary, paid taxes, were able to purchase cars, homes, and were able to interact and play in real life scenarios.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Ms. Tina Amberboy updated the Commission on the CIP was reauthorized and funded through 2021 and staff anticipated receiving FY2019 funding in the fall of 2018. Also, Ms. Amberboy noted that a Collaborative Council directory was created and is available from the Children's Commission. Ms. Amberboy shared an article from Judge Byrne on Normalcy. Ms. Amberboy also introduced the committee goals for the upcoming year for the Basic, Foster Care & Education, Training, and Data/Technology and progressed through a presentation of all the projects placed before the Commission for a vote.

Voting Matters

Ms. Amberboy discussed the budget regarding the slate of fiscal year 2019 projects presented to the Commission. Ms. Amberboy asked for a vote on projects for 2019.

ACTION: Justice Guzman announced the Commission will vote on the proposed budget for fiscal year 2019 as described on the Financial Report handout. Justice Guzman asked for a motion to adopt the slate of 2019 projects the budget as described on the Financial Report handout. A motion was made to approve the budget; the motion was seconded. The attending members voted to approve and adopt the fiscal year 2019 budget unanimously.

COMMISSION MEMBER UPDATES, Cont'd.

Hon. Ronald Pope updated the Commission on the Fort Bend Infant Toddler Court, which has received continued funding from the Victims of Crime or VOCA. Also, several new programs have been established for parenting classes and mental health needs. Judge Pope was presented with a Certificate of

Appreciation from Justice Guzman on behalf of the Commission for his dedicated years of service to the Commission.

Hon. Peter Sakai introduced Christine Regalado as a future child welfare attorney. Judge Sakai passed out CPS Data from Bexar County and discussed various matters about how the child welfare system in Bexar County is functioning. He reported that children in Bexar county are more likely to be reported for abuse and neglect, and that neglect is most prevalent. Also, that almost 2 of 3 children are placed in county care. Almost 50 percent of children removed are placed with relatives. Judge Sakai went through the report updating the Commission on statics of foster care in Bexar County. For more information or a copy of the report, please contact Judge Sakai. An executive summary will be sent by request of Justice Guzman.

COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL MEMBER PRESENTATION

Barbara Elias-Perciful introduced herself to the Commission as the Director of Texas Lawyers for Children, a non-profit organization that works to protect the rights of abused and neglected children in the courts, community and legislature. Their primary work is to assist judges and attorneys handing child protection cases. Ms. Elias-Perciful presented the new Trauma-Informed Judicial Practice Discussion Board to the Commission.

DFPS / CPS UPDATE

Kristene Blackstone, Associate Commissioner for CPS started off with a discussion about the Round Table report featured earlier in the meeting, expressing the importance of promoting collaboration between child welfare and the education system. Ms. Blackstone then shared a brief update of the Department's Legislative Appropriation Request. Ms. Blackstone announced they are seeking funding for additional preparation for adult living staff. The department started serving 15-year-old youth last year, and plan to start serving 14-year-old youth in FY2019. The Department is also asking for an increase in funding for its Supervised Independent Living programs, which allows teens to move to more independent settings as they move toward adulthood. The payment for case management to supervise independent living only allows for visits between the child and case manager monthly. With enhanced case management more children could be moved to this type of setting. Two years ago, there were 7 providers across the state, now there are 13 supervisors of independent living. Ms. Blackstone announced her department is seeking additional funds for post adopt services to prevent children from reentering the system and families providing care for these children have the assistance they need. The investigations division is asking for additional screeners, whose role will be to look at a subgroup of intakes when they come in and make phone calls to determine if cases can be closed administratively. This will allow a reduction of the workload assigned in the field. Ms. Blackstone also updated the Commission about staff with the Department of Public Safety who conduct background checks, so the caseworkers are aware of any past criminal activity in the home, and / or law enforcement visits to the home prior to conducting an investigation. Ms. Blackstone shared the example of how they were able to identify a registered sex offender, from a different state, using this process, enhancing child and caseworker safety. The department is also asking for expansion in Prevention in Early Intervention. The focus is maintaining progress from last session and continue key initiative from that session and fill in

some agency gaps. Ms. Blackstone shared with the Commission the Treatment of Foster Care contracts across the state, everywhere except El Paso. The target is youth 10 and younger. The goal is to prevent another generation of high needs children from entering and aging in the Foster Care system. The Commission was updated on its new Community Based Care contract which will begin phase I in December – January. Ms. Blackstone also shared an update from Sasha Roscoe, the Assistant Commissioner for Prevention and Early Intervention. PEI hosted their conference in Dallas, yielding one-thousand attendees at the Partners in Prevention Conference. DFPS released their Inaugural Report, from the Prevention Task Force, which recommends expansion of prevention services, activities and innovations through five strategies: developing a prevention framework to provide community readiness action, exploring financial potential of a children’s trust fund and other governing financial opportunities, creating a community tool-kit, elevating brain development, and expanding prevention programming to align with data driven risk based growth strategy.

ADDITIONAL COMMISSION STAFF UPDATES

Ms. Milbrey Raney reported the Judicial Commission will be partnering with the Texas Center for the Judiciary (TCJ) in January 2019 for the Family Justice Conference. This is focused on general jurisdiction judges, three speakers the first day address TBRI issues. The Judicial Commission will also be partnering with TJC for the NCJFCJ for scholarships for the Conference in July 2019. The Child Welfare Judges Conference took place in November 2018 in Georgetown, TX. This annual conference invites 90 Judges to attend a training and they have the ability to earn CLEs. The Commission will partner with the State Bar for attorney training, 6 hours of NTLE content will be shared. A Legislative update will be given in the Summer of 2019, the Commission will be informed of changes with CPS cases. Lastly, Ms. Raney updated the Commission on Trial Skills Training in May of 2019, held in San Marcos, TX.

Ms. Jocelyn Fowler informed the Commission about a recent trip to Livingston, TX to attend the Alabama Coushatta Tribe of Texas Judicial Symposium. The focus of the Symposium was to focus on the Violence Against Women’s act, focusing on Human Trafficking in Tribal Nations. Ms. Fowler was given the opportunity to update the Symposium attendees on the 2016 Updates to the Indian Child Welfare Act.

OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

Ms. Mena Ramon, on behalf of David Slayton, updated the Commission on the activities of the Judicial Compensation Commission. Their primary focus is to address stat Judge salaries that are paid by the Texas Comptroller, in comparison to the Associate Judges that are paid by OCA. It was recommended they be tied together, and that associate judges be paid 90% of the state judge salary.

OCA requested, on their Legislative Appropriations Request, an Exceptional Item Request for 9 additional child protection courts. Three would not be new, funding is needing to replace the current funding source. When the courts were created, some were staffed with Visiting Judges, and now those funds are capped, OCA would like to add them to their budget. OCA received a call from the Legislative Budget Board, for the Strategic Fiscal Review. This is the first time that documents have been prepared that involve how the program started, how it’s evolved, how to improve and funding.

NEW BUSINESS

Justice Guzman announced the next Commission Meeting dates: February 8, 2019

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

INSERT - TAB 3



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

Report to Commission

February 8, 2019

The Courtroom of the Supreme Court of Texas
201 West 14th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

February 8, 2019

Goal I: 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: Support statewide efforts to ensure and improve child safety.

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

Progress Report

Background:

With the Family First Prevention Service Act (FFPSA) and the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) amendments to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), it will be necessary for the Children’s Commission to engage with stakeholders more deeply on prevention efforts.

The CARA amendments to CAPTA require more focus on what are known as Plans of Safe Care, and although there is no specific court oversight of Plans of Safe Care, the judiciary is being asked to become familiar with the CARA amendments and partner with child welfare in a manner that makes existing and new Plans of Safe Care more meaningful.

FFPSA became effective on February 9, 2018. This law restructures federal child welfare funding, particularly Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, which Texas uses to pay for services for children in foster care and their families. FFPSA seeks to reduce entry in foster care, limit the use of congregate care, and to increase access to substance abuse and mental health services. There are certain training provisions directly impacting the courts and Court Improvement Programs, but beyond that, FFPSA also mandates that states seeking Title IV-E funding create and provide more robust prevention services for families in the state’s child welfare system.

02/08/19:

Texas has a Quality Improvement Center Collaborative Community Court Team (QIC-CCCT) site in Harris County. The demonstration site is charged with collaboratively addressing the health and substance use disorder treatment needs of infants, young children, and their parents or caregivers.

There is an Infant-Toddler Court Project in place and program staff is in the process of determining the responsibilities of individuals and organizations as they relate to the CAPTA / CARA amendments and how the provisions will be implemented locally.

The Children’s Commission is collaborating closely with DFPS on the implementation of FFPSA, as is required by the federal Administration of Children and Families. Texas has elected to delay implementation of certain provisions, in particular, those provisions related to limitations on the use of congregate care, which mandate that Court Improvement Programs provide training and education to judges and other legal system stakeholders on the limitations on funding for use of non-foster family home placements.

The Texas CIP is collaborating with Casey Family Programs and other national workgroups on best practices for implementation of all FFPSA provisions, including the development of IV-E prevention programs, court oversight of congregate care placements, and court involvement in developing primary prevention services.

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.

I.B.1. Strategy: Implement the Texas Blueprint.

Progress Report

Background:

The Foster Care and Education (FC&Ed) Committee was established in 2015 to continue the implementation of the Texas Blueprint recommendations, released in 2012. There are currently 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, as well as strategies to support persistence and graduation for students currently or formerly in care. The Special Education Workgroup focuses on the over and underrepresentation of students in foster care receiving special education services. The Local Collaboration Workgroup addresses strategies to strengthen collaboration at the local level. The School Discipline Workgroup explores strategies to reduce exclusionary discipline for students in foster care and promote improved behavioral health in the education setting.

IN FY2019, the structure of the FC&Ed collaboration will shift from a workgroup model to a project-centered model. The FC&Ed Committee will develop priorities and provide oversight for the statewide effort. As projects are identified, small groups will each meet periodically with a defined scope, deliverables, and a timeline. Initial projects will address the following issues:

- Collaborating to address education in Residential Treatment settings,
- Promoting increased awareness of early education for young children in foster care, and
- Developing tools and training to better support students in foster care with behavior challenges.

Although the structure will change, the core principles of strengthening collaboration between education, courts, and child welfare systems, developing cross-training

02/08/19:

A top priority identified by the Foster Care and Education Committee and its Special Education Workgroup is to continue the work of the Education in Residential Treatment Settings round table meeting. A group of stakeholders with expertise in general and special education, charter schools, foster care, and the legal system convened on December 6, 2018 to identify a project or deliverable to support improved practice in this area. The group decided to develop a tool or resource containing the Top 10 things stakeholders need to know about education in RTCs.

The Foster Care and Education Committee and interested stakeholders will convene in the Summer of 2019 to identify projects for the following 12-18 months in lieu of standing workgroups or subcommittees.

<p>opportunities, and encouraging data-driven decision-making remain fundamental to the FC&Ed committee model.</p>	
<p>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>	
<p><i>I.C.1. Strategy: Partner with Trauma and Mental Health advocates and agencies to implement and apply principles of Trauma-Informed Care in the respective disciplines.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>In July 2017, the Children’s Commission launched the Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-Informed Care (SCTIC), to elevate trauma-informed policy and practices 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. The SCTIC has four Strategic Workgroups: Child Welfare System Reform, chaired by Andy Homer, Texas CASA; Organizational Leadership, chaired by Renee Calder Encinias, Hope Rising Ministries, Cross-systems Collaboration, chaired by Christine Gendron, TNOYS; and Funding, Data & Evaluation, chaired by Katy Bourgeois, Mission Capital.</p> <p>The SCTIC endeavors to raise awareness about Trauma-Informed Care through training and educational opportunities; lead a Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-informed Care to create a trauma-informed and trauma-responsive child welfare system that better meets the needs of children who have experienced trauma; and partner with other Texas and national trauma-informed workgroups and collaboratives</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The Commission co-hosted and co-sponsored the Judicial Summit on Mental Health with the Judicial Commission on Mental Health on October 22-23, 2018 in Houston. The Summit was attended by professionals across criminal and civil justice systems as well as children and youth professionals. Many members of both high courts of Texas attended. The first day of the Summit agenda contained a plenary for all adult and children and youth track attendees focused on overarching mental health concepts. For the second half of the first day, the Commission organized a Children and Youth Track to provide presentations on trauma-informed progress in two of our state agencies (TJJD and DFPS), with additional presentations on preventing suicide, engaging youth voice, and ensuring equity in serving children and youth. On the second day of the Summit, the Commission convened a meeting for SCTIC members and other interested stakeholders. The SCTIC Chair, Judge Byrne, provided an overview of the SCTIC status to-date and each workgroup chair gave more detailed updates on their workgroup’s progress and general ideas for the Blueprint on Building a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System. During the second half of the meeting, SCTIC members held a working session to help draft the guiding principles for the final Blueprint.</p> <p>All four SCTIC workgroups met throughout the year to draft strategies for the trauma-informed Blueprint. The Steering Committee reviewed the strategies put forth by the workgroups and revised them for redundancies and standardized tone. The final report, “Building a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System: A Blueprint,” is now available.</p>

	The Commission will confer with the SCTIC and other stakeholders on the best path forward on implementation.
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.	
<i>I.D.1. Strategy: Collaborate with state and local partners to prevent and address commercial sexual exploitation of youth in foster care.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children's Commission partners with many key stakeholders with a goal of preventing and addressing commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth in foster care. 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, the DFPS Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation team, and the Office 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>The CC is focused primarily on providing information to judges and attorneys responsible for child welfare cases to raise awareness about human trafficking as it impacts children involved with the child welfare system.</p> <p>The CC also participates in the state and national trainings 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>02/08/19:</p> <p>The CC will continue to work with child welfare and court stakeholders to build capacity to address trafficking throughout the state. CC staff attended a meeting of the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force on December 17, 2018. Information about the Commission's efforts to address trafficking were also included in the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force 2018 Report to the Texas Legislature.</p> <p>The CC will publish a Jurist in Residence letter in February highlighting Human Trafficking issues, training, and prevention.</p>
I.E. Objective: Support efforts to ensure normalcy for children and youth in the foster care system.	
<i>I.E.1. Strategy: Collaborate with stakeholders and provide support to promote and expand access to normalcy activities for children and youth.</i>	Progress Report

Background:

The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (P. L. 113–183) was signed into law in September 2014. This Federal law includes the reasonable and prudent parent standard, which allows foster parents and caregivers greater discretion in making decisions regarding the typical daily activities of the children and youth in their care and is intended to normalize a child or youth’s experiences as much as possible while maintaining their health, safety, and best interests. Helping children and youth in foster care have normal routine experiences is critically important for their healthy social, emotional, and cognitive development, as well as their overall well-being and successful transition into adulthood.

02/08/19:

The Children’s Commission held a roundtable discussion on Normalcy on January 18, 2019. Over 40 stakeholders attended the roundtable, including youth currently and formerly in foster care, foster and kin caregivers, child welfare advocates, child placing and residential providers, licensing and standards, attorneys, judges, child welfare boards, and university partners. The discussion covered federal and state law as well as licensing standards, along with a discussion on what is Normalcy, the risks of providing it, the barriers and challenges to making it a reality, the key roles and responsibilities of the State, caregivers, judges, advocates, and youth in ensuring youth in care experience it, and resources available to support these efforts. A report on the round table will be issued no later than May 31, 2019 and will include recommendations and strategies to help guide Texas toward ensuring that Normalcy becomes a reality.

The Capacity Building Center for States has published several guides related to Normalcy, including [Having the Normalcy Conversation: A Guide for Discussing Developmentally Appropriate Services for Children, Youth, and Young Adults in Foster Care](https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/youth-development/normalcy-conversation/) which is available online at <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/youth-development/normalcy-conversation/>

<p>Goal II: 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><i>II.A.1. Strategy: Work with DFPS and other stakeholders to identify topics for Round Table discussions.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>Round Table discussions are designed to address key, urgent issues affecting the Texas child welfare system through a half-day program that is facilitated by a subject-matter and legal expert. The topics vary year to year and the number of Round Tables hosted each year also varies according to the interest of stakeholders and issues demanding attention. The Children’s Commission’s role usually consists of forming a small workgroup to discuss the overall purpose, creating an invitation and distribution list, securing a venue, handling all invitations, RSVPs, and travel reimbursements, and producing a written report or paper within about 4 to 6 months following the event.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>See item I. E.1</p>
<p>II.B. Objective: Ensure availability of quality judicial resources such as the Bench Book, Jurist in Residence (JIR) support and JIR correspondence and communique 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.</p>	
<p><i>II.B.1. Strategy: Maintain, update, and support a high-quality Child Protection Law Bench Book for CPS Judges (Bench Book).</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission maintains a Bench Book that outlines the state and federal statutory requirements for judges handling child protection cases, including topical sections and checklists. The Bench Book also includes tips and best and promising practices. It is updated annually with new information, as needed, and is disseminated at training events and upon request. The Bench Book is also hosted on the Children’s</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The Texas Child Protection Law Bench Book was updated in November 2018 and distributed to judges attending the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference held on November 12-14, 2018. Judges attending the 2019 College for New Judges were also provided the opportunity to request a Bench Book, and additional copies are being distributed to over 40 judges at their request.</p>

<p>Commission website and through LawBox, which can both be accessed through the Commission website.</p>	<p>New content in the 2018 edition includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Updates to all topical chapters; 2. A new chapter on Contempt; 3. A new bench card on addressing disproportionality; and 4. New chapters on the importance of youth voice in court, the Burden of Proof required throughout the stages of a CPS case, and when courts and the Department are required to consider the best interest of the child. <p>The current version of the CC's Bench Book is maintained online here: http://benchbook.texaschildrenscommission.gov/ The Bench Book is also hosted by LawBox online services for fiscal year 2018-2019.</p>
<p><i>II.B.2. Strategy: Provide JIR support to the judiciary and the legal and child welfare systems.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Jurist in Residence (JIR) position was created to foster judicial leadership and promote greater expertise among child protection judges. The JIR develops relationships with retired and sitting judges, 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, and publishes informational letters and electronic communiques (“e-blasts”) concerning items of interest, such as changes in policy, law, practice, and training events.</p> <p>Additionally, the JIR assists with the development of curriculum for the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference, and moderates and presents at the conference, as needed; reviews updates to the Child Protection Law Bench Book; and attends and participates in events on behalf of the CC, including Round Tables, other conferences, and Trial Skills Trainings.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The Supreme Court has named Judge Rob Hofmann as Jurist in Residence. Judge Hofmann joins Judge Dean Rucker in assisting with execution of the Commission’s strategies for FY2019.</p> <p>The JIR activities will remain much the same for FY2019, with additional emphasis on elevating judicial leaders with expertise and interests related to child and family well-being and improving the child welfare system, as well as serving as a resource for the Texas Legislature during the 86th Legislative Session. Below is a list of the JIR Letters and Announcements issued between September 2018 and February 2019:</p> <p>2019 to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/17/19: Upcoming Training on Family Drug Court, Child Welfare Information Study, Last Day to submit TST Applications • 1/10/19: Hands-on Trial Skills Training Applications Extended to Thursday, January 17th

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/3/19: Hands-on Trial Skills Training Applications Due Thursday, January 10, 2019 <p>2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12/19/18 Hands-on Trial Skills Training Opportunity • 12/7/18 Update on the status of ICWA in Texas • 11/30/19 2018 Child Protection Law Bench Book • 11/9/18 Update on the status of ICWA in Texas • 11/2/18 Information Regarding Children and Families Separated at the Border and State Courts • 10/10/18 Request for Participation in Upcoming Round Table on Mediation in CPS Cases (A) • 10/3/18 The Education of Children & Youth Placed in Residential Treatment Round Table Report • 9/26/18 New and Updated Education-Related Resources • 9/21/18 2018 Texas CASA Conference
<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>Background:</p> <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. The Children’s Commission publishes attorney resource letters about emerging, pertinent, and changing policy, laws, practice, and training opportunities that are of interest to attorneys handling CPS cases. All ARLs are posted on the Children’s Commission’s website.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The CC’s distribution list has grown to more than 4,000 attorneys, judges, court staff, and stakeholders. The Children’s Commission switched the method of communication to Constant Contact in late FY2018. Letters and Announcements issued between September 2018 and February 2019 include:</p> <p>2019 to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/17/19: Upcoming Training on Family Drug Court, Child Welfare Information Study, Last Day to submit TST Applications • 1/10/19: Hands-on Trial Skills Training Applications Extended to Thursday, January 17th • 1/3/19: Hands-on Trial Skills Training Applications Due Thursday, January 10, 2019 <p>2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12/19/18 Hands-on Trial Skills Training Opportunity • 12/7/18 Update on the status of ICWA in Texas (December 2018) • 11/30/18 2018 Child Protection Law Bench Book • 11/9/18 Update on the status of ICWA in Texas (November 2018) • 10/3/18 The Education of Children & Youth Placed in Residential Treatment Round Table Report • 9/26/18 New and Updated Education-Related Resources <p>To subscribe to receive the Commission’s communications and letters, please sign up on the website at http://bit.ly/2MLTTvI.</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><i>II.D.1. Strategy: Maintain and enhance usability and function of the Children’s Commission website.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>

<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission maintains a website that features published reports, guides, announcements, and training opportunities. CIP grant applications and grant recipient information are also included on the website. The website links to a Twitter account, @TXChildrensComm through which JIR and ARL communiques are shared once they are published. Subscribers to the Attorney Resource Letter distribution list continue to increase and is now at over 4,000 subscribers.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The CC routinely updates the website for content and newly released reports and resources and provides a portal / webpage specific to judges and attorneys. Website visitors have full-access to these online tools and can subscribe to join CC electronic mailing lists to receive announcements.</p>
<p>II.E. Objective: Support county, state, and national child welfare leaders and organizations to enhance knowledge and competency and share experience and expertise with and throughout Texas.</p>	
<p><i>II.E.1. Strategy: Provide assistance to and collaborate with local jurisdictions, DFPS, and state and national partners and organizations.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission provides various types of support for child welfare partners and stakeholders including meeting facilitation and support, travel reimbursement for meeting and training event attendees, presentations by CC staff as requested, and assistance securing speakers for local, regional, or national events, as appropriate.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission has budgeted funds to support county, state, and national organization and efforts as described. There are no requests for such funds pending currently.</p>
<p>II.F. Objective: Support the use of best practices in court case management</p>	
<p><i>II.F.1. Strategy: Evaluate the quality, impact and usability of the Office of Court (OCA) Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS).</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>CPCMS is a case management system that is unique to Child Protection Courts (CPC). It has been in use since 2009. OCA staffs a CPCMS Advisory Council of CPC judges, OCA staff, and Children’s Commission staff to identify and discuss various enhancements and issues. CPCMS is in its ninth year of service and is currently in maintenance mode.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>On January 17, 2019, OCA released the first major software release for CPCMS which included 7 enhancements.</p> <p>In support of strategy <i>II.F.3.</i>, OCA has added the new Dallas Child Protection Court to CPCMS and is working with Dallas County IT staff to aid the new court with its initial</p>

<p>User-generated problems and enhancements are routed through an Advisory Council, which also advises on data collection and reporting features of CPCMS.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission staff serves on the Advisory Committee and collaborates with OCA regularly on the status of CPCMS’ functioning, problems, and enhancements.</p>	<p>set up by creating a case import script which will import into CPCMS pertinent case information from the existing case management system.</p> <p>The next major project for CPCMS is automated case import for all courts. The automated case import feature will allow electronic case filings to be imported automatically into CPCMS. This will significantly reduce the amount of time spent on data entry by judges and coordinators. The project will take several months to complete and will be implemented in phases after completion.</p> <p>OCA will conduct two governance meetings to establish priorities for CPCMS enhancements and will report the status of governance activities to the Children’s Commission.</p> <p>Based on the CPCMS user survey results, discussion at CWJC, and defined disposition terms agreed upon by the committee, OCA will update user training materials and include required fields that will be necessary to generate reports determined to be those most beneficial for judges to review.</p>
<p><i>II.F.2. Strategy: Partner with Office of Court Administration to expand support and training for Child Protection Court program, judges, and support staff.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>Child Protection Courts, also known as specialty child protection courts in Texas, were created to assist trial courts in the rural areas with managing their child abuse and neglect dockets. Like the child support court associate judges, these associate judges are appointed by the presiding judges and are OCA employees. At the discretion of the presiding judge, visiting judges are sometimes appointed to hear these cases instead of associate judges.</p> <p>The judges assigned to these dockets hear child abuse and neglect cases exclusively. With this exclusive focus, children on CPC dockets can achieve permanency more quickly and the quality of placement decisions should be higher. The 24 child protection courts operate in 130 Texas counties.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>OCA staff developed a four-hour training that was delivered as part of the 2018 Child Welfare Judges Conference in November. The half-day program included an update on the House Bill 7 Task Force which spent FY2018 examining issues related to broad form jury submission; Notice of Appeal in parental termination cases and the associated trial court record; and the Anders procedure in CPS cases. The curriculum also included legislative preview and a court security update as well as CPC and CPCMS IT updates.</p> <p>Also, the Children’s Commission provided \$26K in Visiting Judge funds to OCA for use between May 2018 and September 2018. Funds not expended in FY2018 were extended for use in FY2019.</p>

<p>The Children’s Commission provides funding to support CPCMS as well as other goods and services required by CPC judges and coordinators to conduct hearings and manage cases.</p>	<p>The Children’s Commission will work with OCA in FY2019 to convene a meeting of the CPC judges and their court coordinators in addition to the CWJC pre-conference meeting on November 12, 2018, in order to respond to the CPC judges’ requests for additional training specific to their court management and data collection.</p>
<p><i>II.F.3. Strategy: Collaborate with and provide support for specialty courts, dockets or programs.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>The National Quality Improvement Center for Collaborative Community Court Teams (QIC-CCCT) has provided a grant to Harris County to focus on the implementation of the CARA amendments to CAPTA. The intent of the grant is to better address the needs of infants and toddlers and their family members who are impacted by substance abuse disorders. Harris County Infant and Toddler Court received a \$70,000 grant award in April 2017. The Children’s Commission has agreed to engage with the CCCT to share information about trends, needs, and service gaps identified by the CCCT as those elements relate to infants to toddlers with prenatal exposure and their parents affected by substance use disorders.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission also agreed to provide funding through OCA to employ an Associate Judge and Court Coordinator to assist in handling child abuse and neglect cases filed in Dallas County Family Courts to promote achieving permanency for children in the Permanent Managing Conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services. The PMC Court will handle PMC cases using best practices modeled after the Harris County PMC Project Court, and will use OCA’s Child Protection Case Management System to manage the cases.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The QIC-CCCT is holding monthly stakeholder conference calls which CIP staff attends.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission provided over \$185,000 in funding to OCA and Dallas County to launch the Dallas County Child Protection and Permanency Court. Agreements between OCA and CIP, OCA and Casey Family Programs, and CIP and Dallas County are in place. An Associate Judge was hired effective January 14, 2019 and is interviewing for a Court Coordinator. DFPS provided a list of children and cause numbers to the Regional Presiding Judge and the new AJ to effectuate the transfer of cases from the referring district courts with continuing jurisdiction to the Dallas CP&P Court. It is anticipated that the Court will start conducting PMC hearings in March or April 2019. Coordination with Dallas news outlets and Senator West (Children’s Commission <i>ex officio</i> and Dallas Senator) will start closer to the launch date for the court and hearings.</p>
<p><i>II.F.4. Strategy: Convene a Task Force to examine the issues related to youth involved both in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission has worked since its inception to strengthen courts for children and families in the Texas child protection system. Federal Court Improvement</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>In July 2018, the Texas Judicial Council adopted a recommendation related to the formation of a Dual Status Task Force. In November, CC staff attended a meeting in</p>

funds require a focus on children who are abused and neglected but children involved in the juvenile justice system present with many of the same challenges and needs. The Texas Judicial Council recommended to the Supreme Court in July that the Children's Commission should convene a task force to study and report on issues relating to youth with involvement in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. The task force should establish a common, statewide definition(s) for the population, identify resources needed to meet the needs of youth who are dually-involved, and make other recommendations as may be necessary to improve outcomes for dually-involved youth. The report should address training needs for judges and other necessary parties on handling cases involving youth involved in both systems.

Harris County to discuss efforts already in place in Harris as well as Bexar, Travis, and Dallas counties through the Georgetown University Crossover Youth Practice Model program. In February 2019, the Children's Commission will meet with a small group of key stakeholders to address the Task Force composition, including outreach to judges and other stakeholders about serving on and chairing the Task Force. It is anticipated that the first meeting of the task force will occur in the Summer of 2019.

Goal III: Facilitate and institutionalize collaboration, communication, and respect between the judicial system and child welfare partners.	
III.A. Objective: Participate in and promote institutional collaboration among high-level state and judicial leaders, as well as among multi-disciplinary child welfare stakeholders to ensure open and continuous dialogue between and among the various child welfare partners aimed at improving the child welfare system functionality, promoting equitable services, and ensuring justice for all parties.	
<i>III.A.1. Strategy: Participate in and 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>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission helps institutionalize collaboration by maintaining a statewide multidisciplinary judicial commission, holding regular meetings that include child welfare stakeholders, partnering with the state child welfare agency, and partnering with other state and national level executives, partners, and organizations.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission also maintains a Collaborative Council of child welfare advocates, stakeholders, and state agencies to promote collaboration in development and implementation of CIP initiatives and conducts regular collaborative calls and meetings involving a variety of stakeholders and participants.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission participates on workgroups and collaboratives of various organizations to ensure the Commission is integrally involved in efforts and decisions affecting the state’s child welfare system, and shares information through its website, judge and attorney distribution lists, and commission meetings and commission-sponsored events.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission also serves as a convener to facilitate substantive discussions related to child welfare matters, and produces related reports with recommended changes to judicial, attorney, child welfare, and advocate practice, as well as state policy and statute.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The CC held Commission meetings on February 9, 2018 and May 4, 2018, and September 28, 2018. At the September 28th meeting, the Children’s Commission voted on several funding and project strategies for FY2019. The ED also updated the Commission that the CIP has been reauthorized through 2021 as part of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act.</p> <p>In 2019, the Commission held committee calls in January to update committee members on activities since September 2018.</p> <p>CC Staff continues to participate on various boards, workgroups, and committees, including but not limited to the Public-Private Partnership for Community Based Care, Education Reach for Texans, Texas Board of Legal Specialization Exam Committee, the TBLS Board of Directors, the Family Justice Initiative, and the Casey Family Program Legal and Judicial FFPSA Collaborative as well as the Executive Advisory Team of the Texas Permanency Outcomes Project (TXPOP).</p> <p>The CC also continues its partnership with stakeholder and advocacy groups, including but not limited to the Office of the Governor, Office of the Attorney General, the Judicial Commission on Mental Health, Texas Juvenile Justice Department, the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services, The University of Texas School of Social Work,</p>

	<p>Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, and the Child Protection Reform Round Table.</p> <p>Pursuant to other strategies outlined in this report, the Commission will convene meetings as requested, manage projects, produce reports, and make appropriate recommendations related to judicial policy and practice.</p>
<p>III.B. Confer regularly with the Department of Family and Protective Services on the Child and Family Service Reviews, Program Improvement Plans, Child and Family State Plans, and the Court Improvement Program Strategic Plans.</p>	
<p><i>III.B.1. Strategy: Confer with DFPS on federal plans, audits and requirements as mandated by federal program instructions.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>Federal Law mandates that states receiving Title IV-E funds must collaborate with the state’s Court Improvement Program (CIP). The Children’s Commission administers the CIP for Texas. As such, the Children’s Commission is required to collaborate and partner closely with the Department of Family and Protective Services. Specifically, the entities are required to collaborate on the State’s five-year Child and Family State Plan(CFSP), periodic Child and Family Service Reviews and ensuing Program Improvement Plans (PIP), and the annual Court Improvement Program Strategic Plan and Self-Assessment. The CC ED and CC Staff serve on and advise the State PIP Team.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The Executive and Assistant Directors of the Children’s Commission regularly confer with DFPS to discuss certain elements of the CFSP and PIP.</p> <p>Specific areas of collaboration for FY2019 will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Commission’s annual judicial conference by joining regional directors and judges to discuss data, gaps, and processes. DFPS will provide aggregate data to help identify gaps, trends, and process changes. • Collaboration on improving notice and engagement of parties beyond the CPC Courts and the CPCMS system. • Collaboration on Round Table discussions on system and specialized topics. • Consideration of legal and judicial input regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working with court stakeholders to ensure effective and appropriate use of court involvement in cases with court-ordered services; ○ Determining barriers and possible strategies to strengthen DPFS policy and practice related to incarcerated parents; ○ Sharing practice guidance regarding how to best engage and support parent victims of family violence;

- Consulting with attorneys who represent parents to determine barriers and strategies to strengthen DFPS policy and practice related to Family Group Decision-Making;
- Polling judges (through CC process) about the challenges and suggestions for improvements to enhance and speed permanency in cases involving the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (the ICPC);
- Sharing information about Collaborative Family Engagement and any evaluations and next steps related to expanding CFE.

DFPS leadership has a standing position on the Children’s Commission. At least one state-level DFPS staff member is on every CC committee. DFPS participates in a bi-weekly collaborative conference call with child-welfare stakeholders, including executive staff of DFPS, OCA, CASA, the Children’s Commission’s Collaborative Council, and other child welfare stakeholders. DFPS members have the opportunity to present at each CC meeting to provide information regarding DFPS initiatives and efforts. DFPS and CIP jointly attend the CIP Annual Conferences. DFPS state and regional leadership attends the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference.

Goal IV: Promote high quality court proceedings that safeguard due process, ensure child and family involvement, and support 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: Convene and maintain a Legal Representation Committee to support efforts to ensure high quality legal representation for parties.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>When a family is involved in a child protection proceeding, quality legal counsel is essential for all parties to ensure that the court strikes the appropriate balance between the rights and duties of all parties involved.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission has maintained a Legal Representation Committee (LRC) since its inception. The Committee exists to identify training needs, advise child welfare system stakeholders on best legal and judicial system practices, evaluate proposed statutory amendments, assess the quality of legal representation throughout the state, and help ensure that court proceedings guard due process, promote child and family engagement, and produce quality legal representation outcomes for the children and families involved.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The LRC met on November 2, 2018 to review the report on the Commission’s 2018 Study of Legal Representation.</p> <p>The report is available at:</p> <p><u>Supreme Court of Texas Children’s Commission 2018 Study of Legal Representation in Child Protective Services Cases</u></p> <p>The final report recommends that the Supreme Court or the Texas Legislature convene a Task Force on Court-Appointed Legal Representation to determine how Texas can thoughtfully design systemic improvements. The report suggests that the Task Force on Court-Appointed Legal Representation be charged with making specific recommendations regarding the creation, implementation, and evaluation of a high-functioning, high-quality legal representation system with the necessary and appropriate oversight and accountability. Further recommendations include that any legal representation system or model should include powers, duties, access to information, policy, legislative, and practice changes necessary to establishing appropriate oversight and accountability.</p> <p>The LRC analyzed the study’s findings and discussed short, medium, and long-term strategies to address the issues raised in the study. Short-term strategies included creating accessible materials for parents and children to help them understand the attorney-client relationship and what to expect from their court-appointed attorneys. Medium-term strategies included the creation of Parent and Child Representation Tool Kits, based on the DFPS Representation Tool Kit produced by the Commission in</p>

	<p>2018. Long-term strategies included the creation and support of the Legal Representation Task Force recommended in the study.</p> <p>The Commission is working on legislation to establish the Legal Representation Task Force and Commission staff will be presenting on the study at the 2019 American Bar Association’s National Conference on Access to Justice for Children and Families</p> <p>The next meeting of the LRC will be in the third quarter of 2019 after the 86th Legislative Session concludes.</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 development and adoption of Standards of Representation for Attorneys representing children and parents in Child Protection cases.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>Though attorneys for parents and children are required by the Family Code to become familiar with the ABA standards of practice for attorneys who represent parents and children in abuse and neglect cases, Texas does not require compliance with the ABA standards as a condition of appointment, nor has Texas adopted its own standards of practice for court-appointed attorneys.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The 2018 Legal Representation Study surveyed stakeholders regarding the effect that the lack of enforceable standards of practice has on the legal representation of parents and children. Across stakeholder groups, participants demonstrated a high level of confidence that the creation and enforcement of standards would improve the quality of representation, including 70% of responding court-appointed attorneys indicating that standards would have a positive effect. The creation and enforcement of standards of practice will be one of the issues examined by the Legal Representation Task Force.</p>
<p>IV.C. Objective: Encourage attorneys who wish to achieve a higher level of understanding and expertise to pursue child welfare specialization through the Texas Board of Legal Specialization to provide a higher caliber of legal representation.</p>	
<p><i>IV.C.1. Strategy: Participate on the Texas Board of Legal Specialization Advisory and Exam Committees and Provide Support for Specialization.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>

<p>Background:</p> <p>On February 14, 2017, the Texas Supreme Court officially recognized Child Welfare Law as the 20th area of certified legal specialization. Judge Dean Rucker serves as the chair of the Advisory Commission which considers applications to become board certified in child welfare law and has the authority to review and suggest changes in standards. CC staff serve as the chair of Exam Commission, which is responsible for drafting and grading the certification exam.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The Texas Board of Legal Specialization held the inaugural Child Welfare Law Certification Exam on October 15, 2018. Forty-eight applicants sat for the exam, and twenty-nine passed the exam. Combined with applicants who were eligible to become certified without taking the exam (they were “grandfathered in” based on meeting certain criteria established by the TBLS), there are now forty-five attorneys who are board-certified in child welfare law. The list of Texas board-certified child welfare law attorneys is available on the TBLS website. The Children’s Commission has partnered with TBLS to provide scholarships to reimburse the amount of exam fees for applicants who successfully passed the exam.</p> <p>The 2019 applications to become certified will open in March of 2019 at the TBLS “Get Certified” page, with a deadline of May 2019. Applicants will be notified in June 2019 of the TBLS decision to admit them to take the exam, and the exam will be held in October of 2019 in Austin.</p>
<p><i>IV.C.2. 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>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission 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 National Association of Counsel for Children’s Child Welfare Law 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, offering and scoring the exam, and reimbursing successful applicants either the \$350 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>02/08/19:</p> <p>In FY2018, there were seven Texas attorneys eligible for recertification and 20 attorney applicants eligible to sit for the NACC’s CWLS exam. Five Texas attorneys took advantage of the recertification scholarship in 2018. No new attorneys were certified, but NACC did receive three new applications during 2018. There are 10 attorneys who have been approved by the exam committee and are preparing to sit for the exam and become certified.</p> <p>With the Commission offering online Red Book training courses in FY2019, NACC estimates there will be 29 Texas attorneys/judges who will seek CWLS certification. There are also seven Texas attorneys whose recertification will be due in FY2019.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission will continue to contract with NACC to provide reimbursement and NACC will provide information and feedback it receives or solicits</p>

	about the quality, subject matter, and process of administering the exam. NACC will also share information about the passage rate for Texas applicants.
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.	
<i>IV.D.1. Strategy: Support Family Helpline and Parent Resource Guide.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</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 oversight, right to legal counsel, non-offending parents, minor parents, incarcerated parents, survivors of family violence, intergenerational issues, and other variations of these situations.</p> <p>Prior to establishing the Family Helpline, the Children’s Commission partnered with the University of Texas and other stakeholders to produce the Parent Resource Guide, which is available 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>02/08/19:</p> <p>The Family Helpline has seen its yearly call volume steadily increase, completing 557 calls in the first quarter of FY 2019 compared to 468 calls in the first quarter of FY 2018. To date in FY 2019, Helpline staff attorneys have spoken with callers from 93 different counties in Texas, concerning 553 adults and 856 children, and have covered questions regarding 108 different issues related to CPS.</p> <p>For FY 2019, the Family Helpline will be working with the Texas Access to Justice Internship Program to develop a project evaluating repeat-caller data and has applied with the Equal Justice Works Fellowship to develop a two-year pilot project providing legal representation to parents in FBSS cases. The Family Helpline has written an internal guide on Investigation and FBSS cases. Because there is very little information easily available about these types of cases, the Commission and the Family Helpline staff have agreed to partner on developing the Family Helpline’s internal document into a guide for attorneys and judges. The CC is reviewing what staff resources this would take and whether this would be a Training Committee or a Parent Resource Group project.</p> <p>The Parent Resource Group met on October 12, 2018 and held a follow up call on January 11, 2019. The focus of the group in FY 2019 has been on expanding access to the Parent Resource Guide. Hard copies of the guide were distributed to Local Mental Health Authorities at the October 22, 2018 Judicial Summit on Mental Health and CPS kinship workers have received access to the online guide which has also been posted on the Texas Kinship Caregiver Facebook page. The Parent Resource Group is reviewing updates to the Parent Resource Guide submitted by the Family Helpline, the</p>

	Texas Council on Family Violence, and other stakeholders and will update the guide at the conclusion of the 86 th Legislative Session.
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.	
<i>IV.E.1. Strategy: Promote and improve availability and use of the OCA Notice and Engagement tool.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>The project involves using non-confidential case data to provide email notice to users about upcoming hearings. All parties involved in CPS 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 market the resource and periodically re-issue announcements, survey users on the usefulness and effectiveness of the system, and 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>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>In FY2018, changes were made to the criteria required to search for a case to receive notice in response to multiple user inquiries who were unable to locate their hearing information. OCA has reported that there have been no requests for assistance locating hearing information since the change was implemented.</p> <p>OCA created an application programming interface (API) that will allow Courts other than those using CPCMS to upload their hearing data into the system. The goal is to expand the hearing notification tool to all courts hearing child protection cases to provide parties with up-to-date hearing information and to provide courts with an alternate means of notification free of charge. OCA and Commission staff continue to search for non CPCMS courts to pilot the program in their court.</p> <p>The number of Notice and Engagement system users continues to increase. Since October 1, an additional 60 users have registered bringing the total to 1,137. Also increasing is the number of users signing up for notification via text message. Since the option was added in 2018, 127 users have used that feature.</p>
IV.F. Objective: Promote the value of mediation in CPS cases, which may, in turn, help children and families exit the child welfare system more quickly.	
<i>IV.F.1. Strategy: Establish an understanding and framework regarding availability, quality, support, cost, training, and usefulness of mediation in CPS cases.</i>	Progress Report
Background:	02/08/19:

<p>Mediation is used in CPS cases throughout Texas and can be an effective and financially prudent method of resolving cases. One benefit of mediation is that it can enhance participants' sense they were treated fairly. Studies show that an enhanced sense of fair treatment increases both acceptance and compliance with court decisions. Though the use of mediation to resolve CPS cases prior to trial has become widely accepted, the CC is interested in exploring whether mediation is being underutilized in CPS cases because it often occurs too late for the benefits of increased compliance to be realized.</p>	<p>The CC will be holding a Round Table on Mediation in CPS cases February 22, 2019 at the University of Texas at Austin. The round table will bring together mediators, attorneys, judicial leaders, subject matter experts and policy-makers to discuss issues affecting mediation in child protection cases across Texas. The goal is to share and advance ideas that could result in increasing the effectiveness of mediation as a tool to improve outcomes for children and families.</p>
<p>IV.G. Objective: Improve and expand engagement of youth in court hearings and related decision-making 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.G.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>Background:</p> <p>In FY2018, the Children's Commission voted to fund a \$50,000 grant to Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) to support its 2018 Annual Conference and help establish a Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) designed to elevate and incorporate youth voice in statewide policy and administrative procedure discussions, particularly in the area of the foster care system. The YALC will provide a long-term opportunity for those youth to actively use their voices to change policy and influence the development and provision of services. The council will also provide a forum for stakeholders to learn from the perspectives of young people.</p> <p>To support youth engagement, the CC will also do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasize the importance of youth voice and youth presence in court. - Provide training about the importance of youth voice. - Include youth currently and formerly in care as part of judicial training events. - Promote bench cards and other resources and tools that judges can use to appropriately involve youth in court hearings and permanency planning. 	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>Members of the Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) participated in a panel discussion at the Judicial Summit on Mental Health in October 2018 about how to incorporate youth voice meaningfully into an organization's culture and service delivery. The young adults who participated in the conference joined the Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-Informed care and helped to develop the guiding principles in the Building a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System Blueprint.</p> <p>The Children's Commission also provided additional grant funding to TNOYS to support the participation of youth and young adults at the upcoming March 2019 Physical and Environmental Activities for Knowledge and Skills (PEAKS) camp.</p>
<p><i>IV.G.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>Background:</p> <p>The video conferencing project enables children involved in child abuse and neglect cases to participate in permanency and placement review hearings without being physically present in the courtroom. The CC provides funding to OCA via a grant to host and support the hardware and software required to facilitate video conferencing between courts and residential placements (primarily Residential Treatment Centers). OCA maintains a list of Residential Treatment Centers with video conferencing capability as well as a list of video-enabled courts. OCA maintains a log of all hearings conducted, including the date, time, participating court, type of hearing, participating placement, length of hearing, and any problems with the transmission quality, or technical difficulties. In FY2019, the CC will work with OCA and others to expand capability and feasibility for use beyond court hearings.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>Video Conferencing activities for FY2019 focus on outreach and user support. OCA will survey users on system satisfaction and usability. Based on survey results, the OCA and Commission will work to make identified changes and to create a user manual. Additionally, outreach will be conducted with CASA offices and courts that have registered and are not yet using the system.</p>
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Goal V: 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 child welfare agency, court system and/or other data to improve permanency outcomes for children and youth in foster care.	
<i>V.A.1. Strategy: Hire Data Analyst to assist both the Children’s Commission and the JCMH with data projects to benefit the State of Texas.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <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. The Children’s Commission is also in need of identifying, obtaining, and understanding court-related data, gaining a better understanding of the data available from the DFPS Data Portal, as well as understanding and accessing data collected by other child welfare partners and stakeholders. JCMH has similar needs in their areas of focus.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission met with interested stakeholders in January 2019 to discuss providing CIP funds to the Texas Alliance for Child and Family Services, through its Research and Policy Division, to hire a data analyst who will have the responsibilities to access publicly available data from DFPS, court-specific data, data from the TACFS, and analyze them in a manner that provides information to the judiciary. The analyst will work with CPS Regional Directors and judges to prepare for the annual judicial conference and facilitate discussions between CPS and judges on data, processes, and potential systemic improvements. The analyst will also work with DFPS to help make use of court-specific data. The focus on the collection and analysis of court and child welfare-related data is primarily to benefit the judiciary through reports and infographics.</p>

Goal VI: 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.	
<i>VI.A.1. Strategy: Plan, fund, conduct, and evaluate judicial training conferences and events.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission collaborates with Texas Center for the Judiciary (TCJ) 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 TCJ. Each year TCJ plans at least one annual Child Welfare Judges Conference.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission also provides partial funding for a half-day CPS track at TCJ’s annual Family Justice Conference.</p> <p>Additionally, the Children’s Commission usually plans and funds at least one multidisciplinary conference or summit during the fiscal year.</p> <p>Planning and funding activities include designing curriculum and agenda for conferences, determining the budget and number of attendees, participating in planning calls, vetting applicants, surveying participants, and evaluating the process and event for future planning.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The 2018 CWJC was held on November 12-14, 2018 at the Sheraton Austin Georgetown Conference Center. Eighty-three judges from across the state were presented with a curriculum which was based on specific judicial requests for further education on topics in a post-event survey following the 2017 CWJC. Using both plenary and break-out sessions, the conference content included a Keynote on secondary judicial trauma; updates on the Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-Informed Care and the Judicial Commission on Mental Health; a panel on cultural competency; a CPS case law update; a presentation on the CC’s Legal Representation Study results; judicially-led topics on teen pregnancy and parenting in foster care, normalcy, and addressing human trafficking; updates from DFPS leadership followed by regional breakouts with DFPS Regional Directors; five topics for a “Shift and Share,” including children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, the Round Table Report on Education in Residential Settings, procedural fairness, domestic violence in CPS Cases, and how to talk with kids in chambers; along with a presentation on drug tests, substance abuse and resources; and a panel to recognize judicial leadership. Post-event survey results indicate that the curriculum was well received. Plans are underway for the 2019 CWJC.</p> <p>Additionally, on January 15th, 2019, the TCJ’s annual Family Justice Conference had three afternoon breakouts on the first day of their 2-day conference, for which the CC provides speakers and financial support. This year, the speakers were Justice Michael Massengale on Changes in Procedures for TPR Cases; DFPS representatives Michele Surratt and Marco Quesada on Drug Testing in CPS Cases; and Crystal Leff-Pinon, Managing Attorney at the Family Helpline on “What Judges Need to Know about the</p>

	Intersection Between Family Law and CPS Cases.” All three breakout sessions were well attended and well received.
VI.A.2. Strategy: Partner with organizations or independently produce attorney training content	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>In partnership with the State Bar, the CC makes several online courses available to court-appointed attorneys and state and DFPS attorneys. 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 Children’s Commission collaborates with local sponsors on the conference agenda, audience, budget, marketing, and evaluation; helps ensure notice of the event to judges and attorneys; ensures CLE is available, if appropriate; analyzes survey results from evaluations distributed by the organizers; and conducts CQI of the process and training content.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p><u>SBOT Annual One-Day Webcast:</u> Commission staff is communicating with the SBOT staff to schedule a fall 2019 date for the annual partnership between the CC and the State Bar of Texas, to produce a total of 6 hours of live webcasts on basic and advanced topics for attorneys providing legal representation in CPS cases. It is anticipated that the upcoming 2019 webcast will be hosted by Judge Piper McCraw, 469th District Court of Collin County and Chair of the Children’s Commission’s Training Committee, and that the Bar will provide discounts to court-appointed attorneys and CASAs, and scholarships to other viewers, while the CC will provide scholarships to attorneys representing the Department of Family and Protective Services. CC staff is homing in on relevant topics and speakers, some of which will be selected from the feedback which the Commission received from its 2018 post-event surveys of scholarship awardees. All three webcasts from 2018 have been archived and are available as webinars for viewing at the same discounted rates provided for the live webcasts in the TexasBar CLE’s Online Library.</p> <p><u>Online Library:</u> A total of 18 webcasts have been archived in the CPS practice area of the Texas Bar CLE’s Online Library, the vast majority of which were produced by the Children’s Commission in partnership with the SBOT. The topics cover relevant and timely issues of interest to attorneys who work in the area of child welfare.</p> <p>Some or all 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.</p> <p><u>In- House Webcasts:</u></p> <p>Commission staff is preparing to launch a regular series of webcasts to help educate child welfare stakeholders across the state. This will supplement the 6 hours a year</p>

	<p>described above which the CC is grateful to film in partnership with the Bar in TexasBar CLE's studio. The Commission plans to open with a webcast on updates from this year's Legislative Session in July. The date is TBD and will be announced via a Resource Letter.</p> <p><u>DFPS Regional Attorney Training</u></p> <p>The 2018 DFPS Regional Attorney Conference, which included DFPS Legal Assistants, was held on November 13-14, 2018 at T Bar M in New Braunfels. The pre-conference Trial Skills Training was held on November 12, 2018. Ninety-seven DFPS attorneys attended, along with 75 DFPS Legal Assistants. Attendees were educated on current legal issues, DFPS policy, and evidentiary matters. The pre-conference Trial Skills training was attended by 17 attorneys. Post-event survey results indicate that the curriculum was well received.</p> <p><u>The 2nd Annual Advanced Child Protection Law Conference:</u></p> <p>The CC has offered a grant of up to \$10,000 to provide financial assistance for the Section's second Annual Advanced Child Protection Law Course, which will be held on March 28-29, 2019 at the Crowne Plaza - Market Center in Dallas, Texas. The goal of the training is to provide attorneys with the education and resources to empower their clients through effective representation and to improve the child welfare system. The two-day conference will focus on topics directly related to child protection. The Section has applied for MCLE. The Child Protection Law Section will develop and distribute a post-survey instrument for the training and provide the Children's Commission with a copy of the survey results.</p>
<p><i>VI.A.3. Strategy: Host one Trial Skills Training (TST) event each fiscal year.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>TST is a 17.50-18.50 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. TST provides parent, child, and state attorneys numerous litigation exercises</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The upcoming, 10th TST will be held over May 8-10, 2019 at the Embassy Suites in San Marcos. The application period closed with 60 applicants for 21 trainee spots (7 parent attorneys, 7 attorneys for children, and 7 attorneys who represent DFPS). Qualified applicants are less-experienced attorneys who are currently representing DFPS or taking appointments on the CPS docket, are in good standing with the State Bar of</p>

<p>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 Parent Therapists 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 were developed.</p>	<p>Texas and with their appointing or presiding judge, and receive their judge’s support to attend this intense, 3-day, hands-on litigation training. (Those applicants who have a newly elected judge as of January 1, 2019 will need to provide a professional reference and a court coordinator’s confirmation that they are currently representing DFPS or accepting court appointments, and that they are suitable for the Trial Skills Training.)</p> <p>This TST will incorporate a few critical CQI points from the prior TST in July 2018, namely: the need to update the fictional fact pattern which forms the basis of the case materials; additional faculty training on how to give critiques in the students’ practice sessions and 1:1 videotaped reviews; and the need for an additional parent therapist to play the role of the therapist witness for the AAL group. Preparations for the upcoming TST are well underway and include updating all materials and preparing the faculty over the next few months and then preparing the upcoming students and witnesses.</p>
<p>VI.B. Objective: Ensure that attorneys and judges are educated and knowledgeable in order to employ best practices in providing legal representation and in conducting hearings.</p>	
<p><i>VI.B.1. Strategy: Support attendance at state and national judicial and legal conferences and training events</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Background:</p> <p>The CC administers different judge and attorney scholarship opportunities throughout the fiscal year, including but not limited to: (1) The bi-annual ABA Parent Attorney Conference and Children and the Law Conference held in Washington D.C.; (2) The State Bar of Texas (SBOT) Advanced Family Law Child Abuse and Neglect 1-Day Workshop; (3) the NACC Annual Conference; and (4) the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges 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 and new practices attendees plan to implement and/or a current</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>NACC: Red Book Online Training Course</p> <p>The Children’s Commission will provide scholarships to thirty judges and qualified attorneys in the form of waived registration fees for the Spring 2019 online National Association of Council for Children’s (NACC) Red Book Online Training Course. The online course will consist of seven, 60-to-90-minute webinars delivered live between March 13, 2019 and June 5, 2019. Each session is delivered with opportunities for questions and interaction and is also recorded and available on-demand for viewing at the participant’s convenience throughout the course. This online course is designed to cover the fundamentals of NACC’s legal treatise, <i>Child Welfare Law and Practice, 3rd Edition</i> (aka the Red Book), in a convenient and accessible format. This course will</p>

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

assist with preparations for those seeking certification as a Child Welfare Law Specialist (CWLS) as well as providing a useful and practical child welfare law course covering material relevant to child, parent, and agency attorneys. MCLE for this course is being requested by the CC from the State Bar of Texas.

Attorney applicants must be currently representing DFPS or taking appointments on the CPS docket, be in good standing with the State Bar of Texas and with their primary judge and commit to completing a post-event survey. Judges with applicants from their jurisdiction will be notified by the Children's Commission and asked to confirm that the applicant is currently representing DFPS or taking appointments on the CPS docket. (Those applicants with a newly elected judge as of January 1, 2019 will be asked to provide a professional reference and information about contacting their primary judge's court coordinator for these purposes.) Preference may be given to applicants who have applied for the CWLS exam. The Children's Commission will be providing scholarships to this Red Book Online Training course on a first-come, first-served basis, until all 30 spots are filled.

ABA Conferences

The Children's Commission will provide ten total scholarships to qualified attorneys in the form of reimbursement of up to \$1,250 for conference registration fees and eligible conference-related travel expenses for either the ABA's 18th National Conference on Children and the Law: Access to Justice for Children and Families on April 9-10, 2019 or the ABA's National Conference on Parent Representation on April 11-12, 2019, both of which will be held in Tyson's Corner, Virginia. The Children's Commission will be providing five reimbursement scholarships to each National Conference on a first-come, first-served basis, until all ten spots are filled. Applicants must be supported by their primary judge (or by a professional reference if the applicant has a newly elected judge as of January 1, 2019) in order to be considered qualified. In addition, qualified applicants must be currently representing DFPS or taking appointments on the CPS docket, be in good standing with the State Bar of Texas and with their appointing or presiding judge and commit to completing a post-event survey. Judges with applicants from their jurisdiction will be notified by the Children's Commission and asked to confirm that the applicant is currently

representing DFPS or taking appointments on the CPS docket, and to provide a statement of support for the scholarship for each applicant .

Advanced Family Law One-Day Child Abuse and Neglect Workshop

This year's Child Abuse and Neglect Track 1-Day CLE will be held on August 14th, 2019 and will be hosted by the SBOT Child Protection Law Section. The Commission is supporting this statewide MCLE effort by following our usual scholarship procedure, to partner with the SBOT to provide registration scholarships to qualified attorneys from across the state. Qualified applicants must be currently representing DFPS or taking appointments on the CPS docket, be in good standing with the State Bar of Texas and with their appointing or presiding judge and commit to completing a post-event survey. The CC has allocated \$10,000 to cover 100 attorneys at \$100 each. This scholarship process is scheduled to begin in the early spring of 2019.

NACC Annual Conference

The NACC's annual conference will be held August 26-28th, 2019 in Anaheim, California, with a pre-conference on the 25th for the NACC's in-person Red Book Training (which is helpful training especially for those attorneys and judges wanting to take the CWLS exam). The Commission will provide up to 25 scholarships to Texas attorneys to attend the conference. Applicants also have the option of applying to attend the preconference Red Book Training. Scholarship funding is capped at \$10,000 and will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis to qualified applicants. This scholarship process is scheduled to begin in the early spring of 2019.

NCJFCJ Annual Conference

The NCJFCJ's 2019 Annual Conference will be held in Orlando, Florida from July 28-31. The Commission will be offering judicial scholarships for 25 judges to attend. This scholarship process is a collaboration between the CC and TCJ.

Goal VII: 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: Identify and Promote data-driven, cross-disciplinary training opportunities to address disproportionality and disparities among children and families involved in child protection cases.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission is committed to the goal of reducing racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system through development and deployment of judicial and attorney resources aimed at increasing awareness, sharing data and information, as well as best practices for dealing with disproportionality and disparities systemically and locally.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>In October 2018, the Commission co-sponsored the Judicial Mental Health Summit with the Judicial Commission on Mental Health. The Children and Youth Track included a presentation from Sheila Craig, a Commissioner and long-time member of the Children’s Commission’s Judicial Workgroup on Disproportionality. The Summit presentation, “Ensuring Equity in Serving Children and Youth,” was very well received and facilitated helpful conversation for the SCTIC meeting held the next day. The CC has also assisted DFPS in promoting a series of DFPS webinars aimed at educating all child welfare stakeholders on the effects of disproportionality and disparities.</p>

Goal VIII: 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>Background:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission supports partnering with system stakeholders to promote ongoing knowledge and understanding of the ICWA and its importance. The CC also works with national ICWA and leading organizations on understanding and implementation of new Federal Rule and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Guidelines and membership on the Commission includes a tribal judge.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission also partners with DFPS in supporting tribal/state collaborative meetings and collaborates with the National Center for State Courts and the participants of the CIP ICWA Constituency Group.</p>	<p>02/08/19:</p> <p>The Commission issued a JIR and ARL on November 9, 2018 informing readers of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas opinion in Brackeen v. Zinke declaring unconstitutional most of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The case is currently pending in the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. The lower court’s decision has been stayed pending appeal. The Fifth Circuit has set oral argument for March 13, 2019. The Commission continues to monitor this case and update stakeholders on the status.</p>

Goal 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.

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 well-being.

IX.A.1. Strategy: Engage in activities integral to the Children’s Commission’s functions and operations.

Progress Report

Background:

The Children’s Commission receives state appropriated as well as federal grant funds which are used to operate the Commission, fund meeting facilitation and travel reimbursement, training expenses and scholarships, as well as pass-through grants to sub-grantees such as Texas Center for the Judiciary and Office of Court Administration.

The Children’s Commission adopted its most recent Strategic Plan in 2016. The Children’s Commission also confers regularly with national organizations and other CIPs, submits annual reports and CIP strategic plans to the Administration for Children and Families and to the Supreme Court of Texas.

The Children’s Commission holds Commission meetings every four months throughout each year of the five-year plan and conducts a bi-monthly collaborative call with DFPS and other child welfare stakeholders as well as numerous other calls and meetings related to Children’s Commission workgroups. CC Staff serves on the Public Private Partnership, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Education Reach for Texans, and many other stakeholder workgroups and subcommittees formed under the leadership of its child welfare partners. The CC engages in ongoing participation with ACF and DFPS regarding the CFSP, APSR, CFSR and PIP and CIP Strategic Plan.

02/08/19:

In FY2019, the CC received approximately \$1.7 million in federal CIP funds for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. These funds are used for Commission operations as well as being passed through to grant recipients such as the Office of Court Administration, Texas Center for the Judiciary, and 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.

DFPS staff participate on the following workgroups and committees: Collaborative Council, Data Committee, Training Committee, Foster Care and Education, Special Education, Post-Secondary Education, School Discipline, House Bill 7 Task Force, Pleading Practice, Legal Representation, Parent Resource Workgroup, and in the Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-Informed Care.

The CC publishes an updated Report to Commission in advance of each Commission meeting as well as JIR and ARL letters, project reports, meeting minutes, meeting agendas, and follow up reports for all short-term and long-term projects throughout the fiscal year. The CC also publishes an annual report to the Supreme Court in December of each year.

INSERT - TAB 4



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

Children's Commission Financial Report

FY 2019 BUDGET

FY 2018 Carry Forward	\$	1,972,442
FY 2019 State General Revenue	\$	7,500
FY 2019 Federal Distribution	\$	1,783,544
FY 2019 Available Funds	\$	3,763,486

FY 2019 OBLIGATIONS

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Expenses To-date</u>	<u>Outstanding Obligations</u>
Indirect	\$ 1,034,061	\$ (306,723)	\$ 727,338
Staff Directed Projects	\$ 143,721	\$ 219,742	\$ 363,463
Grants	\$ 1,125,794	\$ (95,676)	\$ 1,030,118
Scholarships	\$ 67,500	\$ (26,911)	\$ 40,589
	<u>\$ 2,371,076</u>	<u>\$ (209,568)</u>	<u>\$ 2,161,509</u>

CURRENT FINANCIAL STATUS

State General Revenue Balance 1/25/19	\$	7,500
Federal Fund Balance 1/25/19	\$	3,231,987
FY 2019 Outstanding Obligations	\$	(2,161,509)
Estimated Unexpended/Carry Forward FY 2020	\$	1,077,978

INSERT - TAB 5

FY2019 Grant Summaries and Updates

Organization:	Texas Center for the Judiciary (TCJ)
Project:	FY 2018 Judicial Training Overage
Grant Amount:	\$39,017.27
Explanation:	<p>Child Welfare Judges Conference November 2017: The original budget for the conference did not include DFPS Legal Assistants and Regional Directors. With the DFPS attendance and participation the budgeted amount for the conference was exceeded. The budget categories that were exceeded include, food and beverage, audio/visual expense, and travel.</p> <p>Education Summit 2018: The Education Summits content duration and attendance was still being determined at the time of the grant award. This was the first summit of its kind that was managed for the Commission by TCJ. As the planning process was conducted through the first part of the fiscal year, modifications to the original duration and potential participants were made. The added workload from additional attendees and components, along with frequent communication and meetings with Commission staff, caused salary and fringe expenses to exceed the budgeted amount. The Center's Program Director, Conference Coordinator, and Registrar represent the majority of the excess in these categories.</p> <p>With the additions to the conferences listed above and the subsequent increase in TCJ staff hours the expenses exceeded the grant amount by \$39,017.27.</p>
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Conference Expenses Travel
Organization:	Child Protection Law Section
Project:	The 2nd Annual Advanced Child Protection Law Conference
Grant Amount:	NTE \$10,000
Project Description:	The Section's second Annual Advanced Child Protection Law Course, scheduled for March 28-29, 2019 at the Crowne Plaza - Market Center in Dallas, Texas. The goal of the training is to provide attorneys with the education and resources to empower their clients through effective representation and to improve the child welfare system. The two-day conference will focus on topics directly related to child protection. The Section has applied for MCLE. The Child Protection Law Section will develop and distribute a post-survey instrument for the training and provide the Children's Commission with a copy of the survey results.
Project Activities:	The Child Protection Law Section will conduct the following activities to hold the 2nd Annual Advanced Child Protection Law Course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify and reserve training venue; - develop agenda; - market training and register attendees; - work with faculty to assist with presentations, facilitate travel, develop course descriptions, gather materials, arrange AV, etc.; - prepare all conference materials; - track and reconcile MCLE hours for conference participants;

FY2019 Grant Summaries and Updates

	- prepare conference evaluation materials, distribute at conference, and provide results from evaluations to Children's Commission.
Use of Funds:	Conference related expenses.
Organization:	The Texas Center for Child and Family Studies (TACFS)
Project:	Data Analyst
Grant Amount:	\$72,805 (based on \$124,809/year prorated at 7 months)
Project Description:	The Children's Commission met with staff from TACFS, DFPS, and UT about using CIP funds to support a data analyst position through the Texas Alliance for Child and Family Services, through its Research and Policy Division. The data analyst will be responsible for accessing publicly available data from DFPS, court-specific data, data from the TACFS, and analyzing in a manner that provides information to the judiciary.
Project Activities:	The analyst will work with CPS Regional Directors and judges to prepare for the annual judicial conference and facilitate discussions between CPS and judges on data, processes, and potential systemic improvements. The analyst will also work with DFPS to help make use of court-specific data. The focus on the collection and analysis of court and child welfare-related data is primarily to benefit the judiciary through reports and infographics.
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Travel
Organization:	Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS)
Project:	Physical and Environmental Activities for Knowledge and Skills (PEAKS)
Grant Amount:	NTE \$20,000 FY18 NCE
Project Description:	The PEAKS Adventure Program has been transforming the lives of its participants since 1984 when a group of youth care workers and young people from shelters, halfway houses, and juvenile justice agencies partnered with TNOYS to create an intensive residential camp experience founded on best practices in youth development theory. The PEAKS camp program helps youth build resiliency skills through structured experiential learning and positive interactions with adults and youth peers. Camp helps youth enhance feelings of self-worth, build relationship skills, learn to take safe risks, practice problem solving, and discover their strengths and limitations.
Project Activities:	TNOYS will identify and register youth to attend the PEAKS program. They will assist those youth with travel and related expenses.
Use of Funds:	Registration fees and staff salary association with registering campers