



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

**Texas Court Improvement Program (CIP)
2020 Annual Self-Assessment Report**

Submitted July 31, 2020

Supreme Court of Texas
Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families
Court Improvement Program
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**State Court Improvement Program 2020 Annual Self-Assessment Report
Texas Court Improvement Program**

This self-assessment is intended as an opportunity for Court Improvement Programs (CIPs) to review progress on required CIP projects, joint program planning and improvement efforts with the child welfare agency, and the ability to integrate CQI successfully into practice. Questions are designed to solicit candid responses that help CIPs apply CQI and identify support that may be helpful.

- I. **CQI Analyses of Required CIP Projects** (Joint Project with Agency, Hearing Quality Project) *It is ok to cut and paste responses from last year, but please update according to where you currently are in the process.*

Joint Project with the Child Welfare Agency:

Provide a concise description of the joint project selected in your jurisdiction.

- **To improve permanency outcomes for children within 12 months of entering foster care.**

Identify the specific safety, permanency, or well-being outcome this project is intended to address.

- **Permanency.**

Approximate date that the project began:

- **Fall 2016.**

Which stage of the CQI process best describes the current status of project work?

- **Implementation and planning evaluation.**

How was the need for this project identified? (Phase I)

- **Achieving permanency outcomes for children within 12 months of entering foster care has been an ongoing problem in Texas.**

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-13), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Control Number with expiration date. The estimated time to complete the CIP Annual Self-Assessment is 77 hours.

What is the theory of change for the project? (Phase II) *If you do not yet have a theory of change and/or would like assistance, please indicate such in the space below.*

- **The original theory of change was that by examining various aspects of agency permanency data for a given fiscal year, together, the CIP and child welfare agency would be able to identify certain patterns or practices that encourage or inhibit permanency within 12 months.**

Have you identified a solution/intervention that you will implement? If yes, what is it? (Phase III)

- **Due to significant updates to the SACWIS, known in Texas as IMPACT, as well as challenges at the CIP with analyzing publicly available data, the project was modified in 2017. The project now consists of a child welfare data plenary presentation by the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS) to members of the judiciary at an annual conference. The training also includes breakout sessions between judges and DFPS regional directors to discuss region-specific data elements and permanency outcomes. This has been achieved in person at the annual judicial conferences through 2019. However, due to current COVID concerns, the CIP will coordinate with DFPS in 2020 to create a stand-alone judicial education opportunity which will be focused on educating the judiciary with data and updates from the Department.**
- **As part of the PIP, DFPS annually provides aggregate data to the CIP and judiciary with identified trends impacting courts. (PIP Item 5.1.6)**
- **In January 2019, the CIP began funding a specialty court in Dallas County to serve youth in Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC). The Dallas County PMC Court is modeled after the Harris County PMC Court, which has been very successful in Harris County. Both the Harris County and Dallas County PMC Courts use the Office of Court Administration (OCA) Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS) to manage cases. CIP funding for the Dallas PMC Court ended on August 31, 2019 and the court is now funded through a General Appropriation from the Texas Legislature. The appropriation will cover the 2020-2021 biennium. (PIP Item 5.6.1)**
- **In April 2019, the CIP executed an agreement with the Texas Center for Child and Family Studies (Center) to hire a data analyst to analyze publicly available child welfare data in a manner that facilitates discussions between DFPS and judges about data, judicial processes and practices, and potential systemic improvements. The data analyst also uses aggregate court data to**

identify and analyze barriers within the purview of the legal system including ensuring children and youth in foster care experience safety while in care, achieve permanency as quickly as possible, and maintain well-being for the duration of their time in foster care.

- **As part of the PMC Court project, IMPACT and court case management data will be analyzed by the CIP-funded data analyst. (PIP Item 5.6.2)**

What has been done to implement the project? (Phase IV)

- **For the past four years, DFPS has and will continue to participate in the Children’s Commission’s annual judicial conference and provide data which will be reviewed by DFPS regional directors. Due to COVID concerns, this year’s annual judicial conference will be shortened and offered virtually. A few Department representatives will speak on statewide topics during the 2020 virtual conference, and all efforts will be made to provide a separate judicial education offering which will focus exclusively on updates from DFPS to the judiciary (including data and meetings between the judiciary and their DFPS regional directors to review and discuss region-specific data elements and permanency outcomes). (PIP Items 5.5.1 and 5.5.2)**
- **Permanency was a focus both at the pre-conference and at the annual statewide judicial conference held in October 2019. The pre-conference provided an in-depth analysis of permanency for older youth in foster care. At the conference, judges and DFPS regional directors discussed each positive permanency outcome, examined the factors that lead to delays, and identified possible solutions.**
- **As a follow up to the permanency breakout sessions at the 2019 judicial conference, the CIP distributed a short tip sheet to judges about best practices and identified solutions to promote positive permanency.**
- **The Dallas PMC court completed Year One of hearing cases and the initial permanency and well-being outcomes are promising. The CIP data analyst will serve on the PMC Court Advisory Committee and a data project is in progress. (PIP Item 5.6.2)**
- **A team comprised of the Dallas PMC Court Judge, regional and state DFPS leadership, CIP staff, and the data analyst attended the Capacity Building Center for Courts Permanency Workshop in February 2020. The Texas team agreed to evaluate the Dallas PMC Court, including the development of a practice model for the court. The initial goal was to complete the evaluation by December 2020, but this timeline may be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.**

- **The goals of the CIP data analysis project beyond the Dallas PMC Court include the Center consulting with judges on methods for capturing and utilizing court-specific data, staying current on emerging child welfare and legal trends and best practices, and communicating information that empowers judges to improve their court operations and practices. It is also anticipated that the Center will develop original content (presentations, white papers, analyses, trainings, etc.) on topics relevant to the larger child welfare community. Through this partnership and collaboration, the three major components of the child welfare system (the state child welfare agency, the foster care provider network, and the courts) will apply their experience with internal CQI processes in a collective manner that will help Texas further improve outcomes for children, youth, and families involved in the child welfare system.**

What is being done or how do you intend to monitor the progress of the project? (Phase V). *Be specific in terms of what type of evaluation (e.g., fidelity or outcome, comparison group, etc.) or data efforts you have in place or plan to have in place to assess your efforts. If you have already evaluated your effort, how did you use these data to modify or expand the project?*

- **All CIP projects and progress are tracked quarterly and reported to the Children’s Commission in February, May, and September.**
- **The Capacity Building Center for Courts developed a work plan and logic model for the Texas team following the February 2020 Permanency Workshop. The recommendation was for a fidelity assessment, measurement of outputs, and summative evaluation. The Texas team is currently reviewing the work plan and developing a modified timeline in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

What assistance or support would be helpful from the CBCC or the Children’s Bureau to help move the project forward?

- **None identified at this time. The CIP will follow up with the CBCC as needed after conferring with the Texas team.**

Hearing Quality Project:

Provide a concise description of the hearing quality project selected in your jurisdiction.

- **The Texas Family Code requires that youth attend permanency review hearings, and places additional duties on attorneys ad litem, judges, and DFPS to meet with children in advance of court hearings. Despite having**

statutes in place, the practice of involving youth in the court process continues to be a challenge, and meaningful participation by youth remains the exception and not the norm. This lack of involvement results in youth feeling disconnected from the process and judges not reaping the benefits of the input from youth. Although Texas has not yet studied whether the lack of youth participation in the court process directly correlates with delays in permanency, our hypothesis is that it does.

Approximate date that the project began:

- **Fall 2016.**

Which stage of the CQI process best describes the current status of project work?

- **Implementation.**

How was the need for this project identified? (Phase I)

- **There have been many studies on the issue of youth voice and youth involvement. There is consensus that youth in foster care repeatedly express the desire to be involved in decisions about their lives because it gives youth a sense of control, helps them understand the process, and promotes healing. Direct contact between the court and the youth also benefits judges. Simply put, youth involvement in court proceedings results in better quality hearings.**
- **In FY 2014, the CIP undertook a hearing observation project. As indicated on p. 26 of the Hearing Quality Observation Project Report dated March 2014, the presence of the child in court aligned with a significant increase in the number of quality indicators addressed in the hearings.**
- **In 2017, the Texas Legislature enacted a requirement that the CIP conduct a statewide study and produce a report on legal representation in Child Protective Services (CPS) cases across Texas. The Children's Commission, working in concert with its standing Legal Representation Committee, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), and the University of Texas at Austin's Texas Institute of Child & Family Wellbeing, designed, vetted, and distributed survey questions regarding the state of legal representation in Texas CPS cases.**
- **In 2018, perspectives from parents, youth currently in care, relatives, foster parents, attorneys, mediators, judges, and other professionals involved in the child-welfare system were solicited through these survey questions**

regarding the strengths, barriers, and efficacy of the current court-appointment system. CPS caseworkers offered youth on their caseloads the opportunity to complete the survey. CPS caseworkers determined whether the survey was appropriate for each specific youth. The survey did not distinguish between youth who are in Temporary Managing Conservatorship (TMC) of DFPS and are statutorily required to have a court-appointed attorney, and youth in PMC of DFPS, who are not required to have a court appointed attorney. A total of 737 youth in care completed surveys and the results revealed several barriers to meaningful youth participation at court. Only 19 percent of youth surveyed reported that their attorney always visited them before each hearing, 63 percent of attorneys reported always informing youth of their right to attend court, and 42 percent of youth reported that their attorney adequately prepared them for the court process.

What is the theory of change for the project? (Phase II) *If you do not yet have a theory of change and/or would like assistance, please indicate such in the space below.*

- **By increasing youth participation in court proceedings and service planning, youth will feel more engaged, and the quality of review hearings and legal representation in general will be enhanced.**

Have you identified a solution/intervention that you will implement? If yes, what is it? (Phase III)

- **The CIP collaborates with child welfare partners to facilitate and elevate youth input into policy, legislation, and practice.**
- **The CIP provides training and judicial tools such as bench cards and communiques regarding statutory and practice changes so that youth will experience high-quality hearings and court proceedings, and hopefully improved permanency outcomes, including exiting foster care sooner.**
- **The CIP will continue to increase awareness about the law, the importance of youth voice, reducing barriers to participation, and encourage child welfare stakeholders to adopt and implement appropriate policy, legislative, and practice changes that ensure youth voice is regularly included and considered.**

What has been done to implement the project? (Phase IV)

- **The Children’s Commission’s Child Protection Law Bench Book (Bench Book) includes a topical chapter on the importance of youth voice and youth appearance and participation in court proceedings.**
- **The Bench Book also includes ABA Bench Cards on interviewing children as well as bench cards with specific inquiries about the child’s attendance and the attorney ad litem and other parties’ obligations to communicate with the child and help ensure the child’s voice is heard.**
- **The CIP provided start-up support for a Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council designed to engage young adults in statewide policy and administrative procedure discussions, particularly in the area of improving the foster care system. The statewide council provides long-term opportunity for those youth to actively use their voices to change policy and influence the development and provision of services.**
- **The CIP supports a video conferencing project, which enables children involved in child abuse and neglect cases to participate in permanency review hearings without being physically present in the courtroom. OCA hosts and supports the hardware and software required to facilitate video conferencing between courts and residential placements. OCA maintains a list of courts, Residential Treatment Centers, and local CASA offices with video conferencing capability. OCA maintains a log of all hearings conducted, including the date, time, participating court, type of hearing, participating placement, length of hearing, any problems with the transmission quality, or technical difficulties. This service is also available to CASA volunteers, attorneys ad litem, and youth in foster care.**
- **In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, OCA provided Zoom licenses for all Texas courts. Judges report increased youth and family engagement due to the ability to participate in virtual hearings and utilize breakout rooms for confidential conversations. Judges anticipate these benefits can continue even when in-person proceedings resume. Over time, Zoom technology may replace the video conferencing technology referenced above due to ease of use and access.**
- **In response to COVID-19, the CIP designed, broadcast, and archived two free webcasts in May and June 2020 aimed at improving hearing quality. The first focused on attorney advocacy in the virtual courtroom and included a panel of attorneys who represent DFPS, children, and parents. The second was a judicial panel centered around the benefits of virtual court hearings including increased child and family engagement, more efficient docket management, improved language access due to interpreter features,**

increased attorney preparation, increased family time, expanded options for dispute resolution, and progress towards permanency. The judicial panelists emphasized the ease of using virtual participation to include youth voice and the tangible benefits it can have for judicial decision-making, including some benefits that are unique to virtual attendance.

What is being done or how do you intend to monitor the progress of the project? (Phase V) *Be specific in terms of what type of evaluation (e.g., fidelity or outcome, comparison group, etc.) or data efforts you have in place or plan to have in place to assess your efforts. If you have already evaluated your effort, how did you use these data to modify or expand the project?*

- **CIP will collect information through reports from partners, by monitoring the number of attorneys viewing CLE offerings, and by monitoring how frequently the related pages and sections of the Bench Book are being accessed, and by which stakeholders.**
- **CIP may use individual interview tools or surveys as well as agency and stakeholder interviews, focus groups, or surveys.**
- **CIP will continue to monitor use of video conference hearings as one measure of youth involvement in court proceedings.**
- **CIP will continue monitoring youth involvement through activities of the Legal Representation Committee, Foster Care & Education Committee, and other workgroups and projects that are ongoing through the CIP.**
- **The youth representative on the Children’s Commission participates on the implementation of the Children’s Commission’s Statewide Collaborative on Trauma Informed Care Blueprint.**

What assistance or support would be helpful from the CBCC or the Children’s Bureau to help move the project forward?

- **None identified at this time.**

II. Trainings, Projects, and Activities For questions 1-12, provide a *concise* description of work completed or underway to date in FY 2020 (October 2019-June 2020) in the below topical subcategories. For question 1, focus on significant training events or initiatives held or developed in FY 2020.

1. Trainings

<i>Topical Area</i>	<i>Did you hold or develop a training on this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>How many persons attended?</i>	<i>What type of training is it? (e.g., conference, training curriculum/program, webinar)</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>What type of training evaluation did you do? S=Satisfaction, L=Learning, B=Behavior, O=Outcomes</i>
Data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges	93	Conference	Increase knowledge, change practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Hearing quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges	93	Conference	Increase knowledge, change practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Improving timeliness/ permanency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges	316	Conference and webinar	Increase knowledge, change practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Quality legal representation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Attorneys	235 (live)	Webinar	Increase knowledge, change practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Engagement & participation of parties	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges	93	Conference	Increase knowledge, change practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Well-being	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges	150	Conference	Increase knowledge, change practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
ICWA/Tribal collaboration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges	93	Conference	Increase knowledge, change practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Sex Trafficking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges	93	Conference	Increase knowledge, change practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Normalcy/R. Prudent Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No					<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Prevention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Judges	93	Conference	Increase knowledge, change practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> S <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No					<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> L <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> O <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

On average, how many training events do you hold per year?

- **In FY2020, the CIP sponsored 6 major, statewide training events: (1) Annual Child Welfare Judges Conference (57 judges attended a first-ever Pre-conference event on the Judicial Impact on Well-Being of Children in Care; 93 judicial attendees were at the full conference, plus other stakeholders); (2) Annual Family Justice Conference (93 attendees); (3) Trial Skills Training Virtual CLE (18 attendees); and (4) State Bar of Texas One-Day webcast of 6 total hours of CLE (585 viewers for the live CLE, with additional viewers for the archived webcasts); (5) Webcasts on Advocacy in the Virtual Courtroom and Benefits of Using Technology in Court (683 total judicial and attorney attendees to date, including the live viewers and those who watched the replays of these two CLEs); and (6) Department of Family and Protective Services Regional Attorney Training (137 attendees).**
- **The Judicial Trauma Institute (JTI) was scheduled for March 29-31, 2020 but was canceled due to COVID-19 concerns. At this time, the CIP is working to re-schedule and re-imagine JTI, perhaps in a virtual format.**

What is your best prediction for the number of attorneys and judges that will participate in a training annually?

- **Between 100 – 200 judges**
- **Between 100 – 600 attorneys**
- **300+ judges and 3000+ attorneys receive regular educational communiques from the Commission, and access free CIP online training materials each fiscal year.**
- **In addition to the development and hosting of the above events, the CIP provides scholarships to state and national conferences and sponsors child welfare department training events as well. Events include: (1) State Bar of Texas Family Law Section’s Advanced Family Law One-Day Child Abuse and Neglect Workshop; (2) DFPS Regional Attorney Training Conference; (3) State Bar of Texas Child Protection Law Section CLE; (4) National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Annual Conference; (5) National Association of Counsel for Children Annual Conference; (6) Biennial ABA Parent and Child Legal Representation Conferences; and (7) Biennial Texas District and County Attorney Association Conference (this was cancelled in 2020 due to COVID concerns).**

The Family First Prevention Services Act amends the Social Security Act adding an eligibility criterion for the training of judges and attorneys on the congregate care provisions of the Act. See the highlighted portion below.

(1)¹ IN GENERAL.— In order to be eligible to receive a grant under this section, a highest State court shall have in effect a rule requiring State courts to ensure that foster parents, pre- adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of a child in foster care under the responsibility of the State are notified of any proceeding to be held with respect to the child, *shall provide for the training of judges, attorneys, and other legal personnel in child welfare cases on Federal child welfare policies and payment limitations with respect to children in foster care who are placed in settings that are not a foster family home*, and shall submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such form, and including such information and assurances as the Secretary may require, including—

States have an option to delay implementation of the congregate care provisions by two years. The decision will have a direct impact on when judicial determinations and CIP training requirements must begin.

Do you know when your state plans to implement Family First? Yes No
If yes, when?

- **Texas has deferred implementation to October 2021.**

Have you been involved in planning with the agency on implementing Family First? Yes
 No

If yes, please describe how the CIP has been involved.

- **The CIP Director meets with Child Welfare Director periodically. Texas is evaluating FFPSA and will spend FY2021 preparing for October 2021 implementation.**
- **In August 2020, CIP and DFPS leadership will partner to facilitate a small group discussion with judges about the judicial determinations required under FFPSA.**
- **In September 2020, CIP and DFPS CBCAP Leadership will facilitate a listening session with judges with a focus on FFPSA and prevention.**
- **In October 2020, CIP anticipates partnering with DFPS speakers to present a session on FFPSA at the virtual judicial conference.**
- **The CIP Director also participates on the Prevention and Early Intervention Prevention Framework Workgroup.**

Have you been developing your Family First judicial training plan? Yes No

¹ Sec. 50741(c) of P.L. 115-123 revised sec. 438(b)(1) to add language regarding training. Effective as if enacted on 1/1/18 (sec. 50746(a)(1) of P.L. 115-123).

If yes, please describe what you have done.

- **Nothing extensive yet. At the annual judicial training in October 2019, there was a one-hour session on FFPSA and a follow up will be offered either at the 2020 virtual judicial conference or at the anticipated, additional, Department-focused judicial training mentioned above. The training will most likely focus on the state’s implementation status and the duties and responsibilities, strategic planning being undertaken by the child welfare agency, and a preview of the effect on judges and lawyers as it relates to congregate care placements and options for prevention services.**

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

Do you have a data project/activity? Yes No (skip to #3)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
See above		

(a) Do you have data reports that you consistently view? Yes No

(b) How are these reports used to support your work?

3. Hearing Quality. Hearing quality projects include any efforts you have made to improve the quality of dependency hearings, including court observation/assessment projects, process improvements, specialty/pilot court projects, projects related to court orders or title IV-E determinations, mediation, or appeals.

Do you have a hearing quality project/activity? Yes No (skip to #4)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
See above		

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

Do you have a timeliness or permanency project/activity? Yes No (skip to #5)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
See above		

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

Do you have a quality legal representation project/activity? Yes No (skip to #6)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Legal Representation Committee	Other	Implementation
Task Force on Court Appointed Legal Representation	Other	Selecting Solution
Texas Board of Legal Specialization	Other	Implementation
Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in CPS Cases	Other	Implementation

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

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

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Notice & Engagement	Notice to Relatives	Implementation

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Video Conferencing for Permanency Reviews	Youth Engagement	Implementation
Family Helpline	Caregiver Engagement	Implementation

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

Do you have any projects/activities focused on well-being? Yes No (skip to #8)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Statewide Collaborative on Trauma Informed Care	Trauma	Implementation
Foster Care & Education Committee	Education	Implementation
	Choose an item	Choose an item

8. ICWA/Tribal collaboration. These projects could include any efforts to enhance state and tribal collaboration, state and tribal court agreements, data collection and analysis including of ICWA practice.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on ICWA or tribal collaboration? Yes No (skip to #9)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Participation in DFPS Tribal/State Collaborative	Other	

9. Preventing Sex Trafficking. These projects could include work around domestic child sex trafficking, a focus on runaway youth, collaboration with other agencies around this topic, data collection and analysis, data sharing, or other efforts to fully implement these sections of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act into practice.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on preventing sex trafficking/runaways? Yes No (skip to #10)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Participation on Statewide Task Force of State Attorney General	Collaboration with other agencies	Implementation
Participation of Office of Governor Child Sex Trafficking Team	Collaboration with other agencies	Implementation
	Choose an item	

10. Normalcy/Reasonable and Prudent Parent. These projects could include any work around normalcy or the reasonable and prudent parent standard or practices, collaboration with other agencies around this topic, data collection and analysis, data sharing, or other efforts to fully implement these sections of the Preventing Sex and Strengthening Families Act into practice.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on normalcy/reasonable prudent parenting? Yes No (skip to #11)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Developing a Role-Based Guide to Normalcy for Children in Care, in partnership with Texas CASA	Collaboration with other agencies	Implementation

11. Prevention. Prevention projects include work around preventing child maltreatment including primary prevention (preventing maltreatment from occurring in the first place), secondary, and tertiary prevention.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on prevention? Yes No (skip to #12)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Prevention Listening Session with Judges	Other	Identifying/Assessing Needs

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)
Participation in Prevention and Early Intervention Prevention Framework Workgroup	Collaboration with other agencies	Identifying/Assessing Needs

12. Safety. Safety projects are those that focus on decision-making around safety including decision-making practices in substantiation, removal, family time/visitation, and decisions about safety in out of home placements.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on safety? Yes No (skip to sec. III)

Project Description	How would you categorize this project?	Work Stage (if applicable)

III. CIP Collaboration in Child Welfare Program Planning and Improvement Efforts

1. Please describe how the CIP was involved with the state’s CFSP due June 30, 2019.

➤ **Reviewed and provided input.**

a. Does the CFSP include any of the following:

- legal/judicial strategies
- the CIP/Agency Joint Project
- the CIP Hearing Quality Project

If yes, please describe.

➤ **Although the relationship between DFPS and the CIP is mentioned several times in the CFSP, it is not apparent that the CFSP includes anything directly responsive to the above categories. However, this Self-Assessment discusses in detail the CIP/Agency Joint Project and the CIP Hearing Quality Project, which may be included in the 700+ page State Plan. The DFPS PIP has several legal/judicial strategies as well; some are mentioned in this Self-Assessment.**

2. Please describe how the CIP was or will be involved in the most recent/upcoming title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review in your state.

- **CIP usually attends the kick-off and exit conferences but is not otherwise involved.**

3. Please describe how the CIP is or was involved in preparing and completing the latest round of the CFSR and PIP, if required, in your state. *Please check all the ways that the CIP or Court Personnel were involved (or plan to be involved) in the CFSR and PIP Process. Feel free to add additional narrative to explain your involvement in the process.*

- not involved at all
- involved in planning the statewide assessment
- CFSR reviewers
- interviewed for CFSR
- invited to the exit conference at the close of the CFSR review
- invited to the final CFSR results session at the conclusion of the report
- final CFSR report was shared with you
- final CFSR report shared with courts broadly across the state
- part of a large group of stakeholders engaged to assist in design of the PIP
- high level of inclusion during the entire PIP process
- made suggestions for inclusion in the PIP
- suggestions made by CIP for inclusion in the PIP were put forward by the child welfare agency
- had an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the PIP before it was submitted
- meet (or plan to meet) ongoing with the child welfare agency to monitor PIP Implementation

The current version of the PIP includes (check all that apply):

- court strategies
- court/agency shared strategies
- the court/agency joint project described above
- the CIP hearing quality project
- specific practice changes that judges will make
- specific practice changes that attorneys will make

4. What strategies or processes are in place in your state that you feel are particularly effective in supporting joint child welfare program planning and improvement?

- **Regular and ongoing communication and collaboration with the child welfare agency as well as participation on most major child welfare system reform projects.**

5. What barriers exist in your state that make effective joint child welfare program planning and improvement challenging?

- **There are no significant barriers to joint planning with DFPS.**

6. Does the state child welfare agency currently offer professional partner training to judges, attorneys, and court personnel as part of its Title IV-E Training Plan?
If yes, please provide a brief description of what is provided and how.

➤ **No. Texas uses CIP funds to pay for judge, attorney, and court personnel training.**

If no, have you met with child welfare agency leadership to discuss and explore utilizing professional partner training for judges, attorneys and court personnel?

➤ **No.**

7. Have you talked with your agency about accessing Title IV-E funding for legal representation for parents or for children? Is your state currently planning to seek reimbursement? If yes, describe any plans, approaches, or models that are under consideration or underway.

➤ **Yes, but it is too early to articulate exactly how the reimbursement process will work. Generally, the agency will modify existing MOUs with counties to accommodate reimbursement requests, but there are questions about whether the agency can impose quality representation measures on counties in return for the reimbursement assistance.**

IV. CQI Current Capacity Assessment

1. Has your ability to integrate CQI into practice changed this year? If yes, what do you attribute the increase in ability to?

➤ **Yes, and it is probably attributed to simply knowing more and having a better understanding of how to apply CQI to our projects. Every training-related project, including scholarships, involves a pre-event and post-event survey, which are used to modify the curriculum and format for future events. In addition to receiving valuable CQI-related information from trainees, CIP staff also conduct extensive internal CQI on each training project to review our internal planning process and our training outcomes. Partnership with the Center, as mentioned above, greatly increased CIP capacity to utilize CQI principles in project design, implementation, and evaluation.**

2. Which of the following CBCC Events/Services have you/your staff engaged in in the 2020 Fiscal Year?

Judicial Academy

- CQI Consult (*Topic:*_____)
- Constituency Group - Hearing Quality
- Constituency Group - CFSR
- Constituency Group - ICWA
- Constituency Group - New Directors
- Constituency Group - Virtual Hearings/Court Processes
- Constituency Group - Other _____
- CIP All Call -- *What % of All Calls does your CIP participate in? 90%*

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

- CIP staff with CQI (e.g., data, evaluation) expertise
- Consultants with CQI expertise
- a University partnership
- a statewide court case management system
- Contracts with external individuals or organizations to assist with CQI efforts
- Other resources:_____

3a. Do you record your child welfare court hearings? Yes No

If yes, are they audio video

- **In general, some courts utilize audio recordings for hearings. However, in March 2020, OCA purchased Zoom licenses for all Texas courts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Court hearings are recorded and livestreamed on YouTube to comply with the Open Courts Doctrine. Courts are instructed to delete recordings on YouTube after the conclusion of the hearing to protect confidentiality. There may also be instances where sensitive information is discussed in court and the livestream is temporarily disabled.**

3b. Can you remotely access your court case management system? For example, Odyssey systems often allow remote access to case files. Yes No

- **Texas does not have a uniform or statewide case management system.**

3c. What court case management software does your state use? If multiple, please indicate the most common:

- **Although there is great variance throughout the state, the Child Protection Courts utilize CPCMS. The CIP funds CPCMS and OCA operates and maintains the software.**

3d. Have you employed any new technology or applications to strengthen your work?

- **During COVID-19, all-in person meetings, events, and trainings have been cancelled since March 2020 until further notice. All CIP activities currently occur through the use of Zoom meetings and the Zoom webinar feature. The 2020 annual judicial conference mentioned above will be presented virtually via our conference partner (Texas Center for the Judiciary) who will employ a Learning Management System to do so.**

4. Consider the phases of change management and how you integrate these into practice. Are there phases of the process (e.g., Phase I-need assessment, Phase II-theory of change) that you struggle with integrating more than others?

- **No.**

5. Is there a topic or practice area that you would find useful from the Capacity Building Center for Courts? Be as specific as possible (e.g., data analysis, how to evaluate trainings, more information on research about quality legal representation, how to facilitate group meetings, etc.)

- **A primer on the CQI process would be beneficial both for those who are familiar and need a refresher and for those who are new and unfamiliar.**

Self-Assessment – Capacity Continued

We would like you to assess your current capacities related to knowledge, skills, resources, and collaboration by responding to the following 2 sets of questions. In questions 6 and 7, we ask about CQI. When we say CQI we mean the entire change management process including root cause analysis, theory of change, strategy selection, implementation and evaluation.

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

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

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

	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>
We use data to make decisions about where to focus our efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We meet with representatives of the child welfare agency to engage in collaborative systems change efforts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We create theories of change around systems change projects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We use evaluation/assessment findings to make changes to programs/practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We evaluate (beyond monitoring outputs) our efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

Definitions of Evidence

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

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

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

Definitions for Work Stages

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

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

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

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

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