

Children's Commission Grant Summaries Fiscal Year 2022

Organization:	Office of Court Administration
Project:	Data Analyst - Virtual Hearing Impact Study
Grant Amount:	\$100,000.00
Project Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct an in-depth review of the impact of conducting hearings virtually in child welfare cases and how we can retain the positive aspects going forward. - Train judges, attorneys, court staff, and others on the promising and best practices regarding virtual hearings in child welfare cases. - Other data projects identified by the Children's Commission.
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perform data analysis and data research work related to child welfare and court data. - Conduct detailed analyses on the impact of remote and in-person hearings to address the needs stemming from COVID-19 to ensure safety, permanence, and well-being needs of children are met in a timely manner. - Prepare concise and comprehensive report on findings.
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits

Organization:	Office of Court Administration
Project:	Court Improvement Program (CIP) Partnership Grant
Grant Amount:	\$170,276.00
Project Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue enhancing the Child Protection Case Management System. This includes the continuance of the established governance structure and work to continue enhancing the system as needed by the governance committee. The goal of enhancements is to provide the courts with better tools, current from perspectives of technology and judicial process, facilitating child and family safety, permanency, well-being, and timeliness to case resolution. - Continue facilitation of youth participation in hearings via video conference. Facilitation of youth participation in their hearings via video conference allows youth involvement when attending court in person may not be feasible. It improves contact with the children/youth in placements which impacts child safety, well-being and due process. - Continue supporting use of the Notice and Engagement web tool, maintaining and enhancing as appropriate. This will assist parties involved in CPS cases to receive timely notice of scheduled court hearings and adding reporting functionality aid administration of the tool.
Project Activities:	<p><u>CPCMS Enhancement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct a minimum of two governance meetings in FY22 to establish priorities for CPCMS enhancements and report status of governance activities. - Conduct maintenance activities, including version upgrades of supporting software, as needed. <p><u>Notice and Engagement Tool</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pro-actively monitor system to identify and resolve any issues in a timely manner. - Conduct maintenance activities, including version upgrades of supporting software, as needed.

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	- Continue to work with the Children's Commission to identify courts to expand use of the Notice and Engagement system through an API.
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Travel Equipment (Web Cameras, Cellular Hotspot Devices, Programmer Software) Training

Organization:	Office of Court Administration
Project:	Virtual Court Equipment Update
Grant Amount:	\$25,000
Project Description:	- Update CPC virtual court equipment to improve quality of hybrid hearings. - Updated equipment may include better camera(s), audio system, external microphones, and video equipment. (AV cart, projector, LED screen, etc.)
Project Activities:	- In coordination with the Children's Commission team, identify two CPCs to test new equipment for quality and functionality. - Install equipment in identified courts. - Communicate with Judges on quality and functionality of equipment at three months. - Determine other CPCs to install virtual court equipment based on feedback from two initial courts.
Use of Funds:	Equipment

Organization:	Office of Court Administration
Project:	Visiting Judge Support
Grant Amount:	\$21,110.00
Project Description:	- To continue the established mechanism of payment for the appointment of former/retired child protection court associate judges to cover child protection court dockets in absence of the active associate judge.
Project Activities:	- The CIP funds will be used to pay visiting associate judges that are utilized by the Texas administrative judicial regions for child protection courts. OCA will contract with former/retired child protection court associate judges to receive \$494.00 for a full day of service, or \$247.00 for a half day of service and former/district court and county court at law judges, experienced in CPS matters, to receive \$620.00 for a full day of service, or \$310 for a half day of service. Travel expenses incurred in performance of these services are reimbursable in accordance with the State of Texas guidelines for state employees. The grant budget will allow for approximately 30 days of service and \$2,250.00 in travel expenses.
Use of Funds:	Personnel Travel

Organization:	Texas CASA
Project:	Understanding Roles and Responsibilities in the Child Welfare Legal Process
Grant Amount:	\$25,000

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Project Description:	<p>Development of written materials and short video segments by legal stakeholders that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outline their specific roles and responsibilities - Provide judicial perspective in support of court rooms and decision making from trauma-informed practices and participants - Provides information about the legal process that encourages engagement by families and providers - Encourages best practices in legal roles for enhanced safety, permanency, and well-being - Provides resources for training and cross-training with multidisciplinary stakeholders
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Texas CASA will identify a workgroup of child welfare experts (attorneys, judges, CPS caseworkers, GALs) to advise and provide guidance in the development of materials and videos that will increase understanding and participation in the legal system and will incorporate trauma information practices and perspectives. - Texas CASA will secure input from those with lived experience, providers and other nonlegal stakeholders to identify areas of the child welfare legal process where a lack of understanding is a barrier to stakeholder engagement in support of safety, permanency, and well-being. - Texas CASA will seek individual legal practitioners to explain their role and responsibilities in video script that will enhance and support the written materials. - Texas CASA will produce written materials and five videos that can be easily shared and used in different training venues.
Use of Funds:	<p>Personnel & Benefits Travel Graphic Design</p>

Organization:	Texas Center for Child and Family Studies
Project:	Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Analyst
Grant Amount:	\$100,000
Project Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement trauma-informed and trauma-responsive practices that promote child and family felt safety within the Texas court system and ultimately support improved permanency, and well-being. - Build a body of knowledge of how courts have implemented trauma-informed and trauma-responsive practices and what success and challenges have resulted related to improving child and family outcomes. - Support the Children's Commission and Judges across the state in understanding and utilizing data to determine how best to allocate various resources and improve outcomes for children and youth in the state's conservatorship. - Provide rigorous evaluations of court pilot projects, including PMC court projects, across the state, and help replicate pilots that improve outcomes for children/youth in care.
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and implement customized trauma-informed court projects in courts selected and referred by the Children's Commission. - Facilitate a cohort of court teams implementing trauma-informed court projects to allow for shared learning, peer support, and system impact.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In coordination with the Children's Commission team, provide facilitation support to a steering committee, or SCTIC-affiliated committee, made up of Judges who agree to provide strategic guidance on this initiative. - Document implementation successes and challenges to build a body of information that can be used to expand trauma-informed and trauma-responsive court practices across the state. - Continue PMC court project evaluations, including the provision of summary of findings related to court projects in Harris, Dallas, and other counties as requested.
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Travel Supplies

Organization:	Texas Center for the Judiciary
Project:	Judicial Training
Grant Amount:	\$286,598.00
Project Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve the quality and timeliness of court proceedings by providing training and technical assistance to judges hearing CPS cases - Enhance judicial expertise on topics related to well-being, child and family safety, and permanency in order to improve outcomes for children and families - Improve judicial procedure in CPS cases to ensure due process, timeliness to case resolution, and permanency - Facilitate collaboration between the judiciary and system partners represented in the courtroom - Support judicial best practices through data and information sharing
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold the 2021 Child Welfare Judges Conference. The conference is scheduled for October 25-27 at the Sheraton Austin Georgetown Hotel and Conference Center. The conference will include an optional half-day pre-conference training on Judicial Impact on Wellbeing Issues for Children in Care. This pre-conference is designed primarily for judges who have been on the bench less than a year and General Jurisdiction judges but is open to all conference attendees. CWJC typically trains between 85-100 judges and includes collaboration with the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and Texas CASA. - Plan a track at the 2022 Family Justice Conference. This conference typically reaches between 125-145 judges and specifically targets general jurisdiction judges. TCJ staff will facilitate curriculum development for three sessions for a Child Welfare breakout track. - Begin planning process for the 2022 Child Welfare Judges Conference. The exact dates and conference location is TBD.
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Travel Supplies Speaker Fees Other

Organization:	Texas Legal Services Center
Project:	Family Helpline

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Grant Amount:	\$160,000
Project Description:	The Family Helpline assists callers with questions about various aspects of CPS investigations and cases. The Helpline attorneys address common misunderstandings of parents and family members who usually call during a CPS investigation to ask about the process, their rights, and potential outcomes. The Helpline collects and analyzes data, provides education and training and develops resources and outreach materials. The Helpline is a benefit to CPS caseworkers as well as the Helpline attorneys can answer many basic questions that the caseworker may not have time to answer. The project expects to improve positive outcomes for children and families by explaining helping families understand the terms and condition of a CPS investigation and compliance with existing court orders in the case. The Helpline does not provide legal advice and because all calls are anonymous, no attorney-client relationship is established.
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide direct legal information and education to callers with Texas CPS questions by providing easy and efficient telephonic access to experienced child welfare attorneys (on-going for duration of project). - Evaluate and analyze data gathered from Family Helpline calls and share information with interested stakeholders (on-going for duration of project and will occur on a quarterly basis). - In-person outreach, local CPS court information gathering, and community education (local CPS court trips will occur on a quarterly basis and any requested community education presentations will occur as requested). - Expand mailing and distribution of outreach materials throughout the state (on-going for duration of project and will occur on a quarterly basis). - Continue to provide content for Texas Law Help with information regarding CPS matters (this will occur on at least a twice per year basis).
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Travel Promotional Items Printing/Postage Phone Lines & Internet Rent

Organization:	Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS)
Project:	Experiential Learning PEAKS Camp with focus on Youth Empowerment, Youth Voice with Leadership, Wellbeing Improvement, and Normalcy
Grant Amount:	\$52,064
Project Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The goal of this project is to lift youth and young adult voices by engaging them across TNOYS programming to inform and strengthen the legal representation of youth in foster care. - YALC members are young adults between the ages of 16 and 26 who have experience with foster care, homelessness, the juvenile justice system, or other systems, and who have a demonstrated interest in or potential for leadership. The YALC is a ten-month long leadership development program where YYA meet weekly for approximately 10 hours a week. - TNOYS will coordinate and execute one youth voice video around legal representation and the youth-attorney relationship. Working with the Children's Commission Legal Representation team, TNOYS will identify key topics that need

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	to be highlighted in the videos, identify key terms that youth need to know, and identify youth and attorneys to participate in the videos.
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TNOYS will recruit and implement the TNOYS Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) - TNOYS will use Youth-led Participatory Action Research (YPAR), to perform research through listening sessions to understand YYAs' experiences with their legal representation while in foster care. - TNOYS staff and YALC members will conduct approximately one listening session and may conduct additional one-on-one interviews with youth who have experience with foster care legal cases to understand their unique experiences along with what worked, barriers/challenges, and recommendations to improve the youth-attorney relationship. TNOYS staff and YALC members will collaboratively analyze the findings along with the research participants to identify best practices and topics that are important to cover. These findings will be presented to the Legal Representation team at the Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth, and Families and inform the youth voice video.
Use of Funds:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel & Benefits Travel Supplies Contractual Training