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

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

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February 9, 2018  
Meeting Notebook

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



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

**February 9, 2018  
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 9, 2018  
9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Meeting Agenda

- 9:30 Commencement / Opening Remarks – The Honorable Rob Hofmann
- 9:45 First order of business – The Honorable Rob Hofmann  
1. Adopt Minutes from September 22, 2017, Tab 2
- 10:00 Commissioner Updates
- 10:50 Break
- 11:05 Commissioner Updates cont'd
- 12:00 Working Lunch
- 12:15 Executive Director Report / Voting Matters
- 12:45 Collaborative Council Member Presentations:  
Andrea Sparks, Office of the Governor  
Sandra Hachem, Harris County Attorney's Office
- 1:15 Collaborative Council Input
- 1:30 Special Presentation: Justice Bill Boyce, Fourteenth Court of Appeals
- 2:00 DFPS / CPS Update
- 2:30 Jurist In Residence Report
- 2:45 Office of Court Administration
- 3:00 New Business

2018 Meeting Schedule

May 4, 2018 at State Bar of Texas

September 21, 2018 at State Bar of Texas

Adjourn



**INSERT - TAB 1**



## CHILDREN'S COMMISSION MEMBERS

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

Hon. Gary Coley  
 Sheila Sturgis Craig  
 Rep. Helen Giddings  
 Dr. Andy Keller  
 Hon. Lawrence Lujan  
 Hon. Piper McCraw

Hon. Mary Murphy  
 Cindy Patrick  
 Hon. Ronald Pope  
 Hon. Frank Rynd  
 Hon. Peter Sakai  
 Hon. Michael Schneider

Luanne Southern  
 Vicki Spriggs  
 Hon. Carlos Villalon  
 Lt. Col. Travis Walters  
 Sen. Royce West

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### EXECUTIVE

Hon. Eva Guzman,  
*Chair*  
 Hon. Harriet O'Neill,  
*Chair Emeritus*  
 Hon. Rob Hofmann  
*Vice Chair*  
 Hon. 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*  
 Jason Hassay  
 Hon. Gilford Jones  
 Elizabeth Kromrei  
 Robert Nolen  
 Hon. Virginia Schnarr  
 Hon. Carlos Villalon

*Staff: Patrick Passmore  
 Monica Mahoney*

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

### TRAINING PROJECTS

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

*Staff: Milbrey Raney  
 Dylan Moench  
 Andrea Vicencio*

### FOSTER CARE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Hon. Rob Hofmann, *Chair*  
 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  
 Jon Olson  
 Wanda Peña  
 Michael Redden  
 Carol Self  
 Ian Spechler  
 Julie Wayman

*Staff: Jamie Bernstein  
 Andrea Vicencio*

## COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

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

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

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

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

## STAFF

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



**INSERT - TAB 2**



**PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**September 22, 2017**  
**9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**  
**State Bar of Texas – Texas Law Center**  
**Austin, Texas**

**ATTENDANCE**

<b>Commissioners</b>	<b>Attended</b>	<b>Did Not Attend</b>
Chair, Hon. Eva Guzman, Justice, Supreme Court of Texas, Austin	✓	
Chair Emeritus, Hon. Harriet O'Neill, Justice, retired, Law Office of Harriet O'Neill, Austin		✓
Vice Chair, Hon. Rob Hofmann, Judge, 452nd District Court, Mason	✓	
Paula Bibbs-Samuel, Parent Representative, Slaton	✓	
Allison Billodeau, Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor, Austin		✓
Kristene Blackstone, Associate Commissioner for Child Protective Services, Dept. of Family and Protective Services, Austin	✓	
Hon. Gary Coley, Judge, 74th District Court, Waco	✓	
Sheila Craig, Associate Commissioner (by proxy Dr. Rosanna Barrett), Office of Minority Health Statistics and Engagement, Health and Human Services Commission, Austin	✓	
Hon. Helen Giddings, Texas House of Representatives, District 109, Dallas		✓
Dr. Andrew Keller, President and Chief Executive Officer, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Dallas	✓	
Hon. Lawrence Lujan, Chief Judge, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, El Paso	✓	
Hon. Michael Massengale, Justice, First Court of Appeals, Houston	✓	
Hon. Piper McCraw, Judge, 469th Judicial District Court, McKinney	✓	
Hon. Mary Murphy, Presiding Judge, First Administrative Judicial Region, Dallas	✓	
Cindy Patrick, Senior Program Officer, Meadows Foundation, Dallas	✓	
Hon. Ronald Pope, Judge, 328th District Court, Richmond		✓
Hon. Frank Rynd, General Counsel, Archdiocese Galveston-Houston	✓	
Hon. Peter Sakai, Judge, 225th District Court, San Antonio		✓
Hon. Michael Schneider, Judge, 315th District Court, Houston	✓	
Luanne Southern, Senior Director of Texas Strategic Consulting, Casey Family Programs, Austin	✓	
Vicki Spriggs, Chief Executive Officer, Texas CASA, Inc., Austin	✓	
Terry Tottenham, Of Counsel, Norton Rose Fulbright US L.L.P., Austin		✓
Hon. Carlos Villalon, Associate Judge, Child Protection Court of the Rio Grande, Edinburg	✓	
Lt. Col. Travis Walters, State Public Affairs Officer (FTUS), United States Air Force, Fort Worth	✓	
Hon. Royce West (by proxy Graham Keever), Texas Senate, District 23, Dallas	✓	
<b>Senior Judicial Advisor</b>		
Hon. Darlene Byrne, Judge, 126th District Court, Austin	✓	
<b>Collaborative Council</b>		
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 (by proxy Ruth Thornton), 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.	✓	
Christine Gendron, Executive Director, Texas Network of Youth Services, Austin	✓	
Christina Green, Director of Public Affairs, Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Austin	✓	
Sandra Hachem, Senior Assistant County Attorney, Harris County Attorney's Office, Houston		✓
David Halpern, Director, Promise Mentor Program, Seedling Foundation, Austin	✓	
Ashley Harris, Director of Policy and Community Engagement, United Way 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		✓
Madeline McClure, Executive Director, Texas Association for the Protection of Children, Dallas		✓
Hon. F. Scott McCown, Clinical Professor and Director of the Children's Rights Clinic, The University of Texas School of Law, Austin		✓
Gabriella McDonald, Pro Bono and New Projects Director, Texas Appleseed, Austin	✓	
Susan McDowell, Executive Director, Life works, Austin		✓
Pamela McPeters, Director of Public Policy, Texas Association for the Protection of Children, Austin	✓	
Kate Murphy, Senior Policy Associate, Texans Care for Children, Austin	✓	
Katie Olse, 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		
Dr. Anu Partap, Assistant Professor in Pediatrics, Southwest Medical Center, Dallas		✓
Judy Powell, Communications Director, Parent Guidance Center, Austin	✓	
Mary Christine Reed, Director, Texas Foster Youth Justice Project, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Austin	✓	
Carolyne Rodriguez, Independent Consultant, Austin	✓	
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		✓

	Attended	Did Not Attend
Arabia Vargas, Chair, Bexar County Child Welfare Board, San Antonio		✓
Kelly White, Executive Director, LIFT Alliance		✓
<b>Attending Committee Members and Guests</b>		
Holly Benningfield, CPS Adoption Program Director, Department of Family and Protective Services		
Hon. Alyce Bondurant, Judge, North Texas Child Protection Court, Wichita Falls		
Audrey Carmical, General Counsel, Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin		
Frank Cervantes, Director, Department of Juvenile Services, Washoe County, Nevada		
David Chasis, CASA Volunteer		
Cathy Cockerham, Program Operations Director, Texas CASA, Austin		
Brigid Duffy, Director, Juvenile Division Clark County District Attorney, Las Vegas, Nevada		
Dr. Monica Faulkner, Director, Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, The University of Texas, Austin		
Hon. Roy Ferguson, District Judge, 394 <sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court, Alpine		
Maya Guerra Gamble, Attorney at Law, Austin		
Hon. Richard Garcia, Associate Judge, Bexar County Children's Court, San Antonio		
Hon. Katrina Griffith, Associate Judge, Harris County Child Protection Court, Houston		
Ryan Gustafson, Division Director, Washoe County Human Services Agency, Nevada		
Dr. Joseph Haas, Clinical Psychology, Reno, Nevada		
Paula Hammack, Acting Director, Clark County Department Family Services, Nevada		
Michelle Harper, Vice President of Child and Family Policy, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Dallas		
Amber Hart, CPS Supervisor, Department of Family and Protective Services		
Tracy Harting, Attorney at Law, Pflugerville		
Julia Hatcher, Attorney at Law, Galveston		
Andrew Homer, Director of Public Affairs, Texas CASA, Austin		
JT Jones, Student, Angelo State University, San Angelo		
Graham Keever, Legislative Director, Office of Senator Royce West		
Kristen Krusely, CPS Caseworker, Department of Family and Protective Services		
Todd Latiolais		
Emily LeBlanc, Chief Program Officer, CASA of Travis County, Austin		
Alice LeDesma, Division Director, Washoe County Human Services Agency, Nevada		
Crystal Leff-Piñon, Managing Attorney, The Family Helpline, Texas Legal Services Center, Austin		
Aurora Martinez Jones, Associate Judge, Travis County Civil Courts, Austin		
Hon. Cathy Morris, Associate Judge, Child Protection Court of South Texas, Boerne		
Wanda Pena, Senior Director, San Antonio Field Office, Casey Family Programs, San Antonio		
Heidi Penix, Grant Administrator, Texas Center for the Judiciary, Austin		
Joshua Plesant, Office Coordinator, Angelo State University, San Angelo		
Amanda Ritchie, Greek Life and Activities Coordinator, Angelo State University, San Angelo		
Hilary Roberts, Foster Angels		
Hon. Robin Sage, Senior District Judge, Judicial Engagement Team, Casey Family Programs, Livingston		
Hon. Nancy Saitta, Supreme Court of Nevada (retired)		
Raman Sandhu, Contract Administrator Manager, Family & Social Services, Health, Developmental & Independence Services – HHSC, Austin		

Kevin Schiller, Assistant County Manager, Clark County, Nevada  
Hon. William Voy, Judge, Clark County District Court, Family Division, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Hon. Egan Walker, Judge, Second Judicial District Court, Washoe County, Nevada  
Erica Wheatley  
Henry Whitman, Commissioner, Texas Dept. of Family and Protective Services, Austin  
Janice Wolf, Attorney, Children's Attorneys Project, Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada  
Kelly Wooldridge, Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services, Nevada

#### **Attending Staff**

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

#### **CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING REMARKS, Justice Eva Guzman**

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

#### **Recognition of Guests**

Justice Guzman welcomed several special guests from Nevada, visiting on behalf of the state's Court Improvement Program. Justice Guzman welcomed Dr. Monica Faulkner from the University of Texas, Judge Aurora Martinez Jones of Travis County, Judge Cathy Morris of the Child Protection Court of South Texas, Judge Alyce Bondurant of the North Texas Child Protection Court, Judge Roy Ferguson of the 394th Judicial District Court, Judge Richard Garcia of Bexar County, and from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Commissioner Hank Whitman, Associate Commissioner for CPS Kristene Blackstone, and General Counsel Audrey Carmical.

#### **Commissioner Membership Changes**

There were no changes to the Commissioner membership.

#### **Collaborative Council Membership Changes**

Justice Guzman announced several additions to the Collaborative Council: Christine Gendron, Executive Director for the Texas Network of Youth Services; Tym Belseth, Research Coordinator at the Texas Institute for Child and Family Wellbeing at the University of Texas; Sarah Crockett, Public Policy

Coordinator at Texas CASA; Kate Murphy, Senior Policy Associate at Texans Care for Children; Jon Olson, Director of Equity and Inclusion at the Office of Minority Health Statistics and Engagement under HHSC; Tanya Rollins, State Disproportionality Manager at DFPS; and Ian Spechler, formerly an attorney at Disability Rights Texas.

### **Committee Member Changes**

There were no membership changes to the committees.

### **Staff Member Changes**

Justice Guzman announced that Daniella Salazar's internship has ended. Daniella worked on the Legal Representation Study with staff attorney Dylan Moench during the summer and has returned to her studies at the University of Texas School of Law.

### **Court Improvement Program Funding Update**

Justice Guzman and Tina Amberboy gave an update on the funding of the Court Improvement Program (CIP). Ms. Amberboy updated Commissioners on the status of the federal CIP funding, noting that although the CIP was not reauthorized, the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) was able to provide full CIP distribution in fiscal year 2017 – partial funding was received in October 2016 and the remainder in July 2017. Ms. Amberboy reminded members that the CIP expired in October 2016 and was not fully reauthorized by the Congress. Justice Guzman announced that the Supreme Court of Texas included funding for the Children's Commission as an exceptional item in the Court's budget and the Legislature approved the request and appropriated \$2 million for the biennium.

### **Adoption of May 12, 2017 Meeting Minutes**

Justice Guzman directed members to Tab 2 and noted that members had the opportunity to review the May 12, 2017 minutes. Justice Guzman asked if there were any other corrections or discussion. There were no corrections or discussion points raised.

**ACTION:** Justice Guzman asked for a motion to adopt the meeting minutes of the May 12, 2017 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.

Nevada guests were invited to introduce themselves.

Justice Guzman announced that a brochure was created highlighting the work of the Commission over the past ten years.

**DFPS UPDATE, Commissioner Hank Whitman** discussed the effects of hurricane Harvey and the Department's response to the disaster, noting that all children in DFPS care are safe and accounted for. Commissioner Whitman announced that the launch of extended payments to families participating in kinship care placements. As of September 1, 2017 families who care for a child through a kinship placement will be eligible to receive limited monthly payments, in an effort to extend the opportunity for a child to be placed with a relative rather than into the foster care system. Commissioner Whitman

noted the Department's goal of fifty percent of placements to be kinship placements. Commissioner Whitman also announced that as of September 1, 2017 the Department of Family and Protective Services is a stand-alone agency and no longer under the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. DFPS will now report directly to the Governor of Texas. Commissioner Whitman reported on the efforts at DFPS to retain employees and reduce employee turnover.

**Associate Commissioner for CPS Kristene Blackstone** reported on the work of the Department's partners in law enforcement, the faith community, Texas CASA, and child placing agencies (CPAs) to assist the agency's response efforts during hurricane Harvey. About 4,000 children were in CPA foster homes in the impacted area and DFPS communicated with them regularly and ensured all children were accounted for. DFPS staff met and communicated with the 363 families in reunification cases in the affected areas; with the 2,959 children with their current families in the affected areas; and with nearly all of the 6,500 families serviced through family base safety services (FBSS) cases. Ms. Blackstone noted that DFPS has a protocol in place for instances when its staff cannot get in contact with a family or child. Ms. Blackstone also noted the agency's internal response to assist its own staff affected by the storm.

Justice Guzman discussed the orders issued by the Supreme Court of Texas in the wake of hurricane Harvey's impact. All orders issued by the Supreme Court are available on the court's website at <http://www.txcourts.gov/supreme/>.

#### **COMMISSION MEMBER UPDATES**

**Hon. Piper McCraw** reported on a CLE hosted at the 469th District Court regarding communicating with non-verbal children in the CPS system. Judge McCraw noted that several of her court's attorneys attended the Son-Rise Program, which offers training to parents and professionals caring for children challenged by Autism, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) and other developmental difficulties. The attorneys who attended the training were able to take some ideas to several special education programs at area school districts. More information on the program is available here: <http://www.autismtreatmentcenter.org/contents/about-son-rise/what-is-the-son-rise-program.php>.

**Luanne Southern** commented on the meeting on September 20, 2017 with the Children's Commission and visiting guests from the Nevada Court Improvement Program (CIP). Ms. Southern reported on the Casey Family Programs Texas team's work with DFPS on issues specifically focused on preventing the need for foster care and reducing the number of children in foster care in Texas, and the work of the Casey Family Programs Judicial Engagement Team to assist the judiciary of various jurisdictions improve outcomes for children in foster care. Ms. Southern remarked on the Texas Team's efforts to provide leadership development activities for DFPS regional directors and their leadership teams across the state, currently expanding from Harris County into Region 3B and Region 7. Ms. Southern discussed Casey Family Programs' support regarding prevention and early intervention (PEI) in Texas.

Ms. Southern updated the Commission on the Casey's work with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago regarding data analysis of Texas children with complex needs.

**Dr. Andrew Keller** reported on the recent report from the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI) on the current landscape of trauma-informed care (TIC) in Texas. The full report is available online at: <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/83503/trauma-informed-care-final-report.pdf>. Dr. Keller discussed three bills regarding mental health passed in the 85th Legislative Session: Senate Bill 74 includes a two million dollar rider designed to help any certified rehab provider to surge capacity (800 additional slots) for children in foster care with intensive mental health needs; House Bill 1600 creates an annual screening for mental health needs within the Medicaid system; and House Bill 13 gives the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) a ten million dollar grant program for communities to address mental health needs. Dr. Keller reported on MMHPI's work with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to connect mental health counselors with programs and agencies responding to victims of hurricane Harvey in an effort to more readily address trauma. Dr. Keller announced the upcoming release of a comprehensive report of all of the children's mental health services in Harris County on October 30, 2017.

**Ms. Cindy Patrick** updated the Commission on the North Texas group of philanthropic foundations work to help Fort Worth and other regions prepare for community-based care. Ms. Patrick reported on the philanthropic community's work to support Harvey recovery efforts by the state, as well as local non-profits at work on the restoration phase and how to help relocated children and families reach services. Ms. Patrick announced the Philanthropic Regional Conference will be held in Tahoe, Nevada in October 2017. The regional conference is attended by philanthropists from eight states and focuses on the funding opportunities of the region.

**Hon. Darlene Byrne** reported as the Senior Judicial Advisor to the Commission. Judge Byrne announced that she has accepted the invitation to chair the Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-Informed Care (SCTIC), a collaboration between the Commission, MMHPI, Texas CASA and DFPS to follow up on the MMHPI report on TIC. The SCTIC held its first meeting on July 28, 2017 in Austin with nearly 100 professionals from all over the state to discuss the current TIC landscape in Texas.

Ms. Kristi Taylor noted the SCTIC has created four workgroups: Organizational Leadership workgroup, chaired by Renee Calder Price; Child Welfare System Reform workgroup chaired by Andrew Homer; Cross-systems Collaboration workgroup chaired by Christine Gendron; and Funding, Data, and Evaluation workgroup chaired by Katy Bourgeois. Ms. Taylor explained the SCTIC Chair and Workgroup Chairs will draft a statewide strategy over the remaining months of 2017.

**Mr. Graham Kever** reported on behalf of Senator Royce West. Mr. Kever announced that suggestions to interim charges are due on September 22, 2017. Mr. Kever discussed some bills from the 85th Legislative Session, including Senate Bill 999, which aimed to align judicial processes for emergency removals with court order, emergency removals without court order, or non-emergency removal. Mr. Kever reported that the sunset on the permanency care agreement program was repealed. Mr. Kever

also noted that Senate Bill 1444 regarding De Novo reviews was vetoed during the session, and that another bill to require the guardian ad litem to stay with the child when the child transitions from temporary conservatorship to permanent did not go to hearing in the Senate.

**Hon. Mary Murphy** reported that the administrative judicial regions were increased from nine to eleven following the legislative session. Judge Murphy noted that the Presiding Judges of the administrative judicial regions appoint the associate judges or visiting judges who hear the CPS cases. Judge Murphy announced that the Presiding Judges annual evaluations of associate judges who hear CPS cases in their region are due in September 2017. Judge Murphy explained that the evaluations include a new procedure that allows formal input from various stakeholders. Judge Murphy also reported on the need for more judges in the first administrative judicial region and some counties' inability to handle all cases with the resources currently available.

**Justice Michael Massengale** reported that the First Court of Appeals courthouse received little damage from hurricane Harvey and subsequent flooding and is being shared with other courts that currently not operational. Justice Massengale updated the Commission on the work of the Training Committee, announcing the Child Welfare Judges Conference (CWJC), scheduled for November 13-15, 2017 at the Hyatt Lost Pines Resort in Bastrop, Texas. During CWJC the Commission will release the 2017 version of the Child Protection Law Bench Book with updates that reflect the legislative changes from the recently concluded legislative session. Justice Massengale updated the Commission on the Texas Board of Legal Specialization (TBLS) Child Welfare Law Specialization (CWLS), noting the exam commission will be reviewing and finalizing exam questions and turning in final drafts to TBLS in October. Justice Massengale reported on the Child Abuse and Neglect Track 1-Day CLE within the Annual Advanced Family Law Course held on August 9, 2017 in San Antonio, Texas, with subsequent video replays will be held in Houston, Dallas, and South Padre Island. The Commission awarded 119 scholarships to qualified attorney's to attend the one day CLE session.

Justice Massengale discussed the State Bar Committee's work to develop the Child Protection Law Section. Justice Massengale announced that the live webcast Trial Skills Training (TST) was rescheduled from August to October 3 due to hurricane Harvey. The TST webcast will offer six hours of CLE to participants. Justice Massengale also reported on the House Bill 7 Task Force meeting on August 18, 2017. Justice Massengale published an opinion regarding issues associated with incarcerated parents, services provided to incarcerated parents, the duties of lawyers, caseworkers with respect to an incarcerated parent, and how kinship placements and sibling placements can factor into the best interest analysis. The opinion is dated July 24, 2017 and is available on the First Court of Appeals website and Westlaw.

**Vicki Spriggs** reported there are currently 71 CASA programs in Texas that serve 213 of the state's 254 counties. Ms. Spriggs announced that while Texas CASA final fiscal year 2017 numbers are not currently confirmed in all parts of the state due to hurricane Harvey, the number of volunteers is estimated to surpass the 10,000 mark and the number of children served is estimated at 30,000. Ms. Spriggs commented on the successful collaboration with DFPS in response to the hurricane. Ms. Spriggs reported

on the continued permanency initiatives at Texas CASA to keep children with families and find families through the Collaborative Family Engagement (CFE) and consolidation with the work surrounding Permanent Management Conservatorship (PMC). Ms. Spriggs announced the Texas CASA annual conference in Galveston on October 19 – 21, 2017.

Ms. Spriggs reported on the efforts of the Texas CASA media campaign to increase volunteers. The Texas CASA strategic plan includes the goal to have 78% of children in the Child Protective Services (CPS) system being served by a CASA volunteer by the year 2020. In fiscal year 2016, Texas CASA saw an 8% increase in volunteers; for fiscal year 2017 Texas CASA estimates a 12% increase. Ms. Spriggs also reported on CASA's work on recruitment and retention of volunteers, including a pending publication of a recruitment handbook for volunteers. Ms. Spriggs announced that Texas CASA expects to have results from the Child Outcomes Volunteer Effectiveness (COVE) study by March 2018.

**Hon. Lawrence Lujan** reported on an increase in calls for service to the El Paso Police Department for mental health issues involving both adult and children in the community. Judge Lujan also noted that the El Paso Police Department is in the process of creating a crisis intervention team to improve the way local law enforcement and the community responds to members in crisis. The El Paso City Council set aside \$315,000 to stand up a crisis intervention team of fourteen officers to form a co-responder program that will typically involve a police officer and a clinician responding to members in crisis. Judge Lujan noted that the City of El Paso hopes to have the crisis intervention team implemented by February 2018.

Judge Lujan announced that he a contact for reference as an Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) specialist who has served as a qualified expert witness for ICWA cases in New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, New York, Wisconsin, and South Dakota. Judge Lujan announced the Native American Indian Court Judges Association (NAICJA) Annual Conference on October 10 – 13, 2017 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Judge Lujan noted an ICWA training available at the National Indian Child Welfare Association on November 7 – 9, 2017 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Judge Lujan also reported on the El Paso County Juvenile Mental Health Court, known as Project Hope, and the El Paso County Crossover Court. The goal of both courts is to provide services in the El Paso area, to help prevent sending children out of the El Paso area for services, and also to prevent children from entering the formal Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) system.

**Hon. Michael Schneider** reported on the effect of hurricane Harvey on the Juvenile Courts in Houston. Judge Schneider noted he was asked to serve on the Developmental Committee for the upcoming State Bar Section on Child Protection Law. Judge Schneider reported on the Basic Committee projects. The Commission staff recently met with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid to discuss the possibility of a statewide sealing project. The Legal Representation Study Subcommittee last met on July 21, 2017 to discuss the purposes, goals, and the time line of this study. Judge Schneider reported the Family Helpline through Texas Legal Services Center has seen an increase in callers over the summer since its launch in February 2017. The Family Helpline received 440 unique callers with issues effecting 816 children and 1,380

family members, relatives, and fictive kin. Judge Schneider discussed the work of the Judicial Workgroup addressing Disproportionality (JWD), including the Beyond the Bench: Law, Justice, and Communities Summit and an upcoming meeting on November 14, 2017 in conjunction with the Child Welfare Judges Conference in Bastrop, Texas. Judge Schneider reported on the updates in the Child Protection Law Bench Book to reflect the federal finding regulations and advisory guidelines to ensure greater protection for families and kids who are covered by ICWA. Judge Schneider also reported on the eleven Attorney Resource Letters sent from the Commission since the May Commission meeting.

Judge Schneider announced that he has accepted a position as an Adjunct and a Research Scholar at Columbia University relating to issues about juvenile drug courts including screening and services. Judge Schneider discussed a possible longitudinal study over the next five or ten years to determine what kind of treatment is effective. Judge Schneider will work alongside Dr. Carl Hart in the Department of Psychology.

**Hon. Gary Coley** reported on the work of the Heart of Texas Human Trafficking Coalition. The Coalition last met in July 2017 and released a public service announcement video. The video is available online at <https://www.hothtc.org/>. The Coalition will meet next in October 2017. Judge Coley reported on a program called The Refuge, which seeks to offer a place in McLennan County for kids who have aged out of foster care.

**Hon. Frank Rynd** reported that the Board of Child Advocates in Houston had 35 advocates assigned to foster families or children in foster care that were severely affected by hurricane Harvey and is working to find suitable housing for these advocates. Judge Rynd reported the Texas Catholic Conference is working with some diocese in the Catholic Church to begin finding foster care amidst members. Judge Rynd also discussed the Fostering Hope program through the KSBJ radio station, which seeks to educate its listeners on the need for foster parents in the Houston area. Judge Rynd noted that Judge Judy Warne is presiding over the Family Violence and Protective Order docket in Harris County.

Judge Rynd reported on an integration project through the Catholic Charities called the Cabrini Project and the issues facing immigrants in the Houston area since the recent natural disaster. Houston Volunteer Lawyers provided training for over 300 attorneys to help people with filing with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

### **Executive Director Report**

Ms. Tina Amberboy reported that although the Court Improvement Program (CIP) was not reauthorized, the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) was able to provide full CIP distribution in fiscal year 2017 – partial funding was received in October 2016 and the remainder in July 2017. Since funding was uncertain for the majority of the fiscal year, the Supreme Court of Texas requested an appropriation from the Legislature to fund the Children’s Commission, which was granted and the Commission was appropriated \$2 million for the biennium. Ms. Amberboy discussed the 2018 projects under Tab 3 of the notebook and directed members to Tab 4 to review the budget.

**ACTION:** Justice Guzman announced the Commission will vote on the proposed budget for fiscal year 2018 as described under Tab 4. Justice Guzman asked for a motion to adopt the fiscal year 2018 budget. A motion was made to adopt the budget; the motion was seconded. The attending members voted to approve and adopt the fiscal year 2018 budget unanimously.

Ms. Amberboy discussed the anticipated additional spending requests to address in February, including a project with Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) and Texas CASA regarding youth engagement. Ms. Amberboy announced the Collaborative Council Meeting is scheduled for November 13, 2017 in conjunction with the Child Welfare Judges Conference at the Hyatt Lost Pines in Bastrop, Texas.

### **Presentation on Post-Secondary Data**

Judge Rob Hofmann and Dr. Monica Faulkner gave a presentation on some highlights from the data collected from DFPS and TEA as part of the Foster Care and Education Committee's Post-Secondary Education Workgroup.

Judge Hofmann welcomed special guests JT Jones, a student at Angelo State University; Judge Aurora Martinez Jones, Associate Judge in Travis County; Kristen Krusely, CPS Case Worker; Emily LeBlanc, Chief Program Officer at CASA of Travis County; Joshua Pleasant, Office Coordinator at Angelo State University; Amanda Ritchie, Greek Life and Activities Coordinator at Angelo State University; Hilary Roberts at Foster Angels; Greg Trottie, CASA Volunteer Supervisor; Holly Benningfield, CPS Adoption Program Director; David Chasis, CASA Volunteer; Dr. Javier Flores, Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Angelo State University; and Amber Hart, CPS Supervisor for a special presentation on foster care and education.

Judge Hofmann showed a video developed by University of Texas at Austin, available online at: <https://txicfw.socialwork.utexas.edu/texas-higher-education-foster-care-liaisons-information-reference-guide-video/>. The video accompanies a guide for higher education foster care liaisons to assist youth and young adults formerly in care in meeting their postsecondary goals. The *Texas Higher Education Information and Resource Guide for Foster Care Liaisons* is available online at: <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/2075/he-liaisons-guide-final-updated-76.pdf>.

### **COMMISSIONER UPDATES, continued**

**Hon. Carlos Villalon** reported he currently hears cases for about 750 kids in Hidalgo and Starr counties. Judge Villalon reported on the trauma assessment of his court his the National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) as part of the participation and implementation site project. Judge Villalon announced the newly-formed Coalition for Empowering Children and Families held a meeting during the summer of 2017. The Coalition is comprised of the court, the attorneys, service providers, CPAs, health professionals, and other stakeholders. The Coalition works to find solutions and resources in an area that has few options for services. Judge Villalon reported on a presentation from Darren Jones at the Texas Christian University (TCU) Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) program. Judge Villalon also noted the assistance offered by Dr. Cynthia Jones at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV).

Judge Villalon reported an emergency shelter will open in the Valley on September 30, 2017. The nearest emergency shelter previously available to the area is a three hour drive. Judge Villalon remarked on the work of the crossover project and efforts for collaboration with the district court judge of the juvenile court. Judge Villalon announced the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Multidisciplinary Advocacy Training Conference on Child Abuse hosted by Angels of Love on October 5 – 6, 2017 in Edinburg, Texas. Judge Villalon will also participate in a panel discussion at the UTRGV's Coalition Against Violence and Exploitation (CAVE) Conference regarding underserved and marginalized populations with specific emphasis on child welfare. Judge Villalon also reported on the progress the Child Protection Court has made in Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) cases, noting that there are currently under 200 children in PMC in comparison to the 615 children in PMC in November 2012.

**Paula Bibbs-Samuels** announced she became a member of the Birth Parent National Network (BPNN) and traveled to Seattle, Washington to collaborate with parents from across the nation and present on the parent collaboration efforts present in Texas. Ms. Bibb-Samuels reported on a recent presentation at the ACH Child and Family Services Conference regarding advocacy for parents and the necessity to keep families and parents involved in the lives of children who CPS serves. Ms. Bibbs-Samuels reported on meetings with legislators in early 2017 regarding bills from the legislative session, including House Bill 699. Ms. Bibbs-Samuels discussed the Statewide Parent Collaboration Group meeting held in June 2017 to integrate the parent perspective into the CPS caseworker training. Ms. Bibbs-Samuels announced she will speak on behalf of Parent Collaboration Group to the Texas Childcare Administrators Conferences in Houston on October 16, 2017.

**Lt. Col. Travis Walters** reported on the response of the Texas National Guard during and following hurricane Harvey. Over 17,000 Guardsmen were active in the impacted areas including Orange, Beaumont, Houston, and the Corpus Christi area. Since the date of impact, local first responders, Texas Task Force One, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), local sheriffs, and local firefighters rescued and evacuated tens of thousands of people in need. Lt. Col. Walters noted the last time the entire Texas National Guard was activated was 100 years ago, during World War I. Lt. Col. Walters discussed the effects of deployment of military personnel on families and children and the possible impact on courtrooms.

**Dr. Rosanna Barrett** reported on behalf of Sheila Craig. Dr. Barrett announced that the Center for Disproportionality and Disparities was renamed, per Senate Bill 1, rider 216, to the Office of Minority Health Statistics and Engagement (OMHSE). The office still operates under the Office of Minority Health at the Texas Health and Human Services Center (HHSC). Dr. Barrett reported the OMHSE will meet with DFPS staff in September 2017 to discuss efforts around addressing the disproportionality in the child protective system.

## **COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL REPORT**

**Mary Christine Reed, Texas Foster Youth Justice Project** remarked on a success story of a youth who had aged out of care and struggled to access the documentation necessary to work and apply for college. Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA) helped the youth obtain all of his documentation and heard that he recently graduated from Texas State University. Ms. Reed discussed the importance of emotional support for youth who age out of care.

**Kate Murphy, Texans Care for Children** announced a three-part discussion series in October, November and December 2017. The series will focus on substance use and how it affects children and families in Texas. The first discussion will provide a broad overview of substance use in Texas; the second will focus on youth substance use, including youths in child welfare, children's mental health, children's health, and juvenile justice; the third will discuss caregiver substance use, and its effect on children.

**David Halpern, Texas A&M University** remarked on the work of the Foster Care Task Force, the ten year anniversary of the Commission, and the work he has done with the Commission.

**Barbara Elias-Perciful, Texas Lawyers for Children (TLC)** reported on TLC's legislative advocacy effort over this last session. TLC sent out almost 40 email alerts on different bills that were up for consideration.

**DFPS UPDATE continued, Associate Commissioner for CPS Kristene Blackstone** introduced a new video from the Department of Family & Protective Services. Ms. Blackstone reported on legislative changes at CPS and updates to legal documents after the legislative session. CPS completed training for both our internal staff and county and district attorneys around the state with as well. Ms. Blackstone reported on the kinship payments effective as of September 1, 2017. CPS sent letters to all kinship caregivers in September to notify them about the upcoming payment. The first payments will go out in October 2017. CPS kinship workers assisted kinship caregivers with direct deposit slips. Ms. Blackstone announced that CPS created a Kinship Caregiver Collaboration Group to hear feedback from kinship caregivers on how CPS can improve, much like the Parent Collaboration Group. Ms. Blackstone reported the stakeholder webinars series will resume on October 3, 2017 at 3:00 p.m. with a webinar focused on recent legislation.

Ms. Blackstone announced that CPS has released the next two catchment areas for fiscal year 2018 that will roll out as part of Senate Bill 11, or Community-Based Care (CBC): Region 2 and Region 8. CPS has six foster care recruitment events planned for Houston in October, as part of the Department's response to the areas affected by hurricane Harvey.

#### **JURIST IN RESIDENCE REPORT**

**Hon. Dean Rucker** reported on the House Bill 7 Task Force formed by the Supreme Court to study issues brought by mandate through House Bill 7, including jury submission issues, motion for new trial procedure, and issues about court reporter record filings. The Task Force must issue a report to the Supreme Court by December 1, 2017 and to the Legislature by December 31, 2017.

Judge Rucker noted he will co-present with Commission staff attorney Dylan Moench on a Legislative Update at the upcoming Child Welfare Judges Conference. The Commission's full Legislative Update is available online at: <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/83450/85th-session-legislative-update-july-21-final.pdf>.

Judge Rucker reported on the work of the Texas Board of Legal Specialization (TBLS) Advisory Commission regarding the application for examination of the newly-created Child Welfare Law Specialization (CWLS). Judge Rucker reported the application has been approved by TBLS and is expected to be available in early 2018. The Advisory Commission will review submitted applications and determine if applicants are qualified under the standards to sit for an exam. Dylan Moench reported on the work of the TBLS Exam Commission for CWLS. The Exam Commission will submit final versions of the exam questions to TBLS for approval on October 16, 2017.

#### **OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION UPDATE, Ms. Mena Ramon**

Ms. Ramon updated the Commission that the Office of Court Administration's (OCA) legislative appropriation request for implementation and funding of four additional Child Protection Courts was denied in the 85th Legislative Session. Ms. Ramon noted that OCA anticipates a similar request in the 2019 session. Ms. Ramon reported on the Texas Judicial Council (TJC) committees established by Chief Justice Nathan Hecht: Juvenile Justice Committee, Public Trust and Confidence Committee, Guardianship and Mental Health Committee. The Chief Justice has also asked the TCJ to look at the impact of the opioid abuse in the state's courts, to review the need for assistance to the state's specialty courts, and to consider replicating the study of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) in Texas. Ms. Ramon also reported on the work of the Data Committee.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Justice Guzman announced the next Commission Meeting dates: February 9, 2018; May 4, 2018.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

INSERT - TAB 3





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

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

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Report to Commission

February 9, 2018

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The State Bar of Texas – Texas Law Center

1414 Colorado Street

Austin, Texas 78701

This report includes minor updates to certain activities, indicated by an underline feature. Also, some activities have been eliminated because they are no longer applicable; these are indicated by a strikethrough feature.

February 9, 2018	
<p><b>I. Goal: Encourage judicial leadership, accountability, and appropriate oversight of child protection cases to improve safety, permanency and well-being of children and families.</b></p>	
<p><b>I.A. Objective: Participate and provide resources to statewide collaborative efforts to improve child safety.</b></p>	
<p><b><i>I.A.1. Strategy: Collaborate and support agency and partner efforts to examine, secure, assess and improve child safety.</i></b></p>	<p><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><del>— <i>Serve on the DFPS Prevention Advisory Committee</i></del></li> <li>- <i>Support implementation of the recommendations issued by the Protect Our Kids Commission</i></li> <li>- <u><i>Partner with child welfare stakeholders on issues of safety and prevention to ensure courts are aware and informed of data, trends, practices, and policy changes affecting child safety, prevention, and early intervention, including family based services cases.</i></u></li> </ul>	<p>The Prevention Advisory Committee convened by the Prevention and Early Intervention Division of DFPS was a key recommendation from the Protect our Kids Commission (POK). The POK Commission was established by Senate Bill 66 during the 83rd Legislative Session and was charged with identifying promising practices and strategies to address and reduce fatalities from child abuse and neglect and recommending a comprehensive statewide strategy for reducing those fatalities. The PAC includes representatives such as pediatricians, judges, child welfare agency representatives, prosecutors, medical examiners, provider groups, and policy experts in prevention and community advocacy.</p> <p><b>2/09/18 Update:</b></p> <p>The CC is no longer a member of the PAC Advisory Committee. DFPS did retain Judge Ryan Larson, Judge of the 395th District Court in Williamson County as a member. The DFPS PAC published a progress report and five year strategic plan in September. Link to the report here:</p> <p><u><a href="http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention%20and%20Early%20Intervention/documents/Progress%20Report%20on%20Implementation%20of%20PEI%205-Year%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf">http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention and Early Intervention/documents/Progress Report on Implementation of PEI 5-Year Strategic Plan.pdf</a></u></p>

**I.B. Objective: Support the improvement of education outcomes for children in the conservatorship of DFPS to increase opportunities for educational progress, leading to a more productive and stable adult life.**

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

**Progress Report**

Activities:

- *Promote improved collaboration between education, child welfare, and courts*
- *Develop and promote cross-system training opportunities to increase awareness about the educational needs of students in foster care*
- *Encourage the use of state and local data to drive decision-making and improve education outcomes*

The Foster Care and Education (FC&Ed) Committee was established in 2015 to continue the implementation of the Texas Blueprint recommendations, issued in 2012.

There are five FC&Ed workgroups: Data, Postsecondary, Special Education, Local Collaboration, and School Discipline. The Data Workgroup focuses on improved information-sharing and data collection between DFPS and the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The Postsecondary Workgroup focuses on issues of college or career readiness, identification of students currently or formerly in care, supports to encourage better outcomes beyond high school, developing resources to assist new foster care liaisons at institutions of higher education, and data exchange between DFPS and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The Special Education Workgroup focuses on the over and underrepresentation of students in foster care in special education. The Local Collaboration Workgroup focuses on strategies to strengthen collaboration at the local level. The School Discipline Workgroup will explore strategies to reduce exclusionary discipline for students in foster care and promote improved behavioral health in the education setting.

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

**2/09/18 Update:**

The FC&Ed Committee met on January 22, 2018 to review workgroup progress. The Local Collaboration, ESSA/Data, Postsecondary, School Discipline, and Special Education Workgroups last met on January 11, December 19, November 20, November 7, and October 5 respectively.

CC staff participated in multiple meetings related to the refinement of data exchanges between DFPS and the Texas Education Agency as well as the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Efforts are also underway to improve data collection by school

	<p>districts and public institutions of higher education, thus promoting improved identification of students in foster care.</p> <p>On November 13, 2017, several members of the FC&amp;Ed Committee provided a panel presentation on the “Top 10” things judges need to know about improving education outcomes at the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference. The session included practical tips for judges along with an overview of laws related to school stability, special education, academic success, education advocacy, and postsecondary attainment.</p> <p>In December 2017, the CC added information to its website with the complete results from a statewide survey designed to gauge local collaboration. One page documents were also developed to highlight findings from the survey related to legal stakeholders, caregivers, CPS staff, and educators.</p> <p>The CC, in partnership with the Texas Center for the Judiciary, will organize and facilitate Texas’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Foster Care and Education Summit in July 2018.</p>
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p><b><i>I.C.1. Strategy: Partner with Trauma and Mental Health advocates and agencies to ensure the legal and judicial community is aware, educated, supportive of, and implementing and applying principles of Trauma Informed Care in the respective disciplines.</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Raise awareness about Trauma Informed Care through training and educational opportunities.</i></li> <li>- <i>Lead a Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-informed Care to create a trauma-informed child welfare system that better meets the needs of children who have experienced trauma.</i></li> <li>- <i>Partner with Texas trauma-informed workgroups and collaboratives</i></li> <li>- <i>Develop and support Trauma Informed Care and Practice training for stakeholders involved with children and families in CPS cases.</i></li> </ul>	<p>2/09/18 Update:</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. MMHPI presented on its completed report on the TIC environment in Texas, and the SCTIC subsequently established four Strategic</p>

	<p>Workgroups: Child Welfare System Reform, Chaired by Andy Homer, Texas CASA; Organizational Leadership, Chaired by Renee Calder Price, DePelchin; Cross-systems Collaboration, Chaired by Christine Gendron, TNOYS; and Funding, Data &amp; Evaluation, Chaired by Katy Bourgeois, Mission Capital.</p> <p>In November, the four subcommittees met to discuss specific goals for each subcommittee. After the November in-person meeting, Chairperson Judge Darlene Byrne and Children’s Commission staff drafted specific goals, strategies and definitions and a first-year plan. The SCTIC will hold an all-workgroup webinar on Friday, February 16th at noon to discuss how best to share the first year plan and gather input on how to move forward with individual subcommittee work.</p> <p>Also, the topic of trauma-informed care has recently been examined by the two highest courts in Texas at a joint hearing on Jan. 11th. This first-ever joint hearing was to learn more about the need for trauma-informed care and better collaboration among the courts and mental health experts for improved wellness in our child welfare, juvenile justice and criminal justice systems. More information about the new commission, its priorities and meetings will be available soon on the Court’s website.</p>
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p><b><i>I.D.1. Strategy: Collaborate with state and local partners to prevent and address commercial sexual exploitation of foster youth.</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Work with Child Welfare Agency to improve identification of children who are victims or at high risk of becoming victims of human trafficking, including dual status population</i></li> <li>- <i>Provide training and resources related to judicial and legal system handling of HT and CSEC cases.</i></li> <li>- <i>Participate with Office of Attorney General and Statewide HT Task Force as well as the Office of the Texas Governor.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The CC is focused primarily on providing information to judges and attorneys responsible for child welfare cases to raise awareness of human trafficking as it impacts children involved with the child welfare system.</p> <p>The CC Child Protection Law Bench Book includes relevant legislation regarding human trafficking and a one-page checklist on human trafficking added to the Bench Book as an additional resource for judges. Through JIR correspondence, the CC also relayed</p>

important information to judges hearing child welfare cases about the intersection of child welfare and human trafficking.

The CC also participates in the nationwide Capacity Building Center for Courts Constituency Group to learn about best and current practices to prevent and respond to trafficking of children and youth in foster care and attends local, state, and national training events, including the Family Focused Treatment Association conference sessions on human trafficking to stay informed about successful strategies to combat trafficking and develop expertise to relay information to judges and attorneys as needed.

In addition to serving on the Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force, the CC also works with the Office of the Texas Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team and the Office 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.

02/09/18 Update:

CC staff recently attended meetings hosted by the Office of the Texas Governor’s Sex Trafficking Team related to specialized foster care placements, a universal screening tool entitled the Commercial Sexual Exploitation – Information Tool (CSE-IT), and building regional care coordination models throughout Texas. Additionally, during Human Trafficking Prevention Month in January, the CC provided correspondence to judges and attorneys to raise awareness about the recently released “Be the One” digital training created by the Office of the Attorney General and other available resources. The CC will continue to work with child welfare and court stakeholders to build capacity to address trafficking throughout the state, including the possibility of a judicially focused Domestic Child Sex Trafficking Institute.

<b>I.E. Objective: Promote the value of mediation in CPS cases, which may, in turn, help children and families exit the child welfare system more quickly.</b>	
<b><i>I.E.1. Strategy: Establish an understanding and framework regarding availability, quality, support, cost, training, and usefulness of mediation in CPS cases.</i></b>	<b>Progress Report</b>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assess mediator training availability and needs</li> <li>- Assess potential costs, resources spent by counties, and funding sources for CPS mediation</li> </ul>	<p>2/09/18 update:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission is evaluating the feasibility of creating a mediation workgroup to focus on systemic improvement in CPS mediation and will implement its decision in 2018.</p> <p>Later in February, the Commission will work with Texas Council on Family Violence to share information with attorneys and judges about a newly developed online curriculum tool kit which consists of four one-hour webinars and supplemental documents to help mediators satisfy SB 539, which requires any court-appointed SAPCR mediator in Texas to obtain a minimum of four (4) hours of family violence dynamics training. This is particularly important for mediators in CPS cases because parties referred to mediation as part of a CPS case do not have the opportunity to object to mediation on th basis of family violence.</p>
<b>I.F. Objective: Collaborate with the full continuum of providers, including health and mental health providers, to identify ways to enhance effective and efficient services and supports for children in foster care and their caregivers.</b>	
<b><i>I.F.1. Strategy: Partner and collaborate with the residential provider community.</i></b>	<b>Progress Report</b>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <del>CC Staff will serve on the Public-Private Partnership for Foster Care Redesign</del></li> <li>- <del>Confer and attend meetings of various child welfare stakeholder groups and collaboratives the Texas Chapter of the Family Focused Treatment Association and other child placing collaboratives</del></li> <li>- <u>Partner with DFPS, child welfare stakeholders and providers on the implementation of Community Base Care with particular focus on the impact to the judicial system and the courts.</u></li> </ul>	<p>CC Executive Director continues to serve on the DFPS Public Private Partnership, which is the DFPS committee that provides advice and input into the state’s Foster Care Redesign effort, now referred to as Community Based Foster Care.</p> <p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission continues to partner with the provider community regarding implementation of Community Based Care and its impact on the judicial system and courts. The CC ED attended a day-long session on implementing</p>

	<p>Community-Based Care sponsored by the Texas Alliance of Child &amp; Family Services on September 14, 2017. CBC was a featured presentation at the annual CASA Conference in Galveston in October 2017, and at the annual child welfare judges conference held in November at Lost Pines. CASA programs and volunteers as well as judges who attended the annual judicial conference were provided information about the purpose of CBC, current catchment areas, and DFPS mandates from Senate Bill 11. Judges heard specifically about the transfer of case management services, including court functions and the possible implications for local jurisdictions once case management services are outsourced.</p> <p>The PPP has established subcommittees to work through various CBC-related issues such as data protocols, fiscal matters, performance measures, and continuity of care. Children’s Commission staff serves on both the performance measures and continuity of care subcommittee and Tina Amberboy co-chairs the continuity of care subcommittee, which has prioritized its work to begin with preserving paid placement capacity in new catchment areas, court-related duties once case management services transfers to the SSCC, and conflict of interest.</p>
<p><b>I.F.2. Strategy: Support Texas CASA in its mission to support child welfare reform through support of local CASA volunteer advocacy programs, and statewide advocacy</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Conduct a Child Welfare Primer for advocates and system stakeholders on child welfare issues, successes and opportunities, including how to involve former and current foster youth in the court process and child welfare policy development.</i></li> <li>- <i>Produce a white paper of recommendations and goals for increased youth voice and engagement in Texas.</i></li> <li>- <i>Promote increased awareness and use of the OCA video conferencing system among CASA programs to enable youth participation.</i></li> <li>- <i>Plan and convene an event to further discuss implementation of cross-system trauma informed approaches with children and families in child welfare. Major activities of this project will be structured to further the work of the SCTIC workgroups.</i></li> <li>- <i>Update the Texas CASA Educational Advocacy Toolkit.</i></li> </ul>	<p>02/09/18 Update:</p> <p>Texas CASA has been awarded a grant to conduct a Child Welfare Primer for advocates and system stakeholders on child welfare issues, successes and opportunities. This year’s primer will include former foster youth, foster youth service providers and child welfare subject matter experts along with court staff and child welfare system stakeholders for the purpose of elevating youth participation and voice in their court case and in child welfare policy development. The primer will be held in July or August 2018.</p> <p>Starting in FY17, OCA’s video conferencing system (See Strategy IV.F.2) was offered to local Texas CASA program offices to allow volunteers and staff to communicate with youth. In October 2017, OCA and CC staff manned a vendor booth at the Texas CASA</p>

	<p>Annual Conference to provide information to program office staff and volunteers about the hearing notification tool and the video conferencing system. To help further the efforts of expanding the number of video endpoints, Texas CASA has offered to promote internally the use of the system in their FY18 grant from the CC. With both of these initiatives underway the number of registered local CASA program offices has increased from 19 to 38.</p> <p>CASA will also assist the Children’s Commission in launching its legal representation survey by sending the survey to its programs who will in turn send the surveys to volunteers. The surveys will launch in March 2018.</p> <p>CASA is also chairing a subcommittee of the Children’s Commission’s Statewide Collaborative on Trauma Informed Care (SCTIC) which will focus on child welfare system reform. The SCTIC will work with the new Judicial Commission on Mental Health to hold a Mental Health / Trauma Summit in the fall of 2018. Read more about the SCTIC at Strategy I.C.1.</p> <p>And, finally, the status of the Texas CASA Educational Advocacy Toolkit has been updated and will be published in February 2018.</p>
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<p><b>II. Goal: Promote, expand, and share best and promising child welfare and court practices and resources to improve judicial administration and strengthen the child welfare system.</b></p>	
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p><i>II.A.1. Strategy: Work with DFPS and other stakeholders to identify topics for Round Table discussions.</i></p>	<p><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Form workgroup to define the purpose and goal of each Round Table and solicit participation from experts to promote substantive discussion</li> <li>- Develop meeting materials and agendas</li> <li>- Secure facilitator and location</li> <li>- Handle RSVPs and travel reimbursements</li> <li>- Produce a written report within 4-6 months</li> <li>- Consider implementation strategies based on the report and recommendations</li> </ul>	<p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>As part of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP), which is the result of the 2016 federal Child and Family Services Review, DFPS has requested that the Children’s Commission assist with a round table focusing on processes and court handling of cases involving Joint Managing Conservatorship. The Children’s Commission will also consider conducting two “mini-Beyond the Bench” conferences for two jurisdictions which made a request for additional dialogue and solution building with DFPS as a result of the DFPS/Judicial breakout sessions at the November child welfare judges conference.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission may also work with stakeholders to discuss removal to foster care and current burden of proof.</p>
<p><i>II.A.2. Strategy: Host House Bill 7 Appellate Rule Task Force</i></p>	<p><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish need for workgroup, identify workgroup members</li> <li>- Establish workgroup goals, meeting schedule, type of support required</li> <li>- Identify deliverables and select a solution</li> <li>- Report to Supreme Court</li> <li>- Report to Legislature</li> </ul>	<p>In August 2017, the Commission launched an Appellate Rule Task Force pursuant to House Bill 7 (The Task Force on Rules of Procedure in Suits Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship Filed by a Governmental Entity). The TF examined four issues: Jury Submission (whether the use of broad form jury submission in termination of parental rights cases filed by DFPS be eliminated), Motion for New Trial and Notice of Appeal, Court Reporters and Reporter Records, and Increase of Parental Termination Appeals.</p>

	<p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>The HB 7 Task Force held one in-person meeting on August 18, 2017. Additional teleconferences were held on September 18<sup>th</sup>, October 11<sup>th</sup>, and October 18<sup>th</sup>. In addition to meetings and conference calls, the HB 7 Task Force reviewed and provided input to the Final Report. The Children’s Commission submitted a report to the Supreme Court of Texas on 11/27/18 and to the Texas Legislature by 12/15/17. Link to the reports here:</p> <p><a href="http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/83668/final-hb7-task-force-report-to-sct.pdf">http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/83668/final-hb7-task-force-report-to-sct.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/83729/final-hb7-task-force-reporttxleg.pdf">http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/83729/final-hb7-task-force-reporttxleg.pdf</a></p> <p>Highlights from the Phase I report include a recommendation that the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court Rules Advisory Committee consider discontinuing broad form jury submission in child protective services cases. Also, to require an attorney filing a notice of appeal to provide notice of such to the court reporter who prepared the record and to the trial judge who heard the case, as well as a suggestion to extend the deadline for the court reporter to file the record from 10 days to 15 days.</p>
<p><i>II.A.3. Strategy: Host Pleading Practice Workgroup to examine DFPS pleading practice and possible reform</i></p>	<p><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Establish need for workgroup, identify workgroup members</i></li> <li>- <i>Establish workgroup goals, meeting schedule, type of support required</i></li> <li>- <i>Identify deliverables and select a solution</i></li> <li>- <i>Report to Governor and Workgroup Members</i></li> </ul>	<p>During the 85th Legislative Session, attempts were made to statutorily reform the pleading practices utilized by the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) when filing a Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship (SAPCR) seeking termination of the parent-child relationship or conservatorship of a child.</p> <p>The Children’s Commission convened a Pleading Practice Workgroup on Friday, October 30, 2018. Generally, the issues presented during the meeting included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The appropriateness and fairness of naming all known and alleged parents, including non-offending parents in the SAPCR, and how DFPS deals with non-offending parents before DFPS takes conservatorship and after.</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Pleading for termination in the alternative and including multiple grounds for termination when there is no evidence to support certain grounds against one or more of the respondents named in the SAPCR.</li> <li>3. The effect that DFPS' pleading practices can have on a parent's perception of the fairness of proceedings and willingness to participate in the case.</li> </ol> <p>A summary of the October 30, 2017 meeting was provided to workgroup members on December 5, 2017. DFPS submitted comments and edits and a revised summary was provided to the workgroup on January 29<sup>th</sup>. The workgroup will meet for a second time on February 5, 2018.</p>
<p><b>II.B. Objective: Ensure availability of quality judicial resources such as the Bench Book, Jurist in Residence (JIR) support and JIR correspondence and communicate to ensure judges are equipped to make informed, educated decisions, and use best practices in conducting hearings that will contribute to better outcomes for children and families.</b></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 style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintain a Bench Book that outlines the state and federal statutory requirements for judges handling child protection cases, including topical sections and checklists</li> <li>- Include tips and best and promising practices throughout Bench Book</li> <li>- Annually update Bench Book with new information, as needed</li> <li>- Disseminate updated Bench Book at annual child welfare judicial conference, annual college for new judges, and upon request</li> <li>- Maintain an updated Bench Book on the CC's website</li> <li>- Ensure all statutory citations are maintained and connected to an online resource</li> <li>- Track distribution of Bench Book</li> </ul>	<p>2/09/18Update:</p> <p>The CPS Bench Book was updated in November and distributed at the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference, November 13-15, 2017. The Bench Book is online here: <a href="http://benchbook.texaschildrenscommission.gov/">http://benchbook.texaschildrenscommission.gov/</a></p>
<p><i>II.B.2. Strategy: Provide JIR support to the judiciary and child welfare system.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partner with retired judges with child welfare experience to serve as JIRs</li> <li>- JIRs will participate in conference calls, meetings, and conferences as requested/needed</li> </ul>	<p>The Jurist in Residence (JIR) position was created to foster judicial leadership and promote greater expertise among child protection judges. The JIR acts as a consultant, trainer, and speaker to provide expert and seasoned judicial advice on matters affecting courts and legal system handling of child welfare cases and issues.</p>

- *JIRs will release communiqués and letters on emerging, pertinent, and changing policy, laws, and practice of interest to judges hearing CPS cases*
- *JIRs will market scholarship and conference attendance opportunities*
- *Publish JIR letters with CC drafting and research assistance*
- *With CC assistance, distribute to CPS judge listserv, and post JIR letters on the CC website*
- *JIRs will provide judicial technical assistance to Children’s Commission, as needed*
- *JIRs will help recruit, retain, and advance judicial leaders*

Additionally, informational letters and “blasts” concerning items of interests, such as training events, are routinely issued.

Additionally, the JIR assists with the development of curriculum for the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference, moderates and presents, 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 and Trial Skills Trainings.

The JIR activities will remain much the same for FY2018, with additional emphasis on elevating judicial leaders with particular expertise and interests related to child and family well-being and improving the child welfare system.

2/09/18 Update:

Judge Dean Rucker continues to serve as JIR and regularly consults on amendments and additions to the CPS Judge’s Bench Book as well as other pressing or emergent issues brought to the CC’s attention by DFPS or other stakeholders.

Judge Rucker provided extensive review and edits to the Commission’s 85th Legislative Update, as well as presented a legislative update through a State Bar of Texas webcast on July 24, 2017, and to 80+ attendees at the November child welfare judges conference. Judge Rucker will also provide a legislative update to general jurisdiction judges attending the January 22 & 23 Family Justice Conference at Lost Pines.

Judge Rucker also chairs the Legal Representation Committee, the Texas Board of Legal Specialization Advisory Committee, the Supreme Court HB7 Task Force on Appellate Rules, and the DFPS Pleading Practice Workgroup.

JIR Letters and Announcements issued between September 2017 and February 2018

- 1/30/18 [NACC Conference Scholarships, New Child Protection Law Section, Job Opening at the Children’s Commission](#)
- 1/22/18 [The Texas Response to Human Trafficking](#)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 12/13/17 <a href="#">Texas Child Protection Law Bench Book</a></li> <li>- 11/17/17 <a href="#">Request for Assistance with Children's Commission Mediator Survey</a></li> <li>- 11/10/17 <a href="#">Supreme Court Emergency Order and Applicability of Family Code Section 263.401</a></li> <li>- 11/3/17 <a href="#">Trial Skills MCLE Now Available in the TexasBar CLE Online Classroom</a></li> <li>- 10/20/17 <a href="#">Website Update and Children's Commission Celebrates 10 Year Anniversary</a></li> <li>- 9/29/17 <a href="#">Reminder of Upcoming MCLEs and Related Discounts</a></li> <li>- 9/15/17 <a href="#">Announcing Rescheduled Live MCLE on Trial Skills: Tuesday, October 3, 2017</a></li> <li>- 9/8/17 <a href="#">Undocumented Caregivers in Texas</a></li> <li>- 9/5/17 <a href="#">Supreme Court of Texas Emergency Order Affecting Child Protection Cases</a></li> <li>- 9/1/17 <a href="#">New Laws Effective 9/1; Scholarships for 2017 Texas CASA Conference; 2017 Legislative Update Now Available Online</a></li> </ul>
<p>II.C. Objective: Ensure availability of high-quality attorney resources such as Attorney Resource Letters, an attorney webpage on the CC website, and other relevant events to improve court-related outcomes for children and parents through legal representation that is trained and informed.</p>	
<p><i>II.C.1. Strategy: Develop and distribute Attorney Resource Letters (ARLs) that communicate or announce changes in law, policy or practice and inform attorneys of training and other events.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Develop and maintain a distribution list of any / all attorneys known to the CC to work on child protection dockets throughout the State of Texas</i></li> <li>- <i>Publish communiqués and letters on emerging, pertinent, and changing policy, laws, and practice of interest to attorneys handling CPS cases</i></li> <li>- <i>Post ALRs on the CC website</i></li> </ul>	<p>In May 2016, the CC created a distribution list of more than 3,000 attorneys to inform legal practitioners of training and scholarship opportunities and to relay information about issues related to child welfare.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide shorter communications (Attorney Blasts) with attorneys regarding specific training opportunities and other matters of interest</li> </ul>	<p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>Letters and Announcements issued between September 2017 and February 2018.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1/30/18 <a href="#">NACC Conference Scholarships, New Child Protection Law Section, Job Opening at the Children's Commission</a></li> <li>- 1/22/18 <a href="#">The Texas Response to Human Trafficking</a></li> <li>- 12/13/17 <a href="#">Texas Child Protection Law Bench Book</a></li> <li>- 12/1/17 <a href="#">Hearing Notification Service Update - Hearing Alerts by Text Message Now Available</a></li> <li>- 11/3/17 <a href="#">Trial Skills MCLE Now Available in the TexasBar CLE Online Classroom</a></li> <li>- 10/20/17 <a href="#">Website Update and Children's Commission Celebrates 10 Year Anniversary</a></li> <li>- 9/29/17 <a href="#">Reminder of Upcoming MCLEs and Related Discounts</a></li> <li>- 9/18/17 <a href="#">Announcing Rescheduled Live MCLE on Trial Skills: Tuesday, October 3, 2017</a></li> <li>- 9/8/17 <a href="#">Undocumented Caregivers in Texas</a></li> <li>- 9/1/17 <a href="#">New Laws Effective September 1, Scholarships for 2017 Texas CASA Conference, 2017 Legislative Update Now Available Online</a></li> </ul>
<p><b><i>II.C.2. Strategy: Create and maintain an Attorney Resource webpage.</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create an Attorney Resource page and link from CC homepage</li> <li>- Post relevant links, pages, reports, resources on the page</li> <li>- Maintain and update the page periodically</li> </ul>	<p>A webpage has been created to feature the Attorney Resource Letters and timely announcements. To view this webpage, link here:</p> <p><a href="http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/training/attorney-education/attorney-resource-letter.aspx">http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/training/attorney-education/attorney-resource-letter.aspx</a></p>

<p><i>II.C.3. Strategy: Assist child welfare and legal stakeholders with implementation of laws related to sealing juvenile records.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partner with local and state organizations who have expertise in sealing juvenile records</li> <li>- Assess how the Children’s Commission can increase awareness among judges, attorneys, and child welfare stakeholders about the new sealing law effective September 1, 2017</li> <li>- Create training, resources, and tools for attorneys, judges, stakeholders, and youth as needed</li> <li>- Support local record sealing projects</li> </ul>	<p>Youth involved in the juvenile justice system often rehabilitate, but the juvenile criminal record, if not sealed or restricted, can become a major barrier to obtaining financial aid, housing, public benefits, higher educational, and licensing opportunities, and employment. During the 85th Legislative Session, a comprehensive bill was passed to automatically seal records of juveniles for misdemeanors under certain circumstances.</p> <p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission reviewed guides created by the Texas Department of Juvenile Justice and Texas Rio-Grande Legal Aid to assess whether additional resources are needed to explain the processes related to sealing juvenile records. Legislative changes regarding automatic sealing and sealing after an application to the court went into effect September 1, 2017. CC staff is consulting with judges and attorneys to learn more about best practices and areas for improvement and how the information can be shared with others.</p>
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p><i>II.D.1. Strategy: Maintain and enhance usability and function of the Children’s Commission website.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On a regular basis, update the website with recent, up-to-date, and pertinent content and work with OCA for website support</li> <li>- Provide links and resources related to each of the projects outlined in the Strategic Plan</li> <li>- Provide a portal for website visitors to submit inquiries or sign up for CC mailing lists and notification features</li> <li>- Use technology, such as Twitter, to communicate important news announcements and spread awareness about key events</li> </ul>	<p>In May 2017, the CC completed a thorough review and launched an updated and restructured website. This change includes updating the site to the most recent online platform, and becoming mobile-user friendly. Compared to the previous year, Google Analytics report an overall increase in website traffic of five percent and an increase of those accessing the website by mobile device. The Children’s Commission Twitter account, @TXChildrensComm, routinely shares the JIR and ARL communiques once they are published, and engages with the online community to extend the reach of valuable resources. The feed continues to grow a following, expand and engage</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide CIP grant application information and updated applications and forms</li> </ul>	<p>communications with fellow stakeholders involved in similar efforts. Additionally, subscribers to the Attorney Resource Letter distribution list has increased which is managed online within the CC website.</p>
<p><b>II.E. Objective: Support county, state, and national child welfare leaders and organizations to enhance the opportunity to gain knowledge and competency and share experience and expertise with and throughout Texas.</b></p>	
<p><i>II.E.1. Strategy: Provide assistance to local jurisdictions, DFPS, and other state and national partners.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Secure speakers and/or provide funds for meeting support and facilitation</li> <li>- Make presentations at training events, as requested</li> <li>- Evaluate the effectiveness of the assistance</li> </ul>	<p>2/09/18</p> <p>The Children’s Commission has provided meeting support and facilitation for several workgroups and events detailed throughout this Report, including Foster Care and Education Committee and Training Committee (See Strategies I.B.1, and VI.A.2, VI.A.3, VI.A.4, VI.A.5, VI.A.6, and VI.A.7.</p> <p>Additionally, Dylan Moench and Judge Dean Rucker have provided legislative updates to several groups around the state.</p>
<p><b>II.F. Objective: Support the use of best practices in court case management.</b></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>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborate with OCA on the management, programming, and testing services for CPCMS</li> <li>- Monitor bug fixes or enhancements required based on input from CPCMS users</li> <li>- Participate in the CPCMS Advisory Group to determine the nature and priority of CPCMS enhances and bug fixes</li> <li>- Monitor equipment and software purchases required for proper and efficient operation and maintenance</li> </ul>	<p>CPCMS is a case management system that is unique to Child Protection Courts. It has been in use since 2009. OCA provides project management, programming, and testing services for CPCMS. OCA staffs a CPCMS Advisory Council of CPC judges, OCA staff and Children’s Commission staff to identify and discuss various enhancements and issues.</p> <p>CPCMS is in its eighth year of service and is currently in maintenance mode. User-generated bug reporting has significantly decreased. . OCA continually works on the</p>

	<p>architecture to streamline how documents are stored so that document storage can be accomplished outside the CPCMS database.</p> <p>Another feature of CPCMS is data collection, which may be useful in monitoring outcome measures which in turn provide judges with meaningful feedback regarding court practices that affect safety, permanency, and well-being.</p> <p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>OCA continues to maintain CPCMS by releasing software updates in response to user and system generated error reporting.</p> <p>CPCMS Advisory Council Meetings:</p> <p>September 29, 2017 – The council discussed what CPCMS performance measures would be most beneficial to Judges and staff in comparison to other counties/courts. Once the performance measures of interest are determined, OCA and CC staff will process the information and provide the report to Judges biannually as a resource to identify trends and focus training priorities prior to associate judge reviews.</p> <p>January 16, 2018 – The first scheduled meeting for FY18 was cancelled due to winter weather closures. The meeting is being rescheduled.</p>
<p><i>II.F.2. Strategy: Explore feasibility of providing support for specialty courts such as family treatment, crossover youth, and permanency dockets.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborate with judges who handle specialty court dockets</li> <li>- Develop and provide resources and tools helpful to specialty court judges</li> </ul>	<p>2/09/18Update:</p> <p>The National Quality Improvement Center for Collaborative Community Court Teams (QIC-CCCT) recently announced a grant opportunity for demonstration sites to focus on the implementation of the Comprehensive Addiction and Treatment Act amendments to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. The intent of the grant is to better address the needs of infants and toddlers, and the family members, impacted by substance abuse disorders. Harris County Infant and Toddler Court has expressed an interest in applying for the grant. On February 2, 2018, the Children’s</p>

	<p>Commission issued a Jurist in Residence letter to apprise jurisdictions about the opportunity. CIP will provide letters of support for any court team seeking grant funds through this offering.</p>
<p><i>II.F.3. Strategy: Survey availability and functionality of dual status courts, including utilization of a practice model.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review information on the volume of cases and circumstances of dual status youth in Texas.</li> <li>- Provide training and resources to judges, attorneys and other child welfare stakeholders, as appropriate and upon request.</li> </ul>	<p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>On December 8, 2017, CC staff participated in a discussion organized by the Texas Judicial Council’s Juvenile Justice Committee about dual status youth. The meeting also included staff from DFPS and the Texas Juvenile Justice Department. OCA has requested that the CC support the efforts of the committee and relay any relevant information to legal stakeholders in the child welfare system.</p> <p>The CC, in consultation with the Texas Center for the Judiciary, also facilitated a training opportunity for judges attending the 2018 Family Justice Conference on issues related to dual status youth. On January 22, 2018, John Tuell from the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice provided continuing education centering on strategies and best practices in the judicial administration of cases involving dual status youth, including an overview of adolescent brain development. CC staff will explore follow up training opportunities, including a regional approach to improving outcomes for dual status youth.</p>

III. Goal: Facilitate and institutionalize collaboration, communication, and respect between the judicial system and child welfare partners.	
III.A. Objective: Promote and support institutional collaboration among high-level state, legislative, and judicial leaders, as well as among multi-disciplinary child welfare stakeholders so there is open and continuous dialogue between and among the various child welfare partners.	
<i>III.A.1. Strategy: Provide a forum and opportunity for child welfare stakeholders to collaborate, communicate, and share information about child welfare practices, policies, needs, and strengths.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Maintain a statewide multidisciplinary judicial commission</i></li> <li>- <i>Hold regular CC meetings that will include child welfare stakeholders</i></li> <li>- <i>Promote active participation by judges, the CC Executive Director, and DFPS in the federal review process</i></li> <li>- <i>Ensure the visible and joint involvement of a Supreme Court of Texas Justice and the DFPS Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner of CPS, Deputy Assistant Commissioner of CPS and other state level executives</i></li> <li>- <i>Maintain a collaborative council of child welfare advocates, stakeholders, and state agencies to promote collaboration in development and implementation of CIP initiatives</i></li> <li>- <i>Conduct bi-weekly collaborative calls involving a variety of stakeholders and participants</i></li> <li>- <i>Share information through CC website, judge and attorney distribution lists, and commission meetings and commission-sponsored events</i></li> </ul>	<p>The CC will work to develop and achieve shared goals and activities detailed in the CC Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Current collaboration efforts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- DFPS leadership has a standing position on the Children’s Commission.</li> <li>- At least one state-level DFPS staff member is on every CC committee.</li> <li>- Participation in a bi-weekly collaborative conference call with child-welfare stakeholders, including executive staff of DFPS, OCA, CASA, and other child welfare stakeholders.</li> <li>- DFPS and the CC regularly collaborate on the CFSP, APSR, CFSR, PIP and CIP-SP.</li> <li>- DFPS members have the opportunity to present at each CC meeting to provide information regarding DFPS initiatives and efforts.</li> <li>- The CC ED and CC Staff serve on the State PIP Team, the statewide Foster Care Redesign Public Private Partnership Committee, the Prevention Advisory Council and many other DFPS-sponsored workgroups and subcommittees.</li> <li>- Joint Court/DFPS attendance at the CIP Annual Conferences.</li> <li>- DFPS leadership attends the annual child welfare judicial conference.</li> </ul> <p><b>2/09/18 Update:</b></p> <p>In late 2017, the CC convened its collaborative council to discuss what is positive and negative about members’ experiences and how the Children’s Commission can improve each member’s experience. The Children’s Commission agreed to invite all</p>

	<p>Collaborative Council members to participate in the CC-DFPS bi-monthly call, creating a Collaborative Council directory, and creating a one-pager that explains the purpose of the Collaborative Council, terms of service, reimbursement for travel, workgroup participation, and how to submit issues to the Children’s Commission staff for elevation to the Commission or to an ongoing workroup. The one-pager will be posted on the Children’s Commission website.</p> <p>The CC will continue to hold the bi-monthly calls and include a much larger stakeholder group. The CC will continue to conduct regular subcommittee and workgroup meetings to help advance CC strategies.</p>
<p><b>III.B. Engage in policy and procedural improvements that advance child welfare system functionality, promote effective and equitable services, and ensure justice for all parties.</b></p>	
<p><i>III.B.1. Strategy: conduct the following activities and perform CQI evaluations, as appropriate</i></p>	<p><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Serve as facilitator and convener of substantive discussions related to child welfare matters, and produce related reports with recommended changes to judicial, attorney, child welfare, and advocate practice, as well as state policy and statute</i></li> <li>- <i>Monitor, evaluate, and consult on proposed legislation for impact to the judiciary and the child welfare system, and provide research and testimony to the Texas Legislature, as requested</i></li> <li>- <i>Confer regularly with the Department of Family and Protective Services, federal Administration of Children and Families officials, other CIPs, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, National Center for State Courts, National Association of Counsel for Children, National Conference of State Legislatures, and American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law on issues affecting child welfare policy and practice in Texas and nationally</i></li> <li>- <i>Speak and present publicly in a variety of settings to audiences including congressional staff, national organizations, private foundations, state leadership, state legislators and staff, attorneys and advocates, and all levels of the Texas Judiciary, including the Supreme Court of Texas</i></li> </ul>	<p>Throughout the fiscal year, the CC serves as facilitator and convener of Round Table discussions, CIP committee and subcommittee meetings, and conference calls related to the short and long term projects in the strategic plan, as described in this report.</p> <p>See Sections III.A,</p>

IV. Goal: Promote high quality court proceedings that safeguard due process, child and family involvement, and effective legal representation of parties.	
IV.A. Objective: Improve legal representation so that parents, children, and the State of Texas experience high-quality court hearings.	
<i>IV.A.1 Strategy: Work locally and nationally to improve all aspects of legal representation for parties.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participate with Casey Family Program, ABA, and other CIPs to reform Texas legal representation system</li> <li>- Maintain a Legal Representation Committee and relevant, pertinent subcommittees, as appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>The CC serves on the advisory committee of the Family Justice Initiative, which is a national group of key legal experts focused on improving legal representation nationwide. The goals of the FJI is to positively impact permanency through improved representation, to build consensus on how to define permanence, removal avoidance, reunification, and strengthening families, and to identify what professionals in the legal system do that impacts permanency and strengthening families.</p> <p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>Three workgroups have been formed: Research and Data, Quality Representation, and Communications. Texas will serve on the Research and Data workgroup and has also volunteered to work on the State Focus Workgroup, when that workgroup launches.</p> <p>The Research and Data group has split into two groups with distinct focuses. One group will focus on working with FJI demonstration sites to develop a data collection/continuous quality improvement tool, as well as look at the impact of improved parent and children's representation on child welfare outcomes.</p> <p>The second group will focus on overcoming the research barriers in evaluating programs that are not designed with future evaluation in mind. The group will develop a document or guide for jurisdictions making improvements to representation to ensure that their programs can be evaluated in the future. The CC is considering the potential of each of these two new research groups and the possible benefits and opportunities they might present to Texas courts.</p>

<p><i>IV.A.2 Strategy: Work through the Legal Representation Committee and Training Committee to identify training needs, develop and host training events, and support efforts to ensure high quality legal representation for parties.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Please see activities under Section VI for training activities</i></li> <li>- <i>Host meetings and conference calls related to legal representation, due process, local community relationships, financial impact of legal representation, and legislative and policy considerations</i></li> <li>- <i>Target subjects and opportunities for additional training focused on improving legal representation</i></li> <li>- <i>Support the efforts of the TBLA Advisory Committee as described in IV.C.1</i></li> </ul>	<p>The CC will maintain a Legal Representation Committee for FY2018</p> <p><b>2/09/18 Update:</b></p> <p>The Legal Representation Subcommittee held a call-in meeting on January 19, 2018 to update all members on the implementation process for the study. All necessary stakeholders have reviewed, approved, and agreed to a plan to distribute the survey, including the Department’s approval to distribute the survey to children in DFPS conservatorship. The committee is working with Professor Monica Faulkner at the University of Texas at Austin to complete the institutional review board process necessary to survey children and plans to initiate all surveys the first week of March 2018.</p> <p>The DFPS Representation committee has formed a subcommittee to develop a toolkit for DFPS attorneys modelled on the Family Law Section toolkit. An outline has been agreed to and initial drafts of each section have already been completed. The subcommittee will have a final version of the toolkit read for publication and distribution at the TDCAA Crimes Against Children Conference on April 11, 2018</p> <p>The Legal Representation Committee held its latest meeting on August 25, 2018 and projects from that meetings such as Attorney Resource Letter updating attorneys for children on their new obligations to assist clients with identification documents; a Jurist in Residence letter and CLE webinar for judges regarding how to engage children at court and using data from the Family Helpline to train DFPS investigators and attorneys on the fault out from improperly closed cases; attorney training on how to practice trauma informed advocacy when representing children or parents who have been the victims of trauma; a JIR and ARL regarding how to place children with a safe parent across national borders;</p> <p>The next full LRC meeting will be on March 2, 2018.</p>

<p>IV.B. Objective: Develop, adopt and promote standards of practice for attorneys representing parties in child protection cases so that attorneys are encouraged to gain a higher level of expertise and provide high-quality legal representation.</p>	
<p><i>IV.B.1. Strategy: Support establishment of a State Bar of Texas Child Protection Law Section.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Serve on the Child Protection Law Section Council</i></li> <li>- <i>Partner with the State Bar of Texas to provide support for the Section</i></li> <li>- <i>Collaborate with Section leadership and members to promote the new Section, create educational materials, promote membership in the section, and fund scholarships and CLE efforts, as appropriate</i></li> </ul>	<p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>The proposed Child Protection Section of the Texas State Bar received approval from the full Board of Directors on January 26 and is now officially the State Bar’s newest section. This new section was formed after receiving over 400 signatures of attorneys willing to join the proposed section, establishing a development committee to complete the application, drafting by-laws for the section, and proposing officers and council members. Officers of the new section will be: Justice Debra Lehrmann, Chair; Tiffany Crouch Bartlett, Chair-elect; Sandra Hachem, Secretary; and Mark Briggs, Treasurer. The section plans to put on its first annual Advanced Child Protection Law Course April 19 and 20, 2018 in Austin, Texas.</p>
<p>IV.C. Objective: Establish a specialization through the Texas Board of Legal Specialization so that attorneys who wish to achieve a higher level of understanding and expertise can provide higher caliber of legal representation.</p>	
<p><i>IV.C.1. Strategy: Staff and support a Texas Board of Legal Specialization Advisory Committee.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Staff and support TBLS Advisory Committee meetings and activities</i></li> <li>- <i>Draft a TBLS exam for child welfare specialization, if requested</i></li> <li>- <i>Work with TBLS Staff to offer the board specialization exam, if appropriate</i></li> <li>- <i>Work with TBLS Staff to administer exam, if appropriate</i></li> </ul>	<p>On February 14, 2017 the Texas Supreme Court officially recognized Child Welfare Law as the 20th area of certified legal specialization and the process of writing the exam and administering the applications has now begun.</p> <p>TBLS has approved the membership for both the Child Welfare Law Advisory Commission and the Child Welfare Law Exam Commission. Judge Dean Rucker is the chair of the Advisory Commission which will consider applications to become board certified in child welfare law and will have authority to review and suggest changes in</p>

	<p>standards going forward. Dylan Moench was recently named the chair of the Exam Commission which is writing and will also grade the exam.</p> <p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>The Exam Commission held its most recent meeting on November 17, 2017. The Exam Commission reviewed the initial drafts of exam questions, made final assignments to write questions for topics not yet covered, and discussed selecting new members to the Exam Commission to replace the withdrawing Macy Cassin and Charles Van Orden. The Exam Commission will have its next meeting February 2, 2018 and will be welcoming Charles Childress and Jacqueline Wilson to the commission.</p> <p>The process to apply for certification will begin in mid to late February, the deadline for submitting and application will be April 30, 2018, and the Exam will be held in October of 2018.</p>
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IV.D. Objective: Create, distribute, maintain, support, and evaluate resources for parents involved in CPS cases so that parents can gain more equal footing and support for their rights once they become involved with CPS.

<p><i>IV.D.1. Strategy: Support Family Helpline and Parent Resource Guide.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
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<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Maintain and update the Parent Resource Guide on the CC website and online (LawBox, Reprints)</i></li> <li>- <i>Support and evaluate the Family Helpline</i></li> <li>- <i>Continue to staff a committee focused on improving Parent Representation in CPS cases</i></li> </ul>	<p>The Parent Resource Guide was completed in May 2015 and is accessible in print and online on the CC website as well as many on other CC partner and advocate websites, in English and Spanish.</p> <p>In FY2017, the CC partnered with Access to Justice and the Children’s Justice Act to fund the Texas Legal Services Corporation to establish the Family Helpline, which provides easy, statewide access for parents and family members to basic information, education, and resources addressing parental rights as they relate to CPS Investigations, the provision of Family Based Services, Parental Child Safety Placements, Chapter 34 non-parent agreements, termination of parental rights, custody, access, visitation, service plans, the court’s role in conducting hearings and oversight, right to legal counsel, non-offending parents, minor parents, incarcerated parents, survivors of family violence, intergenerational issues, and other variations.</p>
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	<p>2/09/18 Update</p> <p>Following its opening in early 2017, the Family Helpline has steadily increased its volume and as of September 30 2017, the Family Helpline received 1026 unique calls across 140 counties. The Family Helpline has grown from two attorneys to a total of five full and part time attorneys. As the Helpline grows, it is continuing to partner with other stakeholders to share data and information. The Family Helpline participated as a presenter at the 2017 Child Welfare Judges Conference, they will be presenting at on the February 15 SCAN call for department attorneys as well as working with DFPS on a possible presentation at the 2018 DFPS attorney conference. The Helpline is also negotiating the with Children’s Commission on taking editorial responsibility for the Parent’s Resource Guide, which has seen a significant increase in traffic since the Family Helpline was established.</p> <p>The Parent Resource Group held a meeting on November 16, 2017. Goals from that meeting of updating the Parent Resource Guide after the 85th Legislative Session, and collaboration with the State Bar of Texas Child Welfare Law Section have already been begun and the Parent Resource Group will hold its next meeting in the second quarter of 2018.</p>
<p>IV.E. Objective: Improve and expand engagement of families and caregivers in court hearings so that court hearings are higher quality and more meaningful for the families and children involved.</p>	
<p><i>IV.E.1. Strategy: Promote and improve availability and use of the OCA Notice and Engagement tool.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Market OCA web tool that allows establishing a user ID, searching for a child / case, and setting timely email alerts</li> <li>- Periodically re-issue announcement to various audiences</li> <li>- Develop a survey tool to assess the usefulness, effectiveness and accuracy of the system</li> <li>- Monitor the number of users and hearings included in alerts sent by the system</li> </ul>	<p>The project involves using non-confidential case data to provide email notice to users about upcoming hearings. All parties involved in CP cases continue to struggle with securing consistent and timely notice of scheduled hearings from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). This issue includes the foster placements and DFPS service provider facilities where the children/youth are in placement and results in many parties not being able to attend scheduled court hearings. OCA will monitor the system login and search information, Notices will be</p>

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.

2/09/18 Update:

Currently, the search criteria required to find hearing information and sign up to receive notification is proving to be too stringent. To search for hearing information, users are required to input at least part of the parent, adoptive parent, or guardian's last name, the exact spelling for the child's first and last name, and the county where the case or suit was filed. As the number of registered users continues to increase, multiple users have reported that they were unable to find information about hearings due to misspelled names and typographical errors at the data entry point by CPCMS court users. To mitigate the number of failed attempts to secure hearing information, the CC, OCA, and DFPS have agreed to loosen the search criteria related to the child's name since requiring the exact spelling of the child's name creates the largest number of help inquiries. The new search criteria will allow the user to choose between two options to conduct a search: Cause number and county where the case or suit was filed; or County where the case or suit was filed, at least part of the parent, adoptive parent, or guardian's last name, and a close spelling of the child's first and last name. OCA is currently working on these changes.

In late 2017, OCA added text message to the hearing notification tool, and in October 2017, began sending hearing notifications via text message for users who opted to receive notifications in that manner. The CC marketed this feature upgrade via its ARL distribution list, which was sent on December 1, 2017.

OCA is creating an application programming interface (API) which will allow non-CPCMS courts to upload their child protection case hearing data into the database, thus allowing users to access them via the notification system. OCA is 80% complete on the programming of this upgrade and we will begin to identify courts to pilot the project soon.

The CC and OCA continue to advertise the availability of the electronic notification tool. In October 2017, OCA and CC staff manned a vendor booth at the Texas CASA

	<p>Annual Conference to provide information to program office staff and volunteers about the hearing notification tool and the video conferencing system.</p> <p>From January 2017 to date, the number of registered users has increased from 502 to 966.</p>
<p>IV.F. Objective: Improve and expand engagement of youth in court hearings so that youth feel more involved and assured that their voice is heard and important to the decisions being made about their lives.</p>	
<p><i>IV.F.1. Strategy: Elevate the importance of youth voice, youth presence and youth input in the outcome of their case.</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Emphasize the importance of youth voice and youth presence in court</i></li> <li>- <i>Provide training about the importance of youth voice</i></li> <li>- <i>Include foster youth and former foster youth as part of judicial training events</i></li> <li>- <i>Promote bench cards and other resources and tools that judges can use to appropriately involve youth in court hearings and permanency planning</i></li> </ul>	<p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>The Children’s Commission will recommend funding a \$50k grant to Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) to support its 2018 Annual Conference which provides a platform for youth to share their lived experience and their perspectives on policies and services, as well as by offering practical guidance and training for organizations on how to incorporate opportunities for youth voice into their work. The 2018 conference will purposefully focus on youth perspectives, how organizations can develop effective collaborations with youth, and how youth can learn about and effectively advocate for their rights.</p> <p>CIP funds will also support the establishment of a Statewide Youth Council designed to incorporate youth voice in statewide policy and administrative procedure discussions, particularly in the area of the foster care system. The statewide youth council 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. CIP funds will not be used to attend or testify at legislative hearings where legislation is considered for passage or to establish or enhance relationships with specific legislative offices. But CIP funds may be used to support general education efforts designed to make audiences (including legislative) aware of the</p>

	<p>Youth Council, its mission and goals, and how audience members can get additional information about the Youth Council.</p> <p>See also Texas CASA Grant (Section I.F.2) of this report.</p>
<p><i>IV.F.2. Strategy: Promote and improve the availability and use of the Video Conferencing (VC) hosted and maintained by the Office of Court Administration (OCA).</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide funding for OCA to host and support the hardware and software required to facilitate VTC between courts and residential placements</li> <li>- Work with OCA to refine and publish the procedures and protocol between OCA, DFPS, Courts, and other users</li> <li>- Monitor OCA's efforts to maintain an updated set of instructions for participation and provide to end-users, a list of Residential Treatment Centers, courts, and other facilities with internet infrastructure and capability</li> <li>- Monitor OCA hearing logs that include the date, time, participating court, type of hearing, participating placement, length of hearing, any problems with the transmission quality or technological barriers</li> <li>- Work with OCA and others to expand capability and feasibility for use beyond court hearing</li> </ul>	<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. OCA hosts and supports the hardware and software required to facilitate video conferencing between courts and residential placements. OCA maintains a list of Residential Treatment Centers (RTC) with video conferencing capability as well as a list of 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.</p> <p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>OCA has completed the Collaborative Video Conferencing web-link that serves as a resource page for video conferencing. The web page includes an up-to-date list of all facilities and participating courts with video conferencing capabilities including their location and contact telephone number. OCA and CC staff are currently drafting a how-to page for system users. Once the instructional page is complete, the CC will circulate a Jurist in Residence and Attorney Resource communication highlighting the Collaborative Video Conferencing web-link and available resources for system users.</p> <p>Starting in FY17, the video conferencing system was offered to local Texas CASA program offices to allow volunteers and staff to communicate with youth. In October 2017, OCA and CC staff manned a vendor booth at the Texas CASA Annual Conference to provide information to program office staff and volunteers about the hearing notification tool and the video conferencing system. To help further the efforts of expanding the number of video endpoints, Texas CASA has offered to promote internally the use of the system in their FY18 grant from the CC. With both of these</p>

initiatives underway the number of registered local CASA program offices has increased from 19 to 38.

Broadening the type of video endpoints to include local CASA offices is already being utilized in West Texas. Judge Roy Ferguson presides over all CPS cases in Brewster, Culberson, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis and Presidio Counties. A 20,000+ square mile district and lack of local foster homes means many children are placed hundreds of miles from courthouse and attorney. Attorneys appointed in CPS cases in the Big Bend region may now confer with children, parties and foster parents through confidential video conferencing from CASA's Alpine office. Additionally, children can participate in court hearings via video-conferencing, without missing school or traveling across the state.

V. Goal: Collect and analyze court and child welfare-related data to develop solutions to improve outcomes, quality, and sustainability of Children’s Commission strategies.	
V.A. Objective: Use agency administrative data to improve permanency outcomes for children who achieve permanency.	
<i>V.A.1. Strategy: Examine agency data to improve outcomes for kids who achieve permanency to ensure permanency in less than 12 months.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><del>TX CIP will make data request to child welfare agency requesting list of children discharged within 12–18 months of removal to reunification, relative placement or guardianship in FY2016. Additional data will be requested to examine when the child was placed in his/her last placement prior to exiting the system, and whether a monitored return was used.</del></li> <li><del>CIP will also request data on the number of placements for each child in who exited foster care within 12–18 months of removal in FY2016</del></li> <li><del>TX CIP will review and analyze data with staff, child welfare agency partners, and other relevant stakeholders.</del></li> <li><del>TX CIP will develop a survey to send to stakeholders to share information about the project, solicit feedback on root causes of the delays in permanency, and request possible solutions or practices that could counter the delays.</del></li> <li><del>TX CIP will disseminate findings from the data analysis and survey and solicit feedback through publications, training opportunities, and commission meetings.</del></li> <li><del>TX CIP will host 3-5 roundtables, including an all-site kick off (potentially), to review data and support development of local plans to improve timeliness of permanency.</del></li> <li>- <u>TX CIP will develop strategies to support local teams in monitoring fidelity to their plans and ensure they are modifying and adjusting as they learn more about what is working.</u></li> <li>- <u>TX CIP will facilitate a data-sharing session between judges attending the annual child welfare judges conference and DFPS leadership and Regional Directors and facilitate a one-on-one review.</u></li> <li>- <u>Technical Assistance from DFPS and the Children’s Commission will be offered to any jurisdiction seeking additional help in understanding or developing strategies for reform.</u></li> <li>- <u>TX CIP will post the data from the child welfare judges conference on its website</u></li> </ul>	<p>Starting in FY2017, CIP programs were instructed to become familiar and make use of the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data. All CIPs and Child Welfare agencies were required to jointly design and implement one project using available child welfare data that focuses on improving a specific safety, permanency or well-being outcome for children and families. Texas CIP and DFPS decided on the CFSR Outcome related to permanency within 12 months of entry into foster care, otherwise known as the “percent of children achieving permanency within 12 months.”</p> <p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>The activities associated with this project have been changed due to difficulties in obtaining data responsive to the original project description and in the ability engage in in-depth analysis. Thus, as part of the PIP, the project was modified. In November, Regional Directors shared child welfare data with Judges in their areas to discuss ways to improve achieving permanency for children in care. The Judges and Regional Directors engaged in discussion to determine gaps in the system within their jurisdictions and develop remedies to improve permanency. The Children’s Commission will select one to two jurisdictions for a Beyond the Bench event during the 12 months following the November 2017 event in order to bring together local stakeholders to discuss the outcome data and local system strengths and barriers to achieving timely permanency for children and families. The Children’s Commission will also convene a Roundtable to discuss Joint Managing Conservatorship (JMC). Discussion will address the appropriateness and circumstances under which a court grants JMC, the notice and due process required to ensure parties are engaged, hearing schedules courts should follow, whether JMC should or could be temporary or</p>

	<p>permanent, any burdens of proof. Discussions will also include situations in which children and youth enter care due to mental health issues parents are unable to address.</p> <p>The above activities will support up to two round tables, developing local strategies for the jurisdictions that engage in the round tables, and the dissemination of findings from the projects.</p>
<p>V.B. Objective: Engage in CFSP/APSR/CFSR/CIP partnership with DFPS so that CIP and DFPS can better understand and improve the content, processes and uses of the various reports.</p>	
<p><i>V.B.1. Strategy: CIP/CFSP/CFSR workgroup</i></p>	<p>Progress Report</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Regularly confer about the CFSR and PIP as well as other federal plans and audits, and provide input, as appropriate in the development of plans associated with federal activities.</u></li> <li><del>Meet or hold conference call at least once per quarter</del></li> <li>- <del>Review and provide input, as appropriate, in the development of the CFSP, APSR, CFSR, PIP, CIP Strategic Plan</del></li> </ul>	<p>A Workgroup comprised of CIP staff and child welfare agency staff has been created to confer, evaluate, and inform the development and execution of the Department’s Child and Family State Plan, Annual Progress and Services report, Child and Family Services Review, Program Improvement Plan, and Court Improvement Program’s Strategic Plan.</p> <p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>The E.D. and A.D. regularly confer with DFPS and the Administration of Children and Families to discuss the results of the 2016 Child and Family Services Review and resulting Program Improvement Plan. There are several areas of collaboration and partnership in the PIP which was submitted to ACF on December 15, 2017, including:</p> <p><b>1. CPS will improve the permanency planning process for all children in care.</b></p> <p>CPS has developed a single Child Plan of Service integrating CPS and Residential Provider plans for the same child. This allows all parties to have input on the most appropriate permanency goal for the child, along with efforts and services needed to achieve the goal. This will also allow for increased collaboration and participation by parents and the caregivers. CPS is currently making IMPACT changes to allow for joint documentation of the plan. CPS will implement the use of this plan across the state once IMPACT changes are complete. A statewide workgroup is developing a training</p>

plan for the implementation of the single child plan of service. A plan for webinars, computer based training, and regional kick off meetings with external stakeholders are planned. CPS will work with the Children's Commission to publish a Jurist-in-Residence letter to inform judges and attorneys of the practice as well as invite local judiciary to the kick off meetings.

**2. CPS will make data-driven decisions to improve permanency outcomes for children in care.**

In November 2017, DFPS Regional Directors shared child welfare data with Judges in their areas to discuss ways to improve achieving permanency for children in care.

DFPS and the Children's Commission will continue to collaborate on improving notice and engagement of parties beyond the areas of the state where the automated notice and engagement resource is currently operational. This effort is overseen primarily by the Commission's Data/Technology Committee.

The Children's Commission will convene a Roundtable to discuss Joint Managing Conservatorship (JMC). Discussion will address the appropriateness and circumstances under which a court grants JMC, the notice and due process required to ensure parties are engaged, hearing schedules courts should follow, whether JMC should or could be temporary or permanent, and the appropriate burden of proof. Discussions will also include situations in which children and youth enter care due to mental health issues parents are unable to address.

VI. Goal: Develop, support and fund high-quality, appropriate training for judges, attorneys, and child welfare partners.	
VI.A. Objective: Provide high-quality and easily accessible training resources for judges and attorneys to ensure that attorneys and judges are educated and knowledgeable in order to employ best practices in providing legal representation and in conducting hearings.	
<i>VI.A.1. Strategy: Plan, fund, conduct, and evaluate at least one judicial conference.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partner with TCJ to design curriculum and agenda for conferences</li> <li>- Determine budget, number of attendees</li> <li>- Conduct periodic planning calls, including creation of workgroup to plan agenda</li> <li>- Determine attendee criteria</li> <li>- Coordinate with OCA about inclusion of Child Protection Court staff, space requirements, and agenda development.</li> <li>- Identify topics and speakers</li> <li>- Develop program agenda</li> <li>- Approve attendee list to ensure judges with the greatest need and interest are able to attend</li> <li>- Survey participants for increases in knowledge and other feedback</li> <li>- Evaluate conference planning process, the actual event, and participant feedback</li> <li>- Use feedback into improve future conference planning, as appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>The Children’s Commission collaborates with Texas Center for the Judiciary to design specialized judicial education and training opportunities for active, retired and former Texas appellate, district and county court at law judges, as well as associate judges and court personnel through its grant with the TCJ. Each year TCJ plans at least one annual child welfare judicial conference.</p> <p>Also, the Children’s Commission will sponsor a half-day track at the annual Family Justice Conference.</p> <p>In addition, for FY2018, the Children’s Commission and TCJ will confer on a possible Education and/or Trauma Summit for the summer of 2018.</p> <p><b>2/09/18 Update:</b></p> <p>CC Staff working with support from TCJ hosted its 11th annual Child Welfare Judges Conference on November 13-15, 2017, at Hyatt Lost Pines in Bastrop. It was the most well-attended (92 judges total) and well-received CWJC which the CC has hosted to date. All of the presentations received positive evaluations by the judges, including an innovative “Shift and Share” format which allowed for brief topical presentations on Judge-Ordered and Medically Fragile Placements; Family Helpline and Parent Resources, DFPS Faith-Based Initiatives; Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS); Constitutional Rights of Children; and Domestic Child Sex Trafficking. The planning process for the 2018 CWJC has already begun. The venue will be the Sheraton Austin Georgetown Hotel and Conference Center and the dates will be November 12-14, 2018.</p>

	<p>Additionally, the CC provided funding and speakers for three Child Welfare Tracks at TCJ’s Family Justice Conference on January 22 and 23, 2018. Speakers were John Tuell, ED of the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, who presented on their training and technical assistance model for courts working with Dual Status Youth; Judge Piper McCraw, who presented a CPS Case Law Update; and Judge Rucker and Dylan Moench, who gave a CPS-related Legislative Update. The audience was comprised of general jurisdiction judges. Post-event surveys are still being collected, but audience feedback at the event was very positive across all three child welfare track presentations.</p>
<p><b><i>VI.A.2. Strategy: Provide judicial scholarships to state and national conferences and training events.</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Determine budget, number of attendees</li> <li>- Determine attendee criteria</li> <li>- Approve attendee list to ensure judges with the greatest need and interest are able to attend</li> <li>- Survey participants for increases in knowledge and other feedback</li> <li>- Evaluate scholarship planning process, and participant feedback</li> <li>- Incorporate feedback into subsequent year’s planning, as appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>This year’s NCJFCJ conference will be held in Denver, Colorado from July 22-25, 2018. The Commission will be offering judicial scholarships to attend, and plans to create the related criteria and application process early this spring in partnership with Texas Center for the Judiciary.</p>
<p><b><i>VI.A.3. Strategy: Partner with organizations or independently produce attorney training content and provide scholarships and financial support to attorneys to attend national and state conferences and training events.</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>State Bar of Texas (SBOT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with SBOT to develop one day of MCLE content on CPS-related topics for live taping and subsequent archiving in the online CPS classroom</li> <li>- Identify dates, content, speakers for the one-day event</li> <li>- Publicize CLE on CC website and through other methods such as JIR and Attorney Blasts, at Commission meetings, and other events</li> <li>- Provide scholarships based on financial need to attorneys in order to access the SBOT online classroom</li> </ul>	<p>In partnership with the State Bar, the CC makes several online courses available to court-appointed attorneys and state and DFPS attorneys, including the one-day Child Abuse and Neglect track from its annual Advanced Family Law conference. Also, once each year the CC works with SBOT to webcast a day-long, 6 MCLE hours’ worth of training for attorneys who represent children, parents, and the state of Texas in CPS proceedings. The SBOT’s online classroom of CPS-related webinars is available at a reduced rate to attorneys representing children and parents, and there are scholarships available through the Commission and through the Bar for attorneys who</p>

ABA/Advanced Family Law/NACC and Misc. Attorney Scholarships

- *Determine which conference scholarships will be awarded in FY2017, criteria for award, and amount of scholarship*
- *Market scholarship and conference attendance opportunities through the Attorney Blast / Resource Letter system*
- *Determine budget, number of attendees*
- *Determine attendee criteria*
- *Approve attendee list to ensure attorneys with the greatest need and interest attend*
- *Create application process, evaluate each scholarship event and process and makes changes, as appropriate*
- *Award scholarships pursuant to defined process, and collect evaluation data from attendees for increases in knowledge and other feedback*
- *Amend scholarship process, as necessary, and make recommendations regarding the 2017 funding*

represent the State of Texas and need financial assistance to access this online training.

The CC also administers three different attorney scholarship opportunities: (1) The State Bar of Texas (SBOT) Child Abuse and Neglect 1-Day Workshop; (2) The bi-annual ABA Parent Attorney Conference and Children and the Law Conference held in Washington D.C.; and (3) the NACC Annual Conference.

For all scholarships, the CC determines scholarship criteria and deploys an application process that includes pre- and post-conference evaluations to identify or confirm the knowledge gained, new practices attendees plan to implement and/or a current practice they plan to change. The surveys also inquire about additional topics of interest to help inform planning for future conferences.

2/09/18 Update:

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

Regarding webcasts: CC Staff will partner with the SBOT and with speakers to plan and produce live, statewide webcasts for 6 hours of MCLE content in September 2018 at the State Bar studio. The exact date and topics have not been identified yet. The

Children’s Commission will work with SBOT to ensure scholarships are made available to attorneys who wish to view the webcast.

Regarding scholarships: The Advanced Family Law Child Abuse and Neglect Track 1-Day CLE was presented on August 9, 2017 in San Antonio, Texas, with subsequent video replays held in Houston, Dallas, and South Padre Island later in the fall of 2017. The CC awarded 119 scholarships overall to qualified attorneys from across the state to attend the live CLE or the video replays. Of those awardees, 101 attended and CC Staff also attended the live presentation. The CC collected pre- and post-event surveys of awardees to track gains in knowledge as part of the awards process. Of the attendees, 85 completed a post-event evaluation. Some of the feedback which the CC received in these evaluations was as follows: (1) many attorneys planned to change a current practice or implement a new practice based on what they learned from the lectures on trauma, opening and closing statements, and the appellate law update; (2) the Legislative and Case Law updates were rated as very valuable by attendees; and (3) topics that attendees wanted to learn more about included: trauma, tips on managing high case loads, drug abuse and its impact on CPS cases, and trial skills training. The full results of these post-event surveys were shared with the CC’s Training Committee Members; DFPS Legal; and the Program Director for the 2018 Child Abuse and Neglect CLE. Additionally, This year’s CAN CLE is available for viewing in the CPS Practice Area of the TexasBar CLE’s Online Classroom.

Looking forward to August 2018, the Child Abuse and Neglect Track 1-Day CLE is anticipated to be hosted on August 15th by the new SBOT Child Protection Law Section, and the Commission plans to support it by following our usual scholarship procedure, which includes partnering with the SBOT to provide registration scholarships to qualified attorneys from across the state. The CC plans to allocate \$10,000 to cover 100 attorneys at \$100 each. The scholarship application will be launched in March 2018.

The National Association of Counsel for Children’s 2018 conference dates are August 23-25, 2018 in San Antonio, with a pre-conference training on the NACC’s material to prepare those studying for the NACC’s Child Welfare Law Specialization. CC is partnering with NACC to offer scholarships to Texas attorneys wishing to attend. The

	<p>potential amount to be awarded to NACC to facilitate attendance is up to \$60,000. The scholarship application process will be launched in March 2018.</p> <p>This year for the first time, the CC is partnering with the Texas District and County Attorney Association (TDCAA) to provide scholarships and 12 hours of curriculum for the 2-day CPS CLE track within their 4-day Crimes Against Children Conference on April 11, 12 at the Embassy Suites in San Marcos. A total of \$20,000 has been allocated, with \$17,500 to cover registration cost at \$350 apiece for up to 50 DFPS Regional Attorneys and Staff Attorneys and up to \$2,500 to cover speaker fees if any and travel-related costs as necessary for non-DFPS employee speakers. DFPS attorneys will register through TDCAA for free and the CC will contract with TDCAA to cover this cost.</p> <p>Also the CC has been asked by the newly-formed Child Protection Law Section of the SBOT to provide financial assistance to their upcoming CLE on April 19 and 20, 2018 entitled "First Annual Advanced Child Protection Law Course." The CC would like to support the new Section if possible by providing attorney scholarships to their initial CLE effort. Now that the Child Protection Law Section has received final approval from the Bar to act as a formal Section, the CC will work with the State Bar and the new Section to try to develop the scholarship process for the CLE.</p> <p>The next ABA biannual conferences for Parent Attorneys and Child Attorneys will be held in 2019. Dates and venue are still TBD.</p>
<p><i>VI.A.4. Strategy: Reimburse exam and recertification fees for attorneys and judges who pass the NACC CWLS exam or qualify for recertification.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The CC will enter into a grant agreement with NACC to provide reimbursement</li> <li>- NACC will collect the \$300.00 application or \$350.00 examination fee from the applicant</li> <li>- NACC will administer the exam and report to the CC a list of Texas examinees who have passed the certification exam</li> <li>- CC will reimburse NACC funds on a first-come, first-serve basis to applicants that pass the exam through the end of the grant period</li> </ul>	<p>The CC offers reimbursement of either the CWLS Application Fee or the Certification Exam Fee for Texas attorneys and judges who successfully qualify for and pass the Child Welfare Specialist Exam. The scholarship includes the NACC Red Book Training to help applicants prepare for the exam, a copy of the Red Book to each applicant, offering and scoring the exam, and reimbursing successful applicants either the \$350.00 exam fee or the \$300 application fee.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NACC will provide the names of the Texas attorneys and judges who are awarded certification or recertified and the total number of Texas attorneys and judges who applied to be certified during the calendar year</li> <li>- NACC will share any information or feedback it receives or solicits about the quality, subject matter, and process of giving the exam</li> <li>- NACC will also provide the passage rate of Texas applicants</li> </ul>	<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>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>For FY17, the Commission offered scholarships to cover either the application or exam fee for 17 judges or attorneys and 7 scholarships for those who are due for recertification. Four Texas applicants successfully completed the process during the FY17 grant period and were awarded their CWLS credential. Additionally, four existing Texas CWLS submitted for recertification. NACC is currently working on their FY18 application for CIP funds.</p>
<p><b><i>VI.A.5. Strategy: Support regional and local training events throughout the state, as needed and upon request.</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborate with local sponsor/convener on the conference agenda, audience, budget, marketing, and evaluation</li> <li>- Help ensure notice of the event to judges and attorneys</li> <li>- Ensure the sponsor applies for CLE, if appropriate</li> <li>- Analyze survey results from evaluations distributed by the organizers</li> <li>- Conduct CQI of the process and training content</li> </ul>	<p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>See Strategy VI.A.3 re supporting TDCAA training event as well as the newly formed Child Protection Law Section of the SBOT.</p>
<p><b><i>VI.A.6. Strategy: Help sponsor the DFPS Regional Attorney Training.</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborate with DFPS on the budget, location and event evaluation</li> <li>- Provide notice to judges of the DFPS training event, if appropriate</li> <li>- Analyze any survey results obtained by the organizer</li> <li>- Conduct CQI of the supporting role and process used in deploying the training</li> </ul>	<p>With the CC's help, DFPS has been able to hold regular, annual regional attorney training events for its approximately 100 attorneys and staff who provide legal representation to the State of Texas.</p>

	<p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>The Regional Attorney Conference was held on November 2-3, 2017 in San Marcos. Conference and was supported by a training grant to DFPS. Attendance was as follows: November 1st Trial Skills: 13 Attendees; November 2nd: 96 Attendees; and November 3rd: 91 Attendees. DFPS reported on the January 18th Training Committee call that the attendees provided positive feedback and that the content was well-received. The Commission will continue to support the Regional Attorney Conference in FY18 which will include DFPS Legal Assistants and occur concurrently with the 2018 CWJC.</p>
<p><i>VI.A.7. Strategy: Host two Trial Skills Training (TST) events each fiscal year.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progress Report</b></p>
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convene two, 3-day TST events that include lectures, demonstrations, and practice sessions with live witnesses</li> <li>- Include hands-on practice of trial skills with the assistance of professional, live witnesses, videography, and coaching by trained faculty</li> <li>- Allow faculty review of individual attorney's filmed practice session for additional feedback</li> <li>- Evaluate each TST event</li> <li>- Edit and update TST curriculum and materials, as necessary</li> </ul>	<p>TST is an 18.50 MCLE hour, hands-on training designed to improve the litigation skills of child welfare law attorneys in order to raise the caliber of legal services to children and families in child protection cases. It includes a fictional CPS fact pattern, with a complete case file covering all Texas-specific statutory hearings building up to final trial. It provides parent, child, and state attorneys litigation exercises in the CPS context, including lectures and demonstrations from trained faculty comprised of senior attorneys and judges, followed by personal critiques and coaching. Caseworkers, Pediatricians, and a Parent Therapist serve as live witnesses.</p> <p>Materials are updated and new faculty is recruited and trained with each event. Extensive internal and external CQI is involved with each event. The Children's Justice Act covers the cost of participants who represent the state in CPS proceedings.</p> <p>To measure long-term effectiveness and impact, judicial evaluations of the TST graduates was developed.</p> <p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>Planning for the July 25-27, 2018 TST is underway, with faculty RSVPs requested and a revised trainee application process in progress. Updating the fictional case pleadings and materials to conform them to the recent legislative session changes is pending, along with the invitation process to the live witnesses and faculty-in-training for the event. CC staff will coordinate the publicity and selection process for applicants and</p>

continue to work with the venue to facilitate the hands-on and videotaping aspects of the training.

Also, in order to measure the effectiveness and long-term impact of TST, Judge Dean Rucker is conducting a judicial evaluation of the May TST graduates. Judges for the 21 trainees completed a pre-TST survey and most have completed a 6-month post-TST survey about the students' courtroom skills to see how they may have changed their practices based on the skills they learned at TST. CC staff is following up on a few outstanding judicial responses and will have final survey results to share at the time of the Commission Meeting.

VII. Goal: Reduce racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system.	
VII.A. Objective: Support efforts to address disproportionality and disparities in the Texas child welfare system so that children of color do not experience disparate effects and outcomes that prolong their stay in foster care.	
<i>VII.A.1. Strategy: Educate judges and consider data in helping address disproportionality and disparities among children and families involved in child protection cases.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Develop and promote judicial and attorney training on how to apply training and tools designed to reduce institutional racism and bias</i></li> <li>- <i>Partner with system stakeholders to include disproportionality in cross-systems trainings and in issue-specific workgroups, including one Poverty Simulation Workshop</i></li> <li>- <i>Help connect judges and lawyers to data about their communities and to experts who can help develop disproportionality efforts at the local level</i></li> <li>- <i>Liaise with the Texas Health and Human Services State Advisory Coalition for Addressing Disproportionality and Disparities</i></li> <li>- <i>Staff and monitor the Judicial Workgroup Addressing Disproportionality Workgroup (JWD) including conducting quarterly strategy meetings with the JWD Co-Chairs</i></li> <li>- <i>Include information about Disproportionality and bias in the CC CPS Judicial Bench Book</i></li> </ul>	<p>2/09/18 Update:</p> <p>The JWD held a call-in meeting in October and an in-person meeting in November 2017 at the Child Welfare Judicial Conference. The JWD has focused on the projects such as the JWD Bench Card, a new JWD email group committed to sharing resources and data, and increasing awareness through articles in TCJ’s <i>In Chambers</i>, and the <i>State Bar Journal</i>.</p> <p>The JWD Bench Card will be added to the 2018 version of the CPS Bench Book. Also, CPS is modifying the bench card to distribute to CPS caseworkers.</p>

VIII. Goal: Recognize and respect tribal sovereignty, protect the best interests of Native American children and promote stability of Native American children and families.	
VIII.A. Objective: Establish, strengthen and support meaningful and respectful relationships with tribal nations and promote awareness, education, and application of the Indian Child Welfare Act so that Indian children and families experience equitable and respectful treatment in keeping with their customs and beliefs.	
<i>VIII.A.1. Strategy: Continue the mutually respectful and ongoing relationships with Texas' three federally recognized tribes and other tribal nations living in Texas.</i>	Progress Report
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partner with system stakeholders to promote ongoing knowledge and understanding of the ICWA and its importance</li> <li>- Work with national ICWA and leading organizations on understanding and implementation of new Federal Rule and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Guidelines</li> <li>- Continue to support the role of Peacemaker or Tribal Judge as Children's Commission member</li> <li>- Staff and monitor the Tribal/State Workgroup meetings, strategies, timelines, and work product for FY2017, including monthly strategy meetings with tribal partners and DFPS</li> <li>- Partner with DFPS to support the biannual tribal/state collaborative meetings</li> <li>- Assist with any CIP grant application, as requested and appropriate</li> <li>- Further connections with Alabama-Coushatta, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, and Kickapoo tribes through the DFPS tribal/state meetings, Annual Conference of the Native American Section of the State Bar, and other networking opportunities</li> <li>- Continue to collaborate with the National Center for State Courts and the participants of the CIP ICWA Constituency Group</li> </ul>	<p>The Tribal/State Collaborative Workgroup meets monthly via conference call continue to develop new trainings to educate judges and attorneys about amendments to the Texas Family Code that requires judges to ask all parties present at each Adversary, Status, and Permanency hearing whether the child or the child's family has any Native American heritage and identify any Native American tribe with which the child may be associated.</p> <p>CC staff is currently participating in a national consortium of state leaders who work with tribes through their Court Improvement Programs.</p> <p><b>2/09/18 Update:</b></p> <p>The American Indian State Bar Section held a successful annual meeting last week in Austin. At the Feb. 2<sup>rd</sup> monthly call, the Tribal State Collaborative Workgroup will give the highlights of the annual meeting, as well as updates on the DFPS work with the Texas Tribes.</p> <p>The Child Protection Bench Book has being amended to reflect the Department of the Interior's binding regulations and advisory guidelines to ensure greater protection for children and families under the Indian Child Welfare Act.</p>

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

INSERT - TAB 4



## Children's Commission Financial Report

### FY 2018 BUDGET

FY2017 Carry Forward	\$	1,758,419
FY2018 State General Revenue	\$	1,000,000
FY2018 Federal Distribution	\$	451,603
<b>FY2018 Available Funds</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3,210,022</b>

### FY 2018 OBLIGATIONS

	Budget	Expenses To-date	Outstanding Obligations
Indirect	\$ 1,123,985	\$ (320,186)	\$ 803,799
Staff Directed Projects	\$ 169,000	\$ (18,689)	\$ 150,311
Grants	\$ 1,275,789	\$ (118,374)	\$ 1,157,415
Scholarships	\$ 137,500	\$ -	\$ 137,500
	<u>\$ 2,706,274</u>	<u>\$ (457,249)</u>	<u>\$ 2,249,025</u>

### CURRENT FINANCIAL STATUS

State General Revenue Balance 2/2/18	\$	694,417
Federal Fund Balance 2/2/18	\$	2,046,178
FY 2018 Outstanding Obligations	\$	(2,249,025)
<b>Estimated Unexpended/Carry Forward FY 2018</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>491,570</b>



INSERT - TAB 5



## FY2018 Court improvement Program Sub-Grantees

<b>Organization:</b>	Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS)
<b>Project:</b>	Elevating Youth Voice
<b>Grant Amount:</b>	\$50,000
<b>Project Description:</b>	The overarching goal of the Elevating Youth Voice project is to improve the design and delivery of services offered to youth in foster care and at-risk situations through collaboration and increased opportunities for youth voice in policymaking and the development and provision of services by service providers. Partnering with those being served and gathering meaningful input from them leads to more engaging, relevant, and impactful policies and services. In addition to resulting in positive outcomes for youth, strengthening youth voice is critical to developing systems and services, such as foster care services and services for youth who are homeless that effectively support our larger communities into the future.
<b>Project Activities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2018 TNOYS Annual Conference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assemble a conference planning community that includes a collaboration of youth, young adults, and stakeholders.</li> <li>• Incorporate youth voice into the selection of the conference curriculum and individual presentations.</li> <li>• Include youth on presentation panels and as speakers in workshops and presentations.</li> <li>• Include conference sessions specifically for youth on rights and self-advocacy.</li> <li>• Provide scholarships to youth to attend the conference.</li> <li>• Set the stage for the development of a statewide youth council.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Statewide Youth Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with TNOYS members and other provider organizations who utilize youth councils, peer support programs, and other youth leadership strategies within their organizations to identify their best delegates and send them to the state council.</li> <li>• Schedule an in-person meeting to introduce youth council and begin discussions on policy/procedure issues that most affect their lives.</li> <li>• Provide ongoing opportunities for youth to learn tools and techniques for self-advocacy and strengthening their voice.</li> <li>• Coordinate an event for youth council members to share their experiences and perspectives and to help educate policymakers, advocates, providers, and other stakeholders.</li> <li>• Lay groundwork/infrastructure to sustain the statewide youth council and TNOYS youth engagement fund (through which TNOYS compensates youth for their time as speakers, trainers, etc.) beyond this grant period.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Use of Funds:</b>	Personnel & Benefits Travel (Scholarships) Speaker Fees Office Supplies

## FY2018 Court improvement Program Sub-Grantees

<b>Organization:</b>	Texas District & County Attorneys Association (TDCAA)
<b>Project:</b>	Crimes Against Children
<b>Grant Amount:</b>	\$20,000
<b>Project Description:</b>	The Texas District & County Attorneys Association (TDCAA) is conducting a four-day seminar April 10-13, 2018, entitled Crimes Against Children, with two of those days offering a total of twelve hours of CPS-related CLE content in a separate CLE track. This conference will provide an excellent opportunity for DFPS attorneys to access training to help improve the quality of their legal representation.
<b>Project Activities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with Children's Commission and DFPS to identify topics and speakers for the Crimes Against Children Seminar.</li> <li>- Facilitate a registration process for DFPS Regional or Staff Attorneys to waive the \$350.00 registration fee for up to 50 attorneys who register for the Crimes Against Children's Conference.</li> </ul>
<b>Use of Funds:</b>	Conference Registration Scholarships Speaker Travel Expenses
<b>Organization:</b>	National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC)
<b>Project:</b>	2018 National Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, and Family Law Conference
<b>Grant Amount:</b>	\$60,000 – NACC; \$20,000 – Speakers
<b>Project Description:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The NACC conference is designed primarily for attorneys who practice juvenile (dependency and delinquency) and family law. Most NACC members and training attendees dedicate much of their practices to the representation of children and youth, parents, or the state in juvenile dependency, delinquency, or family law cases.</li> <li>- NACC will conduct its annual conference in San Antonio, Texas on August 23-25, 2018. The funds will be used to facilitate the attendance of attorneys who accept court appointments in Texas child protection courts and judges whose docket is comprised primarily and substantially of child protection cases.</li> </ul>
<b>Project Activities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NACC and the Children's Commission will publicize the availability of the scholarships to all Texas attorneys and/or judges until available scholarships are gone or the application period has closed, whichever comes first.</li> <li>- The Children's Commission will conduct the scholarship application process, screen all applicants, and award registration scholarships to the NACC conference based on selection criteria to be determined by the Children's Commission.</li> <li>- NACC will register for the conference all attorneys identified by the Commission as having received a scholarship to the conference and/or Red Book training.</li> </ul>
<b>Use of Funds:</b>	Conference Registration Scholarships (100@\$600, \$60,000) Travel for Speakers and Attendees (\$20,000)

## FY2018 Court improvement Program Sub-Grantees

AMENDED	
<b>Organization:</b>	Texas Center for the Judiciary
<b>Project:</b>	Judicial Training
<b>Grant Amount:</b>	<del>\$345,809</del> <b>\$396,811</b>
<b>Project Description:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improve the quality and timeliness of court proceedings by providing training and technical assistance to judges hearing CPS cases</li> <li>- Enhance judicial expertise on particular topics related to well-being, child and family safety, and permanency in order to improve outcomes for children and families</li> <li>- Improve judicial procedure in CPS cases to ensure due process, timeliness to case resolution, and permanency</li> <li>- Facilitate collaboration between the judiciary and system partners represented in the courtroom</li> <li>- Support judicial best practices through data and information sharing</li> </ul>
<b>Project Activities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hold the FY17 Child Welfare Judges Conference. The conference will include a half day training for Child Protection Court judges and a day and a half training for their coordinators. TCJ will work with the Office of Court Administration (OCA) to facilitate this portion of the training. The Child Welfare Judges Conference is scheduled for November 13-15 and will be held at the Hyatt Lost Pines near Bastrop. The conference typically trains 90-100 judges. The conference will also include collaboration with DFPS and Texas CASA.</li> <li>- Plan a track at the 2018 Family Justice Conference. This conference typically reaches 110-125 judges and specifically target general jurisdiction judges. TCJ staff will work with the Children's Commission to develop three sessions for a Child Welfare breakout track. The 2018 Family Justice Conference will be held at the Hyatt Lost Pines on January 22-23.</li> <li>- Plan either or both an education summit and a trauma summit for judges and possibly other stakeholders involved in the child welfare system. The conference will be held in June of 2018. The number of trainees is uncertain at this time, but is estimated at 125 – 150.</li> <li>- Work with NCJFCJ and the Texas Governor's Office to plan a Judicial Institute on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking. The conference will be held in August of 2018 and will train approximately 25-35 judges.</li> <li>- Begin planning process for the FY18 Child Welfare Judges Conference. The FY18 Conference will take place in November of 2018. The exact dates and conference location is TBD.</li> <li>- <b><u>TCJ will offer scholarships to the 2018 NCJFCJ Annual Conference. The FY18 Conference is scheduled to take place on July 22-25 in Denver, CO. TCJ will provide scholarships for 25 judges. (25 Scholarships @ \$2,000 ea.)</u></b></li> </ul>
<b>Use of Funds:</b>	Personnel & Benefits Travel Supplies Speaker Fees <b><u>Judicial Registration Scholarships/Travel</u></b>

