

Children's Commission Grant Summaries

Fiscal Year 2021

Grant Summary	
Organization:	Child Protection Law Section, State Bar of Texas
Project:	3 rd Annual Advanced Child Protection Law Course
Grant Amount:	\$15,000.00
Project Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The goal of this training is to provide attorneys with the education and resources to empower their clients through effective representation and to improve the child welfare system through extremely high levels of performance, knowledge and professionalism. The attorneys representing the various parties need to be adequately trained in the law. Attorneys are involved in the court system to advocate for victims of abuse and neglect, to help courts determine custody, visitation, adoption proceedings, and other issues. Better trained attorneys help promote safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children in courts.
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to the COVID-19 the 3rd Annual Advanced Child Protection Law Course will be produced virtually on April 1-2, 2021. - The course will be available for replay from April 4 – July 1, 2021. - \$5,000 in funding from the Children's Commission will be used for registration scholarships.
Use of Funds:	Contractual Registration Scholarships
Grant Summary	
Organization:	Office of Court Administration
Project:	Office of Court Administration (OCA) / Court Improvement Program (CIP) Partnership Grant
Grant Amount:	\$180,427.00
Project Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue enhancing the Child Protection Case Management System. This includes the continuance of the established governance structure and work to continue enhancing the system as needed by the governance committee. The goal of enhancements is to provide the courts with better tools, current from perspectives of technology and judicial process, facilitating child and family safety, permanency, well-being, and timeliness to case resolution. - Facilitate youth participation in hearings via video conference. Facilitation of youth participation in their hearings via video conference allows youth involvement when attending court in person may not be feasible. It improves contact with the children/youth in their placement facilities and impacts child safety, well-being and due process. - Continue supporting use of the Notice and Engagement web tool, maintaining and enhancing as appropriate. This will assist parties involved in CPS cases to receive timely notice of scheduled court hearings and adding reporting functionality aid administration of the tool.
Project Activities:	<u>CPCMS Enhancement:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct a minimum of two governance meetings in FY2021 to establish priorities for CPCMS enhancements and report status of governance activities.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue refinement of the Data Dashboard implemented in July 2020 providing data useful in the efficient administration of Child Protection courts and ultimately to facilitate child safety, permanency, well-being, and timeliness to case resolution. - Enhance the "Copy Case" feature on the Case Detail page to dynamically include the current judge associated with the case. - Update the Judge's Docket to include when jury demands are filed and an indicator for UCCJEA. Also, add "jury trial" into the Search tool. - Collaborate with the committees of the Children's Commission on case management system modifications and enhancements necessary to support pertinent activities of the committees (Systems Improvement, Legal Practice and Process, and Data Committee projects such as dynamic population of data common between sources). - Implement juvenile justice-related fields identified by the Dual-Status Task Force for inclusion into CPCMS for dual-status cases. <p><u>Facilitation of Youth Participation in Hearings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide Zoom video conferencing for OCA's Child Protection Court Judges and Court Coordinators. The Zoom Scheduling Privilege feature used by judges to assign scheduling privileges to their court coordinator requires both individuals have a Zoom license. Coordinators use their Zoom account to handle administrative tasks such as scheduling hearing/meetings, admitting new parties into a hearing, managing breakout and waiting rooms and tasks outside the limited functionality available to co-hosts, allowing the judge to focus on the hearing itself. <p><u>Notice and Engagement Tool</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pro-actively monitor system to identify and resolve any issues in a timely manner. - Conduct maintenance activities, including version upgrades of supporting software, as needed. - Expand reporting features to include administrative statistical reporting.
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Travel Equipment (Web Cameras, Cellular Hotspot Devices, Programmer Software) Training
Organization:	Office of Court Administration
Project:	Visiting Judge Support
Grant Amount:	\$18,552.00
Project Description:	- To continue the established mechanism of payment for the appointment of former/retired child protection court associate judges to cover child protection court dockets in absence of the active associate judge.
Project Activities:	- The CIP funds will be used to pay visiting associate judges that are utilized by the Texas administrative judicial regions for child protection courts. OCA will contract with former/retired child protection court associate judges to receive \$494.00 for a full day of service, or \$247.00 for a half day of service and former/district court and county court at law judges, experienced in CPS matters, to receive \$620.00 for a full day of service, or \$310 for a half day of service. Travel expenses incurred in performance of these services are reimbursable in accordance with the State of Texas guidelines for state employees. The grant budget will allow for approximately 30 days of service and \$2,250.00 in travel expenses.

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Use of Funds:	Personnel Travel
Organization:	Texas CASA
Project:	Child Protection Normalcy Guide and Focused Legal Discussion
Grant Amount:	\$25,726 No Cost Extension from FY2020
Project Description:	<p><u>Normalcy Guide</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with Children's Commission and other interested stakeholders to produce a written guide on normalcy that will give practical tips on how to promote and improve normalcy for children in state care. - Create several short videos to complement and promote the normalcy guide.
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct literature and resource search for existing state and federal publications and resources regarding normalcy. - Develop and outline of proposed normalcy guide in consultation with the Children's Commission. - Identify expert resource group based on attendees at February 2019 Children's Commission Roundtable on normalcy. Experts will provide information, support and feedback on the normalcy guide. - Develop materials and scripts for short videos pertaining to normalcy for identified groups or purposes. <p>Provide a finished normalcy guide suitable for publication and completed videos for public distribution.</p>
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Travel Graphic Design
Organization:	Texas Center for Child and Family Studies
Project:	Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Analyst
Grant Amount:	\$128,139.00
Project Description:	- This project is designed to support the Children's Commission and Judges across the state in understanding and utilizing data to improve outcomes for children and youth in the state's conservatorship. Having a nuanced understanding of statewide, region, county, and court specific data will help the judicial community determine how best to allocate various resources.
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access publicly available data from DFPS, Court specific data, data from the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services, etc. and analyze in a manner that provides information to the judiciary. - Alongside CPS Regional Directors and judges, participate in the annual Judicial conference and facilitate discussions between CPS and judges on data, gaps, processes, and potential systemic improvements. - Stay current on emerging industry trends and best practices. Deliver information on emerging trends, policy changes, and shifts in the child welfare landscape to the judiciary such that they can utilize the information to improve their court operations and practices.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respond to ad-hoc requests for help that come from Judges as appropriate and as resources allow or identify content expert/peer organization to help with request and facilitate sharing of information. - Develop and deliver original content (presentations, white papers, analyses, trainings, etc.) on topics relevant to the child welfare judiciary the larger child welfare community.
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Travel Supplies
Organization:	Texas Center for the Judiciary
Project:	Judicial Training
Grant Amount:	\$172,077.15
Project Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve the quality and timeliness of court proceedings by providing training and technical assistance to judges hearing CPS cases - Enhance judicial expertise on topics related to well-being, child and family safety, and permanency in order to improve outcomes for children and families - Improve judicial procedure in CPS cases to ensure due process, timeliness to case resolution, and permanency - Facilitate collaboration between the judiciary and system partners represented in the courtroom - Support judicial best practices through data and information sharing
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Texas Center will conduct the virtual 2020 Child Welfare Judicial Conference (CWJC). The conference will be held virtually on Tuesday, October 27, using the Texas Center's learning management system, BrightSpace. The conference curriculum includes training on implicit bias, the impact of COVID-19 on the child welfare system, community-based care, and substance abuse in child welfare cases. The conference is estimated to train between 100 - 250 judges and includes collaboration with the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and Texas CASA. - The Texas Center will include three one-hour sessions of curriculum, developed by the Children's Commission, at the 2021 Family Justice Conference. This conference typically reaches between 125-145 judges and specifically targets general jurisdiction judges. The 2021 Family Justice Conference will be held January 14-15 at the Sheraton Austin Georgetown Hotel and Conference Center. - The Texas Center will conduct the virtual Judicial Trauma Institute to be held February 17-18, 2021. The conference curriculum includes topics such as changing the court culture to include trauma-informed practices, improving investigations through the use of trauma-informed practices, tailoring family service plans, and vicarious trauma. The Institute will train up to 250 participants. - Begin planning process for the 2021 Child Welfare Judges Conference.
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Travel Supplies Speaker Fees

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	Other
Organization:	Texas Legal Services Center
Project:	Family Helpline
Grant Amount:	\$158,627
Project Description:	The Family Helpline is a program within Texas Legal Services Center ("TLSC") located in Austin, Texas. TLSC is a non-profit legal office whose mission is to ensure equal justice for all Texans by educating, empowering, and representing vulnerable people while reshaping the greater legal system. The Family Helpline fulfills a substantial gap in access to justice for families facing the Texas child protection system, particularly during the investigations and family preservation stages of a CPS case. We achieve this by providing families easy access to high-quality legal information and education given directly by experienced child welfare attorneys. Over the past 3.75 years, the Helpline has shown an expansive reach across Texas. We speak with callers from all over the state, including all of the most populous counties and some of the least populous counties. From January 31, 2017 until June 30, 2020, the Family Helpline completed 8,026 calls, which affected over 12,500 children.
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide direct legal information and education to callers with Texas CPS questions by providing easy and efficient telephonic access to experienced child welfare attorneys (on-going for duration of project). - Evaluate and analyze data gathered from Family Helpline calls and share information with interested stakeholders (on-going for duration of project and will occur on a quarterly basis). - Local CPS court information gathering, community education, and outreach: (ongoing for duration of project, community education will occur as requested, and outreach will occur based on Family Helpline call volume) - Expand mailing and distribution of outreach materials throughout the state (on-going for duration of project and will occur on a quarterly basis). - Continue to provide content for Texas Law Help with information regarding CPS matters (this will occur on at least a twice per year basis).
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Travel Promotional Items Printing/Postage Phone Lines & Internet Rent
Organization:	Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS)
Project:	Experiential Learning PEAKS Camp with focus on Youth Empowerment, Youth Voice with Leadership, Wellbeing Improvement, and Normalcy
Grant Amount:	\$50,000

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Project Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The goal of this project is to lift youth and young adult voices by engaging them across TNOYS programming to inform and strengthen the legal representation of youth in foster care. - YALC members are young adults between the ages of 16 and 26 who have experience with foster care, homelessness, the juvenile justice system, or other systems, and who have a demonstrated interest in or potential for leadership. The YALC is a ten-month long leadership development program where youth and young adults meet weekly for approximately 10 hours per week. - Through our YALC programming we will center youth voice to continue the updates and modernization of the DFPS Preparation for Adult Living curriculum for the Independent Living Skills Guide. Rather than assume the role of content matter expert, TNOYS facilitates cross-systems collaboration, coordinates access to relevant training content and technical assistance, and elevates youth voice to inform services.
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TNOYS will continue to review and update the DFPS PAL ILSG, including both content, and appearance/form in order to make sure that it is up to date, relevant, and accessible for those in need. - TNOYS staff and YALC members will ensure that the recommendations from the 2015 audit of materials are incorporated throughout the update of the materials. Specifically, TNOYS will work with YALC members to modernize the ILSG so it is relevant and useful to young people
Use of Funds:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel & Benefits Travel Equipment Contractual