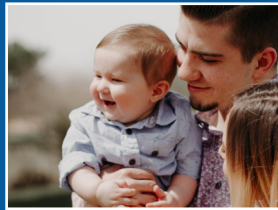




Children's Commission

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



Children's Commission Meeting Notebook

September 18, 2026

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

September 18, 2026

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

Thompson Conference Center
Austin, Texas

Friday, September 18, 2026
9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Agenda

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 9:30 | Check-In / Networking |
| 9:45 | Commencement / Opening Remarks
First Order of Business – Adopt Minutes from May 8, 2026 |
| 10:00 | Children's Commission Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fiscal Year 2027 Strategies and Budget Presentation• Recent Projects and Initiatives |
| 11:30 | Lunch Break |
| 12:00 | Department of Family and Protective Services Update |
| 12:45 | Presentation on Terrell Center for Youth |
| 1:15 | Office of Court Administration Update |
| 1:45 | Collaborative Council Member Announcements |
| 2:00 | New Business / Adjourn |

Meeting Schedule:

- November 6, 2026 (Virtual) from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- February 5, 2027 (In person) from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- May 7, 2027 (Virtual) from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- Sept 17, 2027 (In person) from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- November 5, 2027 (Virtual) from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

INSERT - TAB 1

CHILDREN'S COMMISSION MEMBERS

Hon. Debra Lehrmann, <i>Chair</i>	Hon. Rosie Alvarado	Lana Estevilla	Brandon Logan	Hon. Ian Spechler
Hon. Kyle Hawkins, <i>Deputy Chair</i>	Chantel Bedlington	Hon. Roy Ferguson	Hon. Aurora Martinez Jones	Vicki Spriggs
Hon. Eva Guzman, <i>Chair Emeritus</i>	Tymothy Belseth	Hon. Angela Graves-Harrington	Daphny Milligan	Terese Stevenson
Hon. Harriet O'Neill, <i>Chair Emeritus</i>	Hon. Susan Brown	Anne Heiligenstein	Hon. James Mosley	Hon. Thomas Stuckey
	Yolanda Cortes-Mares	Rep. Lacey Hull	Megan Ransom	Michelle Thompson-Janis
	Sheila Sturgis Craig	Dr. Julie Kaplow	Luanne Southern	Sen. Royce West

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<u>EXECUTIVE</u>	<u>SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT</u>	<u>LEGAL PRACTICE & PROCESS</u>	<u>TRAINING</u>	<u>DATA</u>
Hon. Debra Lehrmann, <i>Chair</i>	Hon. Rob Hofmann, <i>Chair</i>	Hon. Thomas Stuckey, <i>Chair</i>	Hon. Piper McCraw, <i>Chair</i>	Hon. Susan Brown, <i>Chair</i>
Hon. Kyle Hawkins, <i>Deputy Chair</i>	Chantel Bedlington	Mary A. Alvarez	Hon. Mark Atkinson	Hon. Rosie Alvarado
Hon. Susan Brown	Dr. Gary Blau	Mark Briggs	Megan Barcak	Hon. David Barkley
Hon. Rob Hofmann	Adrianna Cuéllar Rojas	Cindy Dyar	Lilly Dealbert	Chelsea Cornelius
Hon. Piper McCraw	Anna Saldaña Ford	Hon. Charles Griffin	Barbara Elias-Perciful	Nathan Ezell
Hon. Thomas Stuckey	Hon. Leigh Mathews Rodriguez	Michelle Latray	Hon. Angela Graves-Harrington	Dr. Monica Faulkner
	Katherine McAnally	Crystal Leff-Piñon	Margaret Halpin	Hon. Delia Gonzales
<i>Staff:</i>	Gabriella McDonald	Amanda Lockhart	Judy Powell	Elizabeth Kromrei
<i>Jamie Bernstein</i>	Emily Miller	Daphny Milligan	Kellie Price	Hon. Robin Sage
<i>Patrick Passmore</i>	Hon. Robin Sage	<i>Staff:</i>	Andrea Requesnes	Vicki Spriggs
	Hon. Ian Spechler	<i>Renée Castillo-De La Cruz</i>	Julliana Reyes	Sub Uppaluri
	Sarah Worthington	<i>Scott Cooley</i>	Britny Rocha-Mendoza	<i>Staff:</i>
	<i>Staff:</i>	<i>Brenda Kinsler</i>	Hon. Randy Shelton	<i>Brenda Kinsler</i>
	<i>Scott Cooley</i>		Diane Sumoski	<i>Jamie Bernstein</i>
	<i>Elizabeth Schmidt</i>		Hon. Elizabeth Watkins	<i>OCA Advisory:</i>
	<i>Chelsea Martinez</i>		<i>Staff:</i>	<i>Alejandra Peña</i>
			<i>Milbrey Raney</i>	
			<i>Renée Castillo-De La Cruz</i>	
			<i>Andrea Vicencio</i>	

COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Erin Argue	Julia Hatcher	Kellie Pittman
Kristene Blackstone	Catherine Henning	Judy Powell
Andrew Brown	Kerrie Judice	Tanya Rollins
Sheryl Draker	Norman Ladd	Johana Scot
Barbara Elias-Perciful	Gabriella McDonald	Denise Smith
Dr. Monica Faulkner	Dr. Jill McLeigh	Andrea Sparks
Mike Foster	Hollie Mims	Amanda Vasquez
Fedora Galasso	Kate Murphy	Britt Viebrock
Barbra Grimmer	Alexandra Mylius	Sarah Worthington

STAFF AND JURISTS IN RESIDENCE

Jamie Bernstein, <i>Executive Director</i>	Brenda Kinsler, <i>Sr. Staff Attorney</i>
Milbrey Raney, <i>Assistant Director</i>	Chelsea Martinez, <i>Program Specialist</i>
Jessica Arguijo, <i>Communications Manager</i>	Patrick Passmore, <i>Finance Manager</i>
Renée Castillo-De La Cruz, <i>Sr. Staff Attorney</i>	Elizabeth Schmidt, <i>Juvenile Justice Staff Attorney</i>
Scott Cooley, <i>Sr. Staff Attorney</i>	Willette Sedwick, <i>Accountant</i>
Tiffany Edwards, <i>Program Specialist</i>	Andrea Vicencio, <i>Program Specialist</i>
	Hon. Rob Hofmann, <i>Sr. Jurist in Residence</i>
	Hon. Piper McCraw, <i>Jurist in Residence</i>

INSERT - TAB 2

Supreme Court of Texas Children's Commission

Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 8, 2026
9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Commissioners	Attended	Did Not Attend
<i>Chair</i> , Hon. Debra Lehrmann, Senior Justice, Supreme Court of Texas, Austin	✓	
<i>Deputy Chair</i> , Hon. Kyle Hawkins, Justice, Supreme Court of Texas, Austin		✓
Hon. Rosie Alvarado, Judge, 438 th District Court, San Antonio	✓	
Chantel Bedlington, Kinship Navigator Program Supervisor, ACH Child and Family Services, Fort Worth	✓	
Tymothy Belseth, Program Coordinator, Texas Institute for Child and Family Wellbeing, University of Texas at Austin, Austin	✓	
Hon. Susan Brown, Presiding Judge, 11 th Administrative Judicial Region, Houston	✓	
Sheila Craig, Strategic Consultant, Austin	✓	
Hon. Roy Ferguson, Special/Private/Visiting Judge, Arbitrator, and Mediator for Family Law and Civil Cases, Alpine		✓
Hon. Angela Graves-Harrington, Judge, 246 th Family District Court, Houston	✓	
Anne Heiligenstein, Senior Director Strategic Consultant - Texas, Casey Family Programs, Austin	✓	
Rep. Lacey Hull, Texas House of Representatives, Katy	✓	
Dr. Julie Kaplow, Executive Director, Trauma and Grief Center, The Hackett Center for Mental Health, Houston		✓
Brandon Logan, Executive Director, One Accord for Kids, Midland	✓	
Hon. Aurora Martinez Jones, Judge, 126 th District Court, Austin		✓
Daphny Milligan, Parent Liaison, Department of Family and Protective Services, Waco	✓	
Hon. James Mosley, Judge, 316 th District Court, Stinnett	✓	
Megan Ransom, Chief Executive Officer, Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services, Austin	✓	
Luanne Southern, Chief Strategist for Behavioral Health, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin		✓
Hon. Ian Spechler, Administrative Law Judge, State Office of Administrative Hearings, Austin	✓	
Vicki Spriggs, Chief Executive Officer, Texas CASA, Austin	✓	
Terese Stevenson, Vice President, Grants, The Rees-Jones Foundation, Dallas	✓	
Hon. Thomas Stuckey, Associate Judge, Centex Child Protection Court South, Seguin	✓	
Michelle Thompson-Janis, Director, Department of Social Services, Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas		✓
Sen. Royce West, Texas Senate, District 23, Dallas		✓
Jurists in Residence		
Hon. Rob Hofmann, Judge, 452 nd District Court, Senior Jurist in Residence, Mason		✓
Hon. Piper McCraw, Judge, 469 th District Court, Jurist in Residence, McKinney	✓	
Attending Committee Members & Guests		
Mary Alvarez, Assistant District Attorney, Hidalgo County District Attorney's Office		
Barbara Elias-Perciful, Director, Texas Lawyers for Children		
Dr. Monica Faulkner, Director, Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, University of Texas at Austin		
Elizabeth Kromrei, Director of Services, Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services		
Michelle Latray, Attorney, Law Office of Michelle Latray		
Crystal Leff-Piñon, Director of Family Protection Representation, Texas Indigent Defense Commission		
Vince Leibowitz, Legislative Director, Office of Hon. Royce West, Texas Senate, District 23, Dallas		
Katherine McAnally, Senior Policy Analyst, Family Protection Representation, Texas Indigent Defense Commission		
Emily Miller, Attorney, Emily Miller Law Office		
Judy Powell, Communications Director, Parent Guidance Center		

Adrianna Cuéllar Rojas, Chief Executive Officer, TexProtects
Hon. Robin Sage, Judicial Engagement Team, Casey Family Programs
Lindsey Van Buskirk, Associate Commissioner for Child Protective Investigations
Brianna Wadlock, Policy and Advocacy Specialist, TexProtects

Attending Collaborative Council Members

Barbra Grimmer, Child Welfare Policy Coordinator, Texas Council on Family Violence
Julia Hatcher, President, Texas Association of Family Defense Attorneys
Catherine Henning, Director of External Relations, Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas
Gabriella McDonald, Deputy Director, Texas Appleseed
Dr. Jill McLeigh, Director of Policy, Advocacy and Research, Rees-Jones Center for Foster Care Excellence, Children's Health
Johana Scot, Executive Director, Parent Guidance Center
Denise Smith, Resource Coordinator, Texas Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
Andrea Sparks, Director of Government Relations, Buckner International

Office of Court Administration Staff

Marcus Crosby, Children's Courts Program Manager
Megan LaVoie, Administrative Director
Jeffrey Tsunekawa, Director of Court Services

Attending Children's Commission Staff

Jessica Arguijo, Communications Manager
Jamie Bernstein, Executive Director
Renée Castillo-De La Cruz, Senior Staff Attorney
Scott Cooley, Senior Staff Attorney
Tiffany Edwards, Program Specialist
Brenda Kinsler, Senior Staff Attorney
Chelsea Martinez, Program Specialist
Elizabeth Schmidt, Juvenile Justice Staff Attorney
Milbrey Raney, Assistant Director
Willette Sedwick, Accountant

CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING REMARKS

Justice Debra Lehrmann called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the first virtual Children's Commission meeting of 2026. Justice Lehrmann announced that the Children's Commission Deputy Chair Justice Kyle Hawkins had an unavoidable conflict for the meeting and sent his regrets. Justice Lehrmann expressed her gratitude to the attendees for their work on behalf of children and families and emphasized the critical importance of stakeholder feedback in guiding the judiciary's work on child welfare matters. She noted that continued engagement ensures that the courts remain focused on the most pressing issues affecting the child welfare system statewide. She encouraged Commissioners to provide input both during and after the meeting and to contact the Children's Commission with additional observations or recommendations.

Adoption of February 27, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Justice Lehrmann directed members to the February 27, 2026 Commission Meeting Minutes behind Tab 2 of the Meeting Notebook, distributed in advance of the meeting.

ACTION: Justice Lehrmann asked if there were any changes to the minutes as written. Hearing none, after a motion from Judge Angela Graves-Harrington and a second from Judge Thomas Stuckey, the Commissioners voted to adopt the minutes from the February 27, 2026 Children's Commission meeting.

CHILDREN'S COMMISSION UPDATE

Strategic Plan

Ms. Jamie Bernstein reported that staff conducted a comprehensive internal review of existing strategies, identifying mature initiatives and potential new areas of focus in collaboration with the Commission's standing committees. A proposed strategic plan will be presented for approval at the September 2026 Commission Meeting.

Ms. Bernstein further noted that the Commission will retain its existing goal framework: Collaboration, Systems Improvement, Legal Practice and Process, Training, and Data. Regarding Collaboration, the Commission plans to enhance communication strategies, including developing improvements to the Commission's website.

Systems Improvement Committee

Mr. Scott Cooley reported that the Systems Improvement Committee convened on April 16 and identified four emerging areas of focus for fiscal year 2027: visitation, special populations, Community-Based Care, and juvenile justice.

Ms. Milbrey Raney outlined a potential strategy to develop a resource on best practices for visitation, emphasizing the adoption of the term "family time" to reflect a more supportive and normalized approach. Commissioner feedback included recommendations for prioritizing unsupervised family time when it is safe, utilizing family members to supervise when appropriate, and ensuring sibling access. Barriers such as limited transportation and staffing capacity, particularly outside of standard business hours, were identified as ongoing challenges.

Ms. Bernstein reported that work related to a resource for caregivers of child victims of sexual abuse is almost complete. Future efforts regarding special populations will address cases involving children with complex medical needs, with subject matter experts contributing to the development of resources. She also noted that the Commission will focus on the role of the legal system in the implementation of the Community-Based Care model in the coming year.

Ms. Elizabeth Schmidt presented proposed juvenile justice initiatives, including expanded training offerings and the continued development of this July's inaugural Judicial Conference on Juvenile Justice. She highlighted the need for improved coordination in dual status cases and emphasized the importance of increased data collection, cross-system collaboration, and the establishment of an Advisory Council for Juvenile Justice. Ms. Vicki Spriggs mentioned a CASA pilot program supporting dual status youth that may be of interest.

Legal Practice and Process Committee

Mr. Scott Cooley reported that the Legal Representation Committee identified attorney recruitment and retention as a priority through fiscal year 2027. He outlined proposed efforts to expand outreach, create additional training resources, and increase pro bono involvement to develop a sustainable pipeline of new attorneys. Ms. Renée Castillo-De La Cruz reported that the DFPS Representation Subcommittee will reconvene in fiscal year 2027 to develop a comprehensive child welfare training curriculum in partnership with the Texas District and County Attorneys Association.

Ms. Brenda Kinsler reported that the Standards of Representation Committee's work on legal standards for attorneys representing children is almost complete, with work on standards for attorneys representing parents expected to begin in early 2027. She also reported that the Legislation and Policy Resource Committee will track child welfare legislation during the upcoming legislative session, and that the Commission will host a related webinar following the conclusion of the session.

Commissioners emphasized the importance of strengthening attorney workforce development through expanded outreach efforts. These include engagement with law schools, development of structured clinical curricula, and increased experiential learning opportunities such as externships. Commissioners also discussed the importance of individualized, case-specific service planning that avoids reliance on standardized checklists and instead focuses on services directly tied to identified risks and family needs.

Training Committee

Ms. Raney and Ms. Castillo-De La Cruz shared ideas discussed at the April 14, 2026 Training Committee meeting. These included online and in-person trainings on Community-Based Care, best legal and judicial practices, and drug testing. Additionally, Commission staff are planning an in-person regional attorney training series in FY 2027. Ms. Daphny Milligan recommended increased focus on trauma-informed practice, particularly demonstrating how these principles are applied in real-world scenarios and courtroom settings. Ms. Sheila Craig further emphasized that training should address the needs of families and avoid one-size-fits-all approaches.

Data Committee

Ms. Brenda Kinsler reported that the Data Committee's primary focus moving forward will be to identify priority research questions, determine whether relevant data is currently available, and explore methods to obtain and analyze data where gaps exist. This includes pursuing opportunities for data sharing and exchange with DFPS, as well as developing potential research partnerships to support evaluation efforts. Anticipated deliverables could include a judicial bench card, a companion guidance resource, and a data-informed framework to identify delays and assess decision-making at key stages of a case.

Ms. Sheila Craig raised the importance of ensuring that judges have access to court-level child welfare data, to better inform decision-making and improve outcomes. Ms. Kinsler confirmed that the Commission is actively working to establish a more consistent data exchange process with the Department and to identify available data sources.

Financial Update

Ms. Bernstein then directed members to the financial report included in the meeting materials and reported that the Commission remains on track with its budget and expenditures for the current fiscal year.

Ms. Bernstein invited feedback from members on potential uses for additional funds. Judge Rosie Alvarado suggested that grant funding could be directed toward developing or expanding legal externship programs to support recruitment and increase the number of attorneys entering the child welfare field. Ms. Daphny Milligan inquired about the potential for supporting specialization in child welfare law, including financial incentives. Ms. Bernstein clarified that reimbursement for certification exam fees is already available through the Commission.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY & PROTECTIVE SERVICES (DFPS) UPDATE

Ms. Lindsey Van Buskirk, Interim CPS Associate Commissioner, provided an update on the Department's receivership in Region 3 East (Dallas metro area and surrounding counties) related to that area's Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC), Empower. Ms. Van Buskirk explained that the court granted a DFPS petition for receivership in March 2026 which demonstrated statutory grounds for receivership, including imminent risk to child safety, failure to achieve compliance despite corrective actions, and noncompliance with court orders. She noted that DFPS retains oversight of contractual and policy matters, while the appointed receiver assumes full operational authority over the SSCC, including case management practices, staffing, financial oversight, and service delivery decisions.

Ms. Terese Stevenson expressed appreciation for the update and acknowledged the complexity of the situation in Region 3. She raised concerns regarding the potential impact of receivership on private funding streams, noting that philanthropic partners may hesitate to continue funding during periods of uncertainty. Ms. Lindsey Van Buskirk acknowledged these concerns and committed to ensuring that the Department and the receiver provide appropriate communication and outreach to community partners.

Judge Stuckey inquired about the ability of judges outside the affected region to obtain information regarding the safety and status of children placed in Region 3. Ms. Van Buskirk clarified that primary caseworkers from other regions are continuing to conduct visits with children placed in the area to ensure ongoing oversight and safety monitoring.

Ms. Van Buskirk then outlined the Department's family engagement project, which is focused on improving interactions with families at the earliest stages of a case. The initiative aims to prevent removals where possible, increase kinship placements, and strengthen service planning through

enhanced communication and relationship-building. The Department is implementing policy updates, standardizing tools, and conducting cross-stage training across investigations, Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS), conservatorship, and SSCC partners to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach.

Ms. Van Buskirk further described the launch of a Family Team Meeting (FTM) pilot program, designed to engage families at the investigation stage, particularly in cases involving substance use concerns. The pilot seeks to identify support networks, implement safety interventions, and potentially prevent removal or facilitate kinship placement through early coordination. The initiative will be implemented in selected regions, representing both urban and rural settings. The pilot is scheduled to begin June 1 and run through October, with a comprehensive analysis anticipated by December. Ms. Van Buskirk concluded by emphasizing that these efforts are intended to strengthen early engagement, improve service delivery, and support more timely and effective permanency outcomes for children and families.

OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION (OCA) UPDATE

Ms. Megan LaVoie provided an update on behalf of OCA, highlighting several ongoing initiatives. She reported that a job posting was released for the Associate Judge position for the Taylor County Child Protection Court, following the departure of Judge April Propst in April. Ms. LaVoie also noted continued progress towards the development of a new case management system to replace CPCMS, with requirements gathering nearly complete and the next phase of procurement expected to begin later in the year.

Ms. LaVoie further reported that OCA is collaborating with the Commission, the University of Texas at Arlington, and the Alliance on the CourtCare Project, a grant-funded initiative examining outcomes for children in permanent managing conservatorship. The project, which utilizes DFPS data and court observations, began in early May and is expected to run for approximately two to three months.

Additionally, Ms. LaVoie highlighted the recent execution of a contract for a judicial address confidentiality system, which will protect judges' personal identifying information. The system will be available at no cost to active judges statewide and is expected to be implemented in early summer. She also noted that the Judicial Compensation Commission will begin its work later in May, and that the Judicial Council has established new committees focused on judicial compensation and benefits, family representation, data, and judicial resources. The Council is scheduled to meet in September to consider potential legislative recommendations.

COMMISSIONER ROUNDTABLE

Commissioners shared updates and insights from their jurisdictions. Discussion included the benefits of local collaboration on child welfare matters, the rollout of Community-Based Care, developments from the 89th Legislative Session, collaboration with DFPS on the Child's Plan of

Service, supporting kinship caregivers, court security, the success of the Texas Family First pilot, services and resources for parents and families, and pending Reunification Day celebrations.

COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL MEMBER UPDATES

Justice Lehrmann invited comments from Collaborative Council members. Ms. Barbara Elias-Perciful of Texas Lawyers for Children provided an update on the organization's current focus, noting its mission to improve outcomes for children who experience abuse and neglect. She highlighted recent discussions surrounding parental rights and responsibilities, noted that her organization is working to ensure that children's rights also remain central to ongoing legal and policy discussions, and invited collaboration from stakeholders on these issues.

NEW BUSINESS

Justice Lehrmann announced that the upcoming 2026 Commission Meeting schedule is as follows: September 18 (in person) and November 6 (virtual).

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

INSERT - TAB 3

REPORT TO THE COMMISSION

September 18, 2026

GOAL I (COLLABORATION)

Administer the Court Improvement Program (CIP) funds to assess current and future needs of the courts, provide a forum for meaningful collaboration, encourage continuous quality improvement, and promote best child welfare and court practices to improve the child welfare system.

Objective: Utilize the CIP funds to execute the strategies of the Supreme Court of Texas Children's Commission.

1. Strategy: Provide regular updates to the Children's Commission and the Systems Improvement, Legal Practice & Process, Training, and Data Committees about Commission initiatives.

Background: The Children's Commission is a statewide, multidisciplinary collaborative body that includes high-level membership from the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of Texas government, along with child welfare partners in the non-profit and private sectors. The Children's Commission holds Commission meetings four times throughout each year. The Children's Commission receives federal grant funds which are used to operate the Commission as well as to fund meeting facilitation and travel reimbursement, training expenses and scholarships, and pass-through grants to sub-grantees.

The Children's Commission confers regularly with national organizations and other CIPs and submits an annual report to the Supreme Court of Texas and a CIP strategic plan to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Children's Commission membership includes standing positions for leadership from the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), Texas Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and the State Bar of Texas Child Protection Law Section as well as a Regional Presiding Judge. The Children's Commission staff also collaborate with various partners, including, but not limited to, the Office of the Governor (OOG), the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), the Office of Court Administration (OCA), the Judicial Commission on Mental Health (JCMH), the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services (TACFS), and the Texas Foster Youth Justice Project (FYJP).

The Systems Improvement, Legal Practice & Process, Training, and Data Committees are standing committees that meet before every Children's Commission meeting and oversee related Commission projects and initiatives.

09/18/26 Update: The May 8, 2026 Children's Commission meeting was held virtually and streamed live. Video of the meeting is archived on the Commission's YouTube channel and website. The Legal Practice & Process, Training, and Data Committees convened on August 21, August 27, and August 11, 2026 respectively to discuss new and ongoing projects. Members of these committees and the Systems Improvement Committee were invited to join an "All Committee Call" on September 10, 2026 to learn more about the proposed Children's Commission strategies for FY2027.

Objective: Collaborate with state and judicial leaders, as well as with multidisciplinary child welfare stakeholders, to maintain productive dialogue aimed at strengthening the child welfare system.

2. Strategy: Engage with the Collaborative Council and participate in and provide forums and opportunities for

child welfare stakeholders to partner and to share information about child welfare practices, policies, needs, and strengths.

Background: The Collaborative Council assists the Children’s Commission by providing information about local, regional, and statewide issues that impact attorney and judicial practices in child welfare cases. The Collaborative Council is an advisory body comprised of child welfare stakeholders and subject matter experts from other child and family serving systems from across Texas, including advocates for children, youth, and families. There are approximately 30 Collaborative Council members at any given time.

The Children’s Commission convenes an annual Collaborative Council meeting to elicit feedback from members about their areas of interest and priorities. The Children’s Commission also conducts a bi-weekly collaborative call with DFPS, OCA, and Collaborative Council members as well as numerous other calls and meetings related to Children’s Commission workgroups to provide consistent opportunities to collaborate, share timely information, assess engagement, and identify areas in need of improvement.

09/18/26 Update: Bi-weekly stakeholder calls, including updates and participation from agency staff and Collaborative Council members, continue to take place every other week. The most recent call was held on September 16, 2026. Information about upcoming training events, resources, and other announcements of interest are shared during each call. The annual Collaborative Council meeting will take place on the morning of September 18, 2026, immediately prior to the September Commission meeting. Members will have the opportunity to network and to share their updates and priorities for the upcoming fiscal year prior to joining the commission meeting.

Objective: Communicate Children’s Commission areas of focus through easy to access, user-friendly resources for judges, attorneys, and child welfare stakeholders.

3. Strategy: Develop, maintain, and enhance usability and function of the Children’s Commission website, social media, print and online materials, and other communication mediums.

Background: The Children’s Commission maintains a website that features announcements for scholarship and training opportunities, reports and resources, as well as the CIP grant application and grant recipient information. Important announcements shared in the Children’s Commission Resource Letters are also distributed through the Commission’s communication and social media platforms. The website is routinely updated for content and to highlight newly released reports and resources produced by or in collaboration with the Children’s Commission.

09/18/26 Update: A new, refreshed look was applied to the Children’s Commission website to allow for greater usability and to increase access to Commission resources. The updated website now features dedicated, top-menu navigation to quickly direct website traffic to related content and resources. Commission website changes include:

- A new webpage for Parents, Caregivers, & Youth designed to better direct relevant resources to their intended audiences;
- The Our Work webpage now features specific topics and the corresponding Children’s Commission resources such as Foster Care & Education, Juvenile Justice/Dual Status, and Legal Representation; and
- Training opportunities, as well as resources for judges and attorneys, were organized to reduce multi-page navigation and facilitate direct access.

Additionally, the Children’s Commission increased social media messaging to further share Commission announcements such as the availability of the 2026 Toolkit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in

Child Welfare Cases, and to expand awareness about recent events including the 2026 Judicial Conference on Juvenile Justice. Children's Commission social media platforms include Facebook and Instagram, as well as LinkedIn, X, and YouTube.

Objective: Confer regularly with the Department of Family and Protective Services on federal plans, audits, and requirements as mandated by federal program instructions.

4. Strategy: Confer with DFPS on the Child and Family Service Reviews, Program Improvement Plans, Child and Family State Plans, A Home for Every Child, and the Court Improvement Program Strategic Plans.

Background: The Children's Commission maintains a long-standing collaboration with the state child welfare agency, DFPS. The Children's Commission engages in ongoing participation with ACF and DFPS regarding the federally required Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP), Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR), Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), Program Improvement Plan (PIP), and CIP Strategic Plan. The Children's Commission also maintains an Attorney Advisory Group comprised of experienced child welfare attorneys from across the state who agreed to offer input and perspective on an *ad hoc* basis via email or conference call on matters of DFPS policy changes when requested by DFPS or to provide feedback on trends or practice issues and concerns.

Texas participated in Round 4 of the federal Child and Family Services Review, with increased emphasis on legal and judicial involvement in this round. On November 5, 2024, ACF presented a Final Report which addressed strengths in the Texas child welfare system as well as areas in need of improvement. Texas had 90 days from the issuance of the Final Report to submit a proposed PIP. To inform the development of the PIP, DFPS conducted breakout meetings on safety, permanency, and well-being with interested stakeholders from throughout the State on November 5-6, 2024; the Children's Commission staff participated in each of these meetings. The Texas PIP was approved by the federal Administration for Children and Families in the summer of 2025. The approved PIP included two strategies that directly involved the CIP: regular review of permanency data and caregiver notification of court hearings.

Texas recently joined the A Home for Every Child Initiative and no longer has a Program Improvement Plan. The Children's Commission will partner with DFPS, ACF, and the courts to support implementation of the Home for Every Child initiative.

09/18/26 Update: Children's Commission staff continue to actively engage in federal and state partnerships. This includes joining monthly meetings with ACF and DFPS. The most recent meeting took place on September 9, 2026.

The Data Committee will provide judicial education on permanency in a Statewide Data Trends panel at the October 2026 Child Welfare Judges Conference, which will be presented by the DFPS Chief Data and Analytics Officer; the Director of the University of Texas at Austin Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing; and a Child Protection Court Judge. The presentation will focus on data, types of exits to permanency, timeliness of permanency, and related best judicial practices.

Objective: Support efforts to encourage fairness and strengthen engagement of children, youth, and families in the Texas child welfare system so that they receive services and support that meet their individual needs.

5. Strategy: Emphasize the importance of engaging children, youth, and parents in case planning and court processes, and include individuals with lived experience in system improvement efforts.

Background: Hearing and learning directly from individuals with lived experience in the child welfare system is

critical to the Children's Commission goals of increasing awareness, encouraging judicial leadership, promoting best judicial and attorney practices, and informing policy and practice affecting child welfare in Texas. The Children's Commission aspires to expand systems-level engagement of youth and family members with lived experience in child welfare and seeks to prioritize and encourage participation by compensating them for contributing their time and expertise to Children's Commission efforts. In furtherance of these goals, the Children's Commission created a lived experience participation policy so that participants are compensated for their time spent preparing and presenting.

The Children's Commission underscores the importance of educating judicial leaders and child welfare professionals on age-appropriate activities for children and youth in foster care through an emphasis on normalcy. The Children's Commission continues to support and promote awareness of the Texas CASA guide entitled *Normalcy Matters: A Guide to Supporting Children & Youth in Texas Foster Care*, as well as a companion video. The guide and video are hosted as resources on the Commission website.

09/18/26 Update: Commission staff continue to invite, include, and be informed by speakers with lived experience in Commission trainings, meetings, and other offerings. Examples include the September 28, 2026 "Caregivers in Court: Notice and Engagement" webinar which will include a foster parent with lived experience and the October 27, 2026 "Supporting Youth and Young Adults with Behavioral Health Challenges" panel at the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference which will feature a parent with lived experience.

GOAL II (SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT)

Execute innovative projects aimed at encouraging fairness and justice for children, youth, and families; promoting judicial leadership in courts and communities; and expanding court and child welfare system capacity to support continuous, systemic improvement.

Objective: Encourage judicial leadership through Jurist in Residence (JIR) support to ensure that judges are equipped to make well-informed decisions and conduct hearings that will contribute to better outcomes for children, youth, and families.

6. Strategy: Utilize Jurists in Residence to promote best practices to the judiciary and support the legal and child welfare systems through judicial leadership and expertise.

Background: The Jurist in Residence position was created to foster judicial leadership and promote greater expertise among judges hearing child welfare matters. The JIR develops relationships with retired and sitting judges and 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. JIR activities include continued emphasis on elevating judicial leaders with expertise and interests related to prevention, removal, permanency, child and family well-being, best practices, and enhancing child and family voice in child welfare system reform.

The Children's Commission has two Jurists in Residence: Hon. Rob Hofmann, Judge of the 452nd District Court in Mason County and Hon. Piper McCraw, Judge of the 469th District Court in Collin County. Both JIRs participate in multiple Children's Commission committee meetings, advise Commission staff, and engage in discussions about Community-Based Care, prevention and early intervention, placement capacity, and other issues.

09/18/26 Update: Between May 8 and September 18, 2026, a few examples of JIR activities include:

- Continued work as Immediate Past President for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) and attended multiple Executive and other Committee Meetings
- Facilitated Judges' Roundtable Meeting (Region 3E), May 15, McKinney
- Attended Children's Commission Executive Committee Meetings, May 19 and September 7, Virtual
- Attended OCA Digital Court Reporting Study Meeting, May 26, Virtual
- Attended Juvenile Justice Committee Meetings, June 26 and September 1, Virtual
- Facilitated Judicial Breakout Session at Child Protection Court Convening, July 17, Round Rock
- Attended NCJFCJ Annual Conference, July 20-22, Nashville
- Presented Child Welfare Update at Texas Center for the Judiciary's Court Professionals Conference, July 27, Fort Worth
- Presented at Judicial Conference on Juvenile Justice, August 17-18, Round Rock
- Attended Developing Pathways for Students in Foster Care Webinar, August 25, Virtual
- Served as Chair and Facilitated Training Committee Meeting, August 27, Virtual
- Attended Texas Center for the Judiciary's Annual Judicial Conference, September 8-11, Round Rock
- Facilitated Trial Skills Training Virtual Day One, September 9, Virtual

- Served as Chair and Facilitated Complex Medical Cases Workgroup Meeting, September 14, Virtual
- Chaired the Trial Skills Training Faculty Meeting, September 14, Virtual
- Participated in calls with Commission leadership and staff regarding various issues

Objective: Support efforts to build capacity to address complex mental health needs and embed a culture of trauma-informed care in the Texas child welfare system.

7. Strategy: Engage stakeholders in the child welfare, juvenile justice, and mental health systems to apply principles of trauma-informed care and address gaps in services for children, youth, and families with complex mental health needs.

Background: The Children’s Commission initiated a Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-Informed Care (SCTIC) in 2017 to elevate trauma-informed policy and practices in the Texas child welfare system by developing statewide strategies to support system reform, organizational leadership, cross-systems collaboration, and community-led efforts with data-informed initiatives. Based on the work of the SCTIC, the Children’s Commission published a final report in February 2019 entitled *Building a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System: A Blueprint*.

The Children’s Commission established the Consortium on Trauma Informed Court Practices in August 2024 to provide a statewide judicial forum for discussion and education about trauma-informed and trauma-responsive court practices. The Consortium further broadens the reach of the SCTIC by sharing and expanding the work of the four Trauma Informed Court Pilot judges and their court teams. The Texas Alliance of Child and Family Studies issued a report entitled Building a Network of Trauma Informed Courts in Texas on the work of these four courts, which was done in collaboration with the Children’s Commission. The four pilot court judges serve as mentors to participating judges. The Consortium convenes for bi-monthly MCLE presentations. Commission staff provide meeting support; continuing legal education credit, TBLS credit, and family violence credit hours as appropriate; and related online resources. Resources related to trauma-informed and trauma-responsive practices are updated regularly on www.TraumaInformedTexas.com.

Additionally, Commission staff participate in the Cross Systems Trauma-Informed Care (CSTIC) Initiative Workgroup at the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). Members are representatives from state agencies who are working on implementing trauma-informed practices in their agencies.

09/18/26 Update: The Consortium on Trauma Informed Court Practices convened on May 15th for an MCLE on “Reunification Day Celebrations.” Presenters were Hon. Randy Shelton, Judge of the 269th Civil District Court in Jefferson County and Hon. Linda Dunson, Judge of the 309th Family District Court in Harris County. The presentation focused on how to organize a Reunification Day Celebration, in anticipation of National Reunification Month in June. In addition to discussing the approach from the bench, the presenters offered practical details about how to put an event together, and the impact that the focus on reunification made on the legal community and the parents with pending child welfare cases. The ensuing discussion with participating judges centered on how judges could work with local child welfare partners to develop a Reunification Day celebration and encourage family reunification in their communities.

The Consortium Planning Committee, led by Hon. Carlos Villalon, Jr., Associate Judge of the Child Protection Court of the Rio Grande Valley West, met on June 30 to discuss curriculum ideas for FY2027.

Objective: Support statewide efforts to transition from a reactive child welfare system to a prevention-oriented system that aims to maintain child safety and keep families together.

8. Strategy: Engage judges and lawyers in systemic efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect, address safety

concerns while maintaining family preservation, and encourage timely reunification.

Background: The Children's Commission collaborates closely with DFPS on the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). FFPSA restructures federal child welfare funding, particularly Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, which Texas uses to pay for services for children in foster care and their families. FFPSA seeks to reduce entry into foster care, to limit the use of congregate care, and to increase access to behavioral and mental health services. The Children's Commission collaborates with Casey Family Programs, DFPS, and other state and national workgroups on best practices for implementation of all FFPSA provisions, including the development of IV-E prevention programs and court involvement in encouraging a prevention approach.

During the 87th Texas Legislative Session, House Bill (HB) 3041 created a Family Preservation Services pilot program, referred to as the Texas Family First (TFF) pilot. Pursuant to Texas Family Code §§ 262.401 - 262.417, DFPS must provide family-focused preservation services to children and families who are at imminent risk of having a child removed from the child's home and placed in conservatorship due to a continuing danger. The TFF pilot operates under direct court supervision and DFPS is directed to utilize federal Title IV-E funds for services. TFF services are available in the following pilot areas: DFPS Regions 1, 2, 3W, 6A, 8A, and 8B.

09/18/26 Update: Children's Commission staff meet monthly with DFPS staff from Investigations, Family-Based Safety Services, Data and Evaluation, Legal, and Finance departments on the Texas Family First Pilot Implementation Steering Committee. During meetings, DFPS provides updates on steps taken to implement the pilot. The most recent Steering Committee meetings took place on May 20 and June 17, 2026. Children's Commission staff also serve on the FFPSA Continuous Quality Improvement Steering Committee which met on July 6, August 13, and September 10, 2026. Additionally, the Children's Commission hosted Zoom meetings with judges and attorneys from DFPS Regions 4/5 to discuss expansion and Region 8B to discuss additional capacity for TFF in those regions. These meetings occurred on June 12, June 29, July 31, and August 4, 2026.

Objective: Encourage the improvement of education outcomes for children and youth in foster care, leading to a more productive and stable adult life.

9. Strategy: Identify opportunities to develop sustainable partnerships between legal, child welfare, and education stakeholders in an effort to identify and address the educational needs and goals of children and youth who experience foster care.

Background: Since the inception of the Education Committee in 2010 and the release of the Texas Blueprint in 2012, the Children's Commission has convened a multidisciplinary, statewide effort aimed at improving education outcomes for children and youth in foster care. The Foster Care and Education (FC&Ed) Committee was established in 2015 to continue the implementation of the Texas Blueprint recommendations. The FC&Ed Committee utilizes a project-centered model. The FC&Ed Committee will continue to develop priorities and provide oversight for the statewide effort. As projects are identified, small groups will each meet periodically with a defined scope, deliverables, and a timeline. The core principles of strengthening collaboration between the education, courts, and child welfare systems; developing cross-training opportunities; and encouraging data-driven decision making remain fundamental to the FC&Ed Committee's work.

09/18/26 Update: In collaboration with TEA and DFPS, the Children's Commission will host its third Foster Care Summit on December 2-3, 2026 in Denton, Texas. The Summit will help provide resources for current foster care liaisons and other stakeholders to better support students in foster care.

TEA, DFPS, and the Children's Commission are currently revising the 2022 Foster Care and Student Success Guide with updated resources and edits for publication in 2026. This guide is designed to support Texas schools

and child welfare professionals in addressing the educational needs of students in foster care.

The Higher Education Guide Workgroup is currently updating the Texas Higher Education Foster Care Liaison Information & Reference Guide. This guide was last published in 2017 and is utilized by higher education professionals to support young adults who experienced foster care as they navigate through higher education.

Objective: Promote awareness of and provide training, resources, and support so that judges and lawyers can assist in preventing and responding to the specialized needs of children and youth in foster care.

10. Strategy: Create resources that address the unique needs of sub-populations of children and youth who experience foster care, such as victims of child sexual abuse.

Background: The Children's Commission partners with many key stakeholders with a goal of raising awareness on addressing specialized issues and needs that children and youth in foster care may experience such as sexual abuse, physical abuse, and running away. This year, the Children's Commission, in partnership with the Office of the Governor, DFPS, Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas (CACTX), and other stakeholders, focused on developing a resource highlighting the relevant laws aimed at protecting children who survive sexual abuse. The goal is to better support children and youth who are at high risk of being subjected to sexual abuse or commercial sexual exploitation.

09/18/26 Update: A workgroup charged with developing a resource to clarify the rights of children who experience sexual abuse was led by Hon. Selina Mireles, Associate Judge of the 4th & 5th Administrative Judicial Regions Child Protection Court. The resource is designed to help child survivors and their caregivers to identify and understand their legal rights. The resource includes information on Responding to Concerns of Child Sexual Abuse, Rights During an Investigation, In Court Proceedings, and Ongoing Safety and Protection. The resource was completed in August 2026 and is available on the Children's Commission website.

A new workgroup will focus on a resource related to complex medical issues in child welfare cases. The Complex Medical Cases Workgroup will be led by Hon. Rob Hofmann, Judge of the 452nd District Court and Senior Jurist in Residence at the Children's Commission. The workgroup will meet for the first time on September 14, 2026 to identify priority areas of focus.

Objective: Create opportunities to bring together subject matter experts, judicial and executive branch leaders, and key policy makers to examine important and urgent issues, and to identify recommendations and solutions.

11. Strategy: Work with DFPS and other child welfare stakeholders to identify critical and urgent topics for Roundtable discussions and hold Roundtable events as needed.

Background: Roundtable discussions are designed to address key, urgent issues affecting the Texas child welfare system through a facilitated, half-day program. The topics vary year to year and the number of roundtables hosted each year also varies according to the interest of stakeholders and issues demanding attention. The Children Commission's role typically consists of forming a small workgroup to discuss the overall purpose, creating an invitation and distribution list, securing a venue, managing all invitations, RSVPs, travel reimbursements, preparing a meeting agenda and related materials, supporting the moderator, and producing a written report within about 4 to 6 months following the Roundtable event.

09/18/26 Update: The next Roundtable event is scheduled for December 1, 2026. The topic of the discussion will be how Community-Based Care impacts the legal process and how courts and Single Source Continuum Contractors (SSCCs) can address strengths as well as challenges and encourage opportunities for innovation and improvement.

12. Strategy: Engage stakeholders in the legal system in statewide efforts to develop and expand placement capacity, including kinship care and the rollout of Community Based Care.

Background: Placement capacity is an issue across the state of Texas, both in urban and rural areas. Judges and attorneys are key partners in identifying gaps and encouraging community support to provide safe and stable placements for children who experience foster care. Additionally, Community-Based Care (CBC) continues to roll out across Texas. In the CBC model, most Child Protective Services duties transfer to a local service network led by a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC). Several initiatives at the Children's Commission aim to engage the legal and judicial communities in efforts to develop placement capacity statewide.

09/18/26 Update: Children's Commission staff serve on the DFPS Partners for Children and Families Committee (PCFC), the advisory body for the rollout of Community-Based Care in Texas. The recent PCFC meetings took place on May 14 and August 13, 2026. The committee oversees multiple workgroups with a focus on the following topics: intake and investigations, Community-Based Care, placement, services and supports, foster care and kinship policy, and contracts.

The Children's Commission hosted an in-person Judges' Meeting on Community-Based Care in DFPS Region 3E, which includes Collin, Dallas, Ellis, Fannin, Grayson, Hunt, Kaufman, Navarro, and Rockwall Counties on May 15, 2026 in McKinney. A related attorney meeting occurred on May 7, 2026 via Zoom. These discussions were designed to engage legal professionals and provide a solutions-oriented approach to the receivership process in the region. Follow up meetings will take place in September 2026.

Objective: Address the needs of children and youth who experience both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems and encourage cross-system partnerships through judicial leadership.

13. Strategy: Prioritize areas in need of improvement in the handling of juvenile justice cases as well as recommendations developed by the Dual Status Task Force.

Background: The Dual Status Task Force was formed to establish a common, statewide definition(s) for the population, identify resources needed to meet the needs of dual status youth, and make other recommendations as may be necessary to improve outcomes for dual status youth. The Dual Status Task Force Report was released in December 2021 and captured recommendations that were formulated over an eighteen-month period, beginning in July 2019. The report contains various recommendations for agency coordination, data, definitions, legal representation and advocacy, judicial practices, and training that highlight the unique needs of this population of youth.

In FY2024, the Children's Commission created a Juvenile Justice Committee to study broader issues related to children and youth involved with the Texas juvenile justice system. Informed by input from the Juvenile Justice Committee, the Children's Commission requested an exceptional item to expand its work to include juvenile justice. The 89th Regular Legislature provided funding for additional capacity at the Children's Commission to support judges and attorneys handling juvenile justice matters.

09/18/26 Update: The inaugural Judicial Conference on Juvenile Justice (JCJJ) took place in Round Rock, Texas on August 17-18, 2026. Sessions were tailored to focus on judicial practice and included the following topics: the power of mentorship, juvenile crime trends, determinate sentence and certification cases, the Continuum of Care Initiative, specialty courts for juveniles, risk-need-responsivity, sex offenses, engaging parents/guardians, juvenile boards, an update from leadership at the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD), and a moderated judicial discussion. A total of 11.25 hours of training was provided, which included 11.25 hours of MCLE, 1.0 hours of ethics credit, 0.25 hours of family violence credit, and TBLS credit. A total of 86 people attended JCJJ, including 61 judges with varying levels of juvenile justice experience from throughout Texas; speakers from across the

State; two national speakers; and Commission staff.

With input from the Juvenile Justice Committee, three bench cards were developed to aid judges hearing juvenile cases by providing a quick reference to relevant legal standards. The topics of the bench cards are detention hearings, certification hearings, and sealing juvenile records. The bench cards were distributed to attendees at JCJJ and are now available on the Commission's website.

The Juvenile Justice Committee last met on September 1, 2026 and will continue to meet regularly to provide insight on new projects and developments in juvenile law and practice across Texas.

Finally, Commission staff attended the TWC Foster Youth Conference in Allen, Texas on July 13-14, 2026 and participated in a session on dual status youth. The presentation provided an overview of the juvenile justice system and addressed the unique needs of the dual status youth population.

GOAL III (LEGAL PRACTICE & PROCESS)

Assist trial and appellate courts, judges, and legal advocates to ensure that children, youth, and families involved with child welfare experience a legal system in which they have access to justice and their rights are protected.

Objective: Improve legal representation so that parents, children, and DFPS experience high-quality court proceedings.

14. Strategy: Convene and support a Legal Representation Committee to sustain efforts to ensure high-quality legal representation for parents, children, and DFPS.

Background: When a family is involved in a child welfare proceeding, quality legal counsel is essential for all parties to ensure that the court strikes the appropriate balance between the rights and duties of all parties involved. The Children's Commission has maintained a Legal Representation Committee (LRC) since its inception. The committee exists to identify training needs, advise child welfare system stakeholders on best legal and judicial system practices, evaluate proposed statutory amendments, assess the quality of legal representation throughout the state, and ensure that court proceedings safeguard due process, promote child and family engagement, and produce quality legal representation outcomes for the children and families involved.

09/18/26 Update: The LRC met on August 19, 2026 and discussed its focus on targeting recruitment and retention of attorneys in the area of child welfare law. The August meeting centered on how to implement this initiative through correspondence with local bar associations, law schools, and other groups, as well as creating a basic '101' level course on child welfare practice for those groups receptive to the committee's outreach. LRC representatives also met with the President of the Texas Young Lawyers Association (TYLA) on September 9, 2026, to discuss how the Commission and TYLA might partner in support of the recruitment effort.

Objective: Encourage standards of practice for attorneys representing parties in child welfare cases so that attorneys throughout the state provide high-quality legal representation.

15. Strategy: Develop Standards of Representation for attorneys representing parents, children, and DFPS in child welfare cases.

Background: Though the Texas Family Code requires attorneys for parents and children to become familiar with the American Bar Association (ABA) standards of practice for attorneys who represent parents and children in abuse and neglect cases, Texas does not require compliance with the ABA standards as a condition of appointment. Additionally, Texas has not adopted its own standards of practice for court-appointed attorneys. The Children's Commission 2018 Legal Representation Study surveyed stakeholders regarding the effect that the lack of enforceable standards of practice has on the legal representation of parents and children. Across stakeholder groups, participants demonstrated a high level of confidence that the creation and enforcement of standards would improve the quality of representation, including 70% of responding court-appointed attorneys indicating that standards would have a positive effect.

The Children's Commission Child Welfare Law Standards of Representation Committee (Standards Committee) is charged with drafting proposed standards to submit to the State Bar of Texas. Hon. Roy Ferguson, retired Judge of the 394th District Court, is the Committee Chair; Hon. Debra Lehrmann, Senior Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas is the Executive Chair; and Professor Stephanie Tang of the Baylor University School of Law serves as the Reporter. Committee members were selected for their expertise in child welfare law and represent jurisdictions across Texas.

09/18/26 Update: The Standards Committee met on September 16-17, 2026 to conduct its final review of the draft standards for attorneys representing children. The committee will meet next on February 3-4, 2027 to begin development of standards for attorneys representing parents.

Objective: Raise the level of understanding and expertise for attorneys by highlighting opportunities for specialization in child welfare law.

16. Strategy: Support efforts to certify Texas attorneys as specialists in child welfare law.

Background: In 2017, the Supreme Court of Texas officially recognized Child Welfare Law as the 20th area of certified legal specialization. Children's Commission staff serve on the Exam Commission, which is responsible for drafting and grading the certification exam. The Children's Commission provides reimbursement scholarships to cover application and exam fees for TBLS Child Welfare Law exam attorneys who successfully pass the exam.

09/18/26 Update: The 2026 Child Welfare Law Exam is scheduled for October 5-6, 2026. There are 6 individuals registered for the exam. The Children's Commission will continue to reimburse exam fees for attorneys who pass the exam and become certified, as detailed on the Commission's website.

Objective: Develop resources to help parents involved in the child welfare system to navigate the process, encourage authentic parent engagement, and ensure parental rights are protected.

17. Strategy: Convene and support a Parent Resource Committee, maintain parent resource guides, and create other materials to sustain efforts to increase parental understanding and engagement in the child welfare system.

Background: The Children's Commission supports a Parent Resource Committee, which is comprised of parent mentors, parent advocates, parents' attorneys, DFPS staff, and other interested stakeholders. Prior to establishing the Texas Legal Services Center Family Helpline, the Children's Commission partnered with the University of Texas and other stakeholders to produce the Parent Resource Guide in 2015, which is maintained by the Parent Resource Committee and made available in print and online on the Children's Commission website as well as on many other stakeholder websites, in both English and Spanish.

09/18/26 Update: Members of the Parent Resource Guide Subcommittee convened in person on August 21, 2026, to review and discuss updates to the Parent Resource Guide (PRG), which was last updated in 2020. The subcommittee plans to update the guide throughout Fall 2026 and revisit it at the conclusion of the Texas 90th Legislative Session to ensure the update captures the most recent legislative changes. The subcommittee aims to release the updated guide by September 2027.

18. Strategy: Support efforts to provide early and reliable access to information and resources for Texas families through programs such as the Texas Legal Services Center Family Helpline.

Background: In 2017, the Children's Commission partnered with the Texas Access to Justice Commission and the Children's Justice Act to fund the Texas Legal Services Center (TLSC) to establish the Family Helpline for Strong Families and Safe Children (Family Helpline). The Family Helpline provides easy, statewide access for parents and family members to basic information, education, and resources addressing parental rights as they relate to Child Protective Investigations, the provision of Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS), Parental Child Safety Placements, Texas Family Code 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 situations.

The Family Helpline continues to address a critical gap in legal services for families navigating child welfare issues by providing legal information to individuals at all stages of CPS involvement, including investigations, Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS), conservatorship cases, and post-case concerns. The Helpline also serves relatives and caregivers who often play key roles in children's lives but may lack access to legal guidance. While a small portion of callers are represented by counsel, the vast majority are unrepresented and face barriers such as financial limitations, geographic isolation, or limited access to legal resources.

09/18/26 Update: From April 1 through August 31, 2026, the Family Helpline completed 610 substantive calls, assisting 509 adults and impacting 975 children. Calls originated from 105 Texas counties, along with 21 out-of-state inquiries related to Texas DFPS matters. Approximately 75% of callers were parents and 18% were relatives, including grandparents and other family members.

Seventy-four percent of callers had questions related to an open CPS case. Of those calls, 58% involved an investigation, 23% Temporary Managing Conservatorship, and 9% Family-Based Safety Services, with the remaining calls involving Alternate Response, Court-Ordered Services, or Permanent Managing Conservatorship. Among callers whose questions did not involve an open case, most sought information about a closed case or child safety and reporting concerns.

Child Protective Investigations remained the most frequently discussed topic, raised in approximately 65% of all calls. Investigations-related questions continued even after cases had progressed to later stages or closed, with callers seeking information about investigation findings, potential future DFPS involvement, and how investigation outcomes could affect ongoing cases.

On September 1, 2026, the Family Helpline launched a dedicated voicemail line for Texas licensed attorneys with questions about CPS matters. Helpline attorneys have long fielded occasional attorney inquiries, but this new, dedicated line will expedite response times and allow the program to actively promote the service to attorneys and courts statewide.

Objective: Strengthen the legal and judicial response in child welfare cases so that Native American children, youth, and families stay connected to their community, culture, customs, and beliefs.

19. Strategy: Establish and support meaningful relationships with federally recognized Tribes and promote awareness, education, and application of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

Background: The Children's Commission supports partnering with system stakeholders to promote ongoing knowledge and understanding of ICWA and its significance. The Commission also works with national ICWA and leading organizations on understanding and implementation of the related Federal Rule and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Guidelines. The Children's Commission also partners with DFPS in supporting tribal/state collaborative meetings and collaborates with the Capacity Building Center for Courts and the participants of the CIP ICWA Constituency Group. Commission staff maintain contact with the three federally recognized Tribes in Texas and continue to communicate any resources that may be helpful.

09/18/26 Update: Commission staff attended monthly ICWA meetings hosted by DFPS on June 18 and August 20, 2026. The June meeting included a presentation by Cody Hunt, DFPS Best Practice Specialist on engaging families and the adultification of children and youth. Melissa Celestine provided the August meeting presentation on the Alabama-Coushatta Tribal History. The next monthly meeting is scheduled for September 17, 2026. Commission staff also provided an ICWA Primer presentation to Child Protection Court Coordinators at the July 17, 2026 in person Children's Commission Child Protection Court Convening and gave a virtual presentation to CASA of the South Plains by request on August 20, 2026.

Objective: Ensure availability of high-quality judicial and attorney resources and tools that provide clear,

relevant information about law, policy, and best practices.

20. Strategy: Maintain a comprehensive Bench Book for judges hearing child welfare cases.

Background: The Children's Commission maintains the Texas Child Welfare Law Bench Book (Bench Book) that outlines the state and federal statutory requirements for judges handling child welfare cases, including topical sections and checklists. The Bench Book also highlights special issues and includes best and promising practices. It is updated annually with new information, as needed, and is disseminated to judges at training events and upon request. The Bench Book is also hosted on the Children's Commission website and through LawBox, both versions of which can be accessed at no cost through the Commission website.

09/18/26 Update: The 2026 Bench Book updates are underway, and hard copies of the updated version will be released for distribution to judicial attendees at the Commission's October 2026 Child Welfare Judges Conference. Children's Commission staff have incorporated edits and suggestions from relevant external partners in all substantive areas of the Bench Book and are now engaged in the final editing process. An online version in both PDF and interactive formats will be available at no cost on the Commission's website shortly after release in late October.

The Bench Book organizes Texas statutory and case law, federal requirements, and practical guidance throughout a child welfare case, covering investigations, alternatives to removal, removal, adversary and permanency hearings, final orders, appeals, adoption, and reinstatement of parental rights as well as related federal law such as ICWA, ICPC, and the Family First Prevention and Services Act. Related topical chapters include medical and mental health care and psychotropic medication, children with disabilities, substance-use disorders, trauma-informed care, education, child and youth voice, domestic human trafficking/CSEC, Community-Based Care, dual status youth, family visitation, and permanency assistance programs. Bench Cards are also available as abbreviated reference cards on hearing types and relevant topical matters including Foster Care and Education and Required Court Admonishments. Additionally, this year's Bench Book will include a new bench card on Caregiver Notice and Engagement.

21. Strategy: Maintain toolkits for attorneys representing parents, children, and the Department of Family and Protective Services in child welfare cases.

Background: The Children's Commission's Toolkit Committee is responsible for updating the Toolkit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in Child Welfare Cases, and the DFPS Representation Subcommittee is responsible for updating the Toolkit for Attorneys Representing DFPS in Child Welfare Cases. At the conclusion of each legislative session, each committee meets to develop a plan to review, edit, and update the toolkits to ensure they reflect current case law, statutory law, and best practices. The committees also develop and review plans for distributing the toolkits to ensure they are readily available to practitioners.

09/18/26 Update: The 2026 edition of the Toolkit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in Child Welfare Cases is now available at no cost as a PDF download and as an online, interactive resource on the Children's Commission website. It is also available as a downloadable mobile application through LawBox. Updates to the toolkit reflect changes from the 89th Legislative Session and highlight required actions before and after each hearing. The toolkit continues to cover legal essentials including pleadings, motions, evidentiary issues, hearing checklists, and related federal law issues. The toolkit also contains topical chapters on concurrent issues such as child well-being, older youth in care, paternity, child support, kinship support, incarcerated parents, and trauma-informed advocacy. Commission staff distributed 220 printed copies of the toolkit at the State Bar of Texas Advanced Family Law Course Child Abuse and Neglect Workshop on August 12, 2026 and plans to distribute remaining copies to attorneys at trainings throughout the rest of the year and to attorneys, upon request.

The Toolkit for Attorneys Representing DFPS is projected to be available as free, downloadable PDFs for print, and as an online interactive resource on LawBox this Fall.

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.

22. Strategy: Support increased child, family, and caregiver engagement in the court process, including through the use of technology.

Background: All parties involved in child welfare cases continue to struggle with securing consistent and timely notice of scheduled court hearings from DFPS. This issue also impacts caregivers and may result in an inability to attend and participate in scheduled court hearings. The Notice and Engagement tool involves using non-confidential case data to provide email notice to users about upcoming hearings. OCA will market the Notice and Engagement tool and periodically re-issue announcements, survey users on the usefulness and effectiveness of the system, and monitor the system login and search information. Notices will be monitored to evaluate whether the correct hearing data are populating according to search criteria. Reports/data are produced by OCA and provided to the Children's Commission.

09/18/26 Update: The Caregiver Notice Workgroup met on August 31, 2026, to finalize resources developed to support caregiver notice and participation in court hearings. The workgroup completed its review of a judicial bench card addressing caregiver notice, participation, and practical considerations for engaging caregivers during hearings, as well as a caregiver-facing one-pager with information and tips to help caregivers prepare for and participate in court.

The Children's Commission will also host a "Caregivers in Court: Notice and Engagement" webinar on September 28, 2026, featuring judicial, attorney, and caregiver perspectives on caregiver notice and engagement in court hearings.

These efforts are intended to complement ongoing work related to hearing notification, including the Notice and Engagement system, which continues to expand. In FY2026, 192 new users signed up to receive hearing notifications between October 1, 2025, and September 4, 2026, bringing the total number of users to 2,764. To date this fiscal year, the system sent 16,658 hearing notifications in child welfare cases.

23. Strategy: Identify and encourage legal and judicial practices that support narrowly tailored service planning for children and families.

Background: This new strategy is designed to facilitate a focus on educating judges and enhancing attorney best practices early in a child welfare case. A narrowly tailored service plan is essential to the success of parents' efforts to address the safety concerns that led to the removal of their children from the home. By addressing issues specific to each parent in the unique circumstances of the case, narrowly tailored plans can also increase parental engagement, reduce fatigue and financial burden, improve targeted skills, and avoid "box-checking" of service plan requirements. Increased legal and judicial understanding of the importance of specific plans will serve to facilitate positive permanency and support family reunification.

09/18/26 Update: The Service Planning Workgroup includes judges, DFPS and SSCC representatives, court-appointed attorneys who represent parents and children, County/District Attorneys, CASA, and a parent with lived experience. The workgroup has had three meetings, with the most recent on September 3, 2026, in which it identified and analyzed various systemic issues, concerns, and potential solutions to improve service planning throughout the State. The workgroup is now in the process of determining the most effective and practical service-planning tools it can produce to help courts give parents a clear path toward reunification while balancing child safety.

Objective: Promote the value of mediation in child welfare cases, including opportunities to achieve timely permanency and increase efficiency in child welfare cases.

24. Strategy: Establish an understanding regarding the availability and usefulness of mediation services in child welfare cases.

Background: Mediation is used in child welfare cases throughout Texas and can be an effective and financially prudent method of resolving cases. Though the use of mediation to resolve child welfare cases prior to trial has become widely accepted, the Children's Commission is exploring whether mediation is being underutilized in child welfare cases because mediation often occurs too late in the case timeline for the benefits of increased compliance to be realized.

09/18/26 Update: The Mediation Workgroup meets on an *ad hoc* basis. There are no updates during this reporting period.

Objective: Support innovation and encourage best practices for Texas courts hearing child welfare cases.

25. Strategy: Track and assess the impact of changes in law, policy, and rule affecting the legal process in child welfare cases.

Background: The Legislation and Policy Resource Committee (LPRC) convenes on an *ad hoc* basis and will continue to act as a resource on the impact of legislative changes as well as changes in DFPS policy and court rules that impact the child welfare system. The purpose of the committee is to provide a forum to discuss judicial considerations on changes to child welfare law, policy, and rule.

09/18/26 Update: There are no updates during this reporting period.

GOAL IV (TRAINING)

Oversee and develop judicial and legal training efforts at all levels of practice that identify and promote best practices to improve outcomes and establish and maintain a well-informed judiciary and bar.

Objective: Provide high-quality training and resources that encourage judicial leadership both within the courtroom and in the broader child welfare community.

26. Strategy: Plan, fund, conduct, and evaluate judicial training through conferences, online content, and events.

Background: The Children’s Commission collaborates with the Texas Center for the Judiciary (TCJ) to design specialized judicial education and training opportunities for active, retired, and former Texas appellate, district, and county court at law judges, as well as associate judges and court personnel through its grant with TCJ. Throughout the fiscal year, TCJ and the Children’s Commission partner to plan and execute the upcoming annual Child Welfare Judges Conference (CWJC) as well as to begin the initial planning for the following fiscal year’s CWJC. The Child Welfare Judges Conference is the Commission’s largest annual in-person judicial training. Planning and funding activities include designing curricula and conference agendas, speaker support, determining the budget and number of attendees, participating in planning meetings, surveying participants, and evaluating the process and event both internally and externally for future planning.

In addition to providing in-person judicial training, the Commission has online training content available for judges to access at their convenience, many of which offer family violence credit hours and/or TBLS hours in addition to MCLE and ethics hours.

09/18/26 Update: In partnership with the Texas Center for the Judiciary, the Children’s Commission will host the Commission’s 19th annual Child Welfare Judges Conference on October 26-28, 2026 in Georgetown, Texas. Based on feedback from the 2025 conference and input from the CWJC Curriculum Committee, Commission staff have developed the conference agenda, refined the topics, and identified and confirmed speakers. This year’s conference will provide 15 sessions of Continuing Judicial Education, including Family Violence credits and ethics hours. A national keynote speaker has been confirmed.

The Children’s Commission will partner with DFPS staff to provide county-level data at the conference for up to 13 concurrent regional breakouts (see additional information below). This year’s conference will also offer breakouts related to the regional status of Community-Based Care. Other planned topics are “A View from the Appellate Bench;” addressing mental health and behavioral health challenges for parents, youth, and young adults; an OCA Update; a DFPS Leadership Update; a presentation on statewide data trends with a focus on permanency; a panel on Research-Driven Therapies; and a panel on Dual Status Youth.

Registration for the conference opened on August 10, 2026. Children’s Commission and TCJ staff communicate regularly to plan details for the conference. Commission staff met with DFPS staff on August 28th to discuss data sharing and facilitation of the Regional Breakout Sessions. Commission staff will host ongoing planning sessions with all speakers in preparation for the conference.

27. Strategy: Support specialized training for the Child Protection Court (CPC) program, judges, and support staff.

Background: Child Protection Courts were created to specialize in the management of child welfare dockets. Like child support court associate judges, these associate judges are appointed by their regional presiding judges and are OCA employees. The goal for CPC dockets is to help children and families achieve safety, permanency,

and well-being in a timely manner. The Children's Commission partners with OCA to provide training and other support for CPCs to conduct hearings and manage cases. There are currently 30 CPCs and 1 Harris County Child Protection Court; these courts hear child welfare cases exclusively and their jurisdiction covers over half of all Texas counties.

09/18/26 Update: The Commission hosted an in-person training for the Child Protection Court judges and court coordinators, known as the Child Protection Court Convening, on July 15-17, 2026, in Round Rock, Texas, which was planned and hosted in partnership with OCA.

Based on feedback from the 2025 conference and input from the CPC Convening Curriculum Committee, the curriculum included several joint sessions for the CPC judges and coordinators on topics germane to both audiences, as well as separate training tracks for each group. Commission staff planned the joint sessions as well as the judicial curriculum, and OCA designed training tailored for the court coordinators. Plenary presentations included OCA and TIDC Updates; the Science of Hope; and Addressing High Conflict Situations in the Courtroom. The judicial training track included a Case Law Update as well as a Presiding Judge Panel. OCA planned the coordinator track and included a Finance and HR Update. A moderated discussion of current issues was facilitated for each group.

The curriculum provided 11.0 Continuing Judicial Education and TBLS hours, as well as 6.0 family violence credit hours, and 0.75 ethics hours. Speakers included members of the judiciary, TIDC staff, and OCA staff as well as a national keynote speaker and a national plenary session speaker.

Commission staff met with OCA's Specialty Courts Division Director regularly to plan details for the conference and on August 19, 2026 to debrief the CPC Convening. Responses to the post-event survey were very positive and provided helpful suggestions for future curricula which will be considered when planning for upcoming trainings for the CPC judges and court coordinators. In 2027, the Children's Commission will host the CPC judges for a half-day virtual training. The Commission and OCA will plan and host the next in-person convening for CPC judges and court coordinators in the summer of 2028.

Objective: Provide high-quality training and resources, along with information for attorneys representing parents, children, and DFPS, as well as other advocates and stakeholders.

28. Strategy: Provide practical, experiential trial skills training that offers attorneys an opportunity to develop their skills in a small-group, low-stakes environment.

Background: Trial Skills Training (TST) is a 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. The TST is directed by Hon. Piper McCraw, Children's Commission Jurist in Residence. Trial Skills Training is held once a year and offers up to 20 MCLE (Minimum Continuing Legal Education) hours, including ethics hours. Since its inception in October 2013, the Children's Commission has hosted numerous TSTs with a focus on jury trial preparation presented by a volunteer faculty comprised of highly experienced judges and attorneys from across the state.

In September 2024, the first iteration of the Trial Skills Contested Hearing Practices Course was held, which shifted the focus of the training to improving contested hearing practice skills. Each TST program has a competitive application process and is limited to no more than 27 attorneys. It includes a fictional child welfare case fact pattern with a complete case file covering all Texas-specific statutory hearings building up to final trial. TST provides parent, child, and attorneys representing DFPS with numerous litigation exercises in child welfare law and includes lectures and demonstrations from trained faculty comprised of seasoned attorneys and judges, which are followed by personal critiques and coaching. Caseworkers, Pediatric Fellows and/or Pediatric Nurse

Practitioners, and Parent Therapists serve as live witnesses. Materials are updated, and new faculty are recruited and trained as needed. Extensive internal and external Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) processes and outcome evaluation are involved with each event.

09/18/26 Update: The Children’s Commission hosted the virtual portion of the Fall 2026 Trial Skills Training Contested Hearing Practices Course over two half-days on September 9 and 16, 2026. Participants who completed the virtual course earned 6.5 hours of MCLE credit, with 1.0 hours of ethics credit. The course was also approved by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization for 6.5 hours of certification and recertification continuing legal education requirements for attorneys and paralegals in the specialty area of Child Welfare Law.

Participants will complete an additional 2.5 days of in-person instruction on September 21-23, 2026, in San Marcos, Texas.

29. Strategy: Create and maintain online content that offers information and guidance on relevant child welfare law issues.

Background: The Commission develops and hosts regular webinars to address current and emerging issues as well as gaps in training in order to educate child welfare attorneys, judges, and stakeholders across the State. These webinars focus on topics most relevant to the legal and judicial communities which may also be relevant to child welfare partners, parents, youth and young adults, and family members of those experiencing the child welfare system. All of the Commission’s web-based content is archived and is available on the On-Demand Training and MCLE webpage.

Additionally, the Commission’s podcast entitled Children’s Commission Conversations provides easy to access education on child welfare matters, including law, policy, and practice. Podcast episodes feature informal discussions with experts on key topics in child welfare. Each episode provides education and practical insights to inform and support judges, attorneys, and others who serve Texas children, youth, and families involved in the child welfare system.

09/18/26 Update: On May 29, 2026, the Children’s Commission initiated a three-part series of webinars on duties, responsibilities, and best practices for attorneys in child welfare cases. The first webinar was entitled “Representing Children in Child Welfare Cases,” and shared best practices for representing children throughout a child welfare case. On June 15, 2026, the Children’s Commission hosted the second webinar in the series, entitled “Representing Parents in Child Welfare Cases,” which highlighted best practices for representing parents throughout a child welfare case. On July 31, 2026, the Children’s Commission hosted the final webinar in the trilogy, entitled “Representing DFPS in Child Welfare Cases,” which focused on best practices for representing DFPS throughout a child welfare case.

On August 25, 2026, the Children’s Commission hosted a webinar entitled “Developing Pathways for Students in Foster Care,” that provided an introduction to the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and shared resources for creating employment pathways for students in foster care.

The Commission’s podcast episodes are posted on the Commission’s website and are available on Spotify and Apple. The most recent episodes include Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare Cases, Parent Mentor Programs and their Impact on Positive Permanency, Understanding and Addressing Grief in Child Welfare Cases, and Intersection of Special Education and Child Welfare. A complete list of episodes can be found on the Children’s Commission Conversations webpage.

30. Strategy: Partner with statewide organizations to offer training to attorneys and advocates who serve children and families in child welfare cases throughout Texas.

Background: In partnership with the CLE branch of the State Bar of Texas, TexasBarCLE, the Children's Commission produced MCLE courses on child welfare and related issues to provide training for court-appointed attorneys and attorneys representing DFPS in child welfare cases. From 2012 through 2019, the Children's Commission partnered with TexasBarCLE to produce numerous MCLE trainings; these live broadcasts are archived in the TexasBarCLE's Child Welfare Practice Area in their Online Classroom. Both the live and archived recordings of these child welfare-related webinars are available at a reduced rate to attorneys representing children and parents, and there are scholarships available through the State Bar for attorneys who represent DFPS and need financial assistance to access this training. 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 §§ 107.004 and 107.0131.

At this time, the Commission's partnership with TexasBarCLE involves participation in the State Bar of Texas Child Protection Law (CPL) Section's Curriculum Committee and supporting that Section through scholarships to the annual spring Advanced Child Protection Law Course, which was expanded to include half-day "101" course offerings, as well as the annual summer Child Abuse and Neglect Workshop during the Advanced Family Law Course. Additionally, the Children's Commission partners with DFPS and TDCAA to provide training for attorneys representing DFPS.

09/18/26 Update: The 2026 Child Abuse and Neglect CLE (CAN Workshop) was held on August 12, 2026, in San Antonio. The Children's Commission provided registration scholarships for this course, and Commission staff distributed resources, including pamphlets, brochures, and printed copies of the 2026 Toolkit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in Child Welfare Cases at the event.

The State Bar of Texas Child Protection Law (CPL) Section will host their annual 101 and Advanced Child Protection Law Course offerings in Spring 2027. The CPL CLE Committee met on September 1, 2026, to begin planning for the course.

Objective: Ensure that judges and attorneys are knowledgeable and aware of educational opportunities in order to employ best practices in conducting hearings and in providing legal representation.

31. Strategy: Develop and distribute information to judges and attorneys that communicates best practices or changes in law, policy, or practice and informs judges and attorneys of trainings and other relevant events.

Background: The Children's Commission maintains an electronic distribution list and regularly publishes Children's Commission Resource Letters about emerging, relevant, and changing policy, laws, practice, and training opportunities. While Jurist in Residence (JIR) Letters are specific to Texas judges, the Resource Letter relays pertinent child welfare related information and reaches over 3,300 attorneys, judges, court staff, and stakeholders. All letters are available on the Children's Commission website.

09/18/26 Update: Several examples of Jurist in Residence (JIR) Letters and Children's Commission Resource Letters issued between May 5 and August 31, 2026, include:

- 5/5/2026: June Webinar: Representing Parents in Child Welfare Cases
- 5/18/2026: May is National Foster Care Month
- 6/11/2026: Upcoming and Archived Webinars
- 6/18/2026: June is Reunification Month
- 6/19/2026: Attorney Scholarships Available for TexasBarCLE's Child Abuse and Neglect Workshop
- 7/6/2026: Archived and Upcoming Webinars

- 7/29/2026, Jurist in Residence Letter: Registration Now Open: 2026 Child Welfare Judges Conference
- 7/30/26: Child Protective Investigations Advisory Committee Survey
- 8/4/2026: August Webinar: Developing Pathways for Students in Foster Care
- 8/7/2026: Attorney Scholarships to TexasBarCLE's Civil Appellate Practice 101
- 8/12/2026: Now Available: 2026 Toolkit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in Child Welfare Cases
- 8/13/2026: New Resource: Your Rights as a Survivor: A Guide for Caregivers of Children Who Experienced Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation
- 8/31/2026: September Webinar: Caregivers in Court: Notice and Engagement
- 9/3/2026: October Webinar: Dynamics of Family Violence & Considerations for Child Welfare Cases

32. Strategy: Support attendance at state and national judicial and legal conferences and training events.

Background: The Children's Commission administers various judicial and attorney scholarship opportunities throughout the fiscal year, including but not limited to: (1) the TexasBarCLE Annual Advanced Child Protection Law Course; (2) the TexasBarCLE Advanced Family Law Child Abuse and Neglect One-Day Workshop; and (3) the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Juvenile Justice Conference and Annual Conference. For all scholarships, the Children's Commission determines scholarship criteria and deploys an application process that includes pre- and post-conference evaluations to identify or confirm the knowledge gained and new practices that scholarship recipients plan to implement and/or change. The surveys also inquire about additional topics of interest to help inform planning for future conferences. All attorney applicants for Commission scholarships must currently represent DFPS or take appointments on a child welfare docket, be in good standing with the State Bar of Texas and with their primary judge, and commit to completing a post-event survey from the Commission.

The Attorney Scholarship Request provides funds for reimbursement to attorneys for conference registration fees to attend recognized local, regional, and state trainings related to the practice of child welfare law, outside of the trainings that are already addressed by current Commission scholarships. The Judicial Scholarship Request provides funds for reimbursement of conference registration for judges who need financial assistance to attend conferences which are not already covered by existing scholarship opportunities.

09/18/26 Update:

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Training: The NCJFCJ 89th Annual Conference was hosted on July 19-22, 2026, in Nashville, Tennessee. The Commission awarded 8 reimbursement scholarships to qualified judges.

Advanced Family Law One-Day Child Abuse and Neglect Workshop: The Child Abuse and Neglect One-Day Workshop was held on August 12, 2026 in San Antonio, Texas. The Commission awarded 38 registration scholarships to the live course on August 12, the webcast replays on September 25 and October 30, and the video replays on September 18 in Carrollton and on October 9 in Galveston.

Civil Appellate Practice 101 CLE: The Commission awarded 8 scholarships to the Civil Appellate Practice 101 CLE taking place on September 8, 2026 in Austin and via replay on October 13, 2026.

Attorney Scholarship Request: The Commission has awarded 3 scholarships to attorneys to attend the Texas Association of Family Defense Attorneys (TAFDA) Annual Beach CLE and 1 scholarship to attend TexasBarCLE's Special Education, Child Welfare, and the Juvenile Justice System CLE.

Judicial Scholarship Request: The commission awarded 1 scholarship to the Rise26 Conference, which took place on July 20-23, 2026 in Nashville, Tennessee and 1 scholarship to the National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC) Conference which took place on August 10-12, 2026 in Portland, Oregon.

Objective: Support local, county, and regional child welfare leaders and organizations to enhance knowledge and share expertise throughout their jurisdiction.

33. Strategy: Provide training and technical assistance to increase training opportunities to local attorneys, judges, and advocates who serve children and families in child welfare cases.

Background: The Children’s Commission provides various types of support for child welfare partners and stakeholders including meeting facilitation and support, travel reimbursement for meeting and training event attendees, presentations by Children’s Commission staff as requested, and assistance with securing speakers for local, regional, state, or national events, as appropriate. Children’s Commission staff also serve on many other stakeholder workgroups and subcommittees formed under the leadership of its child welfare partners.

Providing assistance to local, county, and regional jurisdictions will help the Commission to expand its capacity to meet requests for training support, provide tailored trainings to attorneys and judges in their own jurisdictions, and increase opportunities for attorneys in child welfare cases to qualify for and/or remain on court appointment lists. To address these needs, the Children’s Commission created the Legal Training Support opportunity. Applications for Legal Training Support are accepted on a rolling basis, must relate to safety, permanency, or well-being for children and families involved with the child welfare system, and must identify a judicial sponsor.

09/18/26 Update: Commission staff is currently providing support to the Bexar County Children’s Court Attorneys Association on planning their Ad Litem Seminar set for October 30, 2026, in San Antonio. In addition to staff time for agenda planning and conference support, the Commission has approved funds for MCLE fees, venue fees, and speaker travel reimbursement.

Applications for Legal Training Support are accepted on a rolling basis. Applications and related information regarding Legal Training Support are available on the Commission website.

GOAL V (DATA)

Operationalize data-driven decision-making through continuous quality improvement and an analysis of publicly available child welfare and court data to identify legal processes and practices that produce desired outcomes, as well as which practices need improvement.

Objective: Use child welfare, court, and other data to improve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and youth in foster care.

34. Strategy: Apply data-driven decision-making to Children’s Commission projects, initiatives, deliverables, and areas of focus.

Background: In FY2025, the Children’s Commission added a strategy to embed the application of data into new and ongoing Children’s Commission projects. Incorporating data into other projects will operationalize the Commission’s commitment to Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). This strategy will also supplement any standalone data projects.

09/18/26 Update: The Data Committee’s examination of timely permanency and permanency goal reassessment will inform a Statewide Data Trends Panel at the October 2026 Child Welfare Judges Conference. The presentation will include statewide data on time to permanency, results from the four questions posed at the 2025 conference, and judicial best practices regarding the court’s leadership role in asking focused questions to assess whether the permanency goal remains appropriate, identify progress and barriers, and clarify next steps toward permanency.

35. Strategy: Utilizing all available data sources, analyze trends in child welfare data such as referrals, investigations, removals, and exits.

Background: The Data Committee is committed to identifying and analyzing available data that could enhance courts’ understanding of statewide trends in relevant benchmarks and whether the trends correlate with the changes made to the Family Code or to DFPS policy.

09/18/26 Update: At the August 11, 2026 meeting, the Data Committee received an overview of the data measures associated with Texas’ participation in the federal A Home for Every Child initiative. The measures address the home-to-child ratio, child safety, kinship placements and exits, placement settings, and placement disruptions. The committee also began identifying priority questions for future analysis, with initial discussion focused on the availability and effectiveness of services in child welfare cases.

Objective: Equip courts with relevant and actionable data to strengthen the administration of child welfare cases.

36. Strategy: Analyze data collected during the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) to develop targeted strategies aimed at improving permanency outcomes for children.

Background: The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) includes permanency measures that examine whether permanency goals remain appropriate to a child’s circumstances over time and whether children achieve permanency within expected timeframes. CFSR findings have identified recurring themes related to delays in achieving permanency, including delays in changing permanency goals when circumstances warrant and systemic factors that contribute to children remaining in foster care longer than necessary. Reviewing CFSR

permanency data allows the Children's Commission and the Data Committee to better understand factors affecting timeliness to permanency and to consider data-informed approaches that may support courts in addressing delays and promoting appropriate permanency outcomes for children in foster care.

09/18/26 Update: At the Data Committee meeting on August 11, 2026, committee members received an overview of Texas' participation in the federal A Home for Every Child initiative, which replaced the state's existing CFSR Program Improvement Plan (PIP). DFPS reviewed the requirements for A Home for Every Child and new reporting measures which are designed to increase safe placement capacity to improve permanency outcomes and strengthen placement stability. The committee will continue to follow implementation of the pilot and review CFSR permanency data as they become available.

37. Strategy: Partner with DFPS to provide tailored data presentations on state, regional, and local challenges and opportunities and encourage data-driven systemic improvements and collaborative efforts.

Background: On an annual basis, DFPS and the Children's Commission partner to offer statewide data as part of a DFPS leadership plenary presentation as well as to provide data for the Regional Breakouts to members of the judiciary at the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference, which is hosted by the Commission in partnership with the Texas Center for the Judiciary. The Regional Breakout sessions provide the opportunity for judges to meet with regional DFPS staff as well as Single Source Continuum Contractors responsible for case management and placement in Community-Based Care areas to discuss region-specific data elements and permanency outcomes.

09/18/26 Update: The October 2026 Child Welfare Judges Conference Regional Breakouts will incorporate feedback from the 2025 conference and the 2026 Curriculum Committee members in order to increase gains in knowledge and facilitate higher-level discussion and problem-solving. Jurisdictional data will be gathered by DFPS and shared with judicial attendees and SSCC representatives prior to the conference so that they might prepare for their Regional Breakout discussion. This year, the discussions will be judicially-led and will start with a focus on regional data and improving outcomes before continuing to discuss priority regional issues that were identified prior to the conference by judicial registrants. These judicial discussions with DFPS and SSCC staff on regional data outcomes facilitate a greater understanding of safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes at the regional and local levels as well as identify possible ways to continue to facilitate improved outcomes in these areas. Commission staff met with DFPS Director of Field and DFPS Regional Systems Improvement Team Manager on August 28, 2026 to discuss the data collection and distribution process for the conference.

Objective: **Study the efficacy of virtual or hybrid court hearings in child welfare cases and develop training, tools, and resources designed to maintain the benefits of technology.**

38. Strategy: Partner with OCA to support the maintenance, enhancements, data collection, impact, and usability of a case management system.

Background: CPCMS is a case management system which is unique to Child Protection Courts and has been in use since 2009. OCA staffs a CPCMS Advisory Council of CPC judges, OCA staff, and Children's Commission staff to identify and discuss various enhancements and issues. User-generated problems and enhancements are routed through the Advisory Council, which also advises on data collection and reporting features of CPCMS. The Children's Commission regularly collaborates with OCA on the status of CPCMS' functioning, problems, and enhancements.

09/18/26 Update: This fall, OCA will contract with a third-party vendor to identify system requirements for a new case management system that will be rolled out in the specialty courts throughout the State, including Child Protection Courts. This effort will include meetings with subject matter experts. Once this phase is complete,

OCA will enter into a competitive process to procure a vendor to develop the system. This phase is expected to end in early February 2027.

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**Children's Commission
Fiscal Year 2026 Financial Report**

FISCAL YEAR 2026 FEDERAL/STATE REVENUE

Fiscal Year 2025 Carry Forward	\$	1,430,019
(+) Fiscal Year 2026 Federal Distribution	\$	2,738,517
(+) Fiscal Year 2026 State Appropriation	\$	368,787
(+) Casey Family Programs	\$	21,600
Funds Available for FY 2026	\$	4,558,923

FISCAL YEAR 2026 EXPENDITURES

	Budget	Expenses To-date	Anticipated Expenditures *
Operating	\$ 1,556,818	\$ 1,454,877	\$ 117,547
Commission Projects	\$ 577,200	\$ 122,918	\$ 200,686
<i>Systems Improvement</i>	\$ 157,000	\$ 9,372	\$ 36,332
<i>Legal Practice and Process</i>	\$ 74,700	\$ 35,897	\$ 16,503
<i>Training</i>	\$ 292,500	\$ 37,246	\$ 135,254
<i>Juvenile Justice</i>	\$ 53,000	\$ 40,403	\$ 12,597
Scholarships	\$ 67,500	\$ 31,387	\$ 36,113
<i>Appellate Law Section Boot Camp</i>	\$ 7,500	\$ 885	\$ 6,615
<i>Child Protection Law Section</i>	\$ 13,460	\$ 13,460	\$ -
<i>General Attorney Scholarship</i>	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000
<i>General Judicial Scholarship</i>	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,825	\$ 2,175
<i>NCJFCJ - Judicial Scholarship</i>	\$ 29,040	\$ 14,216	\$ 14,824
<i>State Bar CAN CLE</i>	\$ 7,500	\$ -	\$ 7,500
Grants	\$ 546,322	\$ 263,693	\$ 282,629
<i>DFPS Regional Attorney Training Support</i>	\$ 12,000	\$ -	\$ 12,000
<i>TACFS - Data</i>	\$ 83,364	\$ 51,332	\$ 32,032
<i>Texas Center for the Judiciary (TCJ)</i>	\$ 239,996	\$ 141,715	\$ 98,281
<i>Texas Indigent Defense Commission</i>	\$ 130,962	\$ -	\$ 130,962
<i>TLSC Family Helpline</i>	\$ 80,000	\$ 70,647	\$ 9,353
	\$ 2,747,840	\$ 1,872,874	\$ 636,975

CURRENT FINANCIAL STATUS

Funds Available for FY 2026	\$	4,558,923
(-) Fiscal Year 2026 Expenditures to Date	\$	(1,872,874)
(-) FY2026 Anticipated Expenditures	\$	(636,975)
Estimated Carry Forward FY 2027	\$	2,049,074

* Reduction to budget categories from FY2026 -\$237,991

**Children's Commission
Proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget**

FISCAL YEAR 2027 FEDERAL/STATE REVENUE

Estimated Fiscal Year 2026 Carry Forward	\$	2,049,074
(+) Estimated Fiscal Year 2027 Federal Distribution	\$	2,738,517
(+) Fiscal Year 2027 State Appropriation	\$	368,787
Projected Funds Available for FY 2027	\$	5,156,378

FISCAL YEAR 2027 PROPOSED BUDGET

	Budget
Operating	\$ 1,705,003
Commission Projects	\$ 713,521
<i>Systems Improvement</i>	166,000
<i>Legal Practice and Process</i>	147,900
<i>Training</i>	208,500
<i>Juvenile Justice (GR)</i>	191,121
Scholarships	\$ 103,000
<i>Child Protection Law Section</i>	20,000
<i>General Attorney Scholarship</i>	10,000
<i>General Judicial Scholarship</i>	10,000
<i>NCJFCJ - Judicial Scholarship</i>	45,000
<i>State Bar CAN CLE</i>	6,000
<i>TDCAA</i>	12,000
Grants	\$ 594,651
<i>DFPS: Regional Attorney Training</i>	12,000
<i>OCA: Court Reporters</i>	82,500
<i>OCA: GPS Panic Buttons</i>	12,000
<i>TIDC: Title IV-E</i>	124,815
<i>TCJ: Judicial Training</i>	253,336
<i>TLSC: Family Helpline</i>	80,000
<i>TRLA: Foster Youth Justice Project</i>	30,000
Total Proposed Expenditures	\$ 3,116,175

ESTIMATED FISCAL YEAR 2027 ENDING BALANCE

Projected Funds Available for FY 2027	\$	5,156,378
(-) FY 2027 Proposed Expenditures	\$	(3,116,175)
Estimated FY 2028 Carry Forward	\$	2,040,203

Children's Commission Grant Summaries

Fiscal Year 2027

Organization:	Office of Court Administration
Project:	Contract Court Reporters
Strategic Category:	Systems Improvement
Grant Amount:	\$82,500
Project Description:	Texas Child Protection Court judges preside over child abuse and neglect cases in 147 predominantly rural counties throughout the state. These courts frequently encounter significant challenges in securing qualified court reporters, particularly in rural jurisdictions where certified reporters are scarce or unavailable. As a result, hearings may require additional scheduling efforts, incur increased travel costs, or face delays that affect children and families awaiting timely judicial decisions. This project addresses both challenges through a comprehensive solution by: - Expanding access to qualified contract court reporters for proceedings requiring stenographic reporting. - Improving the consistency, accessibility, and reliability of the official court record throughout Texas Child Protection Courts. These improvements will reduce delays, increase operational flexibility, and better serve children and families involved in child welfare court proceedings.
Project Activities:	The Office of Court Administration will implement a statewide hybrid court reporting initiative for Child Protection Courts by contracting with qualified court reporters to provide services remotely or travel to court locations as needed.
Use of Funds:	Contractual
Prior Funding:	N/A

Children's Commission Grant Summaries

Fiscal Year 2027

Organization:	Office of Court Administration
Project:	Judicial Safety: GPS Panic Buttons
Strategic Category:	Systems Improvement
Grant Amount:	\$12,000
Project Description:	Texas Child Protection Court judges and their coordinators routinely travel across 147 predominantly rural counties to preside over high-conflict child welfare cases, exposing them to potential threats, intimidation, and safety risks. These concerns are significant, with Texas courts reporting a 97% increase in security incidents in Fiscal Year 2025 and 77% of surveyed Child Protection Court judges indicating that they or their staff had experienced a threat or safety concern related to their work. This project will equip Child Protection Court judges and coordinators with GPS-enabled panic buttons that can discreetly contact emergency responders and provide real-time location information during an emergency. By improving emergency response capabilities and providing an additional layer of personal security, the project will enhance judges' and coordinators' safety and confidence while supporting uninterrupted court operations and continued access to justice for vulnerable children and families.
Project Activities:	- Procuring GPS panic button devices. - Configuring each device for deployment. - Distributing devices to Child Protection Court judges and their coordinators. - Providing training on proper use, testing procedures, charging requirements, and emergency activation. - Developing written guidance regarding appropriate use and maintenance. - Conducting periodic functionality testing and replacing devices as necessary throughout the grant period.
Use of Funds:	Equipment
Prior Funding:	N/A

Children's Commission Grant Summaries

Fiscal Year 2027

Organization:	Texas Center for the Judiciary (TCJ)
Project:	Judicial Training
Strategic Category:	Training
Grant Amount:	\$253,336
Project Description:	TCJ will host the 2026 Child Welfare Judges Conference (CWJC). The three-day conference will be held October 26-28, 2026 at the Sheraton Austin Georgetown Hotel and Conference Center. Topics include research driven therapies, best practices for improving the timeliness of courtroom proceedings, supporting family engagement, regional data, and Community-Based Care. The conference typically trains between 85-100 judges and includes collaboration with the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), Texas CASA, and Single Source Continuum Contractors. TCJ will begin the planning process for the 2027 Child Welfare Judges Conference. TCJ and the Children's Commission will also partner to plan for a couple breakout sessions at the two Regional Conferences in Spring 2027.
Project Activities:	TCJ will participate in periodic planning calls with the Children's Commission and OCA. They will communicate with attendees about reservations, reimbursements, work directly with speakers to facilitate travel, develop program descriptions, prepare materials including conference programs, signage, and conference app, and apply for, track, and reconcile MCLE and family violence hours for conference participants. At the conclusion of the conference, TCJ will prepare and distribute conference evaluations, tabulating and providing results to the Children's Commission.
Use of Funds:	Personnel, Benefits, Travel, Supplies, Contractual, Other
Prior Funding:	2010-2026

Children's Commission Grant Summaries

Fiscal Year 2027

Organization:	Texas Department of Family & Protective Services
Project:	2027 DFPS Legal Conference
Strategic Category:	Training
Grant Amount:	\$12,000.00
Project Description:	To provide agency attorneys (and assistant district and county attorneys via video playback) with MCLE that addresses the unique training needs of attorneys who represent DFPS.
Project Activities:	- Identify trends, issues, and needs identified for training based on post-event surveys from prior conferences; - Identify topics and possible speakers; - Contact and confirm speakers; - Prepare agenda and materials for distribution; - Present program in October 2026; and - Tabulate and assess evaluations to use in planning future training.
Use of Funds:	Travel, Contractual (Venue, Audio/Visual)
Prior Funding:	2016-2026

Children's Commission Grant Summaries

Fiscal Year 2027

Organization:	Texas Indigent Defense Commission
Project:	Title IV-E: Advancing Legal Representation for Families
Strategic Category:	Legal Practice and Process
Grant Amount:	\$124,815
Project Description:	TIDC's Title IV-E Legal Representation Project seeks to increase Texas's use of federal Title IV-E funding available to support legal representation for children and parents involved in child welfare cases. Since these funds became available in 2019, Texas has left millions of dollars unclaimed, largely because its decentralized system requires individual counties to contract with DFPS and navigate a complex reimbursement process. With grant support from the Children's Commission, TIDC hired a dedicated Title IV-E staff member in January 2026 who provided county training, direct technical assistance, stakeholder outreach, and enhanced coordination between counties and DFPS. The project's primary goals are to ensure that all eligible counties and entities receive available Title IV-E reimbursements and to leverage those funds to improve the quality and effectiveness of legal representation for children and parents in child welfare cases. TIDC will continue pursuing these goals through collaboration with DFPS, county outreach, training and educational materials, technical assistance, data collection, and evaluation of barriers and system improvements. Continued grant funding for an additional year is essential to maintain the project's momentum and staffing continuity while TIDC seeks legislative support for a permanent full-time Title IV-E position beginning no earlier than September 2027.
Project Activities:	TIDC will collaborate with DFPS, provide outreach to counties, create informational and educational materials, provide trainings, the provision of technical assistance to counties and DFPS, collect data, and continuously evaluate to determine program improvements.
Use of Funds:	Personnel, Benefits, Travel, Supplies, Equipment, Other
Prior Funding:	2026

Children's Commission Grant Summaries

Fiscal Year 2027

Organization:	Texas Legal Services Center (TLSC)
Project:	Family Helpline
Strategic Category:	Systems Improvement, Data
Grant Amount:	\$80,000
Project Description:	TLSC's Family Helpline was established in 2017. The Family Helpline assists Texans who have legal questions regarding the child welfare system and child safety. Family Helpline attorneys are available Monday – Friday from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. CST. When a caller dials the phone number, a child welfare attorney answers their call. The goal of the helpline is to improve safety and stability for children, and to empower families through education about their legal rights and court processes. The Family Helpline serves all 254 counties in Texas.
Project Activities:	- Provide one-on-one legal education, information, and referrals to approx. 1,300 individuals in Texas regarding child welfare involvement or child safety (Monday - Friday from 9am - 6pm CST). Calls will be tracked and measured using Legal Server case management software. - Present legal trainings on a topic related to child welfare law a minimum of four times per fiscal year with a goal of reaching at least 10 attorneys or professionals per presentation. - Provide child welfare content for TexasLawHelp.org with a minimum of 2 self-help kits or articles per year. - Collect data regarding the child welfare system – including the caller's role, type of case, issues discussed, trends, and areas for improvement; this data will be reported to the Commission twice per year. - Distribute at least 1,000 outreach materials to entities across the state (such as local courts and clerk's offices, local public libraries and law libraries, DFPS offices, CASA offices, local parenting class providers, drug treatment and rehabilitation centers, child advocacy centers, medical provider offices, and law enforcement offices).
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits
Prior Funding:	2017-2026

Children's Commission Grant Summaries

Fiscal Year 2027

Organization:	Texas RioGrande Legal Aid
Project:	Texas Foster Youth Justice Project Aging Out Guide Updates
Strategic Category:	Systems Improvement
Grant Amount:	\$30,000
Project Description:	Texas Foster Youth Justice Project will conduct a comprehensive revision of the Aging Out Guide to ensure that all information and resources are up to date through the end of the 90 th Regular Legislative Session.
Project Activities:	In order to effectively provide needed information and resources to youth and young adults with experience in foster care, the Texas Foster Youth Justice Project will complete a revision of the Aging Out Guide, print 2,000 hard copies, update the Project's website to include all revisions, and disseminate the printed guides to youth and young adults throughout Texas. The Project will also print 5,000 brochures, to be disseminated with the Aging Out Guides to community partners throughout Texas. The Foster Youth Justice Project will also conduct six presentations in regions that do not have Project staff to disseminate the educational information to youth experiencing foster care.
Use of Funds:	Travel, Contractual, Other (Printing)
Prior Funding:	2015-2018

