

State Court Improvement Program 2025 Annual Self-Assessment Report

This self-assessment is intended as an opportunity for Court Improvement Programs (CIPs) to review progress on CIP projects, joint program planning and improvement efforts with the child welfare agency, and the ability to integrate (Continuous Quality Improvement) CQI successfully into practice. The self-assessment process is designed to help shape and inform ongoing strategic planning and should include meaningful discussion with the multi-disciplinary task force and others as needed and candid reflection of key CIP staff. The self-assessment is primarily focused on assessing efforts undertaken to date while the strategic plan maps out efforts going forward. Questions are designed to solicit candid responses that help CIPs apply CQI and identify support that may be helpful.

I. CQI Analyses of Required Projects *It is ok to cut and paste responses from last year, updating according to where you currently are in the process, and, if you do so, highlight text to show anything that is new. Complete the descriptions for CQI stages you have progressed through or are in. Though some upcoming stages will be inapplicable, consider whether your team may have preliminary thoughts that are relevant to those questions. Please also indicate if you need assistance from your federal or Capacity Building partners in a particular phase.*

Joint Project with the Child Welfare Agency:

Project title:

State and Regional Outcomes Data

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

Texas Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS) State and Regional Data Presentations; both convened at the annual, statewide Child Welfare Judges Conference hosted by the Texas CIP (CIP or Children's Commission) in partnership with the Texas Center for the Judiciary.

Identify the specific safety, permanency, or well-being outcome(s) this project is intended to address. If this effort is linked to any agency measures, e.g. CFSR measures, please note those.

Permanency.

Approximate date that the project began:

Fall 2016.

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

Evaluation.

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

The annual conference provides a unique opportunity for members of the judiciary to meet with DFPS/Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) staff to review ongoing and emerging trends and discuss ways to improve outcomes for children and families together. In evaluations for the annual judicial conference, judges often express that reviewing the state and regional data with DFPS/SSCC staff is one of the most valuable takeaways from the training. Regional DFPS/SSCC staff also underscore the importance of reviewing the data with judges on an annual basis.

What is the theory of change for the project? (Phase II)

By examining statewide trends and region-level data analysis, courts will better understand and be able to address factors contributing to children and youth not achieving reunification or other timely, positive permanency.

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

The project consists of a child welfare data plenary presentation by the DFPS leadership and data teams to members of the judiciary at an annual conference designed specifically for judges hearing child welfare cases. The project also includes regional breakout sessions between judges and DFPS regional leadership teams as well as SSCC staff in areas with Community Based Care, to discuss region-specific data and permanency outcomes. DFPS also provides court or county-specific information upon request.

Due to the expansion of Community Based Care (CBC), in 2023 the Director of the Office of Community Based Care Transition participated in the DFPS Leadership and Statewide Data Update panel, and the regional DFPS Investigations staff were invited to join the Regional Breakouts. Based on feedback received at the 2023 judicial conference and the increasing scope of Community Based Care, the 2024 annual conference included a panel of SSCC representatives which followed the DFPS Leadership and Statewide Data Update panel and preceded the Regional Breakouts. This portion of the conference is the only part of the curriculum that is open to non-judges; DFPS Child Protective Investigations and Child Protective Services Regional Directors, Regional Systems Improvement Specialists, and SSCC representatives have attended these sessions since 2023. For the 2025 conference, the Commission is collaborating with the agency to develop discussion questions for the Regional Breakouts in order to ensure consistency across regions and promote productive discussion between the judiciary and DFPS/SSCC staff regarding their data and improving outcomes.

If your solution/intervention includes training, please provide a title and brief description of any training(s).

At the annual judicial conference, members of the DFPS leadership team shared statewide updates with the judiciary regarding key topics such as the federal lawsuit; removals; children without placement; capacity; family preservation; investigations; and prevention. The Statewide Leadership Update focused on safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes at the statewide level and how these topics intersect and impact each other. Immediately thereafter, SSCC representatives presented their perspective on current and future initiatives in child welfare. Judges then met by region with regional DFPS and SSCC leadership teams to examine and discuss local data with an eye towards improving outcomes for children and families. After each annual conference, Commission staff collect and review feedback from attendees and implement suggestions for improvement the following

year and develop the curriculum in concert with a judicially led curriculum committee so that each conference can provide training to meet current needs expressed by the judiciary. Data, policy, and best practices regarding permanency are also integrated throughout the conference curriculum.

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

DFPS leadership continue to participate in the annual judicial conference and provide updates which are informed by data. The DFPS Data Team collaborates with CIP staff to prepare for the yearly Regional Breakout discussions held during the annual judicial conference, and the Data Team also prepares regional data which is disseminated prior to the conference. The data are reviewed by DFPS Regional Directors and Regional Systems Improvement leads, who in turn lead the Regional Breakout Sessions and discuss these data with the attending judiciary.

How are you or how do you intend to monitor the progress of the project? (Phase V). *Be specific in terms of what type of evaluation (e.g., fidelity or outcome, comparison group, etc.) and what results you have, if any. If you have already evaluated your effort, what do the data show, and how did you use these data to modify or expand the project?*

All CIP projects and progress are tracked quarterly and reported to the Children's Commission and Systems Improvement, Legal Practice and Process, Training, and Data Committees in February, May, September, and November of each year.

Judges are provided with pre-event and post-event surveys following each annual judicial conference. Feedback from the surveys is used to improve the project. For example, when the breakouts were organized by permanency outcome rather than by region, participating judges provided feedback that they preferred time with the Regional Director in their area and that several courts wanted to move beyond regional data to county-specific information. In recent years, judicial and agency feedback indicated that communication between judges, agency staff, and SSCC staff improved in their respective jurisdictions following these data sessions. Judicial and agency feedback following the 2024 conference reflected a desire to make the regional breakout sessions more dynamic, so doing so will be a focus for the conference in October 2025.

Have there been notable factors that delayed or accelerated this effort?

None identified at this time.

What assistance or support would be helpful from the Center for Legal and Judicial Innovation and Advancement (CLJIA)¹ or the Children's Bureau to help move the project forward?

None identified at this time.

Hearing Quality Project:

Project title:

Texas Family First and Reasonable Efforts

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

¹ Formerly the Capacity Building Center for Courts

CIP designed and implemented a regional training series on the Texas Family First pilot and Reasonable Efforts for the judicial and legal communities. The project underscored the importance of keeping families safely together and using evidence-based practices. The training also raised awareness about the importance of making reasonable efforts and reasonable efforts findings and encouraged judges and attorneys to adopt and implement appropriate practice changes in child welfare cases that ensure reasonable efforts are understood and applied.

Approximate date that the project began:

Fall 2023.

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

Evaluation.

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

Texas Family First is an effort in Texas to implement certain provisions of the Family First Prevention Services Act and provide evidence-based services to families with children who are candidates for foster care. In Texas, participation in the pilot must be court ordered and CIP and DFPS have partnered closely to implement the pilot.

Federal law as well as the Texas Family Code require that reasonable efforts are applied throughout a child welfare case. Despite having statutes in place, the practice of applying a reasonable efforts analysis by judges and attorneys continues to be a challenge, and meaningful examination of whether reasonable efforts have been made and related judicial decision-making remains the exception and not the norm. Reasonable efforts findings are a powerful tool for courts to improve outcomes for children and families by ensuring that the child welfare agency is fulfilling its obligation to keep families together and ensure timely permanency.

What is the theory of change for the project? (Phase II)

By training judges and attorneys on Texas Family First and reasonable efforts law and its application, the quality of child welfare hearings, judicial practices, and legal representation in general will be enhanced.

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

The CIP provides training and judicial tools such as bench cards and communiques regarding the law, policy, practice, training opportunities, and changes to statutory and practice to support high-quality hearings and court proceedings.

The CIP created a Reasonable Efforts Checklist in the 2023 Bench Book updates. Additionally, legislative updates regarding Reasonable Efforts are included throughout the Bench Book. The Commission's Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services in Child Welfare Cases and Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in Child Welfare Cases include updates regarding Reasonable Efforts throughout.

If your solution/intervention includes training, please provide a title and brief description of any training(s).

In FY 2024, the CIP piloted an in-person Reasonable Efforts trainings for judges, attorneys, CASA staff and DFPS staff. This curriculum will be replicated across the state. Finally, a live webcast on “Reevaluating Reasonable Efforts Findings” was presented and archived on the Commission’s training webpage along with the accompanying PowerPoint.

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

On December 11, 2023, the Commission in partnership with DFPS, Belong, and Casey Family Programs offered a free four-hour training event to over 50 participants from the legal and child welfare community in DFPS Region 8B (the area surrounding San Antonio). The training discussed the Texas Family First (TFF) pilot including defining the eligible population, details on the current progress, and clarified many questions related to referrals, referral sources, and time limitations. Two fictional scenarios were offered to facilitate hand-on practice with making legal arguments related to reasonable efforts and engaging discussions were facilitated across all attendees. Region 8B judges attended, participated in the practice sessions, and facilitated the ensuing discussions.

On January 18, 2024 at Texas Center for the Judiciary’s Family Justice Conference, the Commission hosted a CIP Breakout Session entitled “Impact of New Reasonable Efforts Legislation: What Judges Need to Know” to review recent changes in the state laws on reasonable efforts in child welfare cases which create new duties for judges and a third prong in termination of parental rights cases. Two judicial speakers with rural and urban perspectives reviewed the new reasonable efforts legal requirements across all statutory hearings in a child welfare case and discuss best practices throughout the stages of a case.

DFPS and CIP entered a contract to conduct regional legal trainings on the Texas Family First pilot. The training content covered the TFF pilot and Reasonable Efforts training, including an issue-spotting discussion and practice scenarios based on fictional fact patterns. The trainings will roll out in every region of Texas between June 2024 and August 2025.

How are you or how do you intend to monitor the progress of the project? (Phase V). *Be specific in terms of what type of evaluation (e.g., fidelity or outcome, comparison group, etc.) and what results you have, if any. If you have already evaluated your effort, what do the data show, and how did you use these data to modify or expand the project?*

Pre-event and post-event surveys measured gains in knowledge. CIP also monitored the number of judges and attorneys viewing related CLE offerings, attending in-person trainings, accessing related pages and sections of the Bench Book.

CIP will continue training on reasonable efforts through activities of the Children’s Commission, Training Committee, and other workgroups and ongoing projects.

Have there been notable factors that delayed or accelerated this effort?

Participation in the 2023 Colorado and Minnesota Capacity Building Center for Courts trainings provided invaluable experience for Commission staff. Also, the need for training on recent legislation has accelerated this effort.

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

None identified at this time.

Quality Legal Representation Project:

Project title:

Standards of Representation, Tool Kits, and Attorney-Client Relationship Materials

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

The CIP currently has several projects related to quality legal representation, including the following areas of focus:

- Texas specific Standards of Representation;
- Tool kits for attorneys representing parents and children and for attorneys representing DFPS; and
- Materials for parents, children, and caregivers explaining the attorney-client relationship.

Approximate date that the project began:

The creation and adoption of standards of representation was a recommendation of the Task Force on Court-Appointed Legal Representation Final Report released in May 2021. The tool kits and the materials explaining the attorney-client relationship began in Fall 2018 in response to the Children's Commission 2018 Study on Legal Representation.

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

The formation and adoption of Texas-specific standards of representation is in the development stage.

Tool kits for attorneys representing parents and children and for attorneys representing DFPS are in the evaluation stage. Workgroups established a regular schedule to review and update each tool kit.

Materials for parents, children, and caregivers explaining the attorney-client relationship were developed and evaluation is ongoing. This includes materials specific to fathers, incarcerated parents, videos for youth, and a coloring book for younger children in Spanish and English. Pamphlets entitled "What Does a Parent's Attorney Do?" and "What Does an Attorney for a Child in a CPS Case Do?" were also created to provide clarity for parents and caregivers. A video for parents on the attorney-client relationship is in the development stage.

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

The Children's Commission 2018 Study on Legal Representation identified several deficiencies in representation including inconsistencies in accountability and compensation for attorneys, inconsistencies in compliance and performance by attorneys, and a lack of understanding by parents and children on the role of their attorney.

What is the theory of change for the project? (Phase II)

Standards of representation - standards will establish a consistent, objective, and measurable definition of quality representation in Texas that will provide guidance to attorneys, judges, and stakeholders for implementing quality representation.

Tool kits - providing essential information necessary for delivering quality representation in an easy to access and peer reviewed format will increase the consistency of representation across the state.

Materials regarding the attorney-client relationship - increasing the understanding of the attorney's role for parents, children, and caregivers will result in improved attorney-client relationships.

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

The Standards of Representation Committee will continue developing standards of representation over the next several years.

For tool kits, standing tool kit workgroups developed a regular schedule for updating the respective publication after each legislative biennium.

For attorney materials, CIP will continue to work with judicial and other stakeholders to promote awareness and access to the materials.

If your solution/intervention includes training, please provide a title and brief description of any training(s).

None.

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

The Standards of Representation Committee is charged with drafting proposed standards to submit to the State Bar of Texas. Committee members were selected for their expertise in child welfare law and represent various jurisdictions across Texas. The committee conducted a detailed review of the American Bar Association Standards, the National Association of Council for Children Standards, as well as state standards for the twenty states which have adopted child welfare standards of representation. The Committee settled on a framework by dividing representation into six phases and the committee members began the process of drafting language for each of the six phases (Establishing the Attorney-Client Relationship, Investigatory, Preparatory, Conciliatory/Alternative Dispute Resolution, Adversarial, Post-Trial/Appellate).

The Tool Kit Workgroup and the DFPS Representation Subgroup provide integral input to review and update each tool kit with changes in policy and law.

Pamphlets for parents and caregivers, a father's rights pamphlet, a poster for incarcerated parents, and a coloring book for children in Spanish and English about the child's attorney role are complete and are available on the Children's Commission website, and the two-part video "Your Lawyer Works for You" is available on the Texas Network of Youth Services YouTube channel. More recent deliverables include the brochure "What Does an Attorney for a Parent do in a CPS Case?" and the brochure "What Does an Attorney for a Child or Youth do in a CPS Case?"

How are you or how do you intend to monitor the progress of the project? (Phase V). *Be specific in terms of what type of evaluation (e.g., fidelity or outcome, comparison group, etc.) and what results you have, if any. If you have already evaluated your effort, what do the data show, and how did you use these data to modify or expand the project?*

CIP will support the work of the Standards of Representation Committee by providing research, drafting, and logistical support. Monitoring the implementation of the standards once adopted will be done in collaboration with the State Bar of Texas, the Office of Court Administration, and/or the Texas Indigent Defense Commission.

The CIP will monitor the review, update, and publication of the tool kits by facilitating workgroup meetings, consolidating workgroup drafts, and finalizing the tool kits for publication. The Commission will distribute physical copies of the tool kits at statewide child welfare legal education courses and will promote online access to the tool kits via the Law Box app. The Commission will also track website and Law Box usage data.

The CIP will monitor attorney-client materials by seeking feedback from attorneys, judges, and parents and youth with lived experience.

Have there been notable factors that delayed or accelerated this effort?

Commission Chair Justice Debra Lehrmann's support for standards of representation accelerated the creation of the Standards of Representation Committee.

Both tool kits were timely published and are available online; the tool kit for attorneys representing parents and children was updated and released in print in April 2024. The DFPS Representation Subcommittee provides ongoing feedback regarding the tool kit for attorneys representing DFPS which was updated in August of 2024. Both tool kits will be updated in FY 2026 with a focus on legislative changes from the recent biennial legislative session.

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

None identified at this time.

II. Projects, Activities, and Training. For questions 1-13, provide a *concise* description of work completed or underway to date in FY 2025 (October 2024+) in the topical subcategories below where applicable.

1. Training Overall

Did you have any significant training efforts not related to a particular project (those are now integrated under 2 to 14 below)? If yes, please describe.

The CIP regularly produces online training internally and in partnership with external stakeholders based on emerging issues and urgent needs. For example, in January 2025, the CIP hosted a "Community Based Care 101" recorded webinar in partnership with the Office of Community Based Care. However, given the scope of the Commission's strategies, nearly all of the CIP training efforts are tied to a particular project.

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

On average every year, the CIP produces two to three judicial trainings; one hands-on, attorney Trial Skills Training; and CIP-produced webinars for attorneys and judges on a monthly basis. Other trainings are developed as needed. In FY 2025 to date, the CIP either produced, sponsored, or partnered with another entity to develop the following major, statewide training events.

Judicial Training:

- **2024 Child Welfare Judges Conference** - CIP, in partnership with the Texas Center for the Judiciary (TCJ) hosted the 17th annual Child Welfare Judges Conference (CWJC) on October 21-23, 2024. A pre-conference training hosted by the Texas Office of Court Administration was held on the opening day of the conference for Child Protection Court Judges and Child Protection Court Coordinators; the full conference immediately followed. Registration was limited to Texas judges who handle civil child welfare cases.
- **2025 Child Protection Court Convening** - This biennial conference is held in partnership with the Texas Office of Court Administration. This conference trains the Child Protection Court judges together with their court coordinators. This year's offering was a one-day virtual training on July 18, 2025.
- **Consortium on Trauma Informed Practices** - In August 2024, CIP launched an initiative called the Consortium on Trauma Informed Court Practices. The Consortium provides a statewide network for judges to have a forum for discussion, education, and training during bi-monthly virtual meetings.

Attorney Training:

- **Trial Skills Training** - The Fall 2024 Trial Skills Training Contested Hearing Practices Pilot took place on September 18, 2024 on Zoom and in person on September 25-26, 2024. Five new lectures were introduced during this training, in addition to the core lectures: Building the Attorney Client Relationship, Understanding the Required Burdens of Proof and Reasonable Efforts Findings in Child Welfare Cases, Preparing for the Initial Contested Hearing, Motions Practice, and Child Welfare Bench Trials.
- **Texas Family First and Reasonable Efforts** - In FY2025, CIP conducted a regional training series; please reference Hearing Quality Project above. Note, the CIP collaborated with the Child Protection Law Section of the State Bar of Texas to provide additional free MCLE content at these monthly Reasonable Efforts regional trainings in areas where the Texas Family First pilot is not yet available.
- **DFPS Attorney Training** - CIP provided funding to DFPS for its annual legal training. The October 2024 DFPS Attorney Training facilitated an opportunity for the department's regional attorneys to gather in person for training, to work on team building, and to share ideas. The CIP grant covers costs such as speaker fees, facility fees, and other expenses related to the meeting. The objective is to ensure agency attorneys have access to current case law, trial strategies, evidentiary issues, forensic developments, administrative law, ethics and other relevant procedural and substantive issues.
- **Texas District and County Attorney Association (TDCAA) Prosecuting Domestic Violence and Child Sex Assault Cases Conference** - The CIP produced a two- day, 12 hour continuing legal education track focused on child welfare for attorneys representing the state agency (including district and county attorneys as well as regional agency attorneys) within the 4-day biennial statewide conference.

Webinars: In FY2025, CIP produced monthly webinars designed for judges, attorneys, and other child welfare stakeholders. All webinars are presented live and then archived on the Commission's training webpage along with accompanying materials.

Podcasts: The CIP recently initiated a podcast in order to deliver additional training in a readily available format. Episodes to date cover the following topics: introducing the mission and resources available through the Children's Commission; exploring the role and benefits of pre-petition advocacy for parents; and focusing on the vital importance of maintaining sibling connections.

Scholarships: In addition to the development and hosting of the above events, the CIP provides scholarships to state and national conferences. Events may include: (1) State Bar of Texas Family Law Section's Advanced Family Law One-Day Child Abuse and Neglect Workshop; (2) State Bar of Texas Child Protection Law Section's Advanced Child Protection Law CLE and 101 Courses; (3) National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Juvenile Justice and Annual Conferences; (4) Biennial TDCAA Prosecuting Domestic Violence and Child Sex Assault Cases Conference as well as the "Fundamentals of Child Welfare Law" online course hosted by TDCAA, and (5) State Bar of Texas Civil Appellate Practice 101 CLE.

What is your best prediction for the number of attorneys, judges, or other legal system stakeholders that will participate in training annually?

Between 100 – 200 judges

Between 100 – 600 attorneys

300+ judges and 3000+ attorneys receive regular educational communiques from the Commission, and access free CIP online training materials each fiscal year.

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

(1) IN GENERAL — In order to be eligible to receive a grant under this section, a highest State court ... *shall provide for the training of judges, attorneys, and other legal personnel in child welfare cases on Federal child welfare policies and payment limitations with respect to children in foster care who are placed in settings that are not a foster family home...*—

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

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

The CIP Director meets with DFPS Investigations, Family-Based Safety Services, Child Protective Services, and Prevention and Early Intervention division leadership on a regular basis.

In 2023, CIP, OCA, and DFPS implemented an Early Intervention Court Liaison pilot to enhance capacity to provide support prevention efforts and utilize opportunities under FFPSA. In March 2025, CIP staff and a judge who participated in the Early Intervention Court Liaison Pilot presented at the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Juvenile Justice Conference. CIP contracted with Texas A&M University School of Public Health to conduct a formal pilot evaluation which was completed in August 2024. CIP staff is working closely with the OCA and DFPS to identify sustainable funding beyond August 2025.

CIP staff met 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 provided updates on steps taken to identify the target population served and implement the pilot. CIP staff also convened judges and attorneys in both regional and statewide meetings to discuss legal issues in pilot implementation.

Texas CIP convened a workgroup and subgroups to develop QRTP and Residential Treatment Center court processes from September 2021 to July 2022. A report was submitted to the Texas Legislature with recommendations in October 2022. Several recommendations were adopted in the 88th Regular Legislative Session and CIP updated relevant materials to highlight these changes.

Have you developed/been developing your Family First judicial training plan? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe what you have done.

In partnership with DFPS, the CIP hosted an “Overview of Qualified Residential Treatment Program Legal Requirements” webcast on Tuesday, May 17, 2022. The purpose of the webcast was to explain the court requirements for QRTP placements and to provide an opportunity for judges, attorneys, and guardians ad litem to explore the legal process prior to implementation of QRTP placements in Texas. Approximately 200 judges, attorneys, and advocates from areas throughout Texas participated. The video is archived on the Children’s Commission website. At the annual judicial conference, DFPS provides updates on Family First through dedicated presentations and/or the DFPS leadership panel. Judges were also included in the Texas Family First and Reasonable Efforts training project described above.

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

Do you have a data project/activity? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Project Title and Description	Project Sub-category	CQI Stage (if applicable)
Data and Trends Analysis	Agency Data Sharing Efforts	Identifying/Assessing Needs
Data Presentations at Annual Conference	Fostering Court Improvement data projects	Evaluation/Assessment
Support for CPCMS	Case management systems	Evaluation/Assessment
Foster Care & Education Data Exchange	Education and Health Data Sharing	Evaluation/Assessment

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

(b) How are these reports used to support your work? Identifying trends and priority areas of focus.

<i>Did you hold or develop a training related to this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>How many persons attended?</i>	<i>What type of training is it? (e.g., conference, webinar)</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>What type of training evaluation did you do? S=Satisfaction, L=Learning, B=Behavior, O=Outcomes</i>
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges and Court Coordinators	57	Conference - Child Protection Court Convening (CPCC): <i>Data and Reporting Requirements</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges	100	Conference - Child Welfare Judges Conference (CWJC): <i>State and Regional Data Presentations</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A

3. Legal Representation. Legal representation projects include any efforts you have made to improve the quality of legal representation for parents, children and youth, the agency, or others. List projects here if you have any in addition to the required project.

Do you have (an additional) legal representation project/activity? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Project Title and Description	Project Sub-category	CQI Stage (if applicable)
Standards of Representation	Court Appointed Legal Representation	Selecting Solution
Representation Tool Kits	Parent/Child/State Representation	Evaluation/Assessment
Attorney-Client Materials	Parent/Child Representation	Implementation

<i>Did you hold or develop a training related to this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>How many persons attended?</i>	<i>What type of training is it? (e.g., conference, webinar)</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>What type of training evaluation did you do? S=Satisfaction, L=Learning, B=Behavior, O=Outcomes</i>
☒ Yes ☐ No	Attorneys	28 scholarships awarded	On Demand Training: TDCAA <i>Fundamentals of Child Welfare Law</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A
☒ Yes ☐ No	Attorneys and Judges	250	Webinar: 89 th <i>Regular Legislative Session Update</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges and Court Coordinators	57	Conference - CPCC: 89 th <i>Regular Legislative Session Update</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges	100	Conference - CWJC: <i>Great Expectations: How to Attract and Keep High Quality Legal Representation on Your Court Appointment Wheel</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A
☒ Yes ☐ No	Attorneys	20	Conference: Trial Skills Training	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges and Attorneys	40	Podcast: <i>Preserving Sibling Relationships</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☐ S ☐ L ☐ B ☐ O ☒ N/A

<i>Did you hold or develop a training related to this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>How many persons attended?</i>	<i>What type of training is it? (e.g., conference, webinar)</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>What type of training evaluation did you do? S=Satisfaction, L=Learning, B=Behavior, O=Outcomes</i>
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges and Attorneys	750	Webinars: <i>Preserving the Record for Appeal</i> <i>Representing Children with IDD in Child Welfare Cases</i> <i>Representing Older Youth in Care</i> <i>Supporting Reunification in Child Welfare Cases</i> <i>Utilizing Court Interpreters in Child Welfare Cases</i> <i>Utilizing Day Care to Support Children and Families</i> <i>DV in Child Welfare Cases: Best Practices for Judges and Attorneys</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A

4. Hearing Quality. Hearing quality projects include any efforts you have made to improve the quality of child welfare hearings, including court observation/assessment projects, process improvements, specialty/pilot court projects, projects related to court orders or title IV-E determinations, mediation, or appeals. List projects here if you have any in addition to the required project.

Do you have a hearing quality project/activity? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Project Title and Description	Project Sub-category	CQI Stage (if applicable)
Mediation Workgroup	Mediation	Selecting Solution
Reasonable Efforts	Process Improvements	Implementation

<i>Did you hold or develop a training related to this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>How many persons attended?</i>	<i>What type of training is it? (e.g., conference, webinar)</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>What type of training evaluation did you do?</i>
☒ Yes ☐ No	Attorneys	150	Webinar: <i>Mediation in Child Welfare Cases: Preparing, Participating, and Proposing Solutions</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A
☒ Yes ☐ No	Attorneys	150	Webinar: <i>Non-party Participation in Child Welfare Mediations</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges	50	Conference - CWJC: <i>IV-E Meets IV-D: Child Support Matters in Child Welfare Cases</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges, Attorneys, and Child Welfare Partners	Ave. 75 participants per region (10 regions in FY2025)	Conference - Texas Family First and Reasonable Efforts Regional Convenings	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A

- 5. Improving Timeliness of Hearings or Permanency Outcomes.** Timeliness and permanency projects include any activities or projects meant to improve the timeliness of case processing or achievement of timely permanency. This could include general timeliness, focus on continuances or appeals, working on improvement in specific outcomes such as around reunification, guardianship, adoption or a focus on APPLA and older youth.

Do you have a timeliness or permanency project/activity? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Project Title and Description	Project Sub-category	CQI Stage (if applicable)
Joint Agency Project - <i>see above</i>	General/ASFA	Evaluation/Assessment
Child Protection Law Bench Book	General/ASFA	Evaluation/Assessment

<i>Did you hold or develop a training related to this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>How many persons attended?</i>	<i>What type of training is it? (e.g., conference, webinar)</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>What type of training evaluation did you do?</i>
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges	100	Conference - CWJC: <i>State and Regional Data Presentations</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A
☒ Yes ☐ No	Attorneys	150	Webinar: <i>Handling Your First Child Welfare Appeal</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A

- 6. Engagement & Participation of Parties.** Engagement and participation of parties includes any efforts centered around youth, parent, foster family or caregiver, or relative engagement, limited English proficiency, or other efforts to increase presence and engagement at the hearing.

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

Project Title and Description	Project Sub-category	CQI Stage (if applicable)
Notice & Engagement	Notice	Evaluation/Assessment
Family Helpline	Parent Engagement	Implementation
Incarcerated Parents Poster	Parent Engagement	Implementation
Father's Rights Pamphlet	Parent Engagement	Implementation

<i>Did you hold or develop a training related to this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>How many persons attended?</i>	<i>What type of training is it? (e.g., conference, webinar)</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>What type of training evaluation did you do?</i>
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges	100	Conference - CWJC: <i>The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare Cases</i> <i>The REALLY Panel: Redefining Engagement, Advocacy, and Listening to Lived Experience Youth Housing Options, Challenges, and Solutions for Transition Aged Youth and Young Adults</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges and Court Coordinators	57	Conference - CPCC: <i>Best Practices for Courtroom Management</i> <i>Issues Specific to Rural Jurisdictions</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A

<i>Did you hold or develop a training related to this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>How many persons attended?</i>	<i>What type of training is it? (e.g., conference, webinar)</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>What type of training evaluation did you do?</i>
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges	48	Consortium on Trauma Informed Court Practices (TIC): <i>Engaging Parents in the Courtroom</i> <i>High-Quality Legal Representation and Community Resources</i> <i>Phased Service Plans and Creating a Family-Supportive Courtroom Culture</i> <i>Parent Notebooks and a Family-Supportive Courtroom</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A

- 7. Well-Being.** Well-being projects include any efforts related to improving the well-being of children and youth. Projects could focus on education, early childhood development, health, trauma, social network support, cultural connections, or other well-being related topics.

Do you have any projects/activities focused on well-being? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Project Title and Description	Project Sub-category	CQI Stage (if applicable)
Consortium on Trauma Informed Court Practices	Trauma	Implementation
Foster Care & Education Committee	Education	Implementation

<i>Did you hold or develop a training related to this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>How many persons attended?</i>	<i>What type of training is it? (e.g., conference, webinar)</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>What type of training evaluation did you do?</i>
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges	100	Conference - CWJC: <i>Improving the Child Welfare System One Family at a Time: Research-Based Strategies to Strengthen Judicial Practice</i> <i>Dealing with Death, Grief, and Loss on the Bench</i> <i>The Science of Resiliency</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges and Court Teams, Child Welfare Stakeholders	119 live, 1035 archived	Online Training: 2021 Judicial Trauma Institute	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A

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

Do you have any projects/activities focused on ICWA or tribal collaboration? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Project Title and Description	Project Sub-category	CQI Stage (if applicable)
Participation in DFPS Tribal/State Collaborative	Tribal Collaboration	Implementation

<i>Did you hold or develop a training related to this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>How many persons attended?</i>	<i>What type of training is it? (e.g., conference, webinar)</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>What type of training evaluation did you do?</i>
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges, Attorneys, and Child Welfare Stakeholders	1000+ live, 97 archived	Online Training: 2021 ICWA Summit	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A

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

Do you have any projects/activities focused on preventing sex trafficking/runaways? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Project Title and Description	Project Sub-category	CQI Stage (if applicable)
Participation on Attorney General Statewide Task Force	Sex Trafficking	Selecting Solution
Partnership with Office of Governor Child Sex Trafficking Team	Sex Trafficking	Implementation

Did you hold or develop a training related to this topic? ☐ Yes ☒ No

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

Do you have any projects/activities focused on normalcy/reasonable prudent parenting? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Project Title and Description	Project Sub-category	CQI Stage (if applicable)
Normalcy Guide and video (in partnership with Texas CASA)	Reasonable & Prudent Parent	Evaluation/Assessment

Did you hold or develop a training related to this topic? ☐ Yes ☒ No

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

Do you have any projects/activities focused on prevention? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Project Title and Description	Project Sub-category	CQI Stage (if applicable)
Early Intervention Court Liaison Project	Secondary or tertiary prevention	Implementation
Support for Texas Family First Pilot	Secondary or tertiary prevention	Implementation

<i>Did you hold or develop a training related to this topic?</i>	<i>Who was the target audience?</i>	<i>How many persons attended?</i>	<i>What type of training is it? (e.g., conference, webinar)</i>	<i>What were the intended training outcomes?</i>	<i>What type of training evaluation did you do?</i>
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges, Attorneys, and Child Welfare Partners	Ave. 75 participants per region (10 regions in FY2025)	Conference - Texas Family First and Reasonable Efforts Regional Convenings	Increase knowledge, change practice	☒ S ☒ L ☐ B ☐ O ☐ N/A
☒ Yes ☐ No	Judges, Attorneys, and Child Welfare Partners	40	Podcast: <i>Pre-petition advocacy</i>	Increase knowledge, change practice	☐ S ☐ L ☐ B ☐ O ☒ N/A

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

Do you have any projects/activities focused on safety? ☐ Yes ☒ No

13. Continuity Planning. Continuity planning includes prevention and recovery planning for threats such as public health crises, natural disasters, or cyber-attacks. Please describe efforts around technology support for remote hearings or legal representation, developing guidance or protocols, coordinating with other agencies, or otherwise ensuring approaches are in place to ensure needed services are able to continue through any major disruptions.

Project Title and Description	Project Sub-category	CQI Stage (if applicable)
Partnership with Office of Court Administration, including support for visiting judges and CPCMS	Coordination w/ others	Identifying/Assessing Needs
Partnership with DFPS	Coordination w/ others	Identifying/Assessing Needs

Did you hold or develop a training related to this topic? ☐ Yes ☒ No

14. Other. Please list any projects you have that do not fit in any of the categories above.

Do you have any other projects/activities? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Project Title and Description	Project Sub-category	CQI Stage (if applicable)
Identifying Roles in Court Videos and Handout (in partnership with Texas CASA)	Decision-Making	Evaluation/Assessment

Did you hold or develop a training related to this topic? ☐ Yes ☒ No

15. Other Notable Activities. Are there any other activities the CIP has been engaged in not included above that you believe would be important to share with partners including those in the state, partner tribes, the Children’s Bureau, or the Center for Legal and Judicial Innovation and Advancement?

Communiques to judges and attorneys.

Reimbursement of exam fees for attorneys who become board certified as Texas Child Welfare Law Specialists.

16. Materials. From any of the work described above, do you have any documents or other materials that feel would be helpful to share with the national CIP community? For example, research, innovative approaches, compelling outcome data, etc. Please link here or note and include in your submission. If these relate to your three required projects, please indicate that here.

2024 Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children

2024 Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services in Child Welfare Cases

Coloring Book: Sam and the Search for Spots - How Your Lawyer Can Help You; Spanish Version

Brochure: What Does an Attorney for a Parent do in a CPS Case?

Brochure: What Does an Attorney for a Child or Youth do in a CPS Case?

Brochure: Fathers' Rights in CPS Cases: Important Information For Fathers Involved in CPS Cases

Poster: Rights of Incarcerated Parents in CPS Cases

Video Series: Child Welfare Attorney Outreach

Video Series: "Your Lawyer Works for You"

Video Series: Understanding the Roles in a CPS Case Videos & Handouts

Normalcy Matters: A Guide to Supporting Children & Youth in Texas Foster Care

One Pager: School of Origin Determinations for Students in Foster Care

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

1. Please describe how the CIP was involved with the state's Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP)/Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) due June 30, 2025.

Reviewed and provided input.

Does the CFSP include any of the following:

- ☐ the CIP/Agency Joint Project
- ☐ the Hearing Quality Project
- ☐ the Legal Representation Project
- ☒ other judicial strategies
- ☒ other attorney strategies

If yes, please describe.

Although the relationship between DFPS and the CIP is mentioned several times in the CFSP, it is not apparent that the CFSP includes anything directly responsive to the above categories. However, this Self-Assessment discusses in detail the CIP/Agency Joint Project, which may be included in the State Plan.

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

CIP can participate in any way that would be beneficial to the review process in Texas.

A) Only states that will be participating in round 4 of the CFSR and PIP in your state this reporting year are required to complete the questions in this section. However, working to organize meaningful engagement of a broad array of the legal and judicial community and to support collaboration with other system partners is useful for other major CIP projects as well, so others may wish to consider these with your teams. See the PI section II(a)(iii) for further explanation.

1. Regarding engaging the legal and judicial stakeholders with a broad representation of perspectives in CFSR/PIP processes:

- i) What barriers do you foresee in engaging stakeholders at an appropriate breadth and depth?

The biggest barrier in Texas is likely to be the size of the state. With 254 counties and an independent judiciary, it will be a challenge to identify representative jurisdictions. Additionally, Community Based Care is not fully implemented across the state, so some areas operate under the legacy system whereas others are privatized. Legal representation is also variable across the state with many children and parents represented by solo practitioners and prosecution mixed between county or district attorneys and regional DFPS attorneys.

- ii) What do you believe will facilitate engaging stakeholders at an appropriate breadth and depth?

Leveraging key partnerships, offering a transparent process, and activating judicial leadership will be invaluable to meaningful stakeholder engagement.

2. Are there other leadership structures for legal and judicial stakeholders and how can those facilitate the processes around the CFSR/PIP?

For judges and attorneys, CIP offers many leadership opportunities including serving on the Children's Commission, committees or workgroups, leading initiatives statewide, speaking engagements, and having regular opportunities to provide input on how to improve the child welfare system writ large. There are also 30 specialized Child protection Courts in Texas that exclusively hear child welfare matters. For attorneys, the Child Protection Law Section of the State Bar of Texas and Texas Board of Legal Specialization Child Welfare Law Specialty Area are existing structures to support high-quality legal representation. These leadership structures support engagement in the CFSR process by providing an established cadre of judges and attorneys with significant education and expertise in child welfare law as well as regular opportunities to engage in statewide court improvement efforts.

3. How will legal stakeholder involvement in the CFSR/PIP be managed? e.g. CIP is the lead, via the Multi-Disciplinary Task force, a sub-committee established by the child welfare agency, etc.

The CIP Director will serve as lead for legal stakeholder engagement in the CFSR/PIP processes, including participating in all stakeholder interviews, identifying attorneys and judges to participate in the interviews, and conducting reviews of Items 5 & 6 in the case review process. Additionally, there will be opportunities for legal stakeholder involvement at the quarterly task force meeting, annual judicial conference, and dedicated committee meetings established for this purpose. DFPS also provided presentations on the CFSR process at Data Committee Meetings, the Commission Meetings, and the annual Child Welfare Judges Conference.

4. What court, judicial, or attorney data could be integrated into the CFSR/PIP process?

The court system is independently managed in Texas, but the Child Protection Courts utilize a centralized case management system. The Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS) is maintained by the Texas Office of Court Administration with CIP funding. The Data Committee members have regular opportunities to review CPCMS data as well as data provided by DFPS.

5. How might participation vary in stages of the process?

To the extent possible, there will be multiple opportunities for engagement in various locations and mediums. For example, participation via Zoom or another online meeting platform could assist with engaging stakeholders in remote locations. In-person meetings might be preferred for other stakeholders. Providing more than one date and time could also assist with reaching a broader stakeholder group. This approach worked well for stakeholder interviews and will be implemented on an ongoing basis for PIP implementation.

6. What feedback loops will be needed to keep the participants informed?

CIP staff will report on the CFSR process at quarterly multidisciplinary task force meetings and the annual judicial conferences. Written correspondence throughout the process will be shared via regular communication channels, in partnership with DFPS and other legal and judicial stakeholder networks.

7. What supports do you need from the Children's Bureau or the Centers for Innovation and Advancement for participating in the CFSR/PIP?

Previously, Texas received technical assistance from the Capacity Building Center for States and CIP participated in related meetings. The Children's Bureau contracted Legal/Judicial Child Welfare Specialist and the CLJIA Liaison are significant supports to Texas CIP.

B) Collaboration with the Child Welfare Agency in General

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

CIP and DFPS maintain regular and ongoing communication as well as participation on most major child welfare system reform projects. Additionally, DFPS leadership has standing positions on the Children's Commission and at least one state-level DFPS staff serves as a member in each of the standing committees: Systems Improvement, Legal Practice & Process, Training, and Data. Many state and regional DFPS staff also participate on the Collaborative Council and other committees, workgroups, and projects organized by the Children's Commission. CIP also serve on many DFPS committees and provide input on various initiatives and policy implementation.

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

There are no significant barriers to joint planning with DFPS.

3. Regarding collaboration on training with the child welfare agency...

- a.** Regarding training needs across the child welfare system, what is your process to work with the agency to consider how to maximize the impact of complementary resources and ensure there is no undue duplication of efforts?

CIP and DFPS are in regular communication about ongoing initiatives in both organizations. Regarding attorney training, CIP provides grant funding for DFPS attorneys to receive training and agency counsel are invited to CIP trainings including webinars, scholarships, Trial Skills Training, etc. Staff from DFPS and CIP also participate on the State Bar of Texas Child Protection Law Section CLE committee and plan the annual 101 and Advanced Child Protection Law trainings as well as a Child Abuse and Neglect Track at the annual Advanced Family Law Conference. For the annual judicial conference, CIP includes DFPS staff as outlined above in the joint agency project narrative. For the Texas Family First and Reasonable Efforts Training, CIP and DFPS collaborated from the outset to plan the agenda, develop materials, distribute invitations, and deliver content at the regional trainings throughout the state.

- b.** Does the state child welfare agency currently offer professional partner training to judges, attorneys, and court personnel as part of its Title IV-E Training Plan?

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

If yes, please provide a brief description of what is provided and how.

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

Yes. This has been discussed in the past and CIP will continue to inquire about whether the circumstances have changed to make this a viable option.

4. Please provide updates around Title IV-E supported legal representation (e.g. agency, parents, children), if applicable.

Commission staff continue to work with DFPS and the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) on the Task Force on Court-Appointed Legal Representation's recommendation regarding the use of federal Title IV-E funds. DFPS and TIDC entered an MOU in January 2025 for TIDC to provide technical assistance and first line review of Title IV-E reimbursement claims. To develop a process, TIDC focused on Travis County (Austin) as a pilot site. Although the county has not yet received a reimbursement, it is anticipated that the county could receive an extra \$600,000 per year. TIDC and CIP are exploring the feasibility of expanding these efforts beyond Travis County in FY2026.

C) Other Collaborative Activities

Please briefly describe (or cross reference if noted elsewhere) any significant collaborative activities with other child serving partners (e.g. employment, education, housing, mental health substance misuse providers).

CIP maintains robust partnerships with multiple family serving partners through a bi-weekly collaborative call with representatives from the mental health, substance use, domestic violence, early childhood, foster parent, child support, human trafficking prevention, and other sectors. Through the longstanding foster care and education work, there are also strong and enduring partnerships with the state education agency as well as higher education and workforce commission.

D) To facilitate collaborations, partnerships and technical assistance, please indicate where your Self-Assessment will be published or a provide a point of contact to request a copy.

The Children's Commission website hosts the previous 3 years of self-assessments. The links are included under CIP Reports & Orders on the following webpage: <https://texaschildrenscommission.gov/reports-resources/reports-resources-by-topic/>.

IV. CQI Current Capacity Assessment

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

Yes. There are quarterly CIP meetings where the slate of projects and activities are reviewed by the multidisciplinary task force. Committees and workgroups also regularly assess, modify, and review CIP projects. Annually, CIP staff review every project and deliverable to identify status in the change management process and ensure that the program is responsive to the identified priority areas.

Every training-related project, including scholarships, involves a pre-event and post-event survey, which are used to modify the curriculum and format for future events. In addition to receiving valuable CQI-related information from trainees, CIP staff also conduct extensive internal CQI on each training project to review our internal planning process and our training outcomes.

2. Which of the following CLJIA (or former CBCC) Events/Services have you/your staff engaged in this past year?

- ☐ Attorney Academy
- ☐ Judicial Academy
- ☒ CIPShare 2.0
- ☐ CQI Consult (Topic: _____)
- ☐ CQI Workshop
- ☐ Liberating Structures Immersion Workshops
- ☐ Evidence Building CIP Projects
- ☒ Constituency Group - Data/Evaluation
- ☒ Constituency Group - Family First Prevention Services Act
- ☒ Constituency Group - ICWA
- ☒ Constituency Group - Legal Representation
- ☐ Constituency Group - New Directors
- ☒ Constituency Group – Regional CIP Calls
- ☐ Constituency Group – State Tribal Partnerships
- ☐ Constituency Group - Other _____
- ☒ CIP All Call -- What % of All Calls does your CIP participate in? 90%

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

- ☐ CIP staff with data expertise
- ☐ CIP staff with evaluation expertise
- ☒ CIP staff with CQI expertise
- ☐ CIP staff with lived expertise
- ☒ a University partnership
- ☐ a statewide court case management system
- ☐ Contracts with external individuals or organizations to assist with CQI efforts
- ☐ Other resources: _____

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

If yes, are they ☒ audio ☒ video

In general, some courts utilize audio recordings for hearings. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many courts transitioned to recording hearings on Zoom. Some courts have returned to in person proceedings whereas others have a hybrid approach or continue with virtual proceedings using a Livestream to comply with the Open Courts Doctrine required by the Texas constitution.

b. Can you remotely access your court case management system? *For example, Odyssey systems often allow remote access to case files.*

☐ Yes ☒ No

Texas does not have a uniform or statewide case management system. The Office of Court Administration is exploring a unified case management system in the future.

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

Although there is great variance throughout the state, the Child Protection Courts utilize the Child Protection Court Management System (CPCMS). The CIP funds CPCMS and OCA operates and maintains the software.

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

CIP partnered with OCA to pilot equipment that enables continued participation in hybrid court proceedings. The OWL camera has been beneficial to allow for virtual participation at the case level and will likely be utilized in CIP-related meetings as well as committee meetings in the future to allow for increased engagement among participating stakeholders, many of whom live in various parts of the state.

e. Do any of these systems include an electronic filing system?

e-Filing is now mandatory for all attorneys filing civil, family, probate, or criminal cases in the Supreme Court, Court of Criminal Appeals, Courts of Appeals, and all district and county courts.

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

No.

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

Not at this time. The CLJIA liaison is very responsive to Texas CIP.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions of Evidence

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

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

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

Definitions for CQI Phases

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

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

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

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

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

Paperwork Reduction Act

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-13), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Control Number. The OMB control number for this collection is 0970-0307 and it expires 02/28/2026. The estimated time to complete the Self-Assessment is 40 hours.