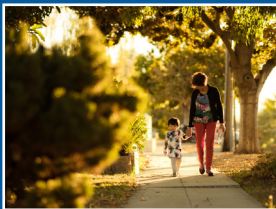




Children's Commission

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



Children's Commission Meeting Notebook

February 10, 2023

State Bar of Texas
Room 101
1414 Colorado Street
Austin, Texas 78701

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

February 10, 2023

Meeting Notebook
Table of Contents

Meeting Agenda

Commission, Committee, and Collaborative Council Member List1

Minutes from November 4, 2022 Commission Meeting2

February 10, 2023 Report to Commission.....3

Financial Report.....4



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

State Bar of Texas
Austin, Texas

February 10, 2023
9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Agenda

- 9:30 Check-In / Networking
- 10:00 Commencement / Opening Remarks
- 10:15 Presentation on Family Preservation & Early Legal Representation
- 11:00 Presentation on Data Trends in Child Welfare Cases
- 11:45 Children's Commission Staff Updates
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:30 Department of Family & Protective Services Update
- 1:15 Office of Court Administration Update
- 1:45 Collaborative Council Member Announcements
- 2:00 New Business / Adjourn

Meeting Schedule: May 12, 2023 (virtual)
September 15, 2023 (in person)
November 3, 2023 (virtual)

TAB 1

CHILDREN'S COMMISSION MEMBERS

Hon. Debra Lehrmann, <i>Chair</i>	Hon. Susan Brown	Hon. Isaac Roland	<i>Advisors:</i>
Hon. Rebeca Huddle, <i>Deputy Chair</i>	Hon. Darlene Byrne	Hon. Randy Shelton	Sheila Sturgis Craig,
Hon. Eva Guzman, <i>Chair Emeritus</i>	Hon. Julie Countiss	Luanne Southern	<i>Equity Advisor</i>
Hon. Harriet O'Neill, <i>Chair Emeritus</i>	Hon. Roy Ferguson	Vicki Spriggs	Hon. Michael Massengale,
	Madelyn Fletcher	Terese Stevenson	<i>Sr. Judicial Advisor</i>
	Sandra Hachem	Hon. Thomas Stuckey	
		Sen. Royce West	

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

EXECUTIVE	SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT	LEGAL PRACTICE & PROCESS	TRAINING	DATA
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. Rebeca Huddle	Hon. Rosie Alvarado	Mark Briggs	Hon. Mark Atkinson	Hon. Rosie Alvarado
Hon. Eva Guzman	Dr. Gary Blau	Sarah Bryant	Tymothy Belseth	Nathan Ezell
Hon. Harriet O'Neill	Hon. Julie Countiss	Hon. Anne Darring	Denise Campbell	Dr. Monica Faulkner
Hon. Susan Brown	Sarah Crockett	Lori Duke	Teal De La Garza	Hon. Delia Gonzales
Hon. Rob Hofmann	Hon. Robin Sage	Hon. Angela Ellis	Barbara Elias-Perciful	Elizabeth Kromrei
Hon. Piper McCraw	Hon. Ian Spechler	Hon. Delia Gonzales	Hon. Denise Fortenberry	Hon. Robin Sage
Hon. Thomas Stuckey	Jordan Watson	Monique Gonzalez	Hon. Angela Graves-Harrington	Hon. Michael Schneider
	Sarah Worthington	Brenda Kinsler	Hon. Yahara L. Gutierrez	Vicki Spriggs
<i>Staff:</i>		Janet VanderZanden	Margaret Halpin	Hon. Carlos Villalon
<i>Jamie Bernstein</i>		Charlotte Velasco	Tracy Harting	
<i>Tiffany Edwards</i>			Sharibeth Niehaus	<i>Staff:</i>
			Hon. Robbie Partida-Kipness	<i>Dylan Moench</i>
			Kellie Price	<i>Chelsea Martinez</i>
			Hon. Tracey Scown	<i>OCA Advisory:</i>
			Diane Sumoski	<i>Darrell Childers</i>
			Hon. Elizabeth Watkins	<i>Jeff Cox</i>
				<i>Anissa Johnson</i>
			<i>Staff:</i>	<i>Casey Kennedy</i>
			<i>Milbrey Raney</i>	<i>Alejandra Peña</i>
			<i>Renée Castillo-De La Cruz</i>	<i>Mena Ramon</i>
			<i>Andrea Vicencio</i>	<i>Charlotte Velasco</i>
			<i>Chelsea Martinez</i>	

COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Milkey Betancourt	Mike Foster	Kerrie Judice	Judy Powell	Jamie Bernstein, <i>Executive Director</i>
Andrew Brown	Will Francis	Bruce Kendrick	Tanya Rollins	Milbrey Raney, <i>Assistant Director</i>
Dania Carter	Fedora Galasso	Brian Klas	Danielle Schafer	Jessica Arguijo, <i>Communications Manager</i>
Irene Clements	Dr. Linda Garcia	Norman Ladd	Johana Scot	Renée Castillo-De La Cruz, <i>Staff Attorney</i>
Sarah Crockett	Barbra Grimmer	Stephanie Madrigal	Andrea Sparks	Aimee Corbin, <i>Staff Attorney</i>
Teal De La Garza	Julia Hatcher	Gabriella McDonald	Kenneth Thompson	Tiffany Edwards, <i>Executive Assistant</i>
De Shaun Ealoms	Félix Herrera	Dr. Jill McLeigh	Ruth Thornton	Jocelyn Fowler, <i>Staff Attorney</i>
Barbara Elias-Perciful	Tina Hosaka	Kate Murphy	Sarah Worthington	Monica Mahoney, <i>Program Specialist</i>

STAFF

				Chelsea Martinez, <i>Executive Assistant</i>
				Dylan Moench, <i>Legal Representation Director</i>
				Patrick Passmore, <i>Finance Manager</i>
				Willette Sedwick, <i>Accountant</i>
				Andrea Vicencio, <i>Program Specialist</i>
				Hon. Rob Hofmann, <i>Senior Jurist in Residence</i>
				Hon. Piper McCraw, <i>Jurist in Residence</i>

TAB 2

Supreme Court of Texas Children’s Commission
Virtual Meeting
Minutes

November 4, 2022
9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Commissioners	Attended	Did Not Attend
<i>Chair</i> , Hon. Debra Lehrmann, Justice, Supreme Court of Texas, Austin	✓	
<i>Deputy Chair</i> , Hon. Rebeca Huddle, Justice, Supreme Court of Texas, Austin	✓	
<i>Vice Chair</i> , Hon. Gary Coley, Judge, 74 th District Court, Waco	✓	
Hon. Rosie Alvarado, Judge, 438 th District Court, San Antonio		✓
Karla Baker, Parent Liaison, Region 4, Parent Collaboration Group Representative, Chandler	✓	
Erica Bañuelos, Associate Commissioner for CPS, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin	✓	
Chantel Bedlington, Supervisor of the Kinship Navigator Program, ACH Services, Fort Worth	✓	
Corey Benbow, Chief Executive Officer, The Tax Box, Austin		✓
Paula Bibbs-Samuels, Parent Representative, Slaton	✓	
Dr. Gary Blau, Executive Director, Hackett Center, Houston		✓
Hon. Susan Brown, Presiding Judge, 11 th Administrative Judicial Region, Houston	✓	
Hon. Darlene Byrne, Chief Justice, Third Court of Appeals, Austin	✓	
Hon. Julie Countiss, Justice, First Court of Appeals, Houston		✓
Hon. Roy Ferguson, Judge, 394 th District Court, Alpine	✓	
Madelyn Fletcher, Budget and Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor, Austin	✓	
Sandra Hachem, State Bar of Texas Child Protection Law Section Chair, Houston	✓	
Anne Heiligenstein, Executive Commissioner, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin	✓	
Hon. Randall Hufstetler, Judge, 300 th District Court, Angleton	✓	
Rep. Stephanie Klick, Texas House of Representatives, District 91, North Richland Hills		✓
Hon. Selina Mireles, Associate Judge, 4 th and 5 th Admin. Judicial Regions Child Protection Court, Laredo	✓	
Katie Olse, Executive Director, Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services, Austin	✓	
Hon. Robbie Partida-Kipness, Justice, Fifth District Court of Appeals, Dallas	✓	
Sasha Rasco, Chief Prevention and Community Well-Being Officer for Prevention, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin	✓	
Hon. Isaac Roland, Tribal Court Judge, Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo Tribe, El Paso	✓	
Hon. Frank Rynd, General Counsel, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Houston	✓	
Hon. Randy Shelton, Judge, 279 th Civil District Court, Beaumont	✓	
Luanne Southern, Executive Director, Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium, 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	✓	
Hon. 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	✓	
Equity Advisor		
Sheila Craig, Director, Civil Rights Office, Health and Human Services Commission, Austin		✓
Senior Judicial Advisor		
Hon. Michael Massengale, former Justice, First Court of Appeals, Houston		✓

Attending Guests

Hon. Kimberly Burley, Associate Judge, Bexar County Children's Court, San Antonio
Sarah Crockett, Director of Public Policy, Texas CASA, Austin
Tamela Griffin, Texas Strategic Consultant, Casey Family Programs, Austin
Corliss Lawson, Deputy Commissioner, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin
Jaime Masters, Commissioner, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin
Jim Sylvester, Associate Commissioner for Child Protective Investigations, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin
Marta Talbert, Director of Field-Investigations and Alternative Response, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin
Vicki Kozikoujekian, General Counsel, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Austin

Office of Court Administration Staff

Jeff Cox, Senior Data Analyst
Anissa Johnson, Specialty and Children's Courts Program Manager
Alexandra Peña, Deputy Director of Research & Judicial Information
Mena Ramón, General Counsel
Charlotte Velasco, Project Manager

Attending Staff

Jessica Arguijo, Communications Manager
Jamie Bernstein, Executive Director
Renée Castillo-De La Cruz, Staff Attorney
Aimee Corbin, Staff Attorney
Tiffany Edwards, Executive Assistant
Jocelyn Fowler, Staff Attorney
Monica Mahoney, Program Specialist
Chelsea Martinez, Executive Assistant
Dylan Moench, Legal Representation Director
Patrick Passmore, Finance Manager
Willette Sedwick, Accountant
Andrea Vicencio, Program Specialist

CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING REMARKS

Justice Debra Lehrmann called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. She welcomed everyone to the final Commission meeting of 2022 and expressed her appreciation for everyone's hard work throughout the year on behalf of children and families.

Adoption of September 30, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Justice Huddle directed members to the September 30, 2022 Commission Meeting Minutes behind Tab 2 of the November 2022 Meeting Notebook that were distributed prior to the meeting.

ACTION: Justice Huddle asked for a motion to adopt the minutes; Judge Coley made a motion and Judge Shelton seconded. Hearing no objection, Commissioners voted to adopt the minutes for the September 30, 2022 Children's Commission meeting.

Incoming Commission Members

Justice Huddle announced that there will be two new members joining the Children's Commission. Justice Huddle first introduced Chantel Bedlington, the Supervisor of the Kinship Navigator Program at ACH Child & Family Services in the Fort Worth area. Ms. Bedlington also

has lived experience as a kinship caregiver. In her capacity with ACH, Ms. Bedlington connects kinship families with education, services, and support.

Justice Huddle then introduced Judge Isaac Roldan, who serves as a Tribal Court Judge for the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo Tribe in the El Paso area. Judge Roldan handles cases involving the Peace Code and has been tasked with establishing a drug court program. In addition to these efforts, Judge Roldan has extensive experience in law enforcement with the El Paso Police and Tribal Police as well as the US Border Patrol.

Justice Huddle and other members then welcomed Ms. Bedlington and Judge Roldan to the Children's Commission.

Outgoing Commission Members

Justice Lehrmann expressed her appreciation to each of the outgoing Commissioners for volunteering their time and contributing exceptional commitment and support to the Children's Commission. This was the last meeting for the four following individuals who provided innumerable contributions to the Children's Commission during their terms: Paula Bibbs-Samuels, Judge Gary Coley, Judge Randall Hufstetler, and Judge Frank Rynd. The four outgoing members reflected on their time at the Children's Commission and remaining members expressed their gratitude and shared reflections on these members' service as Commissioners.

Committee and Collaborative Council Members

Justice Huddle shared that Jordan Watson, the Vice President of Policy and Government at TexProtects joined the System Improvements Committee. She also announced that Knox Kimberly will roll off the Collaborative Council and expressed her gratitude for his many years of service to the Commission.

OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION (OCA) UPDATE

Mena Ramón provided an update on behalf of OCA. She began by sharing her appreciation of the Children's Commission for its continued support of the Children's Courts program. The support received from the Commission allowed OCA to have a very successful pre-conference on the morning before the Child Welfare Judges Conference convened in October, during which OCA addressed issues specific to Child Protection Court judges and court coordinators. Additionally, Ms. Ramón announced that OCA recently created a website where judges can post their local rules, standing orders, and forms which went live in November. On January 1, 2023, the website will be public facing. Ms. Ramón shared that there is an online training opportunity for those wishing to upload their local rules, available on OCA's website. The website will be searchable by county and by court.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY & PROTECTIVE SERVICES (DFPS) UPDATE

Sasha Rasco began the DFPS update by going into detail about current and expanding capacity for pregnant and parenting teens. She first shared information about the home visits which Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) offers to families in order to provide parenting support as a way of preventing abuse or neglect from occurring as well as to improve outcomes for children

and families. She then announced that PEI now has capacity for up to 176 pregnant and parenting youth in foster care through their Healthy Outcome through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES) providers where they provide “Parents As Teachers” or “Safe Care” curriculum. PEI efforts are also focused on supporting and serving fathers. Additionally, the federal funding for the Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program is with Congress and PEI is awaiting its reauthorization to be able to provide further assistance with family preservation cases.

Ms. Rasco’s then provided updates on HB 3041 and the related “Texas Family First” pilot that offers evidence-based programs to families with children who are candidates for foster care. The pilot will serve all four regions with Community-Based Care (CBC). She announced that all Investigations staff in the pilot areas received training, including learning how to identify families for the pilot. Ms. Rasco further added that the Children’s Bureau offered support to help Texas develop a prevention plan pursuant to the federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA).

Ms. Corliss Lawson shared the status of DFPS’ compliance measures with the federal court litigation for the 2022 calendar year. She announced that DFPS continued to show improvements on the court’s remedial orders. The next federal hearing is scheduled on January 27, 2023, where the monitors will look at demographics, graduated caseloads for legacy and CBC areas, statewide intakes statistics, child care investigations, and child fatalities. The subsequent hearing will be in June 2023.

Ms. Lawson added that after receiving feedback from judges at the Commission’s annual conference about the quality of their affidavits, Child Protective Investigations (CPI) created a training to address the concerns. Ms. Marta Talbert added that this training was rolled out in a couple of counties and DFPS is currently scheduling trainings across the state for all caseworkers and supervisors.

Ms. Marta Talbert also provided an update about DFPS’ work to combat human trafficking. From Fiscal Year 2020-2022, DFPS trained over 43,000 internal and external partners on human trafficking, and they hosted their 3rd annual Human Trafficking Summit with 1,200 staff and attendees. Additionally, Ms. Talbert noted that DFPS is working to improve the data collection on victimization.

Ms. Erica Bañuelos reported that DFPS issued a memorandum to change some of their practices in how they work with families, especially at the initiation of a case. She noted that the memo encouraged caseworkers to try for at least 60 days to engage families, make additional efforts to work with families who are reluctant to participate, utilize existing community resources, and identify any other community resources that might be helpful to families. DFPS monitors the data on a monthly and quarterly basis to see if staff are increasing the number of families they are serving and if they are making a difference.

Ms. Bañuelos then explained how a determination to issue a “placement hold” is made. Elements in the decision include the history of the placement, the needs of the children in the placement, the number of children in the placement, the number of citations the placement has received, and whether there are open investigations of concern. She emphasized the importance of not placing more children when a placement hold exists since that might jeopardize the safety of the current

children placed in the home. Ms. Bañuelos clarified that when a placement hold exists, a plan to correct the need for the hold has been put in place. Ms. Bañuelos also described the term “disallowance” of placements which occurs when there are new, serious allegations of abuse and neglect. A designation of disallowance will prevent a foster home from ever serving as a provider for any agency. Both the placement hold and the disallowance designations indicate situations where DFPS strongly requests that judges not order children to be placed due to safety concerns.

Judge Hufstetler inquired about the effort to get the word out to families that Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS) caseworkers are there to help. In response, Ms. Bañuelos shared that in the recent memorandum, workers were encouraged to be transparent and share information with the family about why they are considered to be at high risk for child removal and how to avoid this. “Concurrent Stages” was designed to address the ability of investigations to refer a family to FBSS and caseworkers are to engage the family as early as possible.

Judge Stuckey inquired about the difference between a placement hold and heightened monitoring and how a provider is designated and undesignated in both categories. Ms. Bañuelos explained that the categories are completely different. In heightened monitoring, a five-year history review of the provider’s operation is conducted. Also, the criteria for determination are not the same; for example, a facility can be placed on heightened monitoring without being placed on a placement hold.

Ms. Paula Bibbs-Samuels expressed concern about judges placing children in a facility with a placement hold and asked how that was being communicated and explained to judges, so they could better understand the circumstances. Ms. Bañuelos acknowledged that judges and others who have input on child placements could benefit from learning more about these distinctions, and that DFPS will work on releasing something to all parties involved in those decisions about exactly what a placement hold means and what criteria goes into this determination. Ms. Bibbs-Samuels inquired whether families who were told that their engagement in services was voluntary were informed whether there were consequences if they chose not to participate. Ms. Bañuelos responded that the importance of sharing this information has been communicated to staff, and that the goal of DFPS is to prevent current and future involvement as well as offer services and support to the families.

CHILDREN’S COMMISSION UPDATE

Ms. Jamie Bernstein announced that the Commission recently hosted its annual Child Welfare Judges Conference and that the updated Child Welfare Law Bench Book is available online through a downloadable PDF and through the interactive LawBox app.

Mr. Dylan Moench reported on behalf of the Legal Representation Committee that the Youth Voice videos were completed in collaboration with the Texas Network of Youth Services Young Adult Leadership Council. He noted that the goal of the videos is to explain the attorney-client relationship to older youth. Mr. Moench then showed the first of two videos and encouraged attendees to share the video so that it can reach as many youth as possible. He also announced that the Commission’s October “Enhancing the Experience of Children & Youth in Court: How Judges and Attorneys Can Prepare and Support Youth Attending Court” webinar is available on the Children’s Commission website. This webinar featured youth who had experienced the child

welfare system sharing what judges and lawyers can do to facilitate more positive court experiences.

Ms. Renée Castillo-De La Cruz announced on behalf of the Legal Practice & Process Committee that the updated Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing DFPS in Child Welfare Cases is available for download as a PDF on the Children's Commission website. This tool kit complements the Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in Child Welfare Cases which was updated by the Commission in March 2022. The tool kits will also be available through LawBox. TDCAA, DFPS, and the Commission plans to distribute printed copies of the tool kits and to determine how many Assistant County Attorneys and Assistant District Attorneys represent DFPS.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Sandra Hachem announced that different positions will come open on the Child Protection Law Section Board, and that the Section will send out correspondence to their members and others with application information. She also shared that nominations for the Excellence Award for the Section were open and that the award will be given in the Spring.

Justice Lehrmann announced that the next Commission meeting will be held in person on February 10, 2023. She also reminded everyone that the additional 2023 Children's Commission meetings will be held on the following dates:

- May 12, 2023 (virtual)
- September 15, 2023 (in person)
- November 3, 2023 (virtual)

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

TAB 3

REPORT TO THE COMMISSION

February 10, 2023

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 fund meeting facilitation and travel reimbursement, training expenses and scholarships, and pass-through grants to sub-grantees. The Children's Commission also confers regularly with national organizations and other CIPs and submits annual reports and CIP strategic plans to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and to the Supreme Court of Texas. Leadership from the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), Texas Court Appointed Special Advocates, and the State Bar of Texas Child Protection Law Section have standing positions on the Children's Commission and at least one state-level DFPS staff member serves as a member in each of the Systems Improvement, Legal Practice & Process, Training, and Data Committees.

The Children's Commission helps institutionalize collaboration by maintaining a statewide judicially-led commission, holding regular meetings that include child welfare stakeholders, partnering with the state child welfare agency, and partnering with other state and national level executives, partners, and organizations. The Children's Commission creates an environment and maintains the space for stakeholders to collaborate, communicate, and share information on an ongoing basis. The Systems Improvement, Legal Practice & Process, Training, and Data Committees are standing committees that meet before every Children's Commission meeting and monitor related Commission projects and initiatives.

02/10/23 Update: The November 4, 2022 Commission meeting was held online via Zoom and streamed live and archived on the Commission's YouTube channel and website.

The Systems Improvement, Legal Practice & Process, Training, and Data Committees met on January 31, January 20, January 19, 2023 and November 8, 2022 respectively.

The Children's Commission continues to collaborate with various partners, including, but not limited to, the Office of the Governor, the Office of the Attorney General, the Judicial Commission on Mental Health,

the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services (TACFS), the University of Texas School of Social Work, the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, and the Child Protection Round Table.

Objective: Collaborate with high-level 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, including individuals with lived experience, to partner and to share information about child welfare practices, policies, needs, and strengths.

Background: The Children’s Commission convenes an annual Collaborative Council meeting to elicit feedback about member areas of interest and priorities. The Children’s Commission also conducts a bi-weekly collaborative call with DFPS, the Office of Court Administration (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, and assess engagement and areas in need of improvement.

02/10/23 Update: The annual Collaborative Council meeting was held on Monday, October 24, 2022, in conjunction with the 15th Annual Child Welfare Judges Conference in Georgetown, Texas. In addition to the meeting, Collaborative Council members attended the conference luncheon and Keynote Address from Dr. Peter Pecora of Casey Family Programs before the meeting, as well as a panel on capacity issues, and a judicial reception hosted by Texas CASA following the council meeting. In 2023, bi-weekly stakeholder calls commenced on January 11 and continue to take place every other week.

Objective: Communicate Children’s Commission areas of focus through easily accessible, 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 published reports, guides, announcements, scholarships, and training opportunities. CIP grant applications and grant recipient information are also included on the website. Announcements such as the Resource Letter are also relayed through the Commission’s Twitter account, @TXChildrensComm.

02/10/23 Update: The Commission website is routinely updated for content and newly released reports and resources. While the website audience is specific to judges and attorneys, the materials featured are often accessed by additional stakeholders in the child welfare system. In FY2022, the Children’s Commission initiated research and development to expand website accessibility and navigation. For FY2023, the Children’s Commission will continue working with OCA to schedule further testing and implementation to complete renovation of the website.

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, and the Court Improvement Program Strategic Plans.

Background: At the foundation of the Children’s Commission is a longstanding collaboration with the state child welfare agency, DFPS. The Children’s Commission engages in ongoing participation with ACF and DFPS regarding the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP), Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR), Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and 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 have 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, gauging the impact of a legislative proposal, or providing feedback on trends or practice issues and concerns.

02/10/23 Update: Children’s Commission staff continue to participate in many Department initiatives including participation by the Executive Director and Senior Jurist in Residence on the Public-Private Partnership, the advisory body for the rollout of Community Based Care in Texas.

As of January 2023, the Children’s Commission participates in monthly calls with DFPS and ACF to prepare for the federal CFSR. Texas is expected to participate in CFSR Round 4 in 2024. The Children’s Commission will continue to actively participate in the CFSR process when Texas is reviewed. This includes providing a forum for collaboration with legal stakeholders and encouraging judges and attorneys throughout the state to participate in the review process.

Objective: Support county, state, and national child welfare leaders and organizations to enhance knowledge and competency and share experience and expertise with and throughout Texas.

5. Strategy: Provide assistance to and collaborate with local jurisdictions, DFPS, and state and national partners and organizations.

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, 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.

In response to the growing numbers of children without placement (often referred to as CWOP or “child watch”), the Children’s Commission initiated a Judicial Workgroup on Capacity. Beginning in June 2021, the workgroup meets on a regular basis to provide a forum for judges from jurisdictions throughout the state to brainstorm effective approaches to identifying placement options for children without placement. In the long term, this group may provide a forum to discuss how judges can appropriately participate in developing foster care capacity in their communities.

02/10/23 Update:

There were no requests for assistance to local jurisdictions during this reporting period. The Judicial Workgroup on Capacity resumed meeting in January 2023 and will meet on a monthly basis during the legislative session.

GOAL II (SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT)

Execute innovative projects aimed at ensuring equity, 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 of removal to foster care, child and family well-being, and improving child and family voice in child welfare system reform.

The Children's Commission has two Jurists in Residence: Judge Rob Hofmann of the 452nd District Court in Mason County and Judge Piper McCraw of the 469th District Court in Collin County. Both JIRs participate in bi-weekly stakeholder collaborative calls as well as multiple Children's Commission meetings regarding Emergency Orders, proposed legislation and rules, Community-Based Care, prevention and early intervention, placement capacity, and other issues.

02/10/23 Update: Between October 1, 2022 and February 10, 2023, a few examples of JIR activities include:

- Attended the Far West Texas Regional Public Defender Oversight Committee Meeting, October 18, virtual
- Attended and presented at the Child Welfare Judges Conference, October 4-6, Georgetown
- Chaired the Children's Commission System Improvement Committee Meeting, multiple dates, virtual
- Chaired the Children's Commission Training Committee Meeting, multiple dates, virtual
- Continued work as board member for National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and attended the Executive Committee and Board Meetings, November 2-5, Pittsburgh, PA
- Attended the NCJFCJ Executive Committee Meeting, multiple dates, virtual
- Attended the DFPS Region 9 Judicial & Legal Representation Meeting, November 18, virtual
- Attended the National Center for State Courts Rural Justice Collaborative Advisory Council Meeting, multiple dates, virtual
- Attended the Hill Country Ad Litem Training Planning Meeting, December 5, virtual

- Attended the graduation of a youth formerly in care on court's docket from Corpus Christi A&M University, December 10, Corpus Christi
- Attended the Children's Commission Legislative Check-In Meeting, multiple dates, virtual
- Attended the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Capitol Hill briefing, January 11, virtual
- Attended and/or facilitated the Children's Commission Child Protection Court Convening Curriculum Committee Meeting, January 24, virtual
- Attended and/or facilitated the Children's Commission Child Welfare Judges Conference Curriculum Committee Meeting, February 2, virtual
- Attended the Children's Commission Judicial Workgroup on Capacity Meeting, multiple dates, virtual
- Participated in calls with Executive Director, leadership, and staff regarding multiple topics

Objective: Promote awareness of and embed a culture and practice among the judiciary and legal community around Trauma-Informed Care.

7. Strategy: Partner with trauma and mental health advocates and agencies to implement and apply principles of Trauma-Informed Care in the respective disciplines.

Background: In July 2017, the Children's Commission launched the Statewide Collaborative on Trauma-Informed Care (SCTIC) to elevate trauma-informed policy and practices in the Texas child welfare system by creating a statewide strategy to support system reform, organizational leadership, cross-systems collaboration, and community-led efforts with data-informed initiatives. 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 SCTIC endeavors to raise awareness about Trauma-Informed Care through training and educational opportunities; create a trauma-informed and trauma-responsive child welfare system that better meets the needs of children and families who experience trauma; and partner with other state and national trauma-informed workgroups and collaboratives. The SCTIC continues under the guidance of an Implementation Task Force and utilizes the Blueprint to direct the SCTIC's work.

02/10/23 Update: The Trauma-Informed Court Project has experienced a reduction in participating court sites due to turnover and court capacity. There are now four court sites actively working to implement their selected projects: Judge Linda Dunson (309th Family District Court); Judge Angela Graves-Harrington (246th Family District Court); Judge Andrea James (2nd Region Child Protection Court No. 2); and Judge Cheryl Vaughan (Child Protection Court Eighth Region North). Projects selected by the teams include implementing phased services plans, building collaboration and shared learning through community trainings, and creating improved guidance for parents and children about the court and child welfare case processes. Project sites are implementing their selected projects and maintaining team check-ins with the project oversight team.

Commission staff continue to participate in the HHSC Cross-System Trauma-Informed Care Workgroup which holds regular meetings and includes members from various state agencies working to implement trauma-informed care in their respective areas. Commission staff participated on a training subgroup that met for the past several years to develop a trauma-informed "train the trainer" module in partnership with

the SAMHSA South Southwest Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC). Commission staff reviewed the final self-paced course, along with fellow workgroup members. The goal for this module is to create trauma-informed champions throughout state agencies and it will be available for free on the MHTTC training network.

Objective: Support efforts to build capacity to address mental health needs for children and youth in the Texas child welfare system.

8. Strategy: Engage stakeholders in the child welfare, juvenile justice, and mental health systems to address gaps in services for children and youth with complex mental health needs.

Background: At the February 25, 2022 commission meeting, members of the Children’s Commission identified the urgent need to strengthen the systems supporting children with complex mental health needs. Children’s Commission members then discussed the idea of convening various stakeholders to have a more in-depth discussion about children’s mental health to gather more information on the challenges faced by children with complex mental health needs. After the meeting, leadership of the Children’s Commission and the Judicial Commission on Mental Health prioritized a joint initiative wherein the commissions would partner to adequately address these topics and challenges as well as opportunities for systemic improvement.

On June 24, 2022, the Children’s Commission and the Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health (JCMH) held the first joint commission Round Table Discussion on Current Issues in Children’s Mental Health. Leadership from both commissions participated in the discussion, including Supreme Court of Texas Justice Debra Lehrmann, Chair of the Children’s Commission; Texas Court of Criminal Appeals Judge Barbara Hervey, Co-Chair of the Judicial Commission on Mental Health; and Supreme Court of Texas Justice Rebeca Huddle, Deputy Chair of the Children’s Commission and Deputy Liaison to the Judicial Commission on Mental Health. A report from the Round Table Discussion was released on September 30, 2022 which outlined recommendations set forth in the June 2022 Round Table.

9/30/22 Update: Children’s Commission and JCMH staff are currently working to form a joint workgroup focused on children’s mental health. The workgroup will include representation from young adults and caregivers with lived experience; judges; attorneys; service providers; medical professionals; DFPS, Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC); and the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD).

Objective: Support efforts to address equity in the Texas child welfare system so that children, youth, and families receive services and supports that meet their individual needs.

9. Strategy: Identify and promote data-driven, cross-disciplinary opportunities to address disproportionality and disparities among children, youth, and families involved in child welfare cases.

Background: The Children’s Commission is committed to the goal of reducing racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system through development and deployment of judicial and attorney resources aimed at increasing awareness, sharing data and information, as well as disseminating best practices for dealing with disproportionality and disparities systemically and locally.

02/10/23 Update: The Equity Workgroup is chaired by the Children’s Commission’s Equity Advisor Sheila Craig and last met on December 2, 2022. The workgroup adjusted the meeting schedule to convene every other month to support shared learning and advance workgroup projects. At the December meeting, members heard a presentation from the DFPS Office of Addressing Disproportionality and

Disparities. Statewide Managers Mosley Hobson and Sharibeth Niehaus introduced the four member of their team and provided an overview of the vision for the office. The Equity Workgroup continues to work on data-based training resources for judges. The workgroup will further explore ideas for data-related projects in the coming months. Additional members have been added to the workgroup including Mosley Hobson and Sharibeth Niehaus.

Objective: Improve and expand engagement of youth in court hearings and related decision-making so that children and youth feel more involved and assured that their voice is heard and is important to the decisions being made about their lives.

10. Strategy: Elevate the importance of engaging children and youth in the case planning and court process as well as promote the inclusion of young adults with lived experience in statewide system improvement efforts.

Background: Inclusion of youth and family voice is critical to the goal of the Children’s Commission to improve the child welfare system by 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 in the Children’s Commission’s work. The Children’s Commission also seeks to prioritize and encourage participation of persons with lived experiences by compensating them for contributing their time and expertise to Children’s Commission efforts. In furtherance of this goal, the Children’s Commission created a “Lived Experience Participation Policy” which outlines the reimbursement process. Participants are compensated based upon their time and preparation for Commission trainings and meetings.

02/10/23 Update: On October 20, 2022, Children’s Commission highlighted the importance of youth voice by partnering with young adults to develop and create a webinar entitled, “Enhancing the Experience of Children & Youth in Court: How Judges and Attorneys Can Prepare and Support Youth Attending Court.” Please see Strategy #34 for additional information. The Child Welfare Judges Conferences (CWJC) also included a panel of young adults with experience in foster care to educate judges about considerations for serving youth aging out of care and transitioning to adulthood. The Commission authorized a sub-grant with the Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) to create a training as a collaboration between youth with lived experience and the Judicial Workgroup on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) on the topic of CSEC and child welfare.

Objective: Emphasize the need for normalcy for children and youth who experience foster care by providing clear guidance on age-appropriate activities and real-world application of normalcy principles.

11. Strategy: Promote role-based information about how different stakeholders can support normalcy for children and youth in foster care.

Background: The Children’s Commission held a Round Table on Normalcy in February 2019. Subsequently, the Commission provided grant funding in FY2020 for Texas CASA to create a role-based guide regarding normalcy for children and youth in foster care. On February 2, 2022, Texas CASA released a [guide](#) entitled *Normalcy Matters: A Guide to Supporting Children & Youth in Texas Foster Care*, as well as a companion [video](#) to provide education about normalcy, including the importance of normalcy and how judges, attorneys, stakeholders, and others can support normalcy for children and youth who experience the Texas child welfare system.

02/10/23 Update: The Children’s Commission continues to support and promote awareness of the role-based normalcy guide and video developed by Texas CASA. The guide and companion video are hosted as resources on the Commission website and are referenced in the October 2022 update of the Texas Child Welfare Law Bench Book.

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.

12. Strategy: Engage judges and lawyers, in collaboration with DFPS’ Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) division and other partners, in systemic efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect and address occurrences of child abuse and neglect while maintaining family preservation.

Background: The Children’s Commission collaborates closely with DFPS on the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), as required by the federal Administration for Children and Families. 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 in foster care, to limit the use of congregate care, and to increase access to substance abuse and mental health services. There are certain training provisions directly impacting the courts and Court Improvement Programs, but beyond that, FFPSA mandates that states seeking Title IV-E funding create and provide more robust prevention services for families in the state’s child welfare system. The Children’s Commission collaborates with Casey Family Programs 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 2021, PEI proposed creating a new position of an Early Intervention Court Liaison in identified Child Protection Courts. PEI partnered with the Children’s Commission and OCA to identify Texas communities that would benefit from the Court Liaison position. This position acts as a special assistant to the court, serves to identify and connect early childhood and family support programs to the local Child Protection Courts and community, and offers a judicial perspective within community stakeholder meetings. The pilot site for the court liaison positions are Galveston, Bell, and Lubbock Counties.

02/10/23 Update: The Children’s Commission staff participate in PEI’s Prevention Framework Workgroup which is comprised of statewide stakeholders, and which has a goal of developing a prevention framework to guide communities throughout Texas. The workgroup last met on January 24, 2023 to address goals for the next fiscal year.

The Children’s Commission staff also participate in monthly Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) meetings where DFPS, child advocates, and providers discuss future planning and development of a Prevention Plan and the continued implementation of FFPSA.

For the early intervention court liaison pilot, the Commission held community meetings in July and August 2022 in Galveston and Bell County to encourage the court liaison and community members to connect and work together. A community meeting for Lubbock was held on January 24, 2023. An evaluation of this pilot program is being conducted by Texas A&M University.

13. Strategy: Support the development of court processes relating to implementation of the Family Preservation Services Pilot program.

Background: House Bill (HB) 3041 passed during the 87th Texas Legislature, creating a Family Preservation Services pilot program. 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 Family Preservation Services pilots will operate under direct court supervision and DFPS is directed to utilize federal Title IV-E funds for services. Pilots will be located in some or all counties in the following Community-Based Care Regions: 1, 2, 3B, and 8B.

At the request of DFPS, the Children's Commission convened the judges presiding in the pilot areas who regularly hear child welfare cases. An initial meeting took place on June 30, 2022 via Zoom. DFPS prepared a series of questions regarding the pilot and judges provided feedback in response to these questions. As a follow up, the Children's Commission hosted a meeting on August 2, 2022 with the judges and the attorneys practicing in their courts as well as local CASA programs, DFPS, and Single Source Continuum Contractor representatives. After the August meeting, the Children's Commission shared a visual timeline of the required court elements set forth in HB 3041.

02/10/23 Update: Children's Commission staff meet on a monthly basis with DFPS staff from Investigations, Family-Based Safety Services, Prevention and Early Intervention, Data and Evaluation, Legal, and Finance departments on the HB 3041 Pilot Implementation Steering Committee. During meetings, DFPS provides updates on steps taken to identify the target population served and implement the pilot.

The Family Preservation Pilot is in the implementation phase within the four identified Community-Based Care Regions. Once DFPS identifies families for the pilot program, the court reviews the qualifications and eligibility for the pilot and orders evidence-based services. Currently there are approximately 10 families participating.

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

14. 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. In FY2019, the structure of the FC&Ed collaboration shifted from a workgroup model to 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 model.

On August 4, 2022, the FC&Ed Committee discussed the ongoing projects for the workgroups in the following priority areas: caregiver supports; data and information sharing; and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

02/10/23 Update: The Caregiver Supports Workgroup is focused on expanding educational knowledge, involvement, and supports to caregivers. The workgroup is developing two deliverables for caregivers. The first deliverable focuses on children and youth in grades K-12 who experience specific challenges, such as admission in a psychiatric hospital, transitioning in and out of juvenile detention facilities, and multiple residential placements within a very short period. The second deliverable is for caregivers with youth in high school and aging out. This deliverable will provide a timetable for a caregivers who have youth in their care who are preparing for higher education, the workforce, or other independent living. This workgroup last met on December 13, 2022.

The Data and Information Sharing Workgroup will focus on the momentum and recommendations created through the Foster Care & Student Success Texas Data and Trends Report of 2018. The workgroup plans to review current data shared between DFPS and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and work towards an annual report. DFPS, TEA, and the Commission met in person on December 13, 2022, to discuss the creation of a streamlined data exchange process. The next meeting is set for February 21, 2023.

The Every Student Succeeds Act Workgroup drafted a School of Origin one-pager that is undergoing final review. The workgroup will continue drafting charts and one-pagers on records transfer, best interest decisions, transportation, and cross-system collaboration in order to provide additional guidance to professionals in the child welfare and education systems. This workgroup last met on December 8, 2022.

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.

15. 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 importance. The Commission also works with national ICWA and leading organizations on understanding and implementation of the 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 continue to monitor the lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of ICWA, *Brackeen v. Haaland* (formerly *Brackeen v. Bernhardt*). Commission staff also maintain contact with the three federally recognized Tribes in Texas and continue to communicate any resources that may be helpful.

02/10/23 Update: The Children’s Commission continues to monitor the *Brackeen* case. The Supreme Court of the United States heard oral arguments in the *Brackeen* case on November 9, 2022. Commission staff continue to watch for release of the Court’s opinion and will provide correspondence to judges and attorneys and update materials as needed.

Commission staff meet with DFPS and Tribal ICWA liaisons on a monthly basis to discuss emerging issues regarding application of ICWA and related issues. Judge Isaac Roldan of the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tribe was recently appointed to serve as a Commissioner for the Children’s Commission. The Commission participates in the ICWA Constituency Group monthly calls organized by the Capacity Building Center for Courts.

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

16. Strategy: Partner with national, state, and local leaders to understand the scope of the issue and engage judges and lawyers on the need to prevent and address commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth in foster care.

Background: The Children’s Commission partners with many key stakeholders with a goal of preventing and addressing commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth in foster care. In addition to serving on the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force, the Children’s Commission also works with the Office of the Texas Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team, the DFPS Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation Team, and the Office of Court Administration to develop strategies to improve judicial handling of child welfare cases where children and youth are at high risk of becoming trafficking victims. The Children’s Commission is focused primarily on providing information to judges and attorneys responsible for child welfare cases to raise awareness about human trafficking as it impacts children and youth involved with the child welfare system. The Children’s Commission also participates in state and national trainings on human trafficking to stay informed about successful strategies to combat trafficking and develop expertise to relay information to Texas judges and attorneys as needed.

On January 7, 2021, the Commission convened its first Human Trafficking Judicial Workgroup meeting comprised of fourteen judges from across the state. The workgroup’s purpose is to explore ways judicial leaders can be involved in discussions about prevention and identification of commercial sexual exploitation of children, particularly children within the child welfare system. Since that time, the workgroup changed its terminology to address the commercial sexual exploitation of children in order to reflect the more commonly used verbiage used by others in the field. The workgroup is now known as The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Judicial Workgroup.

02/10/23 Update: The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Judicial Workgroup will collaborate with the Texas Network of Youth Services to produce a webinar with a judicial focus. A planning meeting for this deliverable is set for February 2023.

Commission staff participate in the ACF Region VI Human Trafficking Workgroup to share best practices and better coordinate with other states on combatting human trafficking, including taking part in a subgroup discussion on human trafficking law analysis on September 21, 2022. The workgroup plans to meet in person on March 28-29, 2023.

In February 2021, Commission staff joined a monthly School-Aged Human Trafficking Prevention and Awareness Statewide Implementation Workgroup which focuses on prevention and awareness of human trafficking within Texas schools. This workgroup last met on January 5, 2023.

The Children’s Commission participated in recent meetings of the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force. The Task Force last met on September 21, 2022 to discuss continued development of projects designed to expand trauma-informed education and training to members of law enforcement and the legal community.

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.

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

Background: Round Table discussions are designed to address key, urgent issues affecting the Texas child welfare system through a half-day program that is facilitated by a subject-matter and legal expert. The topics vary year to year and the number of Round Tables hosted each year also varies according to the interest of stakeholders and issues demanding attention. The Children Commission's role usually consists of forming a small workgroup to discuss the overall purpose, creating an invitation and distribution list, securing a venue, handling all invitations, RSVPs, travel reimbursements, and producing a written report or paper within about 4 to 6 months following the Round Table event.

02/10/23 Update: There were no updates during this reporting period.

18. Strategy: Assess the impact of Qualified Residential Treatment Programs on placements for children and youth, including the use of other congregate care facilities.

Background: Texas elected to delay implementation of certain provisions of FFPSA related to the use of congregate care, which mandate that Court Improvement Programs provide training and education to judges and other legal system stakeholders on the limitations on funding for use of non-foster family home placements. However, provisions related to Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs) went into effect in October 2021. Under Senate Bill 1575 (87th Regular Legislative Session), the Children's Commission partnered with DFPS to examine the oversight of, and best practices related to, residential treatment center placements, including placements in QRTPs.

02/10/23 Update: On October 1, 2022, the Children's Commission submitted a report to the Legislature pursuant to Senate Bill 1575 regarding best practices related to Residential Treatment Center (RTC) placements, including placements in QRTPs. The report included a recommendation for the DFPS Committee on Advancing Residential Practices to be charged with implementing the recommendations in the report. The Children's Commission will continue to partner with DFPS if this recommendation is adopted in the future.

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.

19. Strategy: Prioritize and implement the agency coordination, data, definitions, judicial practices, legal representation and advocacy, and training recommendations developed by the Dual Status Task Force.

Background: The Dual Status Task Force (DSTF) 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.

The Child Protection Court dual status pilot is underway in the Child Protection Court of the Rio Grande Valley West, the Child Protection Court of Taylor County, and the Child Protection Court of the Hill Country.

02/10/23 Update: There were no updates during this reporting period.

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.

20. 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 to help ensure that court proceedings safeguard due process, promote child and family engagement, and produce quality legal representation outcomes for the children and families involved.

02/10/23 Update: The LRC last met on January 27, 2023 to discuss the status of several committee projects.

The Children's Materials workgroup in collaboration with the Texas Network of Youth Services Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) completed two videos explaining the attorney-client relationship. The videos feature young adults formerly in foster care discussing their experiences with their attorneys and articulating basic facts about the attorney-client relationship. Workgroup members developed a script for the video in collaboration with the YALC along with questions designed to let the youth tell their own stories. Part 1 of the videos explains the attorney-client relationship and Part 2 explains what options youth have if they have a problem with their attorney. The videos are available on the TNOYS YouTube Channel and have received over 500 views.

The Parent's Materials workgroup has been developing materials specific to fathers and incarcerated parents. The Fathers' Rights Pamphlet is now complete and available on the Children's Commission website. Printed copies were made available at the Child Welfare Judges Conference in October 2022. The Children's Commission worked with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice on finalizing language for the Rights of Incarcerated Parents in CPS Cases Poster and a final version was completed in February 2023.

LRC members identified attorney recruitment and retention for court-appointed counsel lists and raising the quality of appellate representation as areas of focus for FY2023. In response, the Children's Commission, in collaboration with the Texas Indigent Defense Commission and OCA, conducted spotlight interviews of child welfare practitioners and judges to address attorney recruitment. The individual interviews will be reviewed, and one or more spotlight videos will be created from the content. Once completed, the videos will be made available to law schools and other organizations to raise awareness of child welfare law as a potential career path.

Additionally, the Children’s Commission identified experts in appellate representation to be included in an Appellate Representation Workgroup. The workgroup is chaired by Justice Julie Countiss of the First Court of Appeals and is charged with identifying the needs of appellate attorneys and developing projects to enhance the quality of appellate representation. The workgroup held its most recent meeting on January 13, 2023 and identified developing trainings, adding appellate information to the Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children, and focusing on appellate attorney recruitment as the priority projects for 2023. The next meeting of the Appellate Representation Workgroup will be held on April 21, 2023.

The LRC DFPS Representation Subcommittee recently completed the 2022 Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing DFPS. Please see Strategy #26 for additional information.

The next meeting of the Legal Representation Committee will be in the fourth quarter of FY2023.

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

21. Strategy: Support development and adoption of Standards of Representation for attorneys representing parents, children, and DFPS in child welfare cases.

Background: Though attorneys for parents and children are required by the Texas Family Code 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, nor has Texas 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.

02/10/23 Update: The Child Welfare Law Standards of Representation Committee is charged with drafting proposed standards to submit to the State Bar of Texas. Judge Roy Ferguson of the 394th District Court is the Committee Chair, Justice Debra Lehrmann of the Supreme Court of Texas is the Executive Chair, and Professor Stephanie Tang of the Baylor University School of Law will serve as the Reporter. Committee members were selected for their expertise in child welfare law and represent the diversity of jurisdictions across Texas.

The Committee held its first meeting on November 18, 2022, to review the recommendations of the Task Force on Court-Appointed Legal Representation, identify essential topics and issues, and begin developing a framework for Texas Standards of Representation. The committee is currently conducting 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 that have adopted child welfare standards of representation. The next meeting of the Standards of Representation Committee will be held on February 16-17, 2023.

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

22. Strategy: Assist the Texas Board of Legal Specialization (TBLS) Advisory and Exam Committees in efforts to certify Texas attorneys as specialists in child welfare law.

Background: On February 14, 2017, the Supreme Court of Texas officially recognized Child Welfare Law as the 20th area of certified legal specialization. Children’s Commission staff serve as the chair of the Exam Commission, which is responsible for drafting and grading the certification exam. The Children’s Commission partners with TBLS to provide reimbursement scholarships to cover application and exam fees for TBLS Child Welfare Law exam applicants who successfully pass the exam. Also, for several years the Children’s Commission had offered reimbursement of either the application fee or the certification exam fee for Texas attorneys and judges who successfully qualify for and pass the National Association of Counsel for Children’s (NACC) Child Welfare Law Specialist (CWLS) Exam. The Children’s Commission has not received a reimbursement request for the CWLS exam since FY2017 and phased out reimbursement in FY2022.

02/10/23 Update: The 2022 Child Welfare Board Certification Exam was held on October 3-4, 2022. The exam was administered over two days to account for public health considerations and the safety of examinees and staff. Twenty-three attorneys were newly certified as child welfare law experts in December 2022. 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.

23. Strategy: Convene and support a Parent Resource Workgroup and maintain the parent resource guides to sustain efforts to increase parental understanding and engagement in the child welfare system.

Background: The Children’s Commission supports a Parent Resource Group which is made up of parent mentors, parent advocates, parent attorneys, DFPS staff, and other interested stakeholders. Prior to establishing the Texas Legal Services Center Family Helpline (see Strategy #22 for additional information), the Children’s Commission partnered with the University of Texas and other stakeholders to produce the Parent Resource Guide, which is available in print and online on the Children’s Commission website as well as on many other stakeholder websites, in both English and Spanish.

02/10/23 Update: The Parent Resource Workgroup met on January 13, 2023. The workgroup discussed projects for the year including the creation of an attorney-client webcast, the release of the Pre-Litigation Resource Guide, and completing updates to the Parent Resource Guide.

Panelists have been identified for the workgroup’s planned attorney-client webcast, which will be 1.5 hours in length and focus on the importance of communication, preparation, and active representation. The Commission is currently working with the panelists to identify a date for the webcast. The Pre-Litigation Resource Guide will be released after the conclusion of the 88th Texas Legislative Session to ensure that the guide reflects any legislative changes and provides the most current information available to parents and caregivers. The workgroup determined that both the Pre-Litigation Guide and the Parent Resource Guide should be updated on a three-to-four-year cycle. The last update to the Parent Resource Guide was completed in 2020 and this guide is due for an update at the end of the 88th Legislative Session as well.

The Parent Resource Workgroup will next meet in March 2023.

24. 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: Since 2017, the Children’s Commission has partnered with Access to Justice 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), which provides easy, statewide access for parents and family members to basic information, education, and resources addressing parental rights as they relate to CPS Investigations, the provision of Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS), Parental Child Safety Placements, Chapter 34 non-parent agreements, termination of parental rights, custody, access, visitation, service plans, the court’s role in conducting hearings and oversight, right to legal counsel, non-offending parents, minor parents, incarcerated parents, survivors of family violence, intergenerational issues, and other similar situations.

02/10/23 Update: During FY2022, the Family Helpline completed a total of 1,702 calls and assisted 1,816 adults and 2,841 children. The calls originated from 146 counties across Texas and included 95 out-of-state calls with a question about Texas law. The highest call volume continues to originate from Harris, Bexar, Tarrant, Dallas, and Travis counties. Approximately 68% of calls received were from parents and 25% of callers were grandparents and extended family members. Of all the children discussed during a call, 31% were residing with a non-parent family member.

Approximately 55% of callers reported that they had an open DFPS case, 50% of which were in the investigations stage of the case. Notably, the percentage of calls regarding closed DFPS cases significantly rose this past year. About 27% of calls received involved questions related to a closed DFPS matter and 17% of the calls were related to inquiries about preventing child abuse or neglect. Calls to the Family Helpline continue to involve complex legal situations and overlapping issues of child abuse and neglect, poverty, domestic violence, substance use and abuse, and a general lack of understanding of the child welfare system and legal system. The Family Helpline discussed 101 different legal issues with callers over the course of FY2022. The top five trending issues discussed included child protective investigations, conservatorship, parent visitation, child neglect, and SAPCR modifications.

The Family Helpline also created several resources related to child welfare law in FY2022. The State Bar of Texas Litigation Division awarded a grant to the Family Helpline to create five short videos to explain the basics of conservatorship orders, parents’ rights, information for non-parents, general child safety, and dealing with DFPS. These videos are intended to answer the questions commonly received at the Family Helpline in an easy-to-understand format. The videos can be found at the following link: <https://texaslawhelp.org/article/family-helpline-cps-videos>.

Additionally, in the first quarter of 2023, the Family Helpline finalized a Reinstatement of Parental Rights Guide. The Helpline is working collaboratively with the Texas Center for Equity and Justice and the Austin Community Law Center to bring awareness to the new law allowing reinstatement of parental rights for youth in the Permanent Managing Conservatorship of the Department who have not yet been adopted. The guide can be found at the following link: <https://texaslawhelp.org/guide/i-want-to-reinstate-my-parental-rights-after-termination>.

Objective: Ensure availability of high-quality judicial and attorney resources and tools that provide clear, relevant information about law, policy, and best practices.

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

Background: The Children’s Commission maintains a 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.

02/10/23 Update: The Texas Child Welfare Law Bench Book was updated in October 2022. The revised version includes updates throughout, as well as new chapters regarding dual status youth and required participation, also referred to as court ordered services. The updated version is available on the [Texas Child Welfare Law Bench Book webpage](#) as a free, downloadable PDF for print and also as an interactive resource through LawBox.

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

Background: The Children’s Commission’s Tool Kit Committee is responsible for updating the Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in Child Welfare Cases, and the DFPS Representation Subcommittee is responsible for updating the Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing DFPS in Child Welfare Cases. At the conclusion of each legislative session, the committees meet and develop a plan to review, edit, and update the tool kits to ensure they reflect current case law, statutory law, and best practices. The committees also develop and review plans for publicizing and distributing the tool kits to ensure they are accessible to practitioners.

02/10/23 Update: The 2022 Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in Child Welfare Cases was completed in March 2022 and all 500 copies of the tool kit were distributed during FY2022. The tool kit is available for free on the Children’s Commission website and via the LawBox app. Work on the 2024 Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in Child Welfare Cases will begin at the conclusion of the 88th Texas Legislative Session.

The 2022 Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing DFPS was completed in October 2022. The tool kit is available for free on the Children’s Commission website and via the LawBox app. The Commission plans on distributing printed copies of the tool kit to attorneys representing DFPS at the Texas District and County Attorney Association (TDCAA) Crimes Against Children Course in April. Work on the 2024 Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing DFPS will begin at the conclusion of the 88th Texas Legislative Session.

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.

27. Strategy: Support increased child and family engagement through the use of technology.

Background: The Children’s Commission continues to support a video conferencing project which enables children involved in child abuse and neglect cases to participate in permanency and placement review hearings without being physically present in the courtroom. The Children’s Commission provides funding to OCA via a grant to host and support the hardware and software required to facilitate video conferencing between courts and residential placements (primarily Residential Treatment Centers).

The outbreak of COVID-19 forced a monumental change in youth participation in court. In March 2020, OCA provided licenses for the Zoom video conferencing tool to all Texas courts to allow courts to conduct

virtual hearings. The necessity of virtual hearings and universal court access to the video conferencing technology has allowed more courts and youth to attend hearings virtually and for courts and youth to engage together and determine how to make best use of the virtual environment. For nearly three years, Zoom has been used for video conferencing hearings and the Child Protection Courts (CPCs) have provided feedback to support Zoom as the preferred video conferencing application. The Children's Commission is committed to finding ways to maintain the benefits of virtual hearings as courts transition back to in-person and/or hybrid hearings.

02/10/23 Update: The first two courts to receive the new video conferencing equipment were Judge Delia Gonzales of the Dallas County Child Protection and Permanency Court and Judge Andrea James of the 2nd Region Child Protection Court #2. Both courts reported success with their new equipment improving the quality of their hybrid hearings. Monitoring of their hybrid hearings over time, scenarios were encountered that required replacing one component of their setup and making some minor adjustments. Additional courts were identified where the new technology would be of significant benefit, and the following four judges received the new technology equipment: Judge Carlos Villalon Jr. of the Child Protection Court of the Rio Grande Valley West, Judge Chris Cornish of Centex Child Protection Court #1, Judge Cheryl Vaughan of the 8th Region North Child Protection Court, and Judge David Barkley of the 8th Region South Child Protection Court.

28. Strategy: Encourage the availability and use of the Office of Court Administration Notice and Engagement tool.

Background: All parties involved in CPS cases continue to struggle with securing consistent and timely notice of scheduled hearings from DFPS. This issue includes foster placements and DFPS service provider facilities where the children/youth are in placement and results in many parties not being able to attend scheduled court hearings. 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 will be produced by OCA and provided to the Children's Commission.

02/10/23 Update: The number of Notice and Engagement system users continues to increase. 41 new users signed up in FY2023 (from October 1 to present) through the Notification and Engagement system to receive hearing notifications, bringing the total number of users to 2,117. Hearing notifications were sent for 2,944 hearings with a total of 8,011 notifications sent this fiscal year.

OCA created an Application Programming Interface (API) that will allow courts other than those using the Child Protection Court Case Management System (CPCMS) to upload their hearing data into the system. The goal of the API is to expand the hearing notification tool to all courts hearing child welfare cases in order to provide parties with up-to-date hearing information and to provide courts with an alternate means of notification free of charge. OCA is working to identify jurisdictions interested adopting the API in the future.

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

29. Strategy: Convene and support a Mediation Workgroup to establish an understanding and framework regarding availability and cost of mediation services and promote the training and support necessary to raise the quality and usefulness of mediation in child welfare cases.

Background: Mediation is used in CPS cases throughout Texas and can be an effective and financially prudent method of resolving cases. One benefit of mediation is that it can enhance participants' sense that they were treated fairly. Studies show that an enhanced sense of fair treatment increases both acceptance and compliance with court decisions. Though the use of mediation to resolve CPS cases prior to trial has become widely accepted, the Children's Commission is interested in exploring whether mediation is being underutilized in CPS cases because it often occurs too late in the case timeline for the benefits of increased compliance to be realized.

02/10/23 Update: The Mediation Workgroup will meet in late February 2023 to create an outline for a Mediation Tool Kit. The target audience for the tool kit is attorneys who are interested in mediating child welfare cases. This will be the primary deliverable that the workgroup will focus on creating this fiscal year.

Objective: Support innovative court practices for Texas courts hearing child welfare cases.

30. Strategy: Collaborate with and provide support for specialty courts, dockets, and programs.

Background: The Children's Commission partners with or supports individual court efforts seeking to adopt specialized practices or programs.

02/10/23 Update: This strategy is developed on an ad hoc basis and there were 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 and easily accessible training and resources that encourage judicial leadership both within the courtroom and in the broader child welfare community.

31. 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. Each year, TCJ plans two annual Child Welfare Judges Conferences in partnership with the Children’s Commission and hosts one. The Child Welfare Judges Conference is the Commission’s largest annual judicial training. In FY2023, the Children’s Commission will also provide partial funding for two breakout sessions on child welfare issues at TCJ’s Annual Judicial Education Conference. Planning and funding activities include designing curricula and conference agendas, determining the budget and number of attendees, participating in planning meetings, vetting judicial scholarship applicants, surveying participants, and evaluating the process and event both internally and externally for future planning.

In addition to providing training events and conferences, the Commission has the following online judicial training content available for judges to access at their convenience, many of which offer Family Violence Credit Hours and/or TBLS hours:

- Enhancing the Experience of Children & Youth in Court: How Judges and Attorneys Can Prepare and Support Youth Attending Court
- Overview of Qualified Residential Treatment Program Legal Requirements
- Child Welfare Case Primer: Statutory Hearings and Current Issues
- The Texas Response to the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
- 2021 Judicial Trauma Institute
- 2021 Texas Indian Child Welfare Act Summit
- Judicial Webcast on Benefits of Utilizing Technology in Child Welfare Cases

02/10/23 Update: The 15th Annual CWJC was held on October 24- 26, 2022 in partnership with the Texas Center for the Judiciary in Georgetown. Approximately 92 judges from across the state attended. The conference featured a national keynote speaker on the intersection of children’s mental health and child welfare, followed by 13 panel presentations which included 46 speakers. Speakers included members of the judiciary, DFPS, OCA, and youth with lived experience. Regional breakouts were convened in person for the first time in three years with judges and their local DFPS and Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) staff meeting to review and discuss regional data following a DFPS panel on statewide data. The conference also included the annual Collaborative Council meeting and a pre-conference for Child Protection Court judges and court coordinators (hosted by OCA). Planning for the October 23-25, 2023 Child Welfare Judges Conference is already underway. The CWJC Curriculum Committee will convene in February 2023 to provide feedback on this year’s conference agenda.

Additionally, based on an articulated need for basic-level training for judges who sit as visiting judges on child welfare cases or hear child welfare cases on occasion, the Commission plans to provide two speakers to present complementary content at two breakout sessions at TCJ's Annual Judicial Education Conference, in order to reach the highest number of visiting and general jurisdiction judges. These sessions will be presented by the Commission's JIRs and will cover basic information related to statutory hearings and deadlines in child welfare cases as well as topical issues such as trauma, the importance of child and youth voice, etc. The JIRs and Commission staff will also share information about Commission resources at the conference. The conference is scheduled for September 6-8, 2023 with breakouts on the afternoon of September 7.

32. Strategy: Support specialized training for the Child Protection Court program, judges, and support staff, including topics such as Reasonable Efforts.

Background: Child Protection Courts, also known as CPCs, were created to specialize in managing child abuse and neglect dockets. Like the child support court associate judges, these associate judges are appointed by their regional presiding judges and are OCA employees. CPC judges hear child welfare cases exclusively. 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 CPC judges and court coordinators to conduct hearings and manage cases. There are currently 30 CPCs and one Harris County CPS Impact Court; together these courts hear child welfare cases in 148 Texas counties.

02/10/23 Update: The Commission will host the biennial Child Protection Court Convening on July 27-28 2023. This training is specifically tailored for the Child Protection Courts' needs and will provide legislative and caselaw updates, hearing-related data, relevant topical presentations, and updates on ongoing Pilot projects. The conference also features a Presiding Judge panel and separate moderated breakout discussions for judges and for court coordinators. All 31 Child Protection Court judges and their court coordinators were invited to this training, which is planned and hosted in collaboration with OCA. The CPC Convening Curriculum Committee met on January 24, 2023 and provided feedback on the proposed agenda.

A second, virtual Reasonable Efforts Judicial Academy to be hosted in partnership with the national Capacity Building Center for Courts (CBCC) was scheduled in December 2022; however due to scheduling conflicts the academy was canceled. Commission staff will coordinate with the CBCC staff to offer this interactive judicial training in the future.

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

33. 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. Developed and initially spearheaded by Justice Michael Massengale (ret.), the TST is now directed by JIR Judge Piper McCraw. Trial Skills Training is held once or twice a year and offers up to 20 MCLE (Minimum Continuing Legal Education) hours, including ethics hours. Eleven in-person and three virtual TSTs have been hosted by the Children's Commission since its inception in October 2013. Each TST program has a competitive application process and is limited to 21 less-experienced attorneys.

It includes a fictional CPS fact pattern with a complete case file covering all Texas-specific statutory hearings building up to final trial. TST provides parent, child, and state attorneys numerous litigation exercises in the CPS context and includes lectures and demonstrations from trained faculty comprised of seasoned attorneys and judges, 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 is recruited and trained with each event. Extensive internal and external CQI process and outcome evaluation is involved with each event.

02/10/23 Update: The Children’s Commission is planning to host the 15th iteration of TST in Fall 2023. Based on participant and faculty feedback, application criteria will be adjusted to ensure that the target applicant base of less-experienced trial attorneys is reached.

The 3-day course will continue to be divided into a one-day Zoom “Pretrial” and two days of in person “Trial.” Commission staff are currently working on securing a venue and plan to make the course application available in March.

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

Background: In response to the need for virtual training, Commission staff are developing more regular webcasts to help educate child welfare stakeholders across the state. The Commission hosts regular webcasts to address current and emerging issues, as well as gaps in training, to help educate child welfare attorneys, judges, and stakeholders across the state. These webcasts focus on topics relevant to the legal and judicial communities and may be relevant to child welfare stakeholders as well.

02/10/23 Update:

On October 20, 2022, the Commission presented a 60-minute webcast entitled “Enhancing the Experience of Children and Youth in Court: How Judges and Attorneys Can Prepare and Support Youth Attending Court.” The webcast featured a panel discussion focusing on the importance of youth voice in court and best practices for preparing a child client for a court appearance, including speaking with the judge about their needs and goals. The live recorded webcast was approved for 1.0 hour of MCLE and 0.25 hours of ethics. The archived video is available on the Training Committee’s [On-Demand MCLE](#) webpage.

35. Strategy: Partner with the State Bar of Texas, DFPS, and other 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 produces MCLE courses on child welfare and related issues to provide training for court-appointed attorneys and attorneys representing DFPS. From 2012 through 2019, the Children’s Commission partnered with TexasBarCLE to broadcast day-long, 6 MCLE hours’ worth of training for attorneys who represented children, parents, and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in child welfare proceedings. 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 Bar for attorneys who represent DFPS and need financial assistance to access this training. The Commission also worked with TexasBarCLE in 2022 to produce “Building Better Youth Outcomes: The Importance of Being Trauma Informed,” for 1 hour of CMLE credit, including 1 hour of ethics. At this time, the Commission’s partnership with TexasBarCLE is focused on

participating in the Child Protection Law Section’s Curriculum Committee and supporting that Section through a grant for scholarships to their annual spring Advanced Training and their annual fall Child Abuse and Neglect Workshop. Additionally, the Children’s Commission partners with DFPS and TDCAA to provide high-quality training for attorneys representing DFPS.

02/10/23 Update:

State Bar of Texas Child Protection Law Section:

The State Bar’s Child Protection Law (CPL) Section provides high-quality training to judges and attorneys practicing child welfare law by providing MCLE and training opportunities to their membership, hosting an Annual Advanced Child Protection Law CLE, and planning the Child Abuse and Neglect Workshop curriculum for the Annual Advanced Family Law CLE held each August. The Commission collaborates with the CPL Section to connect on possible trainings and ways to partner together. As a part of this collaboration, a Commission staff member participates in the CPL CLE Committee.

Online Classroom: Through TexasBarCLE, the State Bar of Texas currently offers a number of online CLE courses in the Child Welfare Practice Area related to representation of all parties on the CPS docket. A total of 25 webcasts have been archived in the Child Welfare Practice Area of the TexasBarCLE’s Online Classroom, many of which were produced by the Children’s Commission in partnership with TexasBarCLE. The topics cover issues of interest to attorneys who work in the area of child welfare, including legal representation, statutory duties, and best practices. 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. All of the courses can be found in TexasBarCLE’s Child Welfare Practice Area. In the Child Welfare Practice Area of their Online Classroom, TexasBarCLE provides discounts to court-appointed attorneys and scholarships to other viewers.

DFPS Regional Attorney Training: This year’s DFPS Attorney Training took place in San Antonio on October 25-26, 2022. This was the first opportunity for the Department’s regional attorneys to gather together in-person for training, to work on team building, and to share ideas since 2019. The Children’s Commission provided funding in the form of a \$13,000 grant to support this training.

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.

36. 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: Since May 2016, the Children’s Commission has maintained an electronic distribution list to help inform judges, legal practitioners, and child welfare stakeholders of training and scholarship opportunities and to relay pertinent child welfare-related information. The Children’s Commission regularly publishes resource letters for judges and/or attorneys about emerging, relevant, and changing policy, laws, practice, and training opportunities that are of interest to judges, attorneys, and stakeholders handling child welfare cases. All resource letters are posted on the Children’s Commission’s website. The Children’s Commission’s distribution list has grown to more than 4,000 Texas attorneys, judges, court staff, and stakeholders.

02/10/23 Update: Jurist in Residence (JIR) Letters and Judicial and Attorney Resource Letters (JARLs) issued between September 2022 and February 2023 include:

- 1/27/2023: [Scholarships for Attorneys Representing DFPS to TDCOA's 2023 Crimes Against Children Conference](#)
- 1/9/2023, Jurist in Residence Letter: [ICYMI: Scholarships Re-Opened for NCJFCJ Conference in Dallas Applications Due January 23rd](#)
- 1/9/2023: [January is Human Trafficking Prevention Month](#)
- 1/5/2023: [New Report on Child Welfare Representation from Texas Indigent Defense Commission](#)
- 12/9/2022: [Behavioral Health Resources from DFPS](#)
- 12/7/2022, Jurist in Residence Letter: [Virtual Reasonable Efforts Judicial Academy](#)
- 12/6/2022: [Proposed Rule on the Use of Restraints in Juvenile Court](#)
- 12/1/2022, Jurist in Residence Letter: [Judicial Scholarship Opportunity: NCJFCJ 2023 National Conference on Juvenile Justice in Dallas](#)
- 11/30/2022: [Scholarship Opportunity for Attorneys Representing DFPS: TDCOA Fundamentals of Child Welfare Law Online Course](#)
- 11/29/2022: [A Culture of Kin: Texas Kinship Steering Committee Workgroups Recommendations Report](#)
- 11/18/2022: [Now Available on LawBox: 2022 Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing the Department of Family and Protective Services in Child Welfare Cases](#)
- 11/17/2022: [Celebrating Adoption Month in November](#)
- 11/8/2022, Jurist in Residence Letter: [2023 Child Welfare Judges Conference Save the Date](#)
- 11/3/2022: [2022 Child Welfare Law Bench Book Available Online](#)
- 10/31/2022: [October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#)
- 10/27/2022: [Recorded Webcast Now Online: Youth in Court](#)
- 10/17/2022: [New Resources Now Available](#)
- 10/6/2022: [National Survey on Virtual Child Welfare Hearings](#)
- 10/4/2022: [Recently Released Reports on Senate Bill \(SB\) 1578, Children's Mental Health, and SB 1575](#)
- 10/4/2022, Jurist in Residence Letter: [Virtual Reasonable Efforts Judicial Academy December 15-16, 2022](#)

37. 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 biennial ABA Parent Attorney Conference and Children and the Law Conference; (2) the TexasBarCLE Annual Advanced Child Protection Law Course; (3) the TexasBarCLE Advanced Family Law Child Abuse and Neglect One-Day Workshop; (4) the National Association of Counsel for Children Annual Conference; and (5) the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges 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. Judges with applicants from their jurisdiction are notified by the Children's Commission and asked to confirm that the applicant currently represents DFPS or takes appointments on their child welfare docket.

02/10/23 Update:

The Advanced Child Protection Law Conference: The Commission will offer registration scholarships for qualified attorneys to attend the 5th Annual Advanced Child Protection Law Course, hosted by TexasBarCLE and the Child Protection Law Section of the State Bar of Texas on March 23-24, 2023 in Houston, Texas and via webcast replay on May 2-3, 2023. Additionally, the Commission will offer a limited number of registration scholarships for the separate Child Protection Law 101 Course, which is being featured as a pre-conference event this year on the morning of March 23 in Houston and on May 1 via webcast replay. The Commission allocated \$15,000 to cover registration costs to attend the Advanced Course or 101 Course live events or webcast replays.

Texas District and County Attorney Association Trainings: For FY2023, the Commission will offer scholarships to two TDCAA trainings: the "Fundamentals of Child Welfare Law" online course and the in person 2023 Crimes Against Children Conference.

For the "Fundamentals of Child Welfare Law" online course, the Commission is offering up to 14 reimbursement scholarships for new attorneys currently representing DFPS. The six-part online course was designed for less-experienced child welfare prosecutors and covers the fundamental skills needed for prosecutors assigned to represent DFPS, from pretrial to final outcomes of a child welfare case. Scholarships were announced on November 30, 2022 and 3 out of the 14 available awards have been distributed thus far. The scholarship application for the online course will remain open until August 31, 2023 or until all scholarships have been awarded.

The 2023 Crimes Against Children Conference will be held on April 11-14, 2023 in San Antonio, Texas. The Conference will feature a 12-hour child welfare track over two days on April 12-13, 2023. The Commission is offering up to 28 registration scholarships to attorneys currently representing DFPS. Scholarships will take the form of waived registration fees for the full conference and the application period closes on February 20, 2023.

Advanced Family Law One-Day Child Abuse and Neglect Workshop: This year's Child Abuse and Neglect One-Day Workshop is scheduled for August 9, 2023 in San Antonio, Texas. The Commission allocated \$10,000 to cover registration scholarships for 100 qualified attorneys at \$100 each for the live one-day workshop or for any of the subsequent replays. The Commission hopes to announce this scholarship application process by early summer.

National Association of Counsel for Children Annual Conference: The NACC's 46th National Child Welfare Law Conference will be held in-person on August 10-12, 2023 in Minneapolis, Minnesota and a second conference with a different agenda will be held virtually on September 20-22, 2023. The Commission allocated \$10,000 to provide scholarships to qualified Texas judges and attorneys to attend the in-person conference or the virtual conference and hopes to announce this scholarship application process by early summer.

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Trainings: For FY2023, the Commission will offer judicial scholarships to two NCJFCJ trainings: the 2023 National Conference on Juvenile Justice and the 86th Annual Conference.

The 2023 National Conference on Juvenile Justice will be held on March 19-22, 2023 in Dallas, Texas. The Conference features plenary and breakout sessions on juvenile justice, trafficking, child welfare, highlighting court best practices, innovative solutions, and self-care. The scholarships are reimbursement-based and two application types were available for judges: 1) registration and travel scholarships up to \$1,200; or 2) registration-only scholarships for judges in the Dallas area or those who do not need travel assistance in order to attend. Applications were accepted until January 23, 2023 and the Commission awarded 30 judicial scholarships.

The NCJFCJ's 86th Annual Conference will take place on July 16-19, 2023 in Baltimore, Maryland. The Commission plans to offer a limited number of reimbursement scholarships to Texas judges hearing civil child welfare cases for registration costs and eligible travel-related expenses to attend the Annual Conference. The Commission hopes to announce this scholarship application process in April.

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.

38. Strategy: At the annual judicial conference, partner with DFPS to provide a statewide data presentation as well as 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 a statewide data plenary presentation as well as Regional Breakouts to members of the judiciary at the Child Welfare Judges Conference, which is hosted by the Commission in partnership with TCJ. This strategy is achieved at the annual judicial conference through collaboration between the CIP and DFPS during the portion of the conference which focuses on educating the judiciary with data and updates from the Department. The Regional Breakout sessions provide the opportunity for judges and their DFPS regional directors and regional systems improvement specialists to discuss region-specific data elements and permanency outcomes in the context of state data. Due to the expansion of Community-Based Care (CBC), Single Source Continuum Contractors responsible for case management and placement are also included in the regional breakout presentations with judges serving CBC catchment areas, beginning in 2020.

02/10/23 Update: The October 2022 Child Welfare Judges Conference included a Statewide Data Presentation, which was followed immediately by Regional Breakouts. The presentation was coordinated by Commission staff and was presented by the following DFPS staff: the Director of Research and Evaluation, the Contract Performance Manager, and the Division Administrator Child Protective Regional Systems Improvement. The 2022 Statewide Data Presentation incorporated data and trends and focused on safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes at the statewide level and how these topics intersect and impact each other. Immediately following, Regional Breakouts provided the opportunity for judges and their local DFPS and SSCC representatives to review and discuss their regional and county-level data together with the goal of improving outcomes for children, youth, and families. Judicial and agency feedback following these sessions was largely positive and focused on the helpful aspects of convening in person to examine the data and increase and strengthen communication.

39. Strategy: Design and support a study to evaluate the efficacy of the Permanent Managing Conservatorship Court model.

Background: The Data Committee continues to facilitate meetings between TACFS, Casey Family Programs, and other stakeholders regarding the evaluation of Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) Courts. A retrospective study on the work of the Houston PMC court has made significant progress since the last meeting. The appropriate data set has been identified and can be evaluated under pre-existing MOUs between DFPS and TACFS. The evaluation team is also working on initial steps toward the prospective study of both the Dallas and Houston PMC courts and is focusing on identifying sources for necessary qualitative data and the permissions and agreements necessary to acquire those data.

02/10/23 Update: The results of the preliminary studies on the PMC courts were promising, but the workgroup determined that to evaluate the causal evidence of effectiveness of the PMC court model, the evaluation must compare children whose cases were placed on the PMC's court docket upon entering PMC and children whose cases stayed in a non-PMC court and it must be able to measure both permanency outcome indicators and well-being indicators.

To accomplish those goals, the evaluation will need collaboration with DFPS in order to allow access to children and youth in PMC in Dallas and Harris Counties to facilitate collection of well-being data and track outcomes in both groups. Workgroup members and Commission staff met with DFPS staff to discuss a draft evaluation request and in July, the workgroup submitted a formal request for access and data through the new DFPS research and data request portal. DFPS responded with follow up questions about the proposal and the workgroup will submit additional information in response. Next steps will begin once DFPS makes a decision on the request.

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

Background: In response to the substantial changes to the Texas Family Code that occurred in the 87th Texas Legislative Session and the changes which judges reported seeing in their jurisdictions, the Data Committee decided to pursue an analysis of the 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.

02/10/23 Update: Children's Commission and OCA staff, including Senior Data Analyst Jeff Cox, began to analyze trends in referrals, investigations, and removals prior to and after the recent changes to the Texas Family Code. After a discussion regarding removal data at the September 2022 Commission Meeting, the Data Committee reviewed available data from DFPS, OCA, and judicial survey results from the 2022 Child Welfare Judges Conference and made a request to DFPS for additional data to clarify and add specificity. A report on the data will be shared at the February 10, 2023 Commission Meeting.

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.

41. Strategy: Identify best practices in conducting virtual or hybrid hearings and utilize this information to support improved legal and judicial practice.

Background: Texas will develop a virtual hearings study to identify best practices for virtual or hybrid hearings in child welfare cases. The study will include data collection and analysis to better understand the impact of remote proceedings in child welfare cases in Texas in response to COVID-19.

02/10/23 Update: In September 2021, OCA and the Children's Commission executed a contract to support the hiring of a Senior Data Analyst. The Senior Data Analyst conducts research and analysis about the benefits and drawbacks of virtual or hybrid hearings. The Senior Data Analyst also participates in the Children's Commission Data Committee and supports court-related child welfare data projects. The data analyst developed a court observation tool to collect data on court practices in virtual and hybrid court hearings. Court observations began in June 2022 and were completed in September 2022. OCA and Children's Commission staff are reviewing a draft report on the hearing observation study and the report should be publicly available in the third quarter of FY2023.

42. Strategy: Partner with OCA to support the maintenance, enhancements, impact, and usability of the Child Protection Case Management System.

Background: CPCMS is a case management system which is unique to Child Protection Courts and has been in use since 2009. CPCMS is currently in maintenance mode. 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.

02/10/23 Update: The CPCMS Advisory Council met on January 6, 2023 to discuss planned updates and enhancements for CPCMS. Updates to the CPCMS system were released on November 10, 2022, including the ability to flag cases on appeal, track cases in the HB 3041 pilot program, enter additional data in the child’s education tab, and flag cases involving children over 14 years old. Items for discussion included case consolidation functionality, how to incorporate post-final order petitions for modification, and options for displaying party information on dockets. The Advisory Council also received updates on software security and server environment changes, as well as updates on future enhancements to the system’s ability to track required documents for youth, edit or remove parties in the notice and engagement system, and track child disability data. The next meeting of the Advisory Council will be in the third quarter of FY2023.

43. Strategy: Encourage efficiency in data collection and information sharing, including integrating the DFPS IMPACT system and CPCMS, expanding CPCMS to non-Child Protection Courts, and working with other jurisdictions that do not utilize CPCMS.

Background: The Data Committee facilitates meetings between OCA, DFPS, and Data Committee members to discuss data sharing and integration between OCA’s CPCMS system and DFPS’ IMPACT system. The goal of integration is reducing errors and increasing data accuracy while reducing court staff workloads. OCA has also created an API that will allow Courts other than Child Protection Courts to upload their hearing data into the system and utilize the data collection and case management features of CPCMS.

02/10/23 Update: On November 10, 2022 OCA and DFPS staff met to discuss the proposed Data Use Agreement (DUA) between OCA and DFPS that would authorize sharing of a sample data set to test the data matching criteria that will determine whether the systems can be integrated. Security and technical issues were identified that required further amendments to the proposed DUA and OCA is working on proposed language for the amendments. Once both parties have signed the DUA, the data sample can be shared, and the matching criteria can be tested. OCA also set up a panel of presiding judges to discuss the implications of the agreement and the panel and the workgroup will meet in the future to discuss any relevant concerns.

TAB 4

**Children's Commission
Financial Report**

FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET

FY 2022 Carry Forward	\$	1,884,688
(+) FY 2023 Federal Distribution	\$	1,812,795
FY 2023 Available Funds	\$	3,697,483

FISCAL YEAR 2023 EXPENDITURES

	Budget	Expenses To-date	Anticipated Expenditures
Operating	\$ 1,349,982	\$ 359,007	\$ 990,975
Commission Projects	\$ 169,300	\$ 38,443	\$ 130,857
<i>Systems Improvement</i>	\$ 41,000	\$ 663	\$ 40,337
<i>Legal Practice and Process</i>	\$ 42,300	\$ 14,030	\$ 28,270
<i>Training</i>	\$ 86,000	\$ 23,750	\$ 62,250
Scholarships	\$ 108,600	\$ 950	\$ 107,650
<i>Child Protection Law Section</i>	\$ 15,000	\$ -	\$ 15,000
<i>NACC - Annual Conference</i>	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000
<i>NCJFCJ - Judicial Scholarship</i>	\$ 58,600	\$ -	\$ 58,600
<i>State Bar CAN CLE</i>	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000
<i>TBLS - CWL Specialization Exam Fee Waiver</i>	\$ 2,500	\$ 600	\$ 1,900
<i>TDCAA - Conference</i>	\$ 12,500	\$ 350	\$ 12,150
Grants	\$ 790,211	\$ 66,773	\$ 723,438
<i>DFPS - Regional Attorney Training</i>	\$ 12,000	\$ -	\$ 12,000
<i>Houston PEARLS Foundation</i>	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ 25,000
<i>OCA - Data Analyst, Technology, Visiting Judge</i>	\$ 250,000	\$ -	\$ 250,000
<i>TACFS - Data & Trauma Informed Court Practices</i>	\$ 71,732	\$ 9,739	\$ 61,993
<i>TCJ - Judicial Training</i>	\$ 254,571	\$ 37,390	\$ 217,181
<i>TNOYS - Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Care</i>	\$ 25,580	\$ -	\$ 25,580
<i>TFYJP - Hotline Data Collection</i>	\$ 26,328	\$ -	\$ 26,328
<i>TLSC - Family Helpline</i>	\$ 125,000	\$ 19,644	\$ 105,356
	\$ 2,559,270	\$ 465,172	\$ 1,952,921

CURRENT FINANCIAL STATUS

Federal Fund Balance	\$	3,232,311
(-) FY2023 Anticipated Expenditures	\$	1,952,921
Estimated Carry Forward FY 2024	\$	1,279,390

