

Children's Commission Grant Summaries

Fiscal Year 2024

Organization:	Office of Court Administration (OCA)
Project:	OCA/CIP Partnership Grant
Strategic Category:	Systems Improvement , Data
Grant Amount:	\$201,007.00
Project Description:	<p>Enhance, maintain, and support the Child Protection Case Management System (CPCMS) and the hearings Notice and Engagement system. This includes continuance of the established governance structure and work to enhance technology solutions in accordance with governance committee assessment and decisions.</p> <p>Facilitate communication between youth and their judge, and youth participation in their Review and Permanency Hearings, through case management system functionality and availability of video conferencing. Remote hearing availability improves contact with the children/youth in placement facilities and impacts child safety, well-being and due process.</p>
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct a minimum of two CPCMS governance meetings in FY2024 to establish priorities for CPCMS enhancements and report status of governance activities. - Conduct maintenance and support activities for technology solutions provided by OCA for child welfare court judges and staff. This includes version upgrades of software, security updates, database administration, and adherence to OCA-IS operating procedures and policies. - Provide at least two CPCMS software releases during the grant period. Develop, test and deploy enhancements (CPCMS and Notice and Engagement) requested and vetted through the Advisory Council. - Provide annual CPCMS user training and timely training for new Child Protection Court staff. - Provide annual data reporting to identify trends in the child welfare system and make quality improvement recommendations. - Facilitate communication between youth and their child welfare court judge through case management system features/functionality and through supporting use of video conferencing. - Provide webcams and microphones as needed and conduct refresh of MiFi hotspot devices used by Child Protection Court staff. - Conduct Notice and Engagement system maintenance activities, including version upgrades of supporting software, as needed throughout the grant period.
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Supplies (Cellular Hotspot Devices)

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Fiscal Year 2024

Organization:	Office of Court Administration (OCA)
Project:	Visiting Judge Support
Strategic Category:	Legal Practice & Process
Grant Amount:	\$22,000.00
Project Description:	The visiting judge grant would allow OCA to continue the established mechanism of payment for the appointment of former/Retired Child Protection Court associate judges and former/retired district and county court at-law judges experienced in hearing Child Protective Services (CPS) cases to cover Child Protection Court dockets in absence of the active associate judge.
Project Activities:	OCA will contract with former and retired Child Protection Court associate judges at a daily rate of \$494.00 for a full day of service or \$247.00 for a half day of service, and former and retired district court and county court at-law judges, experienced in CPS matters, at a daily rate of \$620.00 for a full day of service or \$310 for a half day of service. Travel expenses incurred in performance of these services are reimbursable in accordance with the State of Texas guidelines for state employees.
Use of Funds:	Contractual

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Fiscal Year 2024

Organization:	Texas Center for the Judiciary (TCJ)
Project:	Judicial Training
Strategic Category:	Training
Grant Amount:	\$259,641.00
Project Description:	<p>TCJ will conduct the 2023 Child Welfare Judges Conference (CWJC). This is a 2.5-day conference, which will include an optional half-day pre-conference training on topical issues relevant based on children's age group. The conference will be held October 23-25, 2023, at the Sheraton Austin Georgetown Hotel and Conference Center. The conference typically trains between 85-100 judges from most regions throughout the State.</p> <p>TCJ will include three hours of continuing education, developed by the Children's Commission, at the 2024 Family Justice Conference. This conference typically reaches about 150 judges and specifically targets general jurisdiction judges. The conference will be held January 18-19, 2024 at the Sheraton Austin Georgetown Hotel and Conference Center.</p> <p>TCJ will also begin the planning process for the 2024 Child Welfare Judges Conference.</p>
Project Activities:	<p>TCJ will participate in periodic planning calls with the Children's Commission and OCA. They will communicate with attendees about reservations, reimbursements, work directly with speakers to facilitate travel, develop program descriptions, prepare materials including conference programs, signage, and conference app, and apply for, track, and reconcile MCLE and family violence hours for conference participants. At the conclusion of the conference, TCJ will prepare and distributing conference evaluations, tabulating and providing results to the Children's Commission.</p>
Use of Funds:	<p>Personnel & Benefits Travel Supplies Contractual (Speaker Fees) Other (Overhead, A/V Conference Support)</p>

Children's Commission Grant Summaries

Fiscal Year 2024

Organization:	Texas Department of Family & Protective Services
Project:	2024 DFPS Annual Attorney and Legal Support Staff Conference
Strategic Category:	Training; Legal Practice & Process, Systems Improvement
Grant Amount:	\$12,000.00
Project Description:	<p>The attorney and legal assistant training will take place in October 2024 and provide substantive training on DFPS litigation, policy, Texas law, best practices, and resources as well as give participants an opportunity to network with colleagues throughout Texas. The project will also provide hands-on trial skills practice for new attorneys who have joined the agency since October 2022. The project will provide approximately 9 hours of accredited MCLE to DFPS attorneys, the majority of which will be recorded and shared with assistant district and county attorneys who represent the agency. New DFPS attorneys will receive an additional 7 hours of MCLE (3 hours virtual, and 4 in-person).</p> <p>The 2023 conference will include speakers from Casey Family Programs, Family Violence Prevention Services, Harris County Attorney's Office, Tarrant County Attorney's Office, the Bexar County Constable, and other stakeholder groups still to be confirmed. DFPS will endeavor to make similar collaborative efforts for the 2024 conference. Additionally, DFPS will provide recordings of most of the MCLE accredited sessions to assistant district and county attorney offices.</p>
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify trends, issues and needs identified for training based on post-event surveys from 2023 program; - Identify topics and possible speakers; - Contact and confirm speakers; - Prepare agenda and materials for distribution; - Present program in October 2024, likely at the Marriott NW San Antonio; and - Tabulate and assess evaluations to use in planning future training.
Use of Funds:	Travel Contractual (Venue, Audio/Visual)

Children's Commission Grant Summaries

Fiscal Year 2024

Organization:	Texas Legal Services Center (TLSC)
Project:	Family Helpline
Strategic Category:	System Improvement, Data
Grant Amount:	\$112,500.00
Project Description:	<p>TLSC's Family Helpline was established in 2017. The Family Helpline assists Texans who have legal questions regarding the child welfare system and child safety. Family Helpline attorneys are available Monday – Friday from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. CST. When a caller dials the phone number, their call is answered by a child welfare attorney. Since its inception, staff attorneys have completed more than 12,000 calls, affecting more than 18,000 children across Texas. The goal of the helpline is to improve safety and stability for children, and to empower families through education about their legal rights and court processes. The Family Helpline serves all 254 counties in Texas.</p>
Project Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide one-on-one legal education, information, and referrals to approx. 1,500 individuals in Texas regarding CPS involvement or child safety (Monday - Friday from 9am - 6pm CST). This will be tracked and measured using Legal Server case management software. - Present legal trainings on a topic related to child welfare law a minimum of twice per fiscal year with a goal of reaching at least 10 attorneys or professionals per presentation. - Provide child welfare content for TexasLawHelp.org with a minimum of 2 self-help kits or articles per year. - Collect data regarding the child welfare system – including the caller's role, type of case, issues discussed, trends, and areas for improvement; this data will be reported on to the Commission twice per year. - Distribute at least 600 outreach materials to entities across the state (such as local courts and clerk's offices, local public libraries and law libraries, CPS offices, CASA offices, local parenting class providers, drug treatment and rehabilitation centers, child advocacy centers, medical provider offices, and law enforcement offices). - Observe court in 50 counties and track observations; a summary of these observations will be included in a report to the Commission 2x/yr. - Draft articles and self-help kits for pro se litigants and the general public throughout the grant period.
Use of Funds:	Personnel & Benefits Travel Supplies Contractual (IT Support, Security) Other (Overhead)