

# **Children's Commission's Collaborative Council Overview**

## **Purpose**

The Collaborative Council assists the Children's Commission by informing commission members and staff of local, regional, and statewide activities, events, and issues that impact attorney and judicial practices in child welfare cases.

## **Composition**

The Collaborative Council is an advisory body composed of child welfare stakeholders and advocates from across Texas, including advocates for children, youth, and families. There are approximately 40 Collaborative Council members at any given time.

## **Membership**

Collaborative Council members serve at the discretion of the Children's Commission for no set term. Vacancies on the Collaborative Council may occur at any time during the year as a result of resignation, non-participation on assigned committees, or continued absence from the Children's Commission meetings. The Children's Commission reserves the right to limit membership.

## **Limitations**

The Children's Commission is a state entity and thus cannot participate in any lobbying activities. The Children's Commission serves as a resource to the Legislature and does not take a position on any legislation. Collaborative Council members do not represent the Children's Commission and members should not attempt to influence legislation on behalf of the Children's Commission.

## **Collaborative Council Input**

Collaborative Council members have various opportunities to participate and provide input into the activities, projects, and strategies undertaken by the Children's Commission. Collaborative Council members are encouraged to participate in the Commission's bi-weekly stakeholder conference call and join Commission meetings to share brief comments, ask questions, or provide information of interest to Commissioners and others during each Commission meeting. The Children's Commission also convenes an annual Collaborative Council meeting to gather input from Collaborative Council members.

Collaborative Council members can contact the Children's Commission directly to submit comments, information, and announcements at Commission meetings.

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## **Committees, Workgroups & Task Forces**

The Children's Commission maintains four standing committees: Systems Improvement, Legal Practice and Process, Training, and Data. The Children's Commission may also form ad hoc committees, workgroups, and task forces. At least one member of the Children's Commission staff is assigned to each committee, workgroup, and task force. The committees, workgroups, and task forces are chaired by at least one judge handling child welfare cases, a member of the Children's Commission, or another person with expertise in the subject matter area. Committees, workgroups, and task forces are formed based on the need, the outcome expected as a result of the work, whether there are measurable objectives or anticipated outputs from the effort, and whether any data can be collected to provide evidence of the committee, workgroup, or task force's usefulness. The same process is used periodically to assess the impact and productivity of committees, workgroups, and task forces.

## **Committee Membership**

Committee Chairs, in consultation with Children's Commission staff, may add or remove committee members at their discretion. Any Collaborative Council member may submit a request to the Committee Chair or to the Children's Commission Executive Director to join a Children's Commission committee, workgroup, or task force. Collaborative Council members may also make a recommendation to the Committee Chair or Commission Executive Director for an additional member to participate on a committee, workgroup, or task force. The Children's Commission has discretion to invite Collaborative Council members to a different or additional project than the one requested, depending on current membership and area of interest.

## **Travel Reimbursement**

The Court Improvement Program (CIP) is federally funded, and travel reimbursement is thereby governed by the reimbursement policies of the CIP, the Children's Commission, and the Supreme Court of Texas. Most Children's Commission committee, workgroup, and task force meetings are held in Austin. Collaborative Council members who travel to Austin for Children's Commission or related meetings may submit certain travel expenses to the Children's Commission for reimbursement. Any person with work headquarters in Austin, Texas is not eligible to claim travel reimbursement under the State of Texas Travel Guidelines, which are outlined on the Commission's [travel webpage](#).

## **To Apply:**

Stakeholders interested in serving on the Children's Commission Collaborative Council should submit their information to the Children's Commission for consideration:

[Collaborative Council Member Application](#)