



# **Nevada's Court Improvement Program**

## **Basic Strategic Plan FY 2011 - FY 2015**

*Supreme Court of Nevada  
Administrative Office of the Courts*



**August 2010**

## **COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM MISSION, PURPOSE, AND GOALS STATEMENT**

"The Court Improvement Program is a multidisciplinary project which seeks improvement of interrelated systems that serve children and families who enter the child welfare system. The program operates through team-oriented court and agency initiatives. The goal of the CIP is to make the systems more effective."

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## ***Chapter 1 – Executive Summary: Basic Strategic Plan***

The Court Improvement Program (CIP) has existed in Nevada since 1995 and is overseen by the multi-disciplinary CIP Select Committee (Committee). State judicial leadership was established when, in 2006, Chief Justice Robert Rose agreed to chair the Court Improvement Committee, and the Committee was brought under the auspices of the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada as a permanent Standing Committee. Under the chairmanship of Associate Justice Nancy M. Saitta, the Committee developed a strategic Mission, Purpose, and Goals Statement in 2009.

“The Court Improvement Program (CIP) is a multidisciplinary project which seeks improvement of interrelated systems that serve children and families who enter the child welfare system. The program operates through team-oriented court and agency initiatives. The goal of the CIP is to make the systems more effective.”

The Committee meets quarterly with one of the meetings planned as an annual “in-person” meeting. This year, for the convenience of those members arriving by air, the annual meeting was held on April 16, 2010, at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport.

The Committee has created a very engaged Grant Award Subcommittee, which strictly adheres to the federal grant requirements when reviewing proposals for recommendation to the entire Committee. A formalized RFP Process has been developed and implemented.

The Basic Grant received from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF)<sup>1</sup> has funded the Early Representation Program, for a second year.

The Early Representation Program (ERP) has recently undergone a facilitated refresher course. A new data collection tool is in place collecting pertinent data from both a control group and the program cohort. Now that the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District has added a second judge to the dependency track, the ERP and other specialty programs will be divided between the two judges. The Committee is considering the possibility of enhancing ERP with a facilitation

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<sup>1</sup> For a complete history, please go to <http://www.ssa.gov/history/childb1.html>.

component. Eighth District Court Judge Frank Sullivan has assumed responsibility for this augmentation believing that this component will further “engage the family in a family-centered and strengths-based approach in partnership with community stakeholders to make decisions, set goals and achieve desired outcomes in the best interests of the children.”

CIP was awarded \$76,233 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families Regional Partnership Grant to help Nevada address the impact of methamphetamine use on the child welfare system, including the judiciary. A year ago, CIP partnered to present 1-day training on the subject. Building on the success of that training, a DVD “*Parental Methamphetamine Use and the Crisis in the Child Welfare System*” was created with our partners from DCFS, and the Sierra Association of Foster Families (SAFF). This DVD has been widely distributed by CIP, DCFS, and SAFF. The final installment from this grant will fund a national speaker for the specialty court regional seminars in December

While a focus of the CIP continues to be on the development and implementation of significant pilot projects in individual courts, the Committee is also emphasizing collaborative strategies to address issues and meet goals. With a strong overall mission in place, the Committee is positioned to establish goals that will build on *strengths*, while undergirding *weaknesses*, to take advantage of *opportunities*, and rebuff *threats* (SWOT). Such an approach will enable the Committee to develop systemic, statewide changes to significantly improve the handling of child welfare cases.

During 2003-05 and 2009-10, CIP worked closely with the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and other stakeholders to conduct Nevada's Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR), and develop its Program Improvement Plans (PIP). The PIP primary strategy 3, goal 1, which is to reduce the number of children in out of home care for 18 months or longer and to reduce barriers to adoption and TPR, has been integrated into this Basic Grant strategic plan.

Justice Saitta intends to authorize district court judges in each of the nine judicial districts to convene local stakeholder workgroups to identify their barriers to adoption. CIP will inform the work of each of these workgroups with data, identified goals, and a reporting format to

facilitate consistency and uniformity across the state. At least two of the larger, urban judicial districts' workgroups will be facilitated.

The Nevada CIP has a long history of working with DCFS, the Child and Family Services Divisions of Clark and Washoe Counties, and representatives from other key child welfare stakeholder groups [e.g., attorney groups representing children and parents and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)]. Since the inception of CIP, the directors (or designated representatives) of these agencies and organizations have been members of the CIP Select Committee. Either the Chief Justice or a Justice of the Supreme Court has chaired the Committee.

Upon the hiring of the new CIP coordinator, child welfare stakeholders across the state have offered assistance and guidance. Committee Chair Justice Saitta requested that Judge Steel from the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District and Amber Howell, Deputy Administrator of DCFS, each provide the new coordinator a primer on how Nevada's system works from behind the bench and on Nevada's child and family services system, respectively. Judge Schumacher from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District has offered to provide guidance, as well.

In July 2010, a Nevada Supreme Court Justice and CIP Select Committee Chair, an AOC Deputy Director, a District Court Judge and CIP Select Committee member, and the CIP Coordinator participated in the Nevada Division of Children and Family Services Program Improvement Plan review. The three CIP Strategic Plans have been developed to closely align with and compliment the PIP goals for Nevada relating to the courts.

For a week in mid-July 2010 an AOC Deputy Director and an AOC Court Systems Analyst, the UNITY Program Assistant, the Children's Services Coordinator for Washoe County Social Services, the Business Policy Analyst for the Department of Health and Human Services Division of Child and Family Services, and the CIP Coordinator all attended the 13<sup>th</sup> National Child Welfare Data and Technology Conference and the 2010 Court Improvement Program Meeting. As a result, concepts learned while there are being discussed for implementation in Nevada and are already being implemented in this plan.

The three CIP Strategic Plans have been developed to be responsive to the PIP goals for Nevada relating to the courts. To foster more complete communication and exchange of ideas,

CIP and DCFS, Clark County Department of Family Services, and Washoe County Department of Social Services hold monthly status and planning meetings to review and coordinate efforts articulated in the PIP and the CIP Strategic Plan(s). The statewide CASA Executive Director and the Executive Director for Sierra Association of Foster Families have both been invited and participated in these meetings.

During the next year, the CIP Coordinator will join most of the nine judicial districts' workgroups on barriers to adoption. The purpose of these workgroups is to identify each judicial district's major barriers to achieving timely adoptions in response to the PIP.

On a national level, collaboration has taken place among states involved in the National Data Exchange Project. Nevada started with the collaboration between CIP and the National Center of State Courts (NCSC). This project has grown now to include multiple states and multiple stakeholders from multi-disciplinary entities. The national IEPDs for the Case Plan and Service Plan were developed with Nevada CIP funds.

Discussions have also been held with CIP Member Judge Teresa Sprouse concerning working together with our tribes on such needed projects as foster care, including recruitment, retention, training, and funding; domestic violence training with the emerging focus on our children that are in and around domestic violence and the issues of perpetrators who do not see themselves as a batterers; developing CASA programs; lack of nearby resources; identifying needs and sponsoring training around ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act); specifically regarding legislation and education.

Previously, the CIP Select Committee had been establishing subcommittees to accomplish the Committee's work. With a deliberate interpretation of the Committee's mission to operate through team-oriented court and agency initiatives to make the child welfare systems more effective, the Committee plans to increase its emphasis on collaborative relationships with state and local, agency and private partners.

Being cognizant of fiscal constraints, CIP has slightly shifted our goals away from "creating and developing" to modifying and utilizing existing tools, training, and informational pieces.

## ***Chapter 2 – Strategic Plan Objectives, Strategies, and Activities***

To provide structure to the CIP efforts to continue to meet and further develop its goals in Nevada, specific strategies have been developed. Each strategy outlines one or more activities that, when complete, will provide a major milestone in the completion of one or more goals. The strategies have been organized into three separate strategic plans, based upon their primary intent. The three strategic plans are:

- Basic [B]
- Training [T]
- Data [D]

### **Basic Objectives**

The Objectives of the basic component of the strategic plan are:

- To continue the positive momentum the Court Improvement for the Protection and Permanency of Dependent Children Select Committee (CIP) has generated across the state and designate other standing committees around Child Safety, Permanency, and Well Being;
- To improve the quality of representation for all parties in dependency proceedings;
- To implement a statewide strategy to provide for engagement of the courts and legal representatives in the CFSR and IV-E review processes; and
- To increase public awareness about child abuse and the rights of children and families in dependency proceedings through an outreach campaign focusing on broad initiatives, resource development, as well as local issue specific advocacy.



## **Basic Objectives, Strategies, and Activities**

### **B1: Continuing the focus of the Court Improvement Program **CIP Select** Committee toward advancing the outcomes of safety, permanency, and well being for children and families.**

Reconstituting the Committee under Supreme Court leadership has had the advantage of raising the profile of the **CIP Select** Committee and its membership and securing commitments from the appointed members that they are prepared to take active roles in committee work to realize the goals of the strategic plan. Meetings are held quarterly, in locations to encourage participation from all sections of the state and will be video- and teleconferenced to meet that goal. Meeting announcements and committee reports are posted to the CIP website as appropriate.

Each fiscal year, the CIP Select Committee convenes at an annual planning meeting with all committee members meeting in-person. Letters from the Supreme Court appointing new members are distributed with the strategic plans and any relevant instructions attached to orient new members and set the foundation for the annual updating of the strategic plans. The Committee membership is composed of 17 key child welfare leaders throughout the state, including 1 Justice of the Supreme Court, the State Court Administrator, 3 District Court Judges, 1 rural Tribal Judge (designated to handle child abuse and neglect matters), 1 court master, 1 Assemblywoman, 2 private bar attorneys, 1 Children's Attorneys Project attorney, 1 Chief Deputy Public Defender, the Administrator from the Division of Child and Family Services, the Director from Washoe County Department of Social Services, the Director from Clark County Department of Family Services, 1 representative from the Office of the Attorney General, and the statewide CASA Executive Director. The committee meetings are staffed by the CIP staff.

### **B2: Formally establish the Court Improvement Program with adequate personnel to effectively staff the Court Improvement Program **CIP Select** Committee and accomplish outreach and public education goals.**

Adequate staff support to the CIP Select Committee and the implementation of the strategic plans **are necessary for an effective program** to ensure that momentum is maintained and the outreach comprehensive. The Court Improvement Program outreach agenda is broad-based, goal-oriented, and a primary function of CIP. Regular articles about CIP activities are published on the Supreme Court's website. CIP began in 2009 to distribute via email information regarding conferences, research, and activities relevant to the CIP, to judges and masters who have NRS 432B calendars, as well as to senior judges who are assigned.

**Due to the need to focus in other areas, the CIP Select Committee has deferred** publishing and distributing informational booklets or pamphlets explaining matters related to child abuse and dependency proceedings.

**B3: Establish a Collaborative Relationship with Agency and Private Partners to Improve the Safety of Children.**

Although one standing committee of the CIP Select Committee, the CIP Juvenile Dependency Rules Subcommittee, chaired by Judge Andrew Puccinelli (4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, Elko) had been assigned to review Nevada statutes to determine conformity with federal child welfare laws and regulations; the CIP Select Committee's emphasis has shifted toward collaborative efforts with agency and private partners statewide and less on committee work. The CIP reassessment identified many strengths in Nevada's statutes and also listed areas where the statutes could be improved to better address the intent of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), and best practices, such as the purpose of specific court hearings, notice to fathers, the requirements of a dispositional hearing, and appointment of counsel.

The CIP Select Committee is advisory to the Supreme Court, Legislature & Rules Committee of the Judicial Council, and local court rules committees on best practices relating to statutes and enabling legislation that could benefit Nevada's children and families.

**B4: Establish a Collaborative Relationship with Agency and Private Partners to Decrease Barriers to and Improve Permanency of Children.**

In response to the Nevada Department of Children and Family Services Program Improvement Plan, CIP will identify barriers to adoption in each of the nine Judicial Districts. Workgroups will be established and assisted in identifying the barriers unique to that jurisdiction with identified activities to reduce these barriers. Some of the Judicial District workgroups will receive facilitation assistance.

In the second quarter of 2009, CIP focused on improving permanency through improving representation of the parties in abuse and neglect proceedings. Two surveys on representation were planned. The first survey was distributed to all judges and masters, asking for response on questions regarding their policies for the appointment of counsel for children and parents. The survey requested information on a range of specific issues including number of appointments, circumstances in which attorneys are appointed, terms of appointment, and compensation to appointed counsel. The second survey will be distributed to all attorneys who represent parents or children statewide and will focus on the nature of their appointments, issues relating to representation, compensation, obstacles to effective representation, and suggestions for improving representation. Responses to both surveys will be collected and analyzed with the results conveyed to the CIP committee, including recommendations for any policy, legislative, and budgetary proposals. Consideration of use of court rules to govern the appointment of counsel and the development of minimum competence and training standards for appointed counsel is also expected.

In collaboration with such partners as the State Bar, and using the product from one of our Early Representation pilot projects, CIP will conduct workshops on specific topics related to representation in abuse and neglect proceedings. Possible topics include those recommended in the CIP reassessment, the CFSR, federal focus, and from the surveys to attorneys and judges, such as reducing barriers to adoption, improving permanency for older youth, educational rights of children, interstate placement and the ICPC, sibling placements, awareness of LGBTQ youth, incarcerated parents, risk and safety analysis, effective case plans, substance abuse treatment, and mental health issues.

To further address issues of ICPC, an assessment was conducted of the current use of cross-jurisdictional resources for placement/adoptions including use of priority placements and identifying challenges to interstate placement including conducting analyses of state law and regulations. This assessment was conducted by surveying judges and caseworkers, conducting interviews, and reviewing case files for administrative data and state ICPC protocols. Instituting recommended Rules of Court and forms to facilitate ICPC and the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources was addressed by obtaining a list of essential documents from the ICPC coordinator, adding protocols based on UIFSA for interstate communication between courts, setting special shortened hearing times for cases involving interstate placements, and developing and holding trainings on ICPC as appropriate. Other strategies to expedite these cases identified in the survey and interview results will be incorporated into ongoing activities within the CIP Strategic Plans.

**B5: Establish a Collaborative Relationship with Agency and Private Partners to Improve the Well Being of Children and Families.**

Collaborative efforts will focus on issues concerning the well being of children in care such as eliminating barriers to permanency, and ensuring that appropriate and adequate services are available for all children in care. A committee, assigned by the Chair of the CIP Select Committee, Justice Saitta to assess the mental health services provided to children in the custody of the court, specifically, the use of psychotropic medication, submitted its report recommending a major symposium on psychotropic medication. The committee intends to apply for training grant funds.

According to the CIP reassessment, the availability of resources for parents to use in completing their case plans was often cited as a barrier to reunification and placement stability. As is true in other states, Nevada is faced with the challenge of providing effective and appropriate mental health assessment, including diagnosis and treatment for children and parents working on reunification. Identifying and cataloging needs and resources is an appropriate task for the local workgroups and a process that can lead to targeted strategies designed to fill service gaps, including collaborative planning and advocacy with other stakeholders in the child welfare arena.

**B6: Organize statewide initiatives to increase public awareness on the safety, permanency, and well being of children and strengthening families at risk.**

The CIP reassessment raised a number of specific issues that would benefit from statewide initiatives, including improving transitions for older youth, educational resources for children in foster care, and foster parenting. Also highlighted in the CIP reassessment was the need for statewide informational and educational campaigns on the public's responsibilities regarding children at risk and roles of social services agencies and the courts. Incorporation of statewide AFCARS and NCANDS court-specific data being generated from Nevada's SACWIS system "UNITY" will be an important feature of the statewide initiatives.

Meeting the needs of tribes and tribal children is also a priority. In collaboration with the Nevada State Indian Commission, the AOC Tribal Consortium, UNLV Boyd School of Law, UNR and UNLV schools of social work, and other entities as appropriate, collaborate on the development of training curricula related to the complex issues around tribal children and parents, including enforcement of the Indian Child

Welfare Act (ICWA), the recognition of tribal court orders, and full faith and credit. Development and distribution of ICWA protocols appropriate to the courts will be a priority. Assessment of resources for Native American children and families will also be undertaken in collaboration with state and county social services in designated counties. With the signing of the *Fostering Connections Act* in October 2008, by which the foster care services provided by the Tribes can be reimbursed directly by the federal government, and the emphasis on improved foster care for Tribal children, the role of the CIP committee as a resource to Nevada's tribes is even more important and offers opportunities for increased collaboration between state and tribal courts.

**B7: Improve permanency outcomes for children and families.**

The U.S. Children's Bureau (a subdivision of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) encourages state agencies to invite court and legal representatives (typically from CIP) to participate in federal Title IV-E foster care eligibility reviews. **The CIP coordinator will participate in the IV-E foster care eligibility review scheduled March 14-18, 2011.**

The August 2009 CFSR involved court representatives. A survey sent to Nevada's judges during the first quarter of 2009 requested volunteers to participate and 9 affirmative responses were received. Training was done in collaboration with DCFS. Through increased court and legal representatives' involvement in Child and Family Service Reviews, statewide preparation in the CFSR and PIP process, and Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Reviews, as appropriate, will result in better permanency outcomes for children and families. **On July 9, 2010, Justice Saitta, AOC Deputy Director Robin Sweet, and CIP coordinator Katherine Malzahn-Bass joined the court portion of the review to finalize the PIP. Eighth District Court Judge Steel participated for the entire 2-day session.**

The remaining pages of this chapter delineate how each of these seven strategies will be addressed. For each strategy, the necessary activities that must be completed to satisfy the strategy are listed. For each activity, the following is provided: description, accountable and participating party(s), benchmarks, and an anticipated timeframe for performing the activity. To assist in evaluating and measuring the success of court improvement efforts, regular reports will be provided on the progress of Court Improvement initiatives across all three Strategic Plans. Types of trainings, numbers of participants, and written summaries of evaluations will be collected, analyzed, and summarized as indicated in the Training Strategic Plan. For data collection and analysis, please see the Data Strategic Plan, which includes strategies for evaluation and progress measurement.

<b>B1: Focus the Court Improvement Program Committee toward advancing the outcomes of safety, permanency, and well being for children and families</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
B1.1 Hold bi-monthly meetings with the Chair and/or Vice Chair of CIP to ensure direction, development, and completion of activities in timely manner	CIP Chair and Vice-Chair CIP Coordinator	Bi-monthly meetings held	Jun. 2007 and Ongoing
B1.2 Expand monthly and bi-monthly meetings to include AOC Director and Deputy Director of Judicial Programs and Services (JPS)  Revised 2010: Regular meetings with AOC management and staff helping with CIP activities	CIP Staff AOC Director AOC Deputy Director(s) AOC staff	Regular meetings are scheduled and held with Deputy Director for JPS Project meetings are scheduled and held with AOC staff helping with CIP efforts Other meetings are scheduled and held as identified	Jun. 2008 and Ongoing
B1.3 Continue review of internal CIP processes and implement needed changes and continue development of CIP manual with procedures  Begin development of CIP policies and procedures to add to manual Hold annual planning meeting of CIP Select Committee in person	CIP Staff	Internal CIP processes reviewed and evaluated  CIP policy, processes and procedures manual developed  Annual meeting in person and quarterly video and teleconferenced meetings held	March 2011 – Dec. 2011 and each year thereafter
B1.4 (previously B1.5) Develop & sign a Declaration of Cooperation between branches of government stating support for taking appropriate steps to work together to improve safety, permanency & well being of children and strengthen families  NOTE: Interest in this effort shifts. CIP Coordinator will revisit occasionally to determine if the time is right to pursue.	AG CIP AOC	Review state law Identify any regulatory or statutory barriers Evaluate other states' practices with similar Declarations of Cooperation	Dec. 2008 Pending renewed interest
B1.5 (previously B1.6) CIP Chair, Coordinator, and other appropriate CIP Members and/or court staff to meet with Courts	CIP Chair CIP Coordinator CIP Members AOC	Meet with judges, masters, and other stakeholders as appropriate across the state to discuss NRS 432B cases, identify local needs, and how and what CIP can assist as needed	FY 2009 and ongoing

<b>B1: Focus the Court Improvement Program Committee toward advancing the outcomes of safety, permanency, and well being for children and families</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>B1.6 (previously B1.7)</b> CIP Coordinator to travel within state to provide oversight on subgrants as needed, and meet with agency and private partners	CIP Coordinator	Meet with subgrantees and other stakeholders, discuss projects, and confirm progress or identify any barriers	FY 2009 and ongoing

**B2: Formally establish the Court Improvement Office within the Administrative Office of the Courts with adequate personnel and resources to effectively staff the expanded mandate of the Court Improvement Committee and accomplish outreach and public education goals**

Activity	Accountable Party	Benchmarks	Timeline
B2.1 Continue to work together with public and private entities and individuals on local, state, and national levels to raise the knowledge and awareness of abuse and neglect and provide direct services to at-risk children and families	CIP Staff CIP Select Committee Judicial District Workgroups	Multi-disciplinary participation in local, statewide, and national events and activities , including volunteer appreciation  Project status reports from funded entities and in-kind time reports from CIP members, community organizations, and individuals  Published newspaper articles and reports on meetings and activities held, goals accomplished, and services provided	Jun 2008 and Ongoing
B2.2 Work with AOC webmaster and staff to revise and maintain CIP website	CIP Staff AOC webmaster AOC Public Information Officer	Ongoing regular additions, notices and updates, are provided for website  Calendar of Events including conferences and trainings, posted and updated  Posting of CIP Library List of Publications and Resources available on-line (including on-line training) or in the CIP Office	Jun 2008 and ongoing
B2.3 Identify and encourage volunteer resources throughout the state for special initiatives such as surveying service needs, disseminating information regarding model programs, and gathering best practices information for the CIP committee  Note: This is a large project that will require assistance outside of CIP and significant collaboration, and has been delayed	CIP AOC	List of volunteer resources developed and survey and dissemination methods identified	July 2008 July 2009 July 2011

<b>B2: Formally establish the Court Improvement Office within the Administrative Office of the Courts with adequate personnel and resources to effectively staff the expanded mandate of the Court Improvement Committee and accomplish outreach and public education goals</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
B2.4 Research, write, publish, and distribute pamphlets on legal and procedural issues, e.g., Guardianship as a permanent plan; what children should expect from the courts, their lawyer and social worker; rights of youth leaving care; understanding the juvenile court; and my rights. Publish and distribute to courts, agencies, providers and attorneys, and the public	CIP Coordinator Consultant	One pamphlet (5000 copies)	Dec 31, 2008 and each year thereafter  Revised 2010: Project has been deferred per Committee recommendation
B2.5 Support National Adoption month in November and Prevent Child Abuse month in April	CIP Coordinator CIP Committee AOC Funded entities	Share and/or distribute available information	Each fiscal year Beginning in Nov. 2008
B2.6 Efforts related to improving foster parent recruitment, retention, and training	CIP Staff Foster Parent Associations Funded entities	Project status reports from funded entities; In-Kind time reports from community organizations and individuals; press releases; project status reports from funded entities	Reports due Quarterly from funded entities
B2.7 CIP Coordinator and other CIP members attend national conferences Court Improvement Program meeting	CIP Coordinator CIP Committee members or their designees	Participation in national conferences	Each fiscal year
B2.8 Obtain a CIP Banner for use in public awareness campaigns, at CIP meetings, and other CIP information dissemination opportunities <b>COMPLETED</b>	CIP Coordinator	CIP Banner depicting the mission or purpose of CIP displayed at CIP meetings, conferences, trainings, and other appropriate opportunities	Dec. 2009 and ongoing
B2.9 Display for current CIP strategies and activities for use in public awareness campaigns, at CIP meetings, and other CIP and child welfare information dissemination opportunities <b>COMPLETED</b>	CIP Coordinator CIP Committee AOC	Poster display made available to CIP committee members, AOC judicial education and other staff, to promote CIP and related strategies and activities at CIP meetings, conferences, trainings, and other appropriate opportunities. Display updated as appropriate.	Dec. 2009 and ongoing



**B2: Formally establish the Court Improvement Office within the Administrative Office of the Courts with adequate personnel and resources to effectively staff the expanded mandate of the Court Improvement Committee and accomplish outreach and public education goals**

Activity	Accountable Party	Benchmarks	Timeline
B2.10 Appropriate funds on an annual basis for local pilot CASA programs relating to improving advocacy resources for children at risk. 1 grant/year	CIP CASA Director	Local CASA program assisted with start up funding	Each fiscal year as funding allows
B2.11 Appropriate funds annually for materials to use in public awareness campaigns, trainings, special events, and other CIP and child welfare information dissemination opportunities	CIP Coordinator	Materials developed and/or purchased (i.e., magnets, brochures, etc.) for dissemination	Each fiscal year as funding allows

<b>B3: Establish a Collaborative Relationship with Agency and Private Partners to Improve Safety for Children</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<p>B3.1 Appoint the members of the standing committee and chair, and staff meetings as necessary <b>COMPLETED</b></p> <p>Revised: Reappointed as Juvenile Dependency Rules subcommittee, chaired by Judge Puccinelli (4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District)</p>	<p>Chief Justice or Chair of CIP</p> <p>CIP Staff</p> <p>Subcommittee Chair</p>	<p>Letters of appointment signed by Chief Justice or Chair of CIP</p> <p>Meetings scheduled</p> <p>Note: The Juvenile Dependency Rules Subcommittee is dormant pending revisions of Chapter 432B</p>	<p>Dec 2007</p> <p>Revised: <b>Meetings to be reconvened following Chapter 432B revisions</b></p>
<p>B3.2 Review state law and court rules for conformity with Federal child welfare law and regulations</p>	<p><b>CIP Select Committee</b></p> <p>CIP Staff</p> <p><b>Agency Partners</b></p> <p><b>Consultant, if needed</b></p>	<p>Legislative proposals for <b>biennial</b> Legislature, <b>as needed</b></p>	<p>July 2008</p> <p>Dec 2008</p> <p>January <b>2009</b> ongoing and <b>as needed</b></p>
<p><b>B3.3 (previously B3.4)</b> Work with legislators to promote issues related to the safety of children and strengthening families</p>	<p>CIP</p> <p>Designated Judges</p>	<p>Ongoing at CIP meetings with Legislative members</p> <p>Attend Leg. Committees as requested</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>B3.4 (previously B3.5)</b> Study appropriateness of uniform statewide rules and forms regarding abuse and neglect proceedings and make recommendations</p>	<p><b>CIP Select Committee</b></p> <p>Designated judges</p> <p>Rural attorneys</p>	<p><b>Minutes of CIP Select Committee</b></p>	<p>Dec 2010 and <b>as needed</b></p>
<p><b>B3.5 (previously B3.6)</b> Review Nevada statutes relevant to child welfare and consider recommendations <b>toward improving safety and permanency</b></p>	<p><b>Rules Subcommittee</b></p> <p>CIP <b>Select Committee</b></p> <p>AOC</p>	<p><b>Bills reviewed and discussed by Rule Subcommittee as made available for possible CIP or judicial support or testimony</b></p>	<p><b>As needed per biennial legislature schedule; ongoing</b></p>
<p><b>B3.6 (previously B3.7)</b> Work with DCFS to make the UNITY system safety outcome measure reports more easily understood by non-agency personnel.</p> <p>The CIP Select Committee will review these reports on safety <b>outcome</b> measures, i.e., timeliness of initiating child abuse and neglect investigations; recurrence of abuse or neglect by parents, adequacy of services to protect children at home and prevent removal, and risk of harm to children while in foster care</p>	<p><b>CIP Select Committee</b></p> <p><b>CIP Staff</b></p> <p>DCFS</p>	<p>Compiled review standards, developed in collaboration with DCFS</p> <p>Presentation by DCFS on safety <b>outcome</b> measures at semi-annual meetings of committee</p>	<p>Ongoing starting in <b>2011</b></p>

<b>B4: Establish a Collaborative Relationship with Agency and Private Partners to Improve Permanency for Children.</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>B4.1 (previously B4.2)</b> Survey courts on appointment practices and policies <b>COMPLETED</b>	CIP Staff NRC	Summary of survey results on appointment practices and policies	May 2009
<b>B4.2 (previously B4.3)</b> Survey attorneys on appointment practices and policies Note: Survey to be finalized and disseminated after results are compiled from the judicial survey	CIP Staff Consultant	Summary of survey results on appointment practices and policies	Jan 2012
<b>B4.3 (previously B4.4)</b> Review standards for legal representation adopted in other states and ABA guidelines and make recommendations to CIP committee on establishing standards of representation. Note: This will be completed in conjunction with the review of the judicial and attorney surveys	CIP Staff Consultant	Consultant to lead forum on the use of standards for representation and other states experience, and review different models for improving representation through standards, guidelines, contracts, etc.	June 2012
<b>B4.4 (previously B4.5)</b> Review surveys and make recommendations to CIP Select Committee regarding possible legislation to facilitate improved representation	CIP committee AOC Legislative liaison	Document presenting recommendations to CIP committee regarding possible legislation to facilitate improved representation	ongoing-see above
<b>B4.5 (previously B4.6)</b> Acquire and/or organize special training curriculum modules for pro bono attorneys	CIP Staff NRC State Bar	Training modules specific for attorneys performing pro bono work for child welfare cases utilized in trainings throughout the state	June 2012; ongoing
<b>B4.6 (previously B4.7)</b> Assist in the development of attorney practice standards that encourage active, competent representation for all parties.	CIP Staff NRC	Work with NRC to present to CIP Select Committee alternative models of attorney practice standards	Dec. 2012- June 2013

<b>B4: Establish a Collaborative Relationship with Agency and Private Partners to Improve Permanency for Children.</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
B4.7 (previously B4.8) Identify local barriers to permanency, beginning with adoption. In each of the nine Judicial Districts, utilizing local stakeholder workgroups that are informed with data, identified goals, and reporting format.	CIP Chair CIP Staff District Ct Judges Contractors County DSS DCFS	Submit letters to District Ct Judges authorizing workgroup formation Create and distribute data sheets for each district (see D2.3) Contract with facilitator for identified Judicial Districts Convene adoption barriers workgroups in 9 Judicial Districts Receive workgroup action plans (see D2.3) Analyze and summarize barriers to adoption by JD for entire state and actions to resolve (see D2.3) Provide copies of workgroup results to DCFS in response to the PIP	Oct 2010 thru Mar 2011
B4.8 Develop baseline data on TRP/adoption to inform workgroups as referenced in D2.3	DCFS CIP Select Committee WCDSS CCDFS	Baseline data sheets	
B4.9 In conjunction with agency partners, develop a targeted action plan to reduce major barriers to finalization of adoptions	CIP Staff DCFS, Admin; Clark, Washoe & Rural Directors/designee	Copy of statewide action plan (see D2.3)	July 2011
B4.10 Review at CIP Select Committee meetings, UNITY data for preceding six months on outcome measures, i.e., foster care reentry, foster placement stability, permanency goals for children, finalization of adoptions, and the use of APPLA as a permanency goal	CIP Staff DCFS	Develop and review standards with DCFS- semiannual meetings with representatives from DCFS to review UNITY data on well being indicators	Ongoing starting in 2010

<b>B4: Establish a Collaborative Relationship with Agency and Private Partners to Improve Permanency for Children.</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
B4.11 Based on the 2008 Nevada State ICPC Assessment and best practices identified from sister states, in collaboration with agency partners, CIP Select Committee recommends any needed changes to Court Rules and/or statutes to facilitate cross jurisdictional placements.	State ICPC coordinator CIP Staff DCFS Consultant coordinator	Minutes recommending modifications to Court Rules and/or statutes as needed Identify and evaluate for Nevada's use existing web-based training for judges and DCFS on effective use of ICPC	Sept. 2010  Dec. 2011
B4.12 Acquire or organize training modules for attorneys and CASA volunteers on cross-jurisdictional resources	ICPC Coordinator DCFS Judges Lawyers CASA	Incorporate into regularly provided trainings for social workers, lawyers, judges, providers, CASA volunteers, and foster parents	July 2011 Ongoing thereafter

<b>B5: Establish a Collaborative Relationship with Agency and Private Partners to Improve the Well Being of Children and Families</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<p>B5.1 Establish committee and appoint chair, and staff meeting as needed</p> <p>Meetings will be held throughout the state</p> <p>Note: CIP ad hoc working group was appointed January 2009 to study and make recommendations regarding mental health services for children in foster care, specifically, the appropriate use of psychotropic medication <b>COMPLETED</b></p>	<p>Chief Justice or CIP Chair</p> <p>CIP Staff</p> <p>Consultant</p>	<p>Letters of appointment signed by Chief Justice or Chair of CIP</p> <p>Meetings scheduled and held</p> <p>Meetings held and reports to CIP Select Committee</p>	<p>Dec 2009</p> <p>Meetings starting Jan 2010</p>
<p>B5.2 Utilize Judicial District workgroups to survey courts to determine range of services used in case plans for children/families and identify service gaps</p>	<p>CIP Chair</p> <p>CIP Staff</p> <p>District Ct Judges</p> <p>Contractor</p> <p>County DSS</p> <p>DCFS</p> <p>Local United Ways</p>	<p>Submit letters to District Ct Judges authorizing new workgroup goal</p> <p>Create and distribute data sheets for each district</p> <p>Contract with facilitator for identified Judicial Districts</p> <p>Convene services used in case plan workgroups in Judicial Districts</p> <p>Receive workgroup action plans</p> <p>Summarize services and gaps by Judicial District</p> <p>Provide copies of workgroup results to agency partners and United Way</p>	<p>Oct 2011 – Jul 2012</p>
<p>B5.3 (previously B5.4) CIP Select Committee will review semi-annually, UNITY data for preceding 6 months for outcome measures, e.g., needs and services of child, parents, &amp; foster parents; child and family involvement in case planning, worker visits to child &amp; parents, educational needs of child, physical and mental health</p>	<p>CIP Staff</p> <p>DCFS</p>	<p>Develop review standards for Nevada with DCFS and semiannual meetings with representatives from DCFS to review well-being indicators</p>	<p>Ongoing starting in 2011</p>

<b>B6: Organize and/or participate in statewide initiatives to increase public awareness on issues related to the safety, permanency and well being of children and strengthening families at risk</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<p>B6.1 Statewide initiative to improve educational achievements of children at risk, beginning with statewide summit on related issues, including truancy court diversion programs, special education rights and advocacy, transitional education plans, most effective use of FCIA funds, and programming to support post secondary education</p> <p><b>NOTE: Education was an area that NV passed in CFSR and so will become less focused on during the next few years while areas of deficiency are addressed.</b></p>	<p>CIP Courts Schools ILP coordinator</p>	<p>Review of state FCIA plan by CIP Select Committee</p> <p>Expand Public Service Announcements (PSA's) on Independent Living (IL) and Educational Training Vouchers (ETV's)</p> <p>Ad hoc working group to present recommendations to the Select Committee on priorities for improving educational outcomes through the courts</p>	<p>Jun 2009 thru Dec. 2009 and ongoing, as needed</p>
<p>B6.2 Develop and host a statewide summit including multidisciplinary stakeholders, e.g., CIP, court staff, legal representatives, welfare agencies, service providers, schools, or foster parents, to raise the level of awareness around issues of child well being, foster youth in transition, strengthening families, placement stability, adoptions, and(or) permanency (See also Training 4.4, 5.1)</p>	<p>CIP staff <b>CIP Planning subcommittee</b> AOC</p>	<p>Determine scope of Summit</p> <p>Contract consultant</p> <p>Outreach to stakeholders</p> <p>Agenda content prepared</p> <p>Summit Held</p>	<p><b>Revised: Spring or summer 2011</b></p>
<p>B6.3 Statewide Summit convened by Supreme Court on improving outcomes for older youth, child well being, foster youth in transition, strengthening families, placement stability, adoptions, and(or) permanency (See also Training 4.4, 5.1)</p>	<p>CIP Youth Advisory Committee NRC's DCFS</p>	<p><b>CIP Planning Subcommittee</b> conducts needs assessment, review of national research on issues, compare with Nevada data, and draft agenda for conference.</p> <p>Obtain sponsorships from private sector.</p>	<p><b>Revised: Spring or summer 2011</b></p>
<p>B6.4 Identify and develop future projects with interested Nevada tribes beginning with Report on the Findings from the August 2009 State/County Tribal Regional Roundtable Meetings by DCFS and the Nevada Indian Commission</p>	<p>CIP AOC Consultant Tribal Reps</p>	<p>Report on Findings reviewed by committee, working group formed, review of national research on current tribal projects and compare with Nevada data, survey youth in care regarding needs and interests, draft recommendation to CIP Committee</p>	<p>March 2010 – Sept. 2011</p>

<b>B7: Improve permanency outcomes for children and families through increased court and legal representatives' involvement in Child and Family Service Reviews, statewide preparation in the CFSR and PIP process, and Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Reviews, as appropriate</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
B7.1 Provide information regarding CFSR/PIP and IV-E processes including on-site review reports to all court personnel, interested judges, and legal representatives	CIP Staff DCFS	Information provided, as appropriate CFSR power point disseminated to judges and masters and invite DCFS to submit additional information regarding CFSR and PIP	June 2009 and each year thereafter as needed
B7.2 Review materials provided and convene appointed workgroups to identify issues in on-site review reports and develop plan and activities to address those issues	CIP committees Appointed Workgroup	Identify eligibility issues deriving from failure to make necessary findings and unacceptable findings. This is a continuing activity.	Dec. 2009 and ongoing
B7.3 Facilitate legal and judicial participation in the CFSR/PIP and IV-E reviews as appropriate. <b>COMPLETED</b>	AOC CIP Staff DCFS	Attend meetings	When scheduled in 2008 and ongoing
B7.4 <b>Participate in the IV-E review for Nevada</b>	AOC <b>CIP Staff</b> <b>DCFS</b> Judges	<b>Attend meetings</b>	<b>March 2011</b>
B7.5 Develop and organize special IV-E training <b>modules</b> for judges, attorneys, and other interested stakeholders	CIP staff <b>CIP Planning subcommittee</b> AOC	Determine scope of Training Contract consultant Outreach to stakeholders Agenda content prepared Training Held	<b>Spring or summer 2011</b>



**Judicial Council of the State of Nevada  
COURT IMPROVEMENT FOR THE PROTECTION AND PERMANENCY  
OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN (CIP) SELECT COMMITTEE**

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