



# **Nevada's Court Improvement Program**

## **Training 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: Training Strategic Plan and Collaborative Efforts***

To achieve its mission, the State of Nevada's Court Improvement Program has a long history of training and educating the judiciary, the child welfare agency staff, and other key stakeholders serving the children and families who enter the child welfare system.

During the last fiscal year, CIP supported 20 Committee members and representatives to attend a variety of conferences including Judicial Leadership Summit, Beyond the Bench 20, and the Annual CIP Meeting and Children's Bureau Data and Technology Conference. The Committee has implemented a unique method of sharing information gleaned from attending trainings and conferences. Attendees are expected to complete a simple form outlining what one thing they brought back that could improve Nevada's service to children and families who enter the child welfare system. They are also asked if they would recommend attendance at this conference in the future and why. These forms are submitted with their travel claims, and, then, at the first Committee meeting following the conference the attendee is expected to make a brief presentation. The intention is to extend the educational value of our funds beyond those who attend conferences and trainings. If an attendee found a national speaker to be particularly compelling, the Committee will so note to support at a suitable training, on a priority issue.

The Committee's state legislator member attended the 2010 Spring National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators conference, where she learned more about current opportunities for partnering with and engaging child welfare agencies. Assemblywoman Smith shared with the Committee that she was particularly interested in the how other states are tracking and assisting the children in the child welfare system, who are students in the public education system. She intends to recommend that the state add information about students who are in transition or foster care to the student information system currently under development in Nevada.

The Committee also has supported and plans to continue supporting the development of CASA programs in rural areas. Utilizing a subgrant from the FY 2011 Training Grant, the Nevada CASA Association, will assist with program development and volunteer CASA training for Pahrump in Nye County's Fifth Judicial District.

During this second year of funding for the Surrogate Education Advocacy Project, approximately 27 additional surrogate volunteers have been recruited and trained, 34 children have had surrogates appointed to represent them to date. Federal law requires that children in group settings have a “surrogate parent” appointed to represent the children’s education needs with the school district. This project enhances and improves the court’s performance in juvenile dependency cases by ensuring that the special education needs are assessed, monitored, and addressed. Training materials have been developed for transplanting the project into other jurisdictions.

The Committee has collaborated with, and intends to continue collaborating with the AOC Judicial Education, the judiciary, agency partners, attorneys, and other partners to establish a baseline for training curriculum and priorities. These priorities will guide the curriculum for the biennial statewide conference organized by the CIP. They will also direct which speakers, training modules, benchcards, and materials the Committee will support for in-state seminars and conferences sponsored by such collaborative partners as CASA, the State Bar, Foster and Adoptive Parent Associations, Family Law Judges, Nevada District Court Judges Association, and the Court Administrators and Clerks Conferences. Due to fiscal and time constraints, the Committee plans to invest in training materials and modules that may be used as refreshers, or in more than one, or even in a web-based venue.

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

Each of the following strategies links specific activities to one of the three strategic plans, based upon their primary intent. The three strategic plans are:

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

### **Training Objectives**

In the area of education and training, the Nevada CIP will focus on implementing continuing education and training for judicial officers and court staff involved in child welfare cases, collaborative training of participants in child welfare court events, and assistance in the training of specific stakeholder groups involved in the child welfare arena. The specific objectives in the education and training area are:

- Improve outcomes for children at risk and strengthen families;
- Present collaborative multi-disciplinary training to the judiciary, state and county child welfare agencies, and other stakeholders involved in child welfare matters; and,
- Encourage, and where appropriate, support training for specific stakeholder groups involved in the child welfare arena.

## **Training Plan Objectives, Strategies and Activities**

The following five strategies have been identified to meet these objectives:

### **T1: Inform child welfare stakeholders, lawyers, and members of the judiciary on the current national trends, federal child welfare law, and best practices by provide training opportunities**

This strategy provides the means for sending CIP representatives and other pertinent child welfare stakeholders to national conferences where current national trends and requirements, regarding child welfare cases, **will be introduced and discussed.**

### **T2: Develop **or identify** continuing education programs and materials for Judges and Juvenile Masters on child welfare issues**

This strategy affords judges and juvenile masters who hear child welfare cases meaningful and on-going training opportunities, both within Nevada and at the national level, to help them remain well-versed in all aspects of child welfare laws and issues, including ASFA requirements, ICWA requirements, as well as other state and federal statutory requirements.

### **T3: Develop **or identify** continuing education programs and materials for court staff involved in child welfare issues**

Recognizing the unique demands on court staff involved in child welfare cases, this strategy provides meaningful and on-going training opportunities on aspects of child welfare laws and issues that impact the **outcome** measures, standards, and best practices used by Judges and Court Hearing Masters, to meet ASFA requirements, ICWA requirements, and other state and federal statutory requirements.

### **T4: Develop **or identify** collaborative multi-disciplinary training and education regarding child welfare court events and best practices**

Collaborative training among all stakeholders is a critical factor necessary to **initiate** successful systemic change **throughout the entire** child welfare process. Such multi-disciplinary training will ensure that participating stakeholders are “on the same page” regarding events, processes, outcomes, best practices, and expectations of all players **involved** with child welfare cases. This strategy provides **a process to enable and inform systemic change.**

**T5: Support training and education for specific stakeholder groupings involved in child welfare court events**

This strategy provides a mechanism for CIP to assist child welfare stakeholder groups in developing and conducting local training, supporting projects that promote training, or to attend pertinent national training, concerning child welfare issues.

The remaining pages of this chapter delineate how each of these five 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 party(s), interim benchmarks, completion indicators, and an anticipated timeframe for performing the activity.



<b>T1. Provide training and educational opportunities for child welfare stakeholders, lawyers, and members of the judiciary to inform on the current national trends, federal child welfare law, and best practices and standards</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
T 1.1 Send appropriate representatives to national conferences or any other conference deemed appropriate by the CIP Select Committee	CIP Reps AOC Reps	Participation in national conferences  Each participant will report to the CIP Select Committee on the Conference and identify projects/resources that would improve Nevada's child welfare system.	Each fiscal year
T 1.2 Appoint CIP member to work with Youth Advisory Councils as required by FCIA (aka Chaffee)	CIP Reps AOC Reps Child Welfare Agencies	Participation in Youth Advisory Councils Meeting minutes and/or reports prepared and distributed to CIP members	Each fiscal year beginning FY 2008
T 1.3 Assist in sending foster youth to a national conference sponsored by a National Resource Center. Through scholarships awarded through a competitive process not to exceed \$1,000 each for a maximum of five youth per year.	CIP coordinator CASA Foster Parents Assoc. CIP Select Committee	Announcement of Conference, dissemination of application, review of applications received, and awarding of scholarships  Reports to the CIP Select Committee at meeting following Conference	FY 2009  Revised: FY-2010
T 1.4 Send a 5-person team to attend the Judicial Leadership Summit	CIP Reps	Participation in Judicial Leadership Summit and report to the CIP Committee on the Summit any updates on the state plan  State Plan Revisions, Training, or other materials from Summit	FY 2011
T 1.5 CIP members and appropriate others attend national conferences and annual Court Improvement Program meeting	CIP Coordinator CIP Members or their reps	Participation in Annual Court Improvement Program meeting  Reports to the CIP Select Committee at meeting following Conference	Each fiscal year
T 1.6 Appropriate representatives attend Model Courts training	CIP Select Committee reps CIP Coordinator	Participation in Model Courts training/conference reports to CIP Select Committee at meeting after Conference	Each fiscal year training is offered

<b>T2. Develop or Identify and implement continuing education programs and materials for judges and juvenile masters on child welfare issues</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
T 2.1 In collaboration with the Judicial Education unit of the AOC and national consultants, establish a baseline for training curriculum and priorities.	CIP Planning Subcommittee CIP Staff Contractor AOC Judicial Ed Judicial officers DCFS Other stakeholders	Identify training needs CIP Planning subcommittees established Baseline curriculum and priorities reported and documented in CIP Select Committee minutes	Each fiscal year starting Sept. 2008  Revised: ongoing
T 2.2 In collaboration with agency partners, AOC Judicial Education and other partners develop or identify brief dependency training modules and/or bench cards in compliance with the Judicial Benchbook on child welfare cases for courtroom practice. The intent is that these training modules could be used as a refresher course in subsequent years	CIP Contractor if needed AOC Judicial Ed Judicial officers DCFS	Brief training modules or bench card materials made available	Each fiscal year
T 2.3 (previously T 2.4) Provide training on child welfare issues at annual Family Law Judges and Nevada District Judges Association conferences	CIP Contractor/speaker AOC Judicial Ed Judicial officers	Child welfare tracks in conference schedules annually Speakers identified and contracted, as necessary Training evaluation and feedback collected	Each fiscal year
T 2.4 (previously T 2.5) Send judicial officers to NCJFCJ Child Abuse and Neglect Institute training	CIP Judicial officers	Post dates of conference on CIP website and email judges information Participation in national conference and reports to the CIP Select Committee at meeting following Conference	Each fiscal year

<b>T3. Develop or Identify and implement continuing education programs and materials for court staff on child welfare issues</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
T 3.1 Identify training and education material for court staff involved in child welfare cases	CIP Planning Subcommittee CIP Staff AOC Judicial Ed Court reps	Identify training needs	Each fiscal year starting FY2009
T3.2 (previously T 3.3) Provide training and/or resources on child welfare issues at Court Administrators and Clerks Conferences  Note: Due to fiscal constraints more court staff training will be conducted using distance methodologies. We will explore our options related to this new opportunity.	CIP Contractor/speaker AOC Judicial Ed Court administrators & reps	Child welfare tracks and/or resources provided in conference scheduled biennially Speakers identified and contracted, as necessary Training evaluation and feedback collected Resources and materials made available at conference, through request, or on-line Reports to the CIP Select Committee at meeting following Conference	Each fiscal year conference is offered

<b>T4. Develop or identify and implement collaborative multi-disciplinary training and education regarding child welfare court law, standards, and best practices</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<p>T 4.1 In collaboration with key stakeholders and partners, organize or support training modules on specific practice, policy, subject matter, research, best practices, on-going collaboration, and issues identified in the representation surveys one or more of these or related topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judicial leadership regarding change in the treatment of parties involved in child abuse and neglect cases</li> <li>• Safety and risk assessment</li> <li>• ASFA requirements and timeframes</li> <li>• The <i>Resource Guidelines</i> and other best practices in child protection cases</li> <li>• Diligent search for fathers and other relatives</li> <li>• Compelling reasons</li> <li>• Reasonable efforts</li> <li>• Understanding concurrent planning</li> <li>• Purpose, scope, and expectations for each hearing type</li> <li>• Increase parental involvement in case planning</li> <li>• Improve visitation practice</li> <li>• PIP strategies designed to improve the case planning, case review, permanency, well being, and adoption</li> <li>• New child welfare agency policies and practices</li> <li>• Substance use and its impact on children, families, and the courts</li> <li>• Title IV of the Civil rights Act of 1964 and the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 (MEPA)</li> <li>• Awareness of LGBTQ youth</li> </ul>	<p>CIP Planning Committee                      CIP Staff                      Contractor/speaker                      AOC Judicial Ed                      Judicial officers                      DCFS                      Other stakeholders and partners</p>	<p>Trainers contracted or otherwise obtained                      Training calendar disseminated                      Attendance at regional training and training evaluation and feedback collected                      Reports to the CIP Select Committee at meeting following Conference</p>	<p>Each fiscal year starting FY2009</p>
<p>T 4.2 Appropriate funds on an annual basis for local pilot programs relating to training and education regarding child welfare court law, standards, and best practices</p>	<p>CIP                      Other stakeholders                      Consultant                      Funded entity</p>	<p>Identify annual goals and priorities, announce grant funds, review applications and award funds                      Annual review of pilot programs                      Report on results</p>	<p>Each fiscal year</p>

<b>T4. Develop or identify and implement collaborative multi-disciplinary training and education regarding child welfare court law, standards, and best practices</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
T 4.3 Provide assistance for speakers or attendees for the annual statewide CASA multidisciplinary conference focusing on issues facing children and families at risk in Nevada for all stakeholders	CIP Select Committee AOC Judicial Ed NV CASA Assn	Curriculum updated based upon feedback Trainers contracted or otherwise obtained Judicial officers and attorneys invited	Each fiscal year starting FY 2009
T4.4 Develop and present targeted training on improving the dependency process. Possible topics include representation of parents in abuse and neglect proceedings; what is termination of parental rights?; training for case workers on appearing in court; law enforcement and case workers on risk and safety assessments.	CIP Select Committee CIP Staff DCFS AOC Judicial Ed AOC IT Consultant	Appoint a conference planning subcommittee to develop the curriculum Curriculum development Training held Reports to the CIP Select Committee at meeting following training	Spring or summer 2011

<b>T5. Support training and education for specific groups of stakeholders</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Accountable Party</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<p>T 5.1 Work with stakeholders to develop <b>or support</b> training programs and materials for stakeholders, including supporting local and statewide pilot projects that show collaborative efforts regarding best practices in child welfare cases, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ASFA mandates and timeframe requirements</li> <li>▪ The <i>Resource Guidelines</i> and other best practices in child protection cases</li> <li>▪ Adoption stability</li> <li>▪ Behavioral Health</li> <li>▪ Child development</li> <li>▪ Educational rights/services</li> <li>▪ Roles and responsibilities</li> <li>▪ Increase parental involvement</li> <li>▪ Meaningful visitation</li> <li>▪ New child welfare agency policies and practices</li> <li>▪ Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children</li> <li>▪ <b>Meaningful Tribal Engagement</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Uniformity of court practices for in/out of home cases</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Judicial methodologies for speaking with children in court</b></li> </ul>	<p>CIP Contractor AOC Judicial Ed Judicial officers DCFS WCDSS CCDFS Foster and Adoptive Parent Associations Lawyers CASA Volunteers</p>	<p>Training opportunities identified, as needed Trainers/consultants contracted or otherwise obtained Curriculum and training materials developed <b>or identified</b> Stakeholders' participation Training held, as appropriate Training evaluation and feedback collected Reports to the CIP Select Committee at meeting following Conference</p>	<p>FY2009 thru FY2015</p>
<p><b>T5.2 (previously T.5.4)</b> Appropriate funds on an annual basis for local program relating to improvement in <b>such areas as early childhood representation and timeliness to adoption.</b></p>	<p>CIP Other stakeholders Contractor</p>	<p>Announce grant funds, review applications and award funds Report on results (data) collected to CIP Select Committee Annual review of programs</p>	<p>Each fiscal year beginning 2010</p>

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

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