

**Child Welfare**

NEW YORK  
STATE

Unified Court System • Division of Court Operations  
Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution and Court Improvement Programs

**Court Improvement Project**

*Annual Program Assessment Report*

*December 31, 2008*

NEW YORK STATE  
CHILD WELFARE COURT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT  
ANNUAL REPORT

2008

New York State Unified Court System

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Chief Judge of the State of New York

**HON. ANN PFAU**

Chief Administrative Judge of the State of New York

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## **Introduction**

This report describes activities undertaken towards implementation of the child welfare court improvement project grant objectives described in the preliminary five year strategic plan submitted with the 2006 grant proposals and refined in the final strategic plan submitted in the 2007 grant proposals. Activities undertaken during 2008 are the primary focus of this report.

Much of our work during 2008 has laid the groundwork for several new projects focused on improving the timeliness of child welfare court proceedings, particularly in the New York City Family Court and the largest jurisdictions outside New York City.

Major initiatives that have begun or are in the final planning stages include:

- Support for a reform initiative in the NYC Family Court primarily focused on improving the timeliness of court proceedings in child welfare matters;
- The development and promulgation of statewide child welfare court data metrics to assess and monitor timeliness of child welfare court case management practices;
- Implementation of a child welfare judicial training program in collaboration with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges; and
- Expansion of "Model Court" best practices to additional courts outside NYC (with an emphasis on the jurisdictions with the largest child welfare caseloads and foster care populations).

We have attempted to integrate the three CIP grants into one holistic program. We recognize, however, that each grant has specific objectives. Resources are preserved in each grant to achieve those objectives. This introduction outlines the general structure of our program and steps that have been taken to ensure our work is done in collaboration with a broad array of stakeholders. Subsequent sections address the specific activities undertaken in each of the three grant programs.

## **Governance Structure and Action Plan**

The Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children ("the Commission") was established in 1988 to address the issues facing children whose lives and life chances are shaped by New York State's courts. The Commission is chaired by Chief Judge Judith Kaye and its members include judges, lawyers, advocates, physicians, legislators and state and local officials.

Chief Judge Kaye has appointed the Honorable Sharon Townsend, Administrative Judge of the 8th Judicial District to chair a CWCIP Advisory Group as a sub-committee of the Commission to provide advice, counsel and support to CWCIP staff, to oversee the development of goals and

objectives and monitor implementation. CWCIP staff work in close collaboration with Commission staff with the Commission acting as a “think tank” developing innovative programs to address emergent issues of importance to the child welfare field and the CWCIP focusing on implementation of ongoing fundamental court improvement activities. This division of functions has resulted in a synergistic partnership.

In May of 2007, the CWCIP hosted a two day Action Planning Meeting at the state Judicial Institute. The meeting, facilitated by senior staff of the Permanency Planning Department of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges brought together CWCIP and Commission staff; Judge Townsend; New York City Family Court Administrative Judge Joseph Lauria; senior administrators and staff of the Office of Court Administration’s Divisions of Court Operations and Technology and New York City Family Court; and representatives of the state Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). This meeting provided a forum for clarification of the mission and goals, development of concrete objectives and a discussion of activities designed to achieve tangible, measurable improved outcomes for children and families in the child welfare system.

During this Action Planning meeting, the Child Welfare Court Improvement Project developed the following mission statement:

***The mission of the Child Welfare Court Improvement Project is to provide resources and technical assistance to enhance, promote and coordinate innovation in court operations and practices in proceedings involving abuse and neglect, voluntary placement, termination of parental rights and adoption that lead to improved safety, permanency and well being for children and enhanced capacity of families to provide for their children’s needs.***

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To achieve the CWCIP mission, the following broad goals were established:

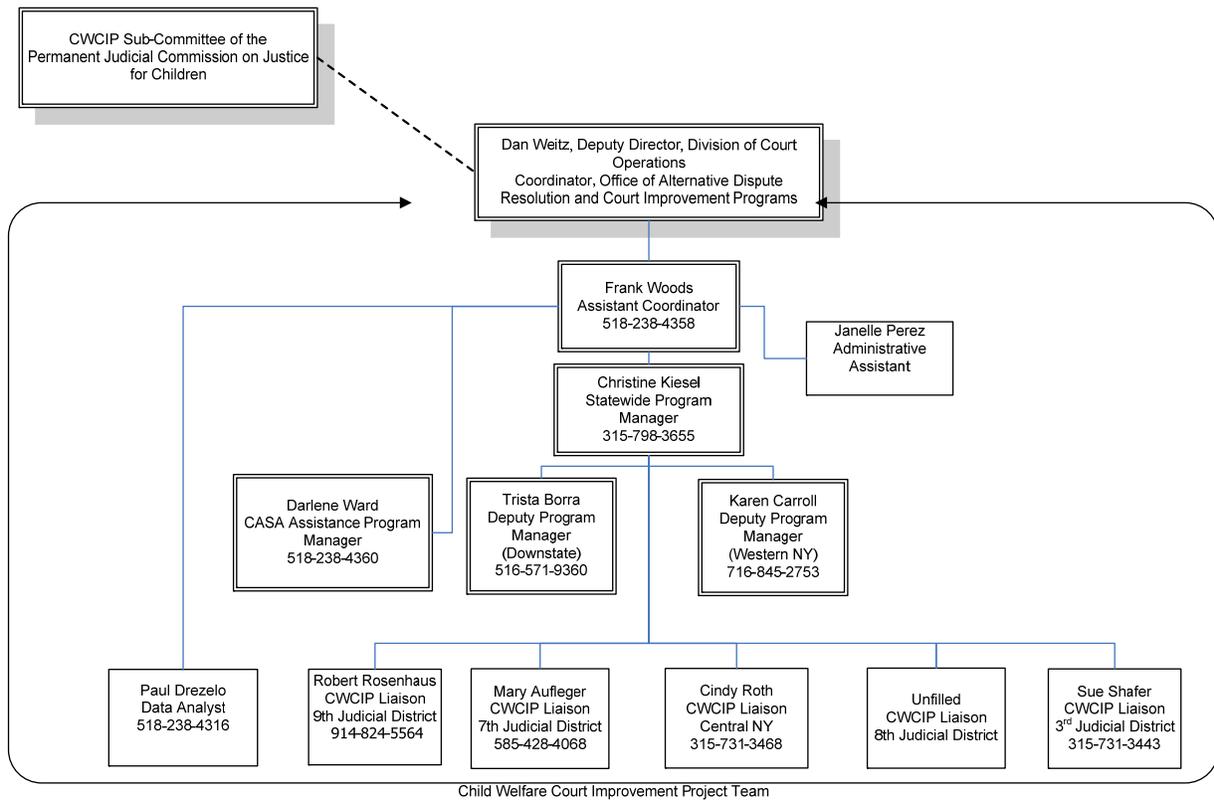
- All relevant administrative units of the Unified Court System collaborate to promote best court practices in child welfare cases;
- A broad array of statewide stakeholders engage in ongoing, meaningful inter-organizational collaboration to promote best court practices in child welfare cases throughout the state;
- In every county of the state, an array of local stakeholders engages in ongoing, meaningful collaboration to promote best court practices in child welfare cases in their respective communities;
- Every participant in child welfare court proceedings is afforded due process, procedural fairness and timely resolution;
- Courts consistently conduct the highest quality child welfare proceedings to ensure that children are kept safe, are maintained in their own homes whenever possible and

appropriate; children’s length of stay in foster care is reduced; and the health, mental health and educational needs of children are met;

- Courts consistently treat all participants in child welfare matters fairly and with consideration;
- All affected participants including but not limited to parents, children, local Departments of Social Services, current and potential relative and non-relative caregivers, and voluntary foster care agencies have ready access to quality representation and advocacy services; and
- Judicial and managerial decision making in child welfare matters is consistently supported by the highest quality data collection, analysis and automation technology.

### Implementation Strategies

To achieve these goals, the CWCIP provides coordination and subject matter expertise to support reform efforts. Activities are implemented by a centrally administered team operating in offices around the state. Several staff members are co-located in key family courts to support implementation at the local level (Chart A).



**Chart A**

### Supporting Collaboration

A key strategy is to develop partnerships with other units within the Office of Court Administration, Counsel's office, local judicial districts, the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), the 58 local departments of social services and other state, local and national agencies that impact families affected by child welfare court proceedings. CWCIP staff members participate in statewide committees focused on child welfare issues including the Permanency Now Workgroup, the Statewide Permanency Planning Team, and the Partnership for Family Recovery.

CWCIP staff members provide support to local stakeholder groups formed to advise Family Courts on the implementation of a broad array of best practices. The efforts of local Family Court Judges and Supervising Judges, and the collaborative efforts of the bench, bar and local departments of social services not only result in enhanced court operations, but also frequently provide a forum for discussions that lead to reform of the child welfare and service delivery systems beyond the court. CWCIP staff provides technical assistance to ensure the effective and uniform use of non-judicial staff, child permanency mediation and CASA services, coordinate local training programs and assist judges and court managers to interpret child welfare data. To date, staff has supported initiatives in the New York City Family Court and in courts in the 3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10<sup>th</sup> (Nassau) Judicial Districts.

## **Basic Grant Initiatives**

In November 2008, the CWCIP began providing support to a major child protective reform initiative in the New York City Family Court. Under the leadership of the Chief Judge and the Chief Administrative Judge, the initiative's objectives include: earlier permanency for children, ensuring all court appearances are meaningful, fewer adjournments, continuous trials, and expanded participation of children in their permanency hearings. A committee chaired by the Chief Administrative Judge and including senior representatives of the New York City Administration for Children's Services and all groups providing legal representation will oversee the implementation of this initiative.

Family Courts will implement a broad array of "best practices" including frequent and in-depth court oversight of cases during their pendency through enhanced conferencing protocols and expanded use of mediation; the use of tools and checklists to enhance the court's inquiry into the safety, permanency, health and well-being of children, improved calendaring procedures, and the expanded use of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). (See Appendix A for a statement of goals and action steps for the project).

Much of the work of the New York City Initiative will be accomplished by borough-based collaborative "stakeholder" groups chaired by the respective Supervising Family Court Judge for each jurisdiction (Kings/Richmond, Queens, New York, and Bronx Counties). CWCIP staff is assigned to provide staff support to each of these groups. In addition three citywide sub-committees: Data, Case Management, and Compliance have been formed, with CWCIP staff providing technical assistance and supporting the work of these groups as well.

## **CWCIP work with OCFS for the Child and Family Services Review**

In 2008, the CWCIP partnered with OCFS in the NYS Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). CWCIP convened focus groups of Judges and court staff around the State, provided input on the self-assessment and participated as reviewers for the onsite review. In addition, CWCIP staff continues to work closely with OCFS on the development of the Program Improvement Plan.

In addition to the major initiative in New York City, CWCIP is working with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges to create "Model Courts" in the jurisdictions outside New York City with the largest foster care populations in an effort to implement best practices and achieve permanency more expeditiously for children.

## **CWCIP Work with Native American Groups**

The CWCIP is actively working with Native American groups, engaging them in the child welfare process for the benefit of their children. Some of the specific initiatives within the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District are as follows:

### **Collaboration of the Eighth Judicial District and the Peacemaker Courts of the Seneca Nation of Indians**

CWCIP staff participates in an ongoing collaboration between the courts of the Eighth Judicial District and the Cattaraugus and Allegany Peacemaker courts of the Seneca Nation. Examples of ongoing action items include the development of an inter-jurisdictional protocol and a tribal CASA program. Technical assistance is being provided to the Nation in the development of a program to assign attorneys to children.

### **Collaboration of the Niagara County Family Court and Chiefs and Clan Mothers of the Tuscarora Nation**

CWCIP staff facilitates ongoing dialogue between the Judges of the Niagara County Family Court, attorneys representing children and parents and the Niagara County Family Court. This group meets to discuss their decision-making processes, facilitate communication and provide culturally competent training. An ICWA training for Niagara County attorneys for children is being planned.

### **Collaboration of the Genesee County Family Court and the Tonawanda Seneca Band of Indians**

CWCIP staff participates in a series of meetings between the Genesee County Family Court Judge, the Chief Clerk of the Court and Chiefs for the Tonawanda Seneca Band of Indians. These meetings resulted in an informal protocol for native children at risk of out-of-home placement. CWCIP staff assisted in presenting an ICWA training for Genesee County stakeholders.

### **NYS Federal State Tribal Courts Forum**

CWCIP staff participates in quarterly meetings of the Forum—whose purpose “is to share information about the different justice systems [NYS and Tribal] in order to minimize and prevent conflict”<sup>1</sup>—and work with the training workgroup from the Forum to address issues concerning children in the child welfare system and the NYS courts.

### **Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) Assessment**

In accordance with the requirements of the federal CIP grant, CWCIP staff assessed New York’s implementation of the ICPC. The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges were hired to evaluate New York State’s statutes and coordinate information gathered regarding child welfare system practice surrounding the implementation of the ICPC. The assessment included personal stakeholder interviews, a broad-based stakeholder survey with more than 200 responses,

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<sup>1</sup> UCS Benchmarks. New York State Unified Court System. 02 Jan 2009  
<<http://www.courts.state.ny.us/publications/benchmarks/issue3/listening.shtml>>.

focus groups, and a state compact office case review. The results were compiled into a final report issued in June 2008 that included seventeen recommendations for reform.

### **National Adoption Day Activities**

CWCIP staff participates in or organize National Adoption Day activities throughout New York State. In the 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, a collaborative event was hosted by the Oneida County Family Court, the Oneida County Department of Social Services, and the CWCIP. Adoptive families past and present were invited to attend a lunch reception where they heard from local public officials and a past adoptive father. In Onondaga County, 39 adoptions were finalized at a ceremony which included presentations by Hon. Judith S. Kaye, Chief Judge, and Rob and Barbara Rogers, foster parents of Olympian Lopez Lomong. In the Eighth Judicial District, CWCIP supported the execution of an Adoption Gala as well as activities surrounding finalizing adoptions on that day. In the Seventh Judicial District, National Adoption Day was celebrated, in four counties, with the planning and support of CWCIP staff.

### **Title IV-E Mock Reviews**

Across the State, CWCIP staff partner with OCFS to conduct regular reviews of court orders in child welfare case files, for compliance with Title IV-E standards. The reviews serve to inform Judges/Judicial Officers and child welfare workers in order to ensure IV-E compliant orders. In the Eighth Judicial District, a training was developed and delivered by CWCIP in partnership with resources provided by OCFS. The three day lunchtime program titled “Ensuring IV-E Eligibility: Making the Case for Eligibility in the Court Orders and the Courtroom, “ was held on September 10, 17 and 25, 2008 and was attended by more than 75 people including Judges, Court Attorney Referees, Child Welfare Attorneys and supervisory caseworkers

### **Adoption Panel Reviews**

Across the State, CWCIP staff participates in adoption panel reviews with OCFS and County local child welfare agencies. Reviews are held for every County twice a year to review the permanency status of all freed children within a given County. Through the review process, system gaps and barriers preventing freed children from reaching permanency in a timely manner are identified and participants work to overcome identified barriers.

### **Small Jurisdiction Coalition**

A pilot is underway in the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District for possible replication statewide. Under the direction of 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Supervising Judge of the Family Courts, CWCIP staff are developing and implementing a new standing child welfare collaborative from four adjacent counties in the district—Ontario, Yates, Seneca and Wayne. These Counties each have one Family Court Judge and their needs are unique due to their smaller size. The group consists of The Supervising Judge of the Family Courts, the Family Court Judge in each county, additional court staff, CWCIP staff, the four county Department of Human Services (DHS) commissioners, law guardians, and respondent attorneys. The objective of the group is to identify common child

welfare issues across all four counties and implement uniform best practices to address them. The initial focus of the group is supervised visitation.

The group came together for a joint training in March of 2008. “Why Adolescents Engage In Risky Behaviors” was a cross-systems training presented by an adolescent PH.D specializing in foster care. The training addressed how to interview, talk to youth and represent the needs of children.

### **Court Appointed Special Advocates Assistance Program**

In 2004, Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye convened a CASA Task Force chaired by the Hon. Howard A. Levine (Retired). The committee’s charge was to explore the current status of the CASA program in New York State and issue recommendations to enhance the quality and availability of CASA services. As a result of the Committee’s efforts, court rules guiding the use of CASA in Family Court proceedings, as well as CASA program structure and administration were developed. New rules of the Chief Judge and Chief Administrative Judge were promulgated in March 2006. The rules require that CASA programs comply with standards published by the National and State CASA Associations and authorize the Chief Administrative Judge to establish the CASA Assistance Program.

Subsequently, the CASA Assistance Program was created to oversee grant administration and provide programmatic support to local CASA programs. Since its inception, the CASA Assistance Program has conducted trainings for the CASA network on such topics as permanency planning, adolescent advocacy, board development, the over-representation of children of color in care, family treatment court, the needs of lesbian, gay and transgender youth in care, grant writing, individual donor cultivation, volunteer recruitment, court rules and family substance abuse.

NYS Unified Court System funding of CASA Programs has grown from the fiscal year ‘05 allocation of \$750,000 to its current level of \$918,637. Grants have been awarded to support CASA programs in 35 Counties. Ninety-one percent (91%) of the children living in foster care in New York State reside in those 35 counties. With partial support from the CWCIP grant programs, existing CASA programs have increased their capacity to serve children and new programs have been established in Ontario, Lewis, and Tioga Counties. Expansions to Clinton and Columbia Counties are being explored, and meetings have been conducted with the Seneca Nation to launch the state’s first Tribal CASA program.

### **Child Permanency Mediation Projects**

The CWCIP partners with OCFS to collaboratively support pilot permanency mediation projects in New York City, Albany, Chemung, Erie, Niagara, Oneida, and Orange counties. The CWCIP and OCFS pool resources to provide funding, training, monitoring, data collection, and evaluation.

As judges and referees become familiar with the mediation process and the quality of justice that it provides, they are referring an increasing number and variety of cases. In addition, attorneys

are more frequently requesting mediation for their clients. New legislation authorizing the Court to refer cases to mediation at any point in a child protective proceeding has also supported an increase in referrals. To date, the mediation program has addressed a wide range of issues including:

- Service plan issues for parents and/or children;
- Custody issues with non-respondent parents or with relatives;
- Visitation issues between parents and foster parents or parents and agency;
- Sibling visitation;
- Communication between parties including foster parents and caseworkers;
- Identification and removal of barriers to the filing of adoptions;
- Permanency planning for adolescents deciding between adoption and living independently;
- Permanency plan issues at the point of TPR including issues of concurrent planning;
- Parent /child communication; and
- The decision to litigate or voluntarily surrender.

A Permanency Mediation Program is currently being developed in collaboration with the 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District using mediators admitted to a court roster pursuant to Part 146 of the rules of the Chief Administrative Judge which articulates minimum training and experience requirements. (See Appendix B for a brochure detailing the 5<sup>th</sup> District program)

In September 2008, a Child Permanency Mediation Training was offered to mediators statewide in an effort to provide courts greater access to trained child permanency mediators due to the growing demand for this specialized type of mediation. Approximately 40 people attended the training in upstate NY.

In the fall 2008, Nancy Theonnes of The Center for Policy Research was hired to conduct an evaluation of the NYC Permanency Mediation Program. This evaluation will study the impact of the permanency mediation program operating in the New York City Family Court. The research is intended to provide information that will help to answer the question “does mediation work?” Different professionals in the child welfare system may have different ideas about what mediation needs to accomplish. The definition of “working” may also change over time, as cases progress through the dependency system. As a result, we are proposing to consider a variety of outcomes that are of interest, such as, of the percentage of the cases sent to mediation, how many are able to produce an agreement? Does participation in mediation reduce the number of contested hearings experienced during the life of a case? Or even, does mediation help cases to reach permanency in less time than traditional court interventions?



Issue to be Addressed	Strategy / Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Progress to Date
					<p>NYC occurred.</p> <p>Staff hired in both TCI and DoT to support CIP goals from an operational and technology perspective. All grant-supported staff have collaborated with CIP on multiple data-related projects.</p> <p>NYC Family Court Administrative Judge added as a member of the CIP executive and advisory committee, providing ongoing counsel and collaboration on CIP NYC-related initiatives.</p> <p>CIP has funded positions in the court's DoT that enable the development of software supporting CIP goals (i.e. LUC project).</p> <p>CIP staff coordinating with JI staff in implementing the CANI conference in 2009, trainings through the summer of 2008 at the JI, and judge/referee training referenced in Section 3.2 below.</p>



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	<p>4. Arrange for presentations on various topics to build the teams' skill set around common areas of responsibility such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Goal Setting Workshop</li> <li>ii. Coaching Workshop</li> </ul> <p>Leadership Trainings</p>				<p>progress with partners.</p> <p>CIP staff convened at the annual Sharing Success conference in fall 2008</p> <p>3. All statewide staff provided access to a shared network drive. Potential plans for newer collaboration software being explored.</p> <p>4. Agenda created for CIP staff training on best practices.</p> <p>2007: CIP staff participated in coaching seminar to enhance collaboration and interpersonal skills.</p> <p>Based on training received by the NCJFCJ on Model Court best practices, CIP staff have worked collaboratively with judges statewide to replicate Model Court procedures.</p>
	<p><b>Objective 1.4:</b> Increase awareness and understanding of child welfare court reform activities among OCA Divisions, Family Court Judges and Referees, court managers, staff and other relevant entities of the UCS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Issue annual reports summarizing the prior year's child welfare court reform activities.</li> <li>2. Issue periodic "Best Practice Bulletins" (via print and e-mail).</li> </ul>	CIP	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual report distributed in 2007 and 2008.</li> <li>2. Three "Best Practice Bulletins" created and disseminated in 2008.</li> </ul>

Issue to be Addressed	Strategy / Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Progress to Date
	<p>3. Make periodic presentations at Administrative Judge’s and Family Court Supervising Judge’s meetings.</p> <p>4. Meet individually with Administrative Judges and Family Court Supervising Judges regarding CIP activities.</p> <p>5. Make periodic presentations to Chief Clerks and Deputy Chief Clerks at annual meetings.</p> <p>6. Make periodic presentations to OCA Executive Management team regarding CIP activities.</p> <p>7. Make periodic presentations to local family court Judges and staff.</p> <p>8. Make periodic presentations to the Family Court Judges Association</p> <p>Meet and make presentations to the Appellate Divisions Law Guardian Programs.</p>				<p>3. Meetings with administrative or supervising Family court judges concerning CIP goals and addressing local issues were held in all judicial districts except the 4<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>5. Presentation made in December 2007 to annual meeting of Chief Clerks and Deputy Chief Clerks Statewide about CIP as well as upcoming CFSR and a second presentation was made in October 2008 updating them on local CIP initiatives.</p> <p>7. Presentations about CIP and best practices made by CIP staff in the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial Districts, conversations had concerning a similar presentation in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District.</p>
<p><b>Goal 2: A broad array of statewide stakeholders to engage in ongoing, meaningful inter-organizational collaboration to promote best court practices in</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 2.1.</b> CIP Staff will participate on existing committees including but not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide Permanency Planning Team</li> <li>• Adoption Now</li> <li>• PIP Strategy Groups</li> <li>• Partnership for Family Recovery (IDTA)</li> <li>• Family Treatment Court Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee</li> </ul>	CIP	Ongoing		CIP staff are members of all mentioned committees.

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child welfare cases throughout the state.	Workgroup to improve the educational well-being of children in foster care (McKinney-Vento)				
	<b>Objective 2.2.</b> Increase number and type of stakeholders involved in child welfare court reform initiatives	CIP	Ongoing		CIP staff are dramatically increasing stakeholder diversity in child welfare reform areas, i.e. the New York City Reforming Child Protective Proceedings initiative.....
	<p><b>Objective 2.3.</b> CIP Staff will participate on other committees which emerge and whose purpose is consistent with the CIP's mission.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participate in and/or present at relevant symposiums, conferences and other events sponsored by existing and potential stakeholder systems (including but not limited to): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Health</li> <li>b. Mental Health</li> <li>c. Education</li> <li>d. Substance Abuse</li> <li>e. Institutional legal service providers, Bar groups (LG's and Respondent's Counsel)</li> <li>f. Agency Attorneys (NYPWA)</li> <li>g. Mental Retardation</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Invite representatives of the aforementioned groups to participate and/or present at CIP sponsored events.</li> <li>3. Identify representatives from each of the aforementioned groups and set up individual meetings to inform them of CIP mission and initiatives and learn about their missions and initiatives.</li> </ol>	CIP	Ongoing	Identify committees that are aligned with the CIP mission	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CIP staff became members of the "Permanency Now" committee in 2008.</li> </ol> <p>CIP staff prepared a presentation on the IDTA initiative and collaborative process between the courts, child welfare system and substance abuse for the NYPWA conference on 1/30/09.</p> <p>CIP staff Coordinat ed Court based substance abuse training with a consultant. It is a seven session lunch time training series entitled Chemical Dependency: Implication for the Child Welfare System.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The CIP co-sponsored Sharing Success 2008 annual conference invited presentations from</li> </ol>

Issue to be Addressed	Strategy / Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Progress to Date
					the mental health and health fields.
	<p><b>Objective 2.4:</b> Engaging State Legislature in Child Welfare and CIP initiatives.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support UCS and PCJCJ efforts to educate Legislature concerning resource needs of the Family Courts.</li> <li>2. Meet individually with legislators and staff to inform them of CIP mission and initiatives.</li> <li>3. Invite representatives of the legislature to participate and/or present at CIP sponsored events.</li> <li>4. Distribute Best Practices Bulletins to state legislators.</li> </ol>	CIP	2009-beyond	<p>Best Practice Bulletins created.</p> <p>Identify legislation impacting family court where CIP can play a role.</p>	CIP to address based on priority and as time permits in the latter half of the 2006-2010 strategic plan.
	<p><b>Objective 2.5:</b> Increase representation of small counties and jurisdictions historically underrepresented in planning activities.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Invite representatives of small and underrepresented jurisdictions to participate in CIP planning processes.</li> <li>b. Use distance technology (conference calls, video conferencing, and “meeting space” software) to facilitate participation from distant parts of the state.</li> <li>c. Develop an advisory group to focus on the special needs of small and underrepresented jurisdictions.</li> </ol>	CIP	Ongoing	Identify underrepresented jurisdictions	<p>a. CIP included family courts judges from the 7<sup>th</sup> JD (Ontario county) and the 6<sup>th</sup> JD (Tompkins county) in the CIP Advisory Committee.</p> <p>b. Online conferencing used to reach distant counties in CASA conferences</p>
<p><b>Goal 3: In every county of the state, a broad array of local stakeholders engage in ongoing, meaningful collaboration</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 3.1:</b> Increase the number of court staff positions dedicated to coordinating child welfare court reform initiatives and supporting Family Court Judges at the local level.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>Work with OCA Division of Human Resources to identify an appropriate title series.</p> <p>Create additional positions in key jurisdictions</p>	CIP	2008	Work with HR to post CIP Liaison positions	<p>In 2008, CIP hired two new Liaison positions to represent the 6<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> JDs.</p> <p>There are potential plans to add a liaison position for the 10<sup>th</sup> JD.</p>

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to promote best court practices in child welfare cases in their respective communities.	in consultation with Judicial districts/NYC FC  Existing CIP staff provide mentoring and training to newly hired staff.				Mentoring and training is provided though monthly liaison meetings.
	<p><b>Objective 3.2:</b> Increase the number of counties with active stakeholder groups to promote system-wide implementation of best practices.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>a. Develop a “Child Welfare Court Improvement Plan” template for use by local courts.</p> <p>b. CIP Liaisons provide direct technical assistance to counties during the start-up phase.</p> <p>c. Provide data synopsis to counties to encourage reform (Demographics, comparison to similar counties, local numbers vs. benchmarks, etc.).</p> <p>d. Conduct “process mapping” and file reviews to identify potential areas of improvement.</p> <p>e. Conduct regional cross system trainings on the process of developing local “best practice” collaborative groups.</p> <p>f. Invite multi-disciplinary attendance at presentations of case-reviews of children who grew up in and aged out of foster care.</p> <p>g. Roll out training of piloted “Substance Abuse Basics” statewide and encourage multi-disciplinary attendance.</p>	CIP	Ongoing		<p>a. Meetings held to formulate template. Document expected to be finalized in January, 2009.</p> <p>b. CIP staff provide ongoing assistance in counties where best practices and Model Court procedures and stakeholder groups are exercised: Erie, Niagara, Monroe, Westchester, Nassau, Oneida, Onondaga, Chemung, and Albany. In addition, CIP personnel are staffing stakeholder groups in the five boroughs of NYC.</p> <p>c. CIP disseminated county-based data reports in 2008.</p> <p>d. CIP staff involved in New York City Reforming Child Protective Proceedings initiative. This project will re-engineer many of the city’s child protective proceedings.</p> <p>e. CIP staff formulating training</p>

Issue to be Addressed	Strategy / Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Progress to Date
					<p>on judicial best practices for judges/referees scheduled for October, 2009.</p> <p>f. Sharing Success VI in November 2008 featured “Why Urgency Matters: An Illustrated Timeline of One child’s Experience in Foster Care”. This was attended by a multi-disciplinary audience—Office of Court Admin, Family Court, OCFS, several local DSS agencies, etc.</p> <p>g. CIP staff coordinated pilot for a court based substance abuse training with consultant Naomi Weinstein. The Kings County Series began on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2007 and was completed in May 2008. Video tapes are being made for a train the trainer statewide initiative.</p>
	<p><b>Objective 3.3:</b> Increase number and type of stakeholders involved in local child welfare court reform initiatives.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage statewide agency partners to provide information to their local partners regarding the importance of participation on local court reform groups.</li> <li>2. CIP Liaisons assist local stakeholder groups to</li> </ol>	CIP	Ongoing	Development of an action plan that includes recommended stakeholders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CIP Liaison work in the 6<sup>th</sup> JD in incorporating Family court best practices.</li> <li>3. In the 5<sup>th</sup> JD, an attorney training sponsored by Monroe county DSS, CIP, and Monroe Family Court was held to review 2005</li> </ol>

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	<p>identify potential representatives and set up individual meetings to inform them of the purpose of the local court reform initiative.</p> <p>3. Conduct a local cross-disciplinary training on CIP basics and showcasing other successful collaboratives as a first step.</p> <p>4. Invite potential partners to tour the court and meet with Judges and Court Managers.</p>				<p>permanency law and Model Court procedures.</p> <p>4. 7<sup>th</sup> JD: CIP staff involved with a Court Orientation Program for foster parents/caregivers for children in placement. The program provides information about the basic permanency hearing court process.</p>
	<p><b>Objective 3.4:</b> Encourage local court leadership surrounding child welfare initiatives.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>1. Facilitate multi-disciplinary team visits to model court jurisdictions around the state and in other states.</p> <p>2. Provide information to clarify ethics questions regarding judicial participation in cross-system reform efforts.</p> <p>3. Provide opportunities for local judges to attend the National Council on Juvenile and Family Court Judges Child Abuse and Neglect Institute and/or contract with NCJFCJ to provide a training in-state.</p>	CIP	Ongoing	Identify key jurisdictions	<p>1. CIP staff coordinated training for Nassau County Court Attorney Referee. Training included spending two days with a Court Attorney Referee in Erie County in February, 2008.</p> <p>3. CIP sent ten NYS judges to attend the CANI training in 2008.</p>
<p><b>Goal 4: Every participant in child welfare court proceedings is afforded due process, procedural fairness and timely resolution.</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 4.1:</b> Increase the percentage of non-respondent parents who are personally served with any initial petition alleging abuse/neglect or petition seeking approval of a voluntary placement instrument.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>1. Survey Counties to determine current practice of notifying non-respondent parents of the existence of a child welfare proceeding involving their children.</p> <p>2. Perform a randomized statewide file review</p>	CIP	2009-2010		CIP to address based on priority and as time permits in the latter half of the 2006-2010 strategic plan.

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	<p>to determine what percentage of non-respondent parents are notified and attend child welfare cases involving their children.</p> <p>3. Work with OCFS to determine impact on personally serving all parents via personal service/publication.</p> <p>4. Work with UCS Counsel’s office and the Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee on developing statutory and rule modification to provide for personal service of non-respondent parents in child welfare cases.</p>				
	<p><b>Objective 4.2:</b> Increase compliance with requirements that permanency reports be submitted 14 days in advance of the permanency hearing.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>1. Work with key UCS, OCFS &amp; ACS partners to enhance automation of case processing and interoperability between UCS and Child Welfare IT systems.</p> <p>2. Continue support of the NYC Family Court/ACS (Legal Tracking System/UCMS/Connections) data share project to allow for electronic filing and dissemination of permanency reports.</p> <p>3. Develop feasibility study regarding statewide interoperability between UCMS and OCFS systems to replicate NYC pilot statewide.</p> <p>4. Train caseworkers in the operations and dynamics of Family Court and necessity of the timely submission of information to the Court and parties.</p>	CIP, OCFS, ACS	Ongoing	<p>Draft feasibility report</p> <p>Define Business requirements for UCS/ACS data share.</p>	<p>1. CIP arranged several meetings to engage OCFS personnel on the importance of inter-agency data share. This meeting was incorporated into the periodic LUC governance meeting.</p> <p>2. CIP participating in LUC project and funding an additional project analyst for ACS.</p> <p>3. OCA/OCFS data share white paper created and disseminated in March, 2008.</p> <p>4. CIP staff have engaged in updating permanency reports generated from UCMS that are utilized by local courts to view operational information.</p>
	<p><b>Objective 4.3:</b> Increase percentage of cases in which relative resources are identified and served notice of the proceedings where required.</p>	CIP, OCFS	Ongoing	Draft publications created.	2. CIP staff created the following publications:

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	<p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide training to Judges and Court Attorney Referees surrounding kinship options.</li> <li>2. Implement standardized checklist of preliminary inquiries from the bench surrounding relative/kinship resources.</li> <li>3. Issue Best Practice Bulletin to outline statutory relative provisions and best practice principles.</li> <li>4. Provide training to the bench and bar concerning relative issues in Family Court and the dynamics and interplay between them all.</li> <li>5. Develop and distribute a simplified desk aid to all counties &amp; courts explaining kinship care options.</li> </ol>				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. "Post Dispositional Review Checklist". This has been disseminated</li> <li>b. "Preliminary Conference Checklist". A draft has been created and waiting for finalization.</li> <li>3. A Best Practice Bulletin has been created and disseminated in 2008 covering relative topics.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Objective 4.4:</b> Increase the percentage of permanency hearings held within statutory timeframes.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to Support the work of OCFS regional office staff in conducting IV-E mock audits.</li> <li>2. Work with Counties to establish multi-disciplinary groups to review internally court orders for compliance with IV-E and include compliance with the statutory mandates of the permanency law.</li> <li>3. Encourage the use statewide of case conferencing techniques in order to minimize contentious issues during permanency hearings, thus minimizing the need for continuances.</li> <li>4. Provide training for judges and court staff surrounding elements of an effective permanency hearing and need for timeliness utilizing Freed Child Permanency Video made by OCFS.</li> <li>5. Implement a continuous hearing mandate</li> </ol>	CIP, OCFS	Ongoing	Identify counties where permanency hearings are not held within statutory guidelines	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CIP staff participated in periodic IV-E mock audits in 2008.</li> <li>2. Two examples of CIP work in statutory compliance: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. In the 5<sup>th</sup> JD, an attorney training sponsored by Monroe county DSS, CIP, and Monroe Family Court was held to review 2005 permanency law and Model Court procedures.</li> <li>b. "Best Practices Permanency - Focus on Child Protective Cases". Training held for the 7<sup>th</sup> District chief clerks. Three different sessions;</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

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	<p>for all permanency hearings.</p> <p>6. Assess judicial and court attorney referee caseload and effect on timely permanency hearings.</p>				<p>Permanency, Support, and Judicial a combination of best practices theory and hands on UCMS.</p> <p>3. CIP staff involved in the New York City Reforming Child Protective Proceedings initiative that includes identifying checklists, protocols, and form orders for many types of conferences.</p> <p>4. UCMS training provided in four districts. This training incorporates the Freed Child Permanency Video.</p>
	<p><b>Objective 4.5:</b> Increase the number of Native American families served by a culturally competent courtroom setting and ensuring compliance with ICWA mandates.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>1. Support judicial training concerning Native American cultures and the Indian Child Welfare Act.</p> <p>2. Develop and distribute signs for every State courtroom asking people of Native American ancestry to advise the Court.</p> <p>3. Work with Indian Nations to identify representatives for participation in local stakeholder’s groups.</p> <p>4. Support the inclusion of Native American representatives on appropriate stakeholder’s groups.</p>	CIP, CASA	Ongoing	Identify local stakeholders	<p>1. CIP Staff participated in an ongoing collaboration between the courts of the 8<sup>th</sup> JD and the Cattaraugus and Allegany Peacemaker courts of the Seneca Nation.</p> <p>2. CIP staff have designed signs.</p> <p>3. CIP staff coordinating a collaboration of the Niagara County Family Court and Chiefs and Clan Mothers of the</p>

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	<p>5. Work with Law Guardian Programs to have ICWA as a core element of child welfare training.</p> <p>6. Work with Nations on providing information to their tribes on child welfare court practice and procedures.</p> <p>7. Work with other system partners to ensure that all systems are trained in the fundamentals of Native American cultures and ICWA.</p>				<p>Tuscarora Nation – Ongoing projects are the development of a contact list, establishment of regular meetings and ICWA training for Niagara County attorneys for children.</p> <p>7. See above training in Objective 4.5, #3.</p>
	<p><b>Objective 4.6:</b> Decrease the time it takes to place children across state lines in accordance with the Interstate Compact on Placement of Children and Safe &amp; Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Solicit bids and Contract to provide assessment of New York State’s statutes, court rules, and regulations surrounding the interstate placement of children.</li> <li>2. Encourage frequent reviews and status reports of out of state home study requests.</li> <li>3. Support the enactment of the new ICPC legislation.</li> <li>4. Provide training around the new legislation once adopted.</li> <li>5. Issue a Best Practice Bulletin with suggestions for moving a case forward that appears to be stuck due to an out-of-state home study.</li> <li>6. Convene a meeting with New York CIP and those in Florida, Pennsylvania and New Jersey (the three states most often sought for Interstate placement of New York’s children) to discuss interstate challenges and procedures.</li> </ol>	CIP	2008 and ongoing	Form committee to draft NYS assessment report	<p>CIP staff submitted Federally-mandated report on interstate placement of foster care children as part of the 2008-2009 grant proposal.</p> <p>CIP staff to discuss implementing the recommendations in the above report in the Permanency Now sub-committee.</p>
	<b>Objective 4.7:</b> Increase the number of fathers identified and involved in the court process and	CIP, Office of Court	Ongoing	Raise involvement of	CIP to address more substantively in the

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	<p>in service planning for their children.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gather existing caseworker tools on identifying fathers.</li> <li>2. Develop a tool that can be easily used by Judges and other Judicial Officers when facing a case where no father has been identified.</li> <li>3. Work with Division of Technology and UCMS Permanency Group to establish prompts, or other highlighting features, to remind court users of the necessity of identifying fathers.</li> <li>4. Develop a cross-reference checklist for use by petition processors to assist in identifying fathers from related cases.</li> <li>5. Conduct multi-disciplinary training on importance of early identification of fathers.</li> <li>6. Develop and distribute best practice principles surrounding the identification and engagement of non-respondent fathers.</li> <li>7. Coordinate efforts with TPR Barriers Workgroup.</li> <li>8. Issue Best Practice Bulletin.</li> </ol>	Administration (OCA)		fathers in child welfare proceedings as an issue in the court system.	<p>latter half of the 2006-2010 strategic plan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. CIP partnered with the Division of Technology to incorporate a prompt in the UCMS case management system to verify a father's legal status relative to the child during the TPR process.</li> <li>7. CIP staff on the TRP Barriers committee have participated in proposing legislation addressing identified barriers.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Objective 4.8:</b> Require attorneys to prepare and sign legal pleadings in family court proceedings.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess impact of pro se paperwork by conducting statewide randomized file review of both attorney drawn and pro se pleadings.</li> <li>2. Work with Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee to establish new Family Court Rule to require attorneys to sign pleadings filed in Article 10 and termination of parental proceedings.</li> <li>3. Issue Best Practice Bulletin surrounding need for attorney drawn pleadings.</li> </ol>	CIP, OCA counsel's office, Trial Court Operations	2008-2009	Draft new Family Court Rule language	2. CIP staff have joined the UCMS Forms committee. If appropriate, CIP will work with the committee to incorporate attorney signature on Article 10 and TPR proceeding forms.

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	4. Work with Trial Court Operations Office to establish conforming protocols for Family Court back office staff.				
	<p><b>Objective 4.9:</b> Support UCS Counsel’s Office in continuing to make improvements to the timeliness of the appeal process for child welfare proceedings.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>1. Undertake a study to determine length of time to decision on appeal.</p> <p>2. Support development of protocols between trial courts and appellate divisions to improve appeal procedures</p>				
<p><b>Goal 5: Courts consistently conduct the highest quality child welfare proceedings to ensure that: 1) children are kept safe, are maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate; 2) children’s length of stay in foster care is reduced; and 3) the health, mental health and educational needs of children are met.</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 5.1:</b> Increase compliance with state and federal child welfare requirements through active engagement with the statewide Office of Children and Family Services.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>1. Participate as consultant reviewers in other states when and if opportunities arise.</p> <p>2. Participate in federal Title IV-E reviews of New York State and the development and implementation of any resulting program improvement plans giving priority to any legal or judicial issues identified in the review.</p> <p>3. Participate in federal CFSR reviews of New York State including development of the state’s self-assessment, active participation in the on-site review and the development and implementation of any resulting program improvement plans giving priority to any legal or judicial issues identified as a result of the review.</p> <p>4. Issue a Best Practice Bulletin for Judicial Officers and Court Managers educating them on their role in federal reviews.</p>	CIP, OCFS	2008, ongoing	Engage OCFS in discussions for CIP involvement in IV-E process.	<p>2. In the 7<sup>th</sup> JD, Title IVE Case Reviews – CIP partners with the BRO of OCFS to conduct monthly case file reviews for compliance with Title IVE standards in Erie County to prepare for the upcoming federal review.</p> <p>3. CIP staff participated in training program for onsite reviewers for the CFSR onsite review.</p> <p>CIP staff participated in Federal CFSR onsite review in May, 2008.</p> <p>CIP staff facilitated focus groups of Judges and Judicial Officers around the state to inform the self-assessment as</p>

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					<p>well as authored a portion of the assessment. CIP staff have been working closely with OCFS on PIP development and have had meetings where alignment of PIP and CIP goals were discussed.</p> <p>4. Best Practice Bulletin disseminated. (See Attachment D)</p>
	<p><b>Objective 5.2:</b> Increase knowledge and skill of judicial officers (Judges and Referees) on child welfare related issues.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>1. Underwrite Judicial Officer participation in the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judge’s Child Abuse and Neglect Institute or have the program brought to New York State.</p> <p>2. Develop a basic child welfare training program for all judicial officers who will hear child welfare matters and determine feasibility of mandating such training. The training to include but not be limited to:</p> <p>a. Best Practices and CIP Initiatives;  b. Child Development;  c. Having children present in the courtroom;  d. Child welfare basics;  e. The court’s role in promoting child well being using existing PJCJC curriculum (education, healthy development and special developmental needs of infants); ICWA;  f. Elements of case planning and role of the caseworker and corresponding regulations; and  g. Needs of children aging out of the foster care system.</p> <p>3. Develop a child welfare bench book to augment the child welfare training program.</p>	CIP, PJCJC	Ongoing	<p>Develop training programs</p> <p>Engage the JI for program arrangements</p>	<p>1. CIP funded ten Family court judges/referees to attend CANI seminar in 2008 and 9 in 2007.</p> <p>CIP staff in planning stages to hold a NCJFCJ training in New York in October, 2009.</p> <p>2. CIP is in ongoing discussions with the NYS Judicial Institute concerning a new judge training as well as beginning stages of developing a training for child welfare referees.</p> <p>4. October 2008 a contract was signed with retired NYC Family Court Judge Sarah Schecter to develop a Judicial mentorship program..</p>

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	<p>4. Develop a Judicial mentorship program.</p> <p>5. Develop a case review protocol for children who have aged out of the system as a self-assessment tool for improvement.</p>				
	<p><b>Objective 5.5:</b> Improve the communication between Referees and Judges on their child welfare caseloads to solidify a team approach.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>1. Work with UCS Counsel’s Office and Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee to establish clearer guidelines for referee activity.</p> <p>2. Train judges and referees on the team model concept.</p> <p>3. Provide training for referees in conjunction with the Judicial Institute specific to their caseloads.</p> <p>4. Provide for regular meetings of child welfare referees statewide and consult judges and referees on issues to address.</p>	CIP	2008-2009	Prepare agenda for NYS CANI conference	<p>2. CIP funded ten Family court judges/referees to attend CANI seminar in 2008 and 9 in 2007. CIP will host a NCJFCJ co-sponsored CANI training in NYS in 2009.</p> <p>3. CIP is in ongoing discussions with the NYS Judicial Institute concerning a new judge training as well as beginning stages of developing a training for child welfare referees.</p> <p>4. CIP staff involved in New York City Reforming Child Protective Proceedings initiative. See Report Introduction for background information in the initiative.</p>
	<p><b>Objective 5.6:</b> Increase availability of Alternative Dispute Resolution services</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>1. Maintain support for current child welfare mediation projects.</p> <p>2. Expand child welfare mediation to additional counties.</p> <p>3. Provide statewide training opportunities for additional child welfare mediators.</p>	CIP, OCA	Ongoing	Identify ADR trainers	<p>1. Currently fund four out of five original pilot permanency mediation programs.</p> <p>2. Currently being developed and implemented by April 2009 is the CWCIP Permanency Mediation Program in collaboration</p>

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	<p>4. Participate in the national “Conflict Resolution in Child Welfare: Collecting the Wisdom of 25 Years of Experience” Symposium.</p> <p>5. Provide training for Judges and Referees and child welfare attorneys on the applicability of mediation to child welfare matters.</p>				<p>with the 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District which will expand mediation from one county in the 5<sup>th</sup> District to 6 counties.</p> <p>3. September 2008 a Child Welfare Permanency Mediation training was offered statewide to advanced mediators.</p> <p>4. Assistant Coordinator attended in 2007. CIP liaison attended in May 2008.</p> <p>5. Statewide Manager and liaisons presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Judges Meeting. CIP liaisons scheduled to meet with 5<sup>th</sup> District Judges individually to ensure for a smooth implementation and correct utilization of the program.</p>
	<p><b>Objective 5.7:</b> Increase the number of Counties utilizing conferencing models in their courtrooms.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>1. Develop a “Child Welfare Court Improvement Plan” template for use by local courts.</p> <p>2. CIP Liaisons provide direct technical assistance to counties during the start-up phase.</p> <p>3. Provide data synopsis to counties to encourage reform (Demographics, comparison to similar counties, local numbers vs.</p>	CIP	Ongoing	Identify best practice conference models.	<p>1. Meetings held to formulate template. Document expected to be finalized in January, 2009.</p> <p>2. CIP staff provide ongoing assistance in counties where best practices and Model Court procedures and stakeholder groups are exercised (including conferencing models): Erie,</p>

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	<p>benchmarks, etc.).</p> <p>4. Conduct “process mapping” and file reviews to identify potential areas of improvement.</p> <p>5. Conduct regional cross-system trainings on the various conferencing models utilized statewide and nationally and the benefits to each.</p> <p>6. Facilitate site visits between county teams who are interested in conferencing techniques and those who are successfully engaged in such techniques – both statewide and nationally.</p> <p>7. Provide file reviews and courtroom assessments for interested counties to assess their child welfare practices and provide suggestions for improvement.</p>				<p>Niagara, Monroe, Westchester, Nassau, Oneida, Onondaga, Chemung, and Albany. In addition, CIP personnel are staffing stakeholder groups in the five boroughs of NYC.</p> <p>3. CIP staff disseminated county-based child welfare statistics to Family courts statewide based on OCFS-provided data.</p> <p>4. CIP staff involved in New York City Reforming Child Protective Proceedings initiative. This project will re-engineer many of the city’s child protective proceedings.</p> <p>5. CIP funded ten Family court judges/referees to attend CANI seminar in 2008 and 9 in 2007.</p> <p>6. 5<sup>th</sup> JD, CIP sponsors a Model Court For Abused and Neglected Children: Monthly meeting with court personnel and local DSS for best practice permanency part for all child welfare cases including front</p>

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					<p>end case conferencing, disposition, permanency hearings, and post dispositional reviews until permanency is reached.</p> <p>7. CIP has planned a CANI conference in NYS for Oct, 2009. CIP staff will be trained in file reviews and courtroom assessments as part of this.</p>
<p><b>Goal 6: Courts consistently treat all participants in child welfare matters fairly and with consideration.</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 6.1:</b> Maintain a culture of patience, dignity and courtesy in all aspects of court operations.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct focus groups of court users including parents, youth and professionals.</li> <li>2. Conduct multi-disciplinary trainings on topics to promote the objective (including but not limited to):  Vicarious Trauma; Fostering meaningful participation in court proceedings; Cultural diversity; and Awareness of parties' perspective of court experience.</li> <li>3. Develop a written guide and training module for court security personnel on the special nature of child welfare matters (calendar privacy, the role of foster/adoptive parents, etc.).</li> <li>4. Work with Court Interpreters Unit to ensure frequently used documents are translated and available to local courts for distribution.</li> <li>5. Explore availability of interpreters for attorney/client interaction outside of court.</li> </ol>	<p>CIP, OCA</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Identify cross-disciplinary topics and training documentation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Presentation completed in the 9<sup>th</sup> JD by CIP staff on Vicarious Trama.</li> <li>CIP included a presentation on cultural competency as part of the Sharing Success conference in 2008.</li> <li>6. CIP staff working with a Family court judge in the 9<sup>th</sup> JD on a local pilot to ensure racial and ethnic fairness in court proceedings. This pilot is based upon the NCJFCJ Courts Catalyzing Change Initiative.</li> <li>7. CIP Staff are facilitating an ongoing dialogue between the Judges of the Niagara</li> </ol>

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	<p>6. Develop publications and conduct in-service trainings to raise awareness of issues relating to the overrepresentation of children of color in care.</p> <p>7. Support judicial training concerning Native American cultures and the Indian Child Welfare Act.</p> <p>8. Collaborate with Office of Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives Juanita Bing-Newton on her advocacy efforts in ensuring racial and ethnic fairness in the Court System.</p>				<p>County Family Court, attorneys representing children and parents and the Niagara County Family Court. The group has met to discuss the development of a contact list, establishment of regular meetings and ICWA training for Niagara County attorneys for children.</p>
	<p><b>Objective 6.2:</b> Increase the number of children who are present in the courtroom.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>1. Support PJCJC’s lead on project and actively participate in workgroup to be formed by PJCJC.</p> <p>2. Work with OCA Counsel’s Office and Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee to implement statute or court rule.</p> <p>3. Provide training for all system users on child participation in court proceedings to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Explanation of the benefits to the court and other stakeholders of youth presence and participation in permanency hearings;</li> <li>b. Explanation of the benefit to the children of youth participation in and presence at their permanency hearings;</li> <li>c. Behavioral expectations of children and youth based upon cognitive developmental stage;</li> <li>d. Age-appropriate questions and expectations for input from children and youth;</li> <li>e. Strategies to deal with emotional issues</li> </ul>	CIP, PJCJC	Ongoing	??	<p>1. See the progress note for Objective 1.2.</p> <p>5. The CIP funded the PJCJC’s publication for engaging children in their court proceedings.</p> <p>6. As part of Sharing Success in 2007 and 2008, CIP had the voice of children present through youth who are a part of the statewide group Youth in Progress.</p> <p>7. CIP staff supported Teen Days in NYC established and was modified and named “Empowering youth day” in Oneida County.</p> <p>8. 8<sup>th</sup> JD: Erie County Adolescent Subcommittee – CIP</p>

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	<p>and outbursts;</p> <p>f. Restructuring or bifurcation of permanency hearings to permit younger children to participate;</p> <p>g. Judicial role in encouraging active and meaningful children and youth participation in permanency hearings;</p> <p>h. Use of creative, time-specific scheduling to permit children and youth to attend without significant disruption of school attendance;</p> <p>i. Strategies to prepare a child or youth for effective participation; and</p> <p>j. Age appropriate expectations for input for children and youth.</p> <p>4. Provide follow up forums for Judges to discuss concerns regarding youth participation in Court proceedings.</p> <p>5. Develop a Judicial Handbook of age appropriate or developmental stage appropriate questions.</p> <p>6. Include foster youth panels at relevant trainings/seminars/conferences.</p> <p>7. Expand New York City’s “Teen Days” project to assist foster youth in transitioning to adulthood.</p> <p>8. Expand and refine “Benchmark Permanency Hearings” at critical stages of adolescent development.</p> <p>9. Issue Best Practice Bulletin encouraging youth attendance at permanency hearings.</p>				<p>staff works with Erie County collaborative committee dedicated to improving outcomes and process for adolescents in out-of-home placement. Committee has developed an Adolescent Checklist to be used with specialized adolescent reviews??</p> <p>9. CIP staff have begun work on a fourth Best Practice Bulletin which addresses youth participation in permanency hearings among other topics.</p>
	<p><b>Objective 6.3:</b> Decrease the length of time from filing to completion of various child welfare proceedings.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>1. Evaluate and assess current length of time to completion of various child welfare</p>	CIP, OCA, DoT	Ongoing	Gather data reports that detail court proceeding statistics	1. CIP staff involved in New York City Reforming Child Protective Proceedings initiative. See Report Introduction for background

Issue to be Addressed	Strategy / Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Progress to Date
	<p>proceedings, number of trial appearances and length of time between trial days.</p> <p>2. Execute a feasibility study of conducting consecutive hearing days with statewide participation.</p> <p>3. Select pilot sites for roll out of consecutive hearing dates.</p> <p>4. Develop a best practice timeline for each type of child welfare proceeding with descriptions supporting each appearance.</p> <p>5. Work with UCS Counsel’s Office and the Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee on implementing statutory and rule changes.</p> <p>6. Work with Supervising Judges and District Administrative Judges on understanding the necessity of timely resolution of child welfare proceedings.</p>				<p>information in the initiative.</p> <p>3. CIP staff have begun discussions in the 5<sup>th</sup> JD with Oneida Family Court for the roll out of consecutive hearing dates.</p> <p>4. CIP staff involved in New York City Reforming Child Protective Proceedings initiative which is implementing a best practice process flow for child welfare proceedings.</p> <p>6. As part of the expanded Model Court rollout planned in 2008 and beginning in 2009 and, best practices resulting in the timely resolution of child welfare proceedings will be emphasized.</p>
	<p><b>Objective 6.4:</b> Increase the number of Family Courts using calendar management techniques to ensure appropriate attention to child welfare caseloads.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>1. Convene a workgroup to identify within child welfare proceedings and specific appearance types, elements of the particular proceeding in order to determine a suggested length time for the court appearance.</p> <p>2. Select pilot sites for implementation.</p> <p>3. Develop benchmarks to reach by</p>	CIP, Trial Court Operations	Ongoing	Identify work group participants	<p>1. CIP staff involved in New York City Reforming Child Protective Proceedings initiative. See report Introduction section for background information on the initiative.</p> <p>5. CIP staff are available in almost every judicial district in the state to support court</p>

Issue to be Addressed	Strategy / Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Progress to Date
	<p>implementing date/time certain and varying durations of appearances.</p> <p>4. Deliver training in conjunction with Trial Court Operations Unit to introduce date/time certain calendaring.</p> <p>5. Provide CIP liaison staff to support court initiatives.</p>				initiatives.
<p><b>Goal 7: All affected participants including but not limited to parents, children, local Departments of Social Services, current and potential relative and non-relative caregivers, and voluntary foster care agencies have ready access to quality representation and advocacy services.</b></p>	<p><b>Objective 7.1:</b> Adopt standards for representation for parents, agency/social services district attorneys and review standards for law guardians.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>Work in partnership with State Bar Association to explore adoption/revision of Standards of Practice in child welfare matters:</p> <p>Survey other states standards; review ABA model standards; Propose standards; and Determine proper procedure for formal adoption of standards.</p>	CIP	2010	Gather information on non-NYS state ABA model standards	CIP to address based on priority and as time permits in the latter half of the 2006-2010 strategic plan.
	<p><b>Objective 7.2:</b> Increase knowledge and skills of attorneys engaged in child welfare practice.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>Develop basic training curriculum for child welfare attorneys.</p> <p>Conduct periodic training sessions for attorneys in the basics of child welfare practice.</p> <p>Conduct periodic training sessions for attorneys on ethics in CW practice.</p> <p>Explore requiring attorney mentoring/second chairing.</p> <p>Develop pilot locations for the implementation of attorney mentoring.</p>	CIP	2010	Identify attorneys for participation in curriculum development	CIP to address based on priority and as time permits in the latter half of the 2006-2010 strategic plan.

Issue to be Addressed	Strategy / Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Progress to Date
	<p>Integrate mandatory training requirements into contracts with institutional legal service providers.</p> <p>Conduct Law Guardian training on how to talk to children at varying developmental stages.</p>				
	<p><b>Objective 7.3:</b> Increase relatives, caregivers &amp; potential caregivers access to advocates at the earliest possible point in the process.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>Convene focus groups to determine unmet needs of relatives/caregivers &amp; potential caregivers.</p> <p>Convene an informational session with various advocacy groups to determine resources for advocacy and local initiatives.</p> <p>Develop a caregivers manual to outline relevant child welfare law, court process and various support services.</p> <p>Work with OCFS to develop advocacy positions in the largest districts.</p> <p>Provide training or access to training, regionally or nationally, for local project advocates.</p> <p>Encourage local stakeholder's groups to add this issue to their agendas.</p>	CIP	2010	Identify materials for focus groups and caregiver manual.	CIP to address based on priority and as time permits in the latter half of the 2006-2010 strategic plan.
	<p><b>Objective 7.4:</b> Increase number of judges who are appointing counsel to relatives/caregivers in child welfare cases.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>Perform feasibility study on impact of assigning counsel both on County finances and attorney workload.</p> <p>Meet with various groups of legal aide, public defenders, 18B attorneys to explore with them representation of these groups of people.</p> <p>Educate the Judges, attorneys and caseworkers surrounding the need for these individuals to</p>	CIP	2010	Gather statistical reports to determine areas of the state where relative placement is low.	CIP to address based on priority and as time permits in the latter half of the 2006-2010 strategic plan.

Issue to be Addressed	Strategy / Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Progress to Date
	<p>be represented in child welfare proceeding including the publication of a Best Practice Bulletin.</p> <p>Work with established stakeholder's groups to add the topic to their agenda.</p> <p>Identify Counties who have regular representation for relatives/caregivers to determine if a model can emerge.</p>				
	<p><b>Objective 7.5:</b> Increase the number of parties receiving continuous representation in child welfare proceedings where the representation is undertaken by an institutional provider.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>a. Evaluate the feasibility of continuous representation by a single attorney throughout the life of a case with various institutional providers (Legal Aide, Public Defenders, Conflict Defenders and Law Guardian Offices).</p> <p>b. Disseminate information about dedicated child welfare teams (Judge, DSS Attorney, Law Guardian(s), Respondent's counsel(s)).</p> <p>c. Work with FCARC to establish a rule that requires notice be given to Law Guardians for all agency adoption petitions filed.</p> <p>d. Educate law guardians about their role during the adoption proceeding.</p>	CIP	2008-2010	<p>Identify representatives for institutional provider groups.</p> <p>Develop presentation or educational material for institutional provider groups.</p>	<p>CIP to address based on priority and as time permits in the latter half of the 2006-2010 strategic plan.</p> <p>b. CIP staff involved in New York City Reforming Child Protective Proceedings initiative. As part of this effort, cross-disciplinary child welfare committees have been established to address continuous representation among other topics. Committees have....</p>
	<p><b>Objective 7.6:</b> Increase the frequency and availability, and improve the quality of CASA advocacy services for children.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <p>1. Develop new CASA programs (three new counties by 2010).</p> <p>2. Work with the Seneca Nation to develop the state's first Tribal CASA program.</p> <p>3. Enhance capacity of existing CASA Programs.</p> <p>4. Educate Judges and Referees on the appropriate use of CASAs.</p>	CIP	Ongoing	<p>Identify new areas for CASA expansion</p> <p>Develop fund raising training for CASA agencies</p>	<p>1. CIP staff met with Family Court Judges and agencies in three counties to discuss new CASA programs—although available financial resources limit expansion at this time.</p>

Issue to be Addressed	Strategy / Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Progress to Date
	<p>5. Perform site visits to all CASA programs in the state to review case files as well as program and volunteer management.</p> <p>6. Conduct annual trainings of all CASA directors on child welfare and court issues, such as substance abuse, developmental issues, and the impact of trauma.</p> <p>7. Improve effective use of CASA Programs by Family Court Judges:</p> <p>a. Conduct survey of Family Court judges regarding quality of CASA reports and effectiveness in assisting prompt and stable placements of children.</p> <p>b. Conduct meetings with local Family Court judges to assess their awareness of CASA, its roles, and appropriate case assignment.</p> <p>c. Conduct presentation at fall 2007 Family Court Judges Association statewide meeting on the CASA program and its use.</p> <p>8. Conduct trainings on cultural competence.</p> <p>9. Retain services of diversity consultant to develop intervention strategies for network.</p>				<p>2. CIP staff have worked with the Seneca Nation to consider a CASA program.</p> <p>3. CIP staff effort on enhancing program effectiveness:</p> <p>a. Establish workgroups to continue to develop a standardized CASA Program Manual.</p> <p>b. Standardized data collection terms were distributed, and a workgroup is moving state network toward a web-based data collection mechanism in collaboration.</p> <p>c. Standardized court and program forms are being developed for CASA programs.</p> <p>d. CIP has provided regular information to CASA network about court-related initiatives through a newsletter.</p> <p>4. See # 7 below.</p> <p>5. CIP staff conducting regular site visits.</p> <p>6. CIP staff organized two program directors' meetings held in 2008, a cross-systems training on children impacted by familial substance abuse, and trainings on permanency planning, resource development and collaborative advocacy.</p>

Issue to be Addressed	Strategy / Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Progress to Date
					<p>7. a. CIP staff met with local judges as part of CASA program site visits.</p> <p>c. 2007: Conducted presentation at fall 2007 Family Court Judges Association statewide meeting on the CASA program and its use.</p> <p>8. CIP staff have conducted two cultural competency trainings: Sullivan and Fulton/Montgomery Counties.</p> <p>9. CIP have worked to develop a 90-minute training for CASA staff and volunteers. The training will be piloted in 2009 and rolled out to the remaining network following the pilot.</p>

## **Training Grant Initiatives**

The CWCIP training grant supports training for judges, referees, court attorneys, court managers and staff and cross-system training for child welfare and legal professionals to improve court practice and legal representation in child welfare cases.

CWCIP staff is involved in the coordination of statewide and local training programs and is actively involved in a number of planning groups and committees related to the court and child welfare system's efforts to improve our capacity to provide quality training. Curriculum development and training presentations are implemented by staff and through contracts with consultants. CWCIP funding supports the Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children (PJJC) in development of training curriculum on the issue of encouraging youth participation in court proceedings.

## **Sharing Success**

In each of the last six years, CWCIP co-sponsored with the executive branch OCFS, the annual "Sharing Success" conference. This important conference has become the cornerstone of the Unified Court System's collaboration with the OCFS. "Sharing Success VI: Embracing a Culture of Urgency: Achieving Permanency for New York State's children" was held in Albany on November 20 & 21, 2008 and was attended by nearly 400 participants. Over fifty counties from New York State attended Sharing Success VI with opportunities for breakout sessions by role and again by county team to discuss collaboration and to formulate a county plan to address urgency and achieving permanency for foster youth in a more judicious manner.

(See Appendix C for an agenda for the Sharing Success IV conference in 2008)

## **National Council of Juvenile and Family Courts Child Abuse and Neglect Institute**

The CWCIP and the Model Courts Project of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Courts pool resources to underwrite the participation of a number of New York Judges at the "The Role of the Judge" Institute held each year in Reno, Nevada. The Institute is a premiere training for judicial officers interested in learning about innovative and creative court practices that result in improved outcomes for children and families. Judges are selected in consultation with Administrative and Family Court Supervising Judges. In June of 2008, ten Judicial Officers (Family Court Judges and Referees) from across New York State attended the Institute. We are currently working with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the New York State Judicial Institute to bring the Child Abuse and Neglect Institute to New York State in October 2009. Inclusion of neighboring states is being considered for the October 2009 conference making the Conference regional in scope.

## **Summer Judicial Seminars**

The CWCIP sponsored the participation of Hon. Len Edwards (Ret.) at the Summer Judicial Seminar held in June. Judge Edwards conducted two presentations: Achieving Timely Permanency for Children in Foster Care: The Role of the Judge, and Judicial Leadership and

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Essential Tools for Achieving Timely Permanency. (See Appendix D for a description of the workshops in the training). These presentations were replicated by Eighth Judicial District Administrative Judge Sharon Townsend, and retired New York City Family Court Judge Sara Schechter at the July and August Judicial Seminars.

### **Children in Court**

CWCIP staff is working with the PJJC to develop and deliver curriculum surrounding the inclusion of children in court. With CWCIP funding, PJJC continues to lead on curriculum development in 3 phases: Phase 1: Developmental Issues – what to expect from children in court; Phase 2: Hearing Youth Voices; Phase 3: A Panel of Experts to discuss the benefits of having children participate in their court proceedings and allow a forum for discussion about concerns. A truncated training was delivered at the Summer Judicial Seminars in all three sessions.

“Hear Me! Hear Me! Hear Me!: Voices of Youth in Foster care Regarding their Court Proceedings” is a video created and produced to highlight New York State’s children’s experiences with Family Court. The video was a part of the Summer Judicial Seminars and was shown at Sharing Success VI to a multidisciplinary statewide group of approximately 400 attendees. In addition, “Tools for Engaging Children in Their Court Proceedings: A Guide for Judges, Advocates and Child Welfare Professionals” was created, produced and distributed and is now available to support Judges and Judicial Officers throughout the State.

On October 2, 2008, CWCIP staff planned and facilitated a conference for more than 200 western New York child welfare professionals on overcoming barriers to finding permanency for older youth. The conference: *Words of Permanency: Challenging Child Welfare Professionals to Find Permanency for Older Youth* included presentations from former foster youth, nationally known author and speaker Ashley Rhodes-Courter and Barry Chaffkin, LCSW from *Changing the World One Child at a Time*. (See Appendix E for a brochure on the above “Words of Permanency” conference).

On October 1, 2008, The Monroe County Family Court piloted a court orientation program for youth prior to attending their first Court Appearance. The orientation is designed to provide information concerning the court process, both in the courtroom and in the courthouse. Professionals are utilized to discuss their roles and responsibilities in the court proceeding. Children who have not yet experienced their first permanency hearing, and their foster parents or other caregivers are invited to attend. The orientation is held in a courtroom. This pilot is being developed for possible statewide replication.

CWCIP staff in Nassau County piloted a case file review of a child’s timeline in foster care from the time the child entered care until the time the child aged out. The timeline was presented to the local Family Court Judges and the ensuing discussion was facilitated by CWCIP staff. The purpose of the presentation was to allow the group to identify system barriers and develop a plan to overcome those barriers. The pilot was expanded and presented to a statewide

multidisciplinary audience at Sharing Success VI in November 2008 and was titled: “Why Urgency Matters: An Illustrated Timeline of One child’s Experience in Foster Care.”

CWCIP staff in partnership with Monroe and Seneca counties’ advisory groups is drafting guidelines to engage children in the permanency hearing court process. The “Seventh District Children in Court Judiciary Guidelines” are being drafted to support The “Enhanced Permanency Hearing” pilot that began in Monroe County in September.

### **Empowering Youth Day**

CWCIP staff in partnership with the Oneida County Family Court and the Oneida County Department of Social Services hosted Empowering Youth Day: “Life After Foster Care”: on September 8, 2008 (See Appendix F for Program Announcement). This ½ day event targeted youth ages fifteen to twenty-one who were freed for adoption and lack an adoptive resource. Informal court appearances were scheduled to allow the youth to discuss issues of importance to the youth. A diverse ethnic lunch was provided to the participants. There were three facilitated workshops for the youth to attend to allow them to discuss with their peers life in foster care. The youth attended an Independent Life Skills Expo, and a “Dress for Success” closet where interview appropriate clothing were offered to the youth at no cost. Additionally, a workshop for system professionals on adolescent permanency resources by Pat O’Brien of “You Gotta Believe” was offered. Each youth received a bookbag with information in it regarding community services available to them and the book “What Color is Your Parachute for Teens”.

### **Best Practice Bulletin**

The CWCIP “Best Practice Bulletin” was launched with an inaugural edition in January 2008. This issue focused on the role of the office and the staff as well as the partnership between CWCIP and the PJCJC. The publication was distributed to all Judges, Referees, Court Managers as well as other identified partners. The goal of these Best Practice Bulletins is to disseminate best practice principles to target audiences as well as to inform readers of the availability of technical assistance through the CWCIP.

(See Appendix G for the first three editions of this publication)

### **Basics of Substance Abuse and Addiction**

The CWCIP is currently replicating the “Basics of Substance Abuse and Addiction” training program, first piloted in Nassau County and then repeated in Kings County Family Court. This is a seven session lunch time training series entitled Chemical Dependency: Implication for the Child Welfare System. This program is designed to increase the knowledge of judges, court staff, attorneys and social services casework staff on the fundamentals of addiction, treatment, and relapse. The CWCIP has contracted with the Center on Addiction and the Family, consultant Naomi Weinstein, to refine the curriculum, develop a train-the-trainer program, produce video training modules, and create a facilitator’s guide that will enable faithful replication of the training throughout the state using local substance abuse experts.

## **New York State Partnership for Family Recovery**

The Partnership for Family Recovery is an inter-branch collaborative whose membership includes the Unified Court System, OCFS, the New York City Children's Services (NYCCS), The Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA) and The Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS). The Group's purpose is to develop guidelines for communication between the three systems and recommended practices to better address the needs of families involved with all three systems. With technical assistance provided by the National Resource Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare the group is in the process of implementing several tools developed during this collaborative as well as rolling out Guidelines to local jurisdictions in order to actualize county-level partnerships.

The group developed a comprehensive training plan. The plan identified a need for systems to understand each other's roles, cultures, and language before coming together as a collaborative. To this end, the CWCIP is developing a curriculum and will deliver trainings designed to increase the understanding of the court process among professionals within the substance abuse system. In July 2008, "Everything the Substance Abuse Professional Always Wanted to Know about the Child Welfare Legal System" was piloted to a group of substance abuse professionals in Onondaga County.

The Basics of Substance Abuse and Addiction as described above, is an additional training developed to support this initiative and is funded by CWCIP.

CWCIP staff worked to develop several tools to support the New York State Partnership for Family Recovery. "Gearing Up to Improve Outcomes for Families: New York State Collaborative Practice Guide for Managers and Supervisors in Child Welfare, Chemical Dependency Services, and Court Systems" ("the Guide") was developed, printed with CWCIP and OCFS funds and is available for distribution. Additionally, each system developed individualized desk guides for system professionals with salient highlights of the Guide. CWCIP staff created a bench guide for use by judicial officers and a desk guide for other Family Court staff and practitioners.

(See Appendix H for the Guide; Appendix H for materials developed for this project).

## **Unified Case Management System (UCMS) Training**

CWCIP staff developed and presented training for court staff users of UCMS in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial Districts. The goal of the training is increase the accuracy of data collection to support the work of developing court performance measures. The method by which this goal is being achieved is to provide a basic level of understanding of child welfare laws and the relationship of the role of the data enterer and the use of the data to the lives of children within their communities and across the State. A blended learning method of lecture and actual data entry, using a county's own caseload as examples, promotes interactive discussion of both policy, and procedure. The training will continue to rollout statewide.

Two regional trainings were delivered for CASA staff and volunteers on the use of active listening, problem solving, and facilitating skills to advocate for children in collaboration with colleagues in child welfare. “Collaborative Advocacy: It’s a Plan Not an Argument,” was arranged and facilitated by CWCIP staff on August 1<sup>st</sup> and September 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Local Multidisciplinary Trainings to address Best Practice Topics**

An attorney training titled “Best Practices for Achieving Timely Permanency” was held in two sessions in June of 2008. The training was presented by Oneida County Family Court’s Model Court in collaboration with the local social services district and the CWCIP. The agenda highlighted the 2005 Permanency Law, Procedures and Protocols specific to Oneida County’s Model Court, and Evidentiary Issues in Article 10 Cases.

CWCIP staff developed and facilitated several trainings in a series entitled “Babies Can’t Wait ~ Teens Won’t Wait.” These court based educational sessions raise awareness, educate, promote professional development and identify community resources for a multi-disciplinary audience. Topics address best practices, healthy development, well-being, and improved permanency outcomes for children and youth. This program maintains and strengthens a court generated multi-systemic collaboration. Presentations are live, via V-Brick or video conference to Family Courts the in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Districts The Monroe Family Court Babies Can’t Wait web page provides all sessions on video and accompanying handouts. 2008 session topics that have been delivered include: Teen-age Substance Abuse (January 10); Foster Care Parent Panel (February 14); Permanency and Best Practices (March 13); Kinship Care – Grandparents Panel (April 10); Youth Mental Health and Medications (May 8).

CWCIP staff planned and facilitated a training series for a multi-disciplinary audience at the Genesee County Family Court entitled, “Improving Child Welfare Practice and Advocacy” by Dr. Barbara Rittner, Ph.D. Topics covered in the three session series included Addressing mental health needs of youth in foster care (June 6), Improving outcomes in child welfare cases impacted by parental mental health concerns (July 18), and Visitation: Addressing parent-child relationships through visitation (August 15).

In the Eighth Judicial District, a training was developed and delivered by CWCIP in partnership with resources provided by OCFS to support Title IV-E compliance. The three day lunchtime program titled “Ensuring IV-E Eligibility: Making the Case for Eligibility in the Court Orders and the Courtroom, “ was held on September 10, 17 and 25, 2008 and was attended by more than 75 people including Judges, Court Attorney Referees, Child Welfare Attorneys and supervisory caseworkers.

Issue to be addressed	Strategy/Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator	Progress to Date
<p>Increase knowledge and skill of judicial officers (Judges and Referees) on child welfare related issues.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Underwrite Judicial Officer participation in the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judge's Child Abuse and Neglect Institute.</li> <li>2) Develop a basic child welfare training program for all judicial officers who hear child welfare matters and determine feasibility of mandating such training. Such training to include but not be limited to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Best Practices and CIP Initiatives;</li> <li>b) Child Development;</li> <li>c) Having children present in the courtroom;</li> <li>d) Child welfare basics;</li> <li>e) The court's role in promoting child well being using existing PJCJC curriculum (education, healthy development and special developmental needs of infants);</li> <li>f) ICWA;</li> <li>g) Elements of case planning and role of the caseworker and corresponding regulations; and</li> <li>h) Needs of children aging out of the foster care system.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3) Develop a child welfare bench book to augment the child welfare training program.</li> <li>4) Develop a Judicial mentorship program.</li> </ol>	<p>CIP in consultation with Supervising Judges</p> <p>CIP staff in collaboration with PJCJC</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2007-2010</p>	<p>8-10 Judges Participate in CANI seminar each year</p> <p>Planning group convened</p> <p>RFP for consultant curriculum development issued</p> <p>Consultant selected</p> <p>Curriculum Developed</p> <p>Trainers identified and recruited</p> <p>Training conducted annually</p> <p>Bench book published</p> <p>Mentoring program established</p>	<p>Quality of judicial decision making improved to support improvements in CFSR outcome measures:</p> <p>Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect</p> <p>Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.</p> <p>Children have permanency and stability in their living situation; and</p> <p>The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.</p> <p>Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs;</p> <p>Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs</p> <p>Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.</p>	<p>Improvements in CFSR and court performance indicators</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Sent 10 Judicial officers (Judges and Referees) in June, 2008. Sent 9 in 2007. Planning underway to bring CANI to New York in October of 2009</li> <li>2) Established a working relationship with NYS Judicial Institute to develop collaborative trainings to deliver to Judges and Judicial Officers. Had input on Child welfare presentations at Summer 2008 Judicial Seminars. Currently working with the national Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the NYS Judicial Institute on bringing the Child Abuse and Neglect Institute to New York State in October 2009.</li> <li>2) a) Best practices and CIP Initiatives presentation was given to 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Judges' Meeting, 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Judges' Meeting.</li> <li>b) &amp; e) Healthy Development of Children in Foster Care Curriculum in development.</li> <li>c) PJCJC lead on curriculum development. 3 phases: Phase 1: Developmental Issues – what to expect from children in court; Phase 2: Hearing Youth</li> </ol>

Issue to be addressed	Strategy/Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator	Progress to Date
							<p>Voices; Phase 3: A Panel of Experts to discuss the pros and cons of children in the courtroom. "Hear Me! Hear Me! Hear Me!: Voices of Youth in Foster care Regarding their Court Proceedings" video created, produced and shared statewide at conferences including Sharing Success VI. "Tools for Engaging Children in Their Court Proceedings: A Guide for Judges, Advocates and Child Welfare Professionals" was created, produced and distributed. CIP staff is currently working with the PJJC to develop curriculum for a children in court training and is anticipated to deliver the training.</p> <p>f) ICWA Conference November of 2007 held.</p> <p>h) Teen Days in NYC established and was modified and named "Empowering youth day" in Oneida County.</p> <p>3) Established a relationship with the Judicial Institute to assist with curriculum development of child welfare matters. Established a working relationship with NYS Judicial</p>

Issue to be addressed	Strategy/Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator	Progress to Date
							<p>Institute to develop collaborative trainings to deliver to Judges and Judicial Officers. Had input on Child welfare presentations at Summer 2008 Judicial Seminars. Currently working with the national Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the Judicial Institute on bringing the Child Abuse and Neglect Institute to New York State in October 2009.</p> <p>4) October 2008 a contract was signed with retired NYC Family Court Judge Sarah Schecter to develop and implement a Judicial mentorship program.</p>

Issue to be addressed	Strategy/Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator	Progress to Date
Encourage active participation of children and youth in court proceeding.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Provide training for all system users on child participation in court proceedings to include:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Explanation of the benefits to the court and other stakeholders of youth presence and participation in permanency hearings;</li> <li>b) Explanation of the benefit to the children of youth participation in and presence at their permanency hearings;</li> <li>c) Behavioral expectations of children and youth based upon cognitive developmental stage;</li> <li>d) Age-appropriate questions and expectations for input from children and youth;</li> <li>e) Strategies to deal with emotional issues and outbursts;</li> <li>f) Restructuring or bifurcation of permanency hearings to permit younger children to participate;</li> <li>g) Judicial role in encouraging active and meaningful children and youth participation in permanency hearings;</li> <li>h) Use of creative, time-specific scheduling to permit children and youth to attend without significant disruption of school attendance;</li> <li>i) Strategies to prepare a child or youth for effective participation; and</li> <li>j) Age appropriate expectations for input for children and youth.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2) Develop a Judicial Handbook of age appropriate or developmental stage appropriate questions.</li> <li>3) Include foster youth panels at relevant trainings/seminars/conferences.</li> </ol>	PJCJC and senior CIP staff and consultants	2008	<p>Planning group convened</p> <p>RFP for consultant curriculum development issued</p> <p>Consultant selected</p> <p>Curriculum developed</p> <p>Trainers identified and recruited</p> <p>Training conducted</p>	Increased participation of youth in court proceedings	UCMS data indicator on youth attendance	<p>1) "Hear Me! Hear Me! Hear Me!: Voices of Youth in Foster care Regarding their Court Proceedings" video created, produced and shared statewide at conferences including Sharing Success VI. "Tools for Engaging Children in Their Court Proceedings: A Guide for Judges, Advocates and Child Welfare Professionals" was created, produced and distributed. PJCJC continues to lead on curriculum development in 3 phases: Phase 1: Developmental Issues – what to expect from children in court; 1 c) d) e) j)Phase 2: Hearing Youth Voices; 1 b) h)Phase 3: A Panel of Experts to discuss the benefits of having children participate in their court proceedings and allow a forum for discussion about concerns. 1 a) b) g) h) i) CIP staff is currently working with the PJCJC to develop curriculum for a children in court training and is anticipated to deliver the training. 1)CIP staff planned and facilitated a conference for child welfare professionals in Erie Co. on overcoming</p>

Issue to be addressed	Strategy/Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator	Progress to Date
							<p>barriers to finding permanency for older youth entitled "The Words of Permanency: Challenging Child Welfare Professionals to Find Permanency for Older Youth"</p> <p>1 b) i) Monroe Co. created a Court Orientation Program offered every six months to youth in care due to neglect/abuse explaining the court process, roles and responsibilities of professionals in the court room and permanency hearings.</p> <p>2) "Hear Me! Hear Me! Hear Me!: Voices of Youth in Foster care Regarding their Court Proceedings" video created, produced and shared statewide at conferences including Sharing Success VI. "Tools for Engaging Children in Their Court Proceedings: A Guide for Judges, Advocates and Child Welfare Professionals" was created, produced and distributed.</p> <p>3)NYS OCFS YIP (Youth in Progress) have been presenting at various law guardian training programs and were featured in the "Hear Me! Hear</p>

Issue to be addressed	Strategy/Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator	Progress to Date
							<p>Me! Hear Me!" video. Youth were also featured at Sharing Success VI in November 2008 as the voices in "Why Urgency Matters: An Illustrated Timeline of One child's Experience in Foster Care".</p>
<p>Increase judicial oversight of child and family service planning.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Collaborate with OCFS to provide training to Judicial Officers on the elements of case planning.</li> <li>2) Conduct training for CASAs to enhance the court's ability to monitor child and family service plan implementation.</li> <li>3) Conduct training for Law Guardians on existing well-being indicators and child development.</li> <li>4) Educate Judicial Officers on the need to be informed regarding community services beyond those under contract with the local social service agency.</li> <li>5) Provide technical assistance statewide to Judicial Officers regarding conducting meaningful permanency hearings and exploring all permanency options prior to approving an APPLA goal.</li> <li>6) Utilize a case review of children who have aged out of the system after entering at a young age as a self-assessment/training tool.</li> </ol>	<p>CIP staff</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Planning group convened</p> <p>RFP for consultant curriculum development issued</p> <p>Consultant selected</p> <p>Curriculum developed</p> <p>Trainers identified and recruited</p> <p>Training conducted</p>	<p>Improved service plans lead to enhanced family capacity, and improved CFSR outcomes</p>	<p>Formal evaluation of impact of judicial oversight in child and family service planning</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Through the work with the In Depth Technical Assistance provided by the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare a Training Plan emerged with this element as part of the training initiative. In response, OCFS developed a training for the courts with elements of case planning and will begin piloting in 2009.</li> <li>2) "Collaborative Advocacy: It's a Plan Not an Argument" training offered regionally in</li> </ol>

Issue to be addressed	Strategy/Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator	Progress to Date
							<p>August and September 2008 for CASA staff and volunteers on the use of active listening, problem solving and facilitating skills to advocate for children in collaboration with colleagues in child welfare.</p> <p>3) Healthy Development Curriculum in development. Pilot of one module on incorporating healthy development into permanency hearings being piloted in March and April of 2008. Monroe County offers a monthly "Babies Can't Wait-Teens Won't Wait" court based educational series that CIP staff develops and is responsible for implementation.</p> <p>5) Relationship established with NYS Judicial Institute to discuss judicial training in the area of child welfare. CIP was consulted regarding Child Welfare presentations at the 2008 Judicial Summer Seminars. Additionally, CIP Liaison staff work to improve the quality of permanency hearings in each of the jurisdictions they serve.</p>

Issue to be addressed	Strategy/Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator	Progress to Date
							<p>6) Nassau County piloted a case file review of a child's timeline in foster care from the time they entered until they aged out and presented the results to the local Family Court Judges. This pilot was expanded and presented to a statewide multidisciplinary audience, "Why Urgency Matters: An Illustrated Timeline of One child's Experience in Foster Care" was presented at Sharing Success VI in November 2008. Next steps to engage OCFS in initiative to support local agency opening files for the review.</p>
<p>Improve the communication between Referees and Judges</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Train judges and referees on the team model concept.</li> <li>2) Provide training for referees in conjunction with the Judicial Institute specific to their caseloads.</li> </ol>	<p>Judicial Training Consultant</p>	<p>2009</p>	<p>Planning group convened</p> <p>RFP for consultant curriculum development issued</p> <p>Consultant selected</p> <p>Curriculum developed</p> <p>Trainers identified and recruited</p> <p>Training conducted</p>	<p>Increase judicial oversight of cases managed by referees</p>	<p>Formal evaluation of Judge/Referee team model</p>	<p>1) Ongoing work of the CIP Liaisons where the jurisdiction they serve utilizes referees. Continue to send Judges to the Child Abuse and Neglect Institute, 10 referees and judges sent in June 2008. 9 were sent in 2007. A workshop on collaboration and the role of the Judge was offered at the 2008 Summer Judicial Seminars and presented by Honorable Len Edwards. CIP is currently working with the National</p>

Issue to be addressed	Strategy/Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator	Progress to Date
							<p>Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the Judicial Institute on bringing the Child Abuse and Neglect Institute to New York State in October 2009 to be opened to Judges and Referees handling child welfare cases.</p> <p>2) Relationship established with NYS Judicial Institute to discuss judicial officer training in the area of child welfare during the annual update trainings provided to legal series employees that includes referees. CIP is currently working with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the Judicial Institute on bringing the Child Abuse and Neglect Institute to New York State in October 2009 to be opened to Judges and Referees handling child welfare cases. Conferencing checklists are being developed by CIP staff to serve as a basis for a future training of child welfare Referees.</p>
<p>Increase awareness and understanding of child welfare court reform activities among OCA Divisions, Family Court Judges and</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Issue periodic "Best Practice Bulletins" (via print and e-mail).</li> <li>2) Make periodic presentations at Administrative Judge's and Family Court Supervising Judge's meetings.</li> <li>3) Meet individually with</li> </ol>	<p>CIP Staff</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Requests for technical assistance increased</p> <p>Judicial leadership cultivated</p>	<p>Court reform efforts more broadly deployed leading to increase in the number of counties with active stakeholder groups</p>	<p>Number of active stakeholder groups</p>	<p>1) Inaugural issue distributed January 2008, subsequent issues, Vol 1, Issue 2 &amp; 3 were distributed in 2008.</p>

Issue to be addressed	Strategy/Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator	Progress to Date
Referees, court managers, staff and other relevant entities of the UCS	<p>Administrative Judges and Family Court Supervising Judges regarding CIP activities.</p> <p>4) Make periodic presentations to Chief Clerks and Deputy Chief Clerks at annual meetings.</p> <p>5) Make periodic presentations to OCA Executive Management team regarding CIP activities.</p> <p>6) Make periodic presentations to local family court Judges and staff.</p> <p>7) Make periodic presentations to the Family Court Judges Association</p> <p>8) Meet and make presentations to the Appellate Divisions Law Guardian Programs.</p>			<p>Participation in statewide and local planning efforts increased</p> <p>Traditionally underrepresented jurisdictions engaged</p>	to promote system-wide implementation of best practices		<p>2) Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator of CIP Office presented to annual meeting of Administrative Judges of the Judicial District and the Supervising Judges of the Family Courts January 2008.</p> <p>3) Assistant Coordinator and Statewide Project Manager met with 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, &amp; 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Supervising Judges of the Family Courts individually. In 2008, additional meetings with the 10<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and NYC occurred.</p> <p>4) Presentation made in December 2007 to annual meeting of Chief Clerks and Deputy Chief Clerks Statewide about CIP as well as upcoming CFSR and a second presentation was made in October 2008 updating them on local CIP initiatives. Presentation made in May 2008 at the 6<sup>th</sup> District Managers Meeting.</p> <p>5) Ongoing on a regular basis</p> <p>6) Presentations about CIP and best practices made by CIP staff in the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial Districts,</p>

Issue to be addressed	Strategy/Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator	Progress to Date
							<p>conversations had concerning a similar presentation in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District. CIP created, developed and has provided a UCMS permanency module training for family court staff in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial district</p> <p>7) Conversation occurred between Statewide Project Manager and President of Association.</p> <p>8) Fourth Department Panel familiar and allows for regular presentations on the CIP and best practices at regional seminars. Statewide Project Manager meeting with other Law Guardian Program Directors at a meeting which convenes all Directors and is establishing relationships.</p>
<p>Improve the quality of representation and advocacy in CW proceedings</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Develop basic training curriculum for child welfare attorneys.</li> <li>2) Conduct periodic training sessions for attorneys in the basics of child welfare practice.</li> <li>3) Conduct periodic training sessions for attorneys on ethics in CW practice.</li> <li>4) Explore feasibility of mandated training programs.</li> </ol>	<p>CIP and PJCJC in consultation with State Bar and Appellate Division Law Guardian programs</p>	<p>2009-Ongoing</p>	<p>Planning Group convened</p> <p>Needs assessment conducted</p> <p>Curriculum developed</p> <p>Trainers identified and recruited</p> <p>Trainings conducted</p>	<p>Increase knowledge and skills of attorneys engaged in CW practice</p>	<p>Pre and post tests required for CLE credit</p>	<p>3) Preliminary conversations had with OCFS Counsel's Office who provide non-mandated training as well as counsel to The New York Public Welfare Association. 1)&amp; 2) Attorney training offered at two locations in 5<sup>th</sup> district in June 2008.</p>



## **Data Collection and Analysis Projects**

The CWCIP data collection and analysis grant supports several projects through its funding of two positions in the Office of Court Administration's Division of Technology, a position in the Division of Court Operations, a position at the OCFS and thorough contracts with technical assistance organizations. Additionally, CWCIP staff is actively involved in a number of planning groups and committees related to the court system's efforts to improve our capacity to collect and analyze child welfare data.

Sharing data between the courts and child welfare system has specific potential benefits:

1. System interoperability: Interoperability means direct communication between individual agencies' electronic case management systems in a way that is mutually beneficial. System interoperability supports enhanced operational efficiency, decreased data entry, faster service delivery, improved communication, standardized practice and improved data validity.
2. Increased capacity for evidence-based evaluation and enhanced decision making: Data sharing will benefit both the courts and child welfare agencies in their efforts to evaluate performance and monitor improvement efforts. With combined data, agencies can adopt a common outcome-oriented focus.
3. Reinforced partnerships between the courts and child welfare agencies: Through the interagency collaboration necessary to implement a data share, enhanced agency partnerships can emerge. Oftentimes, agencies work at cross-purposes unaware of the other's activities. Through the process of collaborating on data-share projects, agencies will be more likely to align resources and develop a sense of shared responsibility for the safety, permanency and well-being of New York State's children in foster care.

## **System Interoperability**

*LUC Project.* A promising pilot project has been initiated in New York City known as the "Legal Tracking System/Universal Case Management System/CONNECTIONS" or "LUC" data share project. This interagency system interoperability project has the goal of streamlining the process of filing child protective petitions and permanency hearing reports, and synchronizing the legal case information between the court and child welfare agency data systems. Achieving these objectives will both improve efficiency and enhance the reliability and validity of the respective data sets. To date, the project workgroup has defined the business requirements and developed a multi-phased project plan to implement the project in four stages or "builds" throughout 2008-2010. (Please see Appendix I for a November 2008 status on this initiative and Appendix J for a statistical study for measuring the effectiveness of the project)

It is envisioned that implementation of the New York City phase of the project will provide a model for the development of statewide interoperability. The LUC Governance group, which includes management from the UCS, OCFS and ACS, will provide a forum to explore the feasibility of creating similar interoperability between UCMS and CONNECTIONS to extend

the benefits statewide. A joint OCFS/OCA working group has already engaged in several prerequisite tasks including: 1) development of a descriptive analysis of the UCS and OCFS data sets; 2) comparative analysis of UCS and OCFS data from several pilot counties; 3) documenting the challenges that inhibit interoperability, and; 4) exploring solutions to overcome identified challenges.

(Please see Appendix K for a white paper describing the benefits of data share between the courts and child welfare agency)

### **Evidence-Based Evaluation and Enhanced Decision Making**

*The CHILD in Child Welfare and the Courts.* As the LUC project has worked to develop true interoperability between systems, the UCS and the OCFS have simultaneously explored ways of manually exchanging data to support decision making and evaluation of improvement efforts. In 2006, the Commission published the first edition of *The CHILD in Child Welfare and the Courts* in collaboration with the OCFS and the New York State Council on Children and Families. The data book includes statewide and county specific data profiles that presented court and child welfare data related to the federal Child and Family Services Review within the context of child well-being indicators to inform local and state policy development, planning and accountability as a means to improve outcomes for children, youth and families.

*Foster Care Profile.* The OCFS has developed a robust outcome framework published in the Foster Care Profile, a report developed by Chapin Hall Center for Children<sup>2</sup>. The Foster Care Profile provides state, regional and county staff with longitudinal data on the rate of placement into foster care and information on the core outcomes of county foster care systems: length of stay, permanency, placement stability and re-entry. The Foster Care Profile provides a longitudinal analysis to help administrators recognize trends in child welfare services and core outcomes, a process begun several years ago in response to the Federal Child and Family Service Reviews. In 2007, the CWCIP recognized the potential value of this data to the court system. In partnership with the OCFS this data was distributed to family court managers statewide. The objective of the parallel dissemination effort is twofold: to provide a single child welfare data set emphasizing local data to all county-based DSS agencies and family courts throughout New York State; and to foster local court-child welfare agency discussions based on data to improve the outcomes for children in each given region.

*Statewide Child Welfare Court Performance Measures.* The CWCIP is developing child welfare court performance measures to report information regarding child welfare court operations within a child outcomes framework to New York State Family Courts. Since 2002, the Center for Court Innovation (CCI) and New York City Family Court have been working together to develop such benchmark measures for abuse and neglect cases using UCMS data.

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<sup>2</sup> New York State Data Packet Fall 2007. New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Fall 2007.

Based on emerging national standards designed to assess court performance in child welfare cases the CWCIP will compile and disseminate a comprehensive report that integrates child welfare court metrics with the OCFS Foster Care Profile data measures. Using metrics from both court and agency data sets will provide an up-to-date, comprehensive view of the status of New York State's child welfare system from removal to permanency.

Eventually this data will be promulgated via a web-accessible, "executive dashboard" user interface. This will provide a user-friendly method of retrieving and displaying critical child welfare data in an organized fashion. This interface will provide significant insight into both short term operational effectiveness and long term trends to serve as the basis of policy development.

*Kids' Well-Being Indicators Clearinghouse (KWIC)*. CWCIP staff collaborated with the NYS Council on Children and Families to provide court statistical data and analysis for the KWIC project's statewide child welfare indicators website. The court indicators, along with indicators from several other NYS agencies involved with the welfare of NYS children, are compiled on an annual basis and are promulgated by the council on its website for a comprehensive look at child wellbeing—i.e. education, health, family, economic security, citizenship, and community. The resulting indicator profiles are then used collectively to help assess areas of need, design and improve programs, and sharpen the focus of the state on outcomes for children and their families<sup>3</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

In the last fifteen years the Court Improvement Project has made significant contributions towards improving the court's capacity to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of children in the child welfare system. Quality improvement, however, is a continuous process. The additional CWCIP funding provides an opportunity to sustain momentum for improvement efforts already underway and to reinforce the already strong partnership between the courts and the child welfare system. The additional funding and a carefully developed strategic plan will certainly lead to innovative approaches that improve our capacity to monitor performance and implement necessary reforms. As detailed herein, efforts undertaken by CWCIP staff in 2008 built significantly on the existing 2006-2010 strategic plan and past CWCIP legacy. In addition, funds were utilized to aid several local child welfare initiatives outside the scope of the strategic plan that allow local courts and corresponding agencies to address the unique child welfare challenges in their specific areas.

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<sup>3</sup> *Kids' Well-Being Indicators Clearinghouse*. New York State Council on Children and Families. 05 Jan 2009 <<http://www.nyskwic.org/>>.

## Data Grant Strategic Plan

Issue to be addressed	Strategy/Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator	Progress to Date
<p>Improve efficiency of child welfare court case management practices</p>	<p>1. Support NYC Family Court/ACS (Legal Tracking System/UCMS/Connections) data share project to allow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Real Time data exchange of key fields</li> <li>b. Electronic filing and dissemination of petitions, permanency reports and Orders</li> <li>c. Development of "portals" and electronic notifications of events</li> </ul> <p>2. Develop feasibility study regarding statewide interoperability between UCMS and OCFS systems to replicate NYC pilot statewide.</p>	<p>Division of Technology (DoT) in collaboration with NYC FC and ACS team with CIP data analyst support</p> <p>CIP Data Analyst/ OCFS Data Analyst</p>	<p>2008-2010</p> <p>March 2009</p>	<p>Build 0: March 2009</p> <p>Build 1: December 2009</p> <p>Build 2: June 2010</p> <p>Build 3: December 2010</p> <p>Report Published</p>	<p>Reduced delays</p> <p>Increased compliance with requirement that permanency reports be submitted 14 days in advance of the permanency hearing</p> <p>Increased communication among professionals</p>	<p>Court statistics reflect permanency reports submitted on time.</p>	<p>1. 2008: UCS / ACS technical design has begun on nine inter-agency messages supporting the data share.</p> <p>Outreach delivered to five audiences garnering project support.</p> <p>2. 2008: Final report published in March, 2008</p>

## Data Grant Strategic Plan

Issue to be addressed	Strategy/Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator	Progress to Date
Increase the capacity of the court system to disseminate data to court managers and judicial decision makers	1. Develop enhanced reporting functionality in UCMS Permanency Module	Division of Technology	Ongoing	Determine requirements. Deploy updates.	Improved access to data.	Reports available in UCMS statewide.	1. 2007: several new reports promulgated.
	2. Conduct a train-the-trainer to inform child welfare (CIP, PJCJC) staff about existing UCMS reports to prepare them to train court managers on accessing and interpreting reports.	DoT/Trial Court Operations	2007	Training Completed			2. 2007: Training of CIP Staff conducted Fall 2007
	3. Train court managers on accessing and interpreting child welfare data.	CIP Liaisons/Trial Court Operations	2007-2008				3. 2007: CIP Staff trained to provide TA to court managers.
	4. Develop a data warehouse/data store based on UCMS data to provide court users with ad hoc reporting capability.	DoT	2009	Data facility platform identified. Design initiated.	Increase access to data at the local level	Local courts generating reports.	4. 2008: Initial data facility technical planning underway.
	5. Provide county-by-county "Data Snapshots" based on OCFS data to court managers on a regular basis.	CIP Data Analyst/OCFS Data Analyst	2007				5. 2007 and 2008: OCFS Data packets disseminated annually.
	6. Establish protocols for data access and authorization for external publication	DoT/Trial Court Operations	2007				6. 2007: AD Hoc report request forms promulgated and training of CIP staff completed.
	7. Publish period updates to the Child in Child Welfare data book	PJCJC staff/Research and Stats Unit	2009				7. As priority dictates, possible update in 2009.
Improve consistency,	1. Review and prioritize current permanency module enhancement	DoT/Trial Court Operations	Ongoing				1. Ongoing:

### Data Grant Strategic Plan

Issue to be addressed	Strategy/Activity	Responsibility	Timeline	Interim Benchmark	Outcome	Indicator	Progress to Date
reliability and validity of UCMS data	<p>requests and implement enhancements</p> <p>2. Review and update end-user documentation for UCMS permanency module</p> <p>3. Provide training to court end-users</p>	<p>DoT/Trial Court Operations</p> <p>CIP Liaisons/Trial Court Operations</p>	<p>2007-2008</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Writer identified; documentation created.</p>	<p>Improved training ability for end-users; more consistent data entry.</p>	<p>Decrease in identified data quality issues.</p>	<p>UCMS enhancements identified through and prioritized by UCMS Permanency Planning committee.</p> <p>2. 2008: Contracted with technical writer to create UCMS end-user documentation. Documentation has begun.</p> <p>3. 2008: CIP Liaisons conducted UCMS end-user training in 4 districts.</p>

