

Strategic Plan

State Name: CONNECTICUT

Date Strategic Plan Submitted: February 2012

Timeframe Covered by Strategic Plan: FFY 2012-2014

Overall Goal/Mission of SCIP: Mission of the Connecticut Judicial Branch, State Court Improvement Program is to:

- Promote and improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of children who are subject to child protection cases in the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters;
- Assure that families are engaged throughout the court process;
- Handle child protection cases in fair, timely, and efficient manner.

Outcome #1: The Court will use data to inform practice and to improve outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: The Judicial Branch collects and reports caseload and case movement data related to child protection matters. In order to better analyze the treatment of cases under the Court's jurisdiction, inform practice across the entire child welfare system, and to meet the newly established CQI requirements of the SCIP, an expanded set of data needs to be collected and utilized by the Court and the state child welfare agency in its policy and decision-making process.

Measurable Objective: Availability of data reports at Statewide Taskforce meetings; Use of child welfare information in the SCIP policy and decision-making process.

Activities to be undertaken include but are not limited to data collection from the Court's Statewide Child Protection Information System (CPIS); periodic court file review; collection and review of data from DCF's Connecticut Comprehensive Outcomes Review (CCOR) process; and, collaboration with the University of Connecticut Department of Community Medicine and Health Care analyze and report findings from expanded data collection.

Strategic Category: *Classification of activities/projects strategized to reach desired outcome.*

Activity or Project Description <i>Specific actions or project that will be completed to produce specific outputs and demonstrate progress toward the outcome.</i>	CIP Funding Stream <i>Grant(s) used to fund activity; can be basic, training, data and/or other grants or funding sources as appropriate.</i>	Collaborative Partners <i>Responsible parties and partners involved in implementation of the activity.</i>	Timeframe <i>Proposed completion date or, if appropriate, "ongoing".</i>	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activity <i>What the CIP intends to produce, provide or accomplish through the activity.</i>	Target Improvement <i>Where relevant and practical, provide specific, projected change in data the CIP intends to achieve.</i>	Data Source <i>Where relevant and practical, name the specific sources where data will be drawn to measure anticipated changes due to CIP activity.</i>	Feedback Vehicle <i>Brief description of stakeholders the data will be shared with and methodology/products for dissemination of findings.</i>
SCIP will meet enhanced Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process requirements by	Basic Data Collection	SCIP Director, SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force, Department of	Ongoing	SCIP will use data collected to analyze trends and outcome measures to improve practice in the child	Expanded outcome data will be reported semi-annually and shared with system stakeholders.	Child Protection Information System (CPIS)	The following individuals will meet semi-annually to review data:

conducting improved and expanded data analysis and reporting and using this information to inform the decision-making process.	Children and Families, Office of the Chief Public Defender, Office of the Attorney General, Child Protection Unit, UConn Dept. of Community Medicine and Health Care	welfare system.		CFSR/CCOR data	Chief Administrative Judge for Juvenile Matters, Court Operations Managers; SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force
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Narrative: Connecticut's State Court Improvement Program has long supported efforts to improve the state Child Protection Information System (CPIS) and enhance the Court's ability to perform data analysis. By using the CPIS and other methods of data collection such as file review and the DCF CCOR reviews, the Court and the state child welfare agency are anticipated to gain a better understanding of the manner in which cases progress through the child welfare system, and how this impacts outcomes for children and their families. Use of the empirical data provided by these activities, rather than dependence upon anecdotal evidence, will be used as the basis for sound decision-making, will guide SCIP activities and overall systemic improvements, and help Connecticut develop standards for the Court Performance Measures, Timeliness Measures, and Strategic Plan Measures, in an effort to improve outcomes for children involved in the child welfare system.

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Outcome #2: Identify Connecticut's crossover youth population and assess whether this population is at risk of less favorable permanency outcomes compared with children who are solely involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice system.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: The Connecticut Judicial Branch has actively participated in the statewide Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee. Disproportionate Minority Contact Subcommittee for many years. Several studies, including the Casey Breakthrough Series, have been completed that identify the frequency and significance of children in the child welfare system who then become involved in the juvenile justice system, including documenting the disproportionate representation for youth of color within the population. In addition, Public Act 11-154 took affect in October 2011. In the Act, the state legislature has identified DMC in both the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare population as an issue requiring attention and evaluation. This project will support the Court's efforts to improve outcomes for youth for "Permanency Outcome (P1) Children in care will have appropriate permanency goals established and achieved in a timely manner" identified as an area needing improvement the CFSR.

Measurable Objective: The Judicial Branch, DCF, and OPM the state budget office will enter into a cross agency Memorandum of Agreement. The MOA will allow data sharing across the three systems. Data from each system will be collected and analyzed.

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☐ Capacity Building ☐ Court Function Improvement ☒ Systemic Reform

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Capstone Project to improve outcomes for crossover youth dually involved in child welfare and juvenile justice	CIP Basic Grant	Judicial Branch Office of Policy & Management (OPM) Dept. of Children & Families	October 2012	An analysis of Judicial and DCF data to identify CT's crossover youth population. Recommendations for	The ability to track this population in Connecticut and improve their time to permanency.	Judicial CPIS system Judicial CMIS system DCF CONDUIT system DCF LINK system	The project leader will provide semi annual updates at meetings of the SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force and the

				<p>SCIP Task Force and agencies to implement and improve outcomes for this population.</p>		<p>OPM Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee/Data Workgroup DCF OPM The project leader will provide quarterly email updates to leadership of the Judicial Branch, DCF and OPM.</p>
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Narrative: As a result of Connecticut's participation in Georgetown University's Multi-System Integration Certificate Program for Public Sector Leaders in Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare at the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR), the team is required to develop and implement a Capstone Project that focuses on improving policies, programs and practices for "crossover" children that have been dually-involved in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Connecticut's Capstone Project will focus on identifying developing a technical solution to track this population for Connecticut; analyzing the date to determine whether Connecticut's crossover youth are at risk of less favorable outcomes by comparison with children who are solely involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice system; and providing recommendations to stakeholders that focus on improving policies, programs and practices for this population.

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Outcome #3: Use of concurrent permanency planning by the Court, the state child welfare agency and child protection system stakeholders will be increased.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Children in out-of-home care often wait long periods of time before achieving permanency. A factor that affects the issue is the degree to which the state child welfare agency and the Court establishes and supports the use of concurrent permanency planning. In the CFSR, stakeholders interviewed indicated that there was a lack of emphasis placed on developing and promoting concurrent plans which is documented by outcomes for Permanency Outcome 1 (P1) "Children have permanency and stability in their living situation", Composite 3: "Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods".

Measurable Objective: The SCIP will support the child welfare agency if it chooses to propose legislation that clarifies the need to develop concurrent permanency plans; Case Management Orders will be modified to indicate when a concurrent plan has been established as well as an outline of the plan; Staff will be trained in the use of the new Case Management Order; Multidisciplinary training will be provided to judges, attorneys, Court and DCF staff regarding the use and effectiveness of concurrent permanency planning.

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The Court OTC/Case Management Order will be modified to include a section for Concurrent Permanency Planning	CIP Basic Grant	Judicial Branch Administration and Local Court Managers	March 1, 2012	Documentation in the court record whether a concurrent permanency plan has been developed following removal of a child.	Following dissemination statewide, 100% of case files will indicate whether there is a concurrent permanency plan in	Case File Review	The following individuals will meet semi-annually to review data: Chief Administrative

					the case file.		Judge for Juvenile Matters, Court Operations administrative and local court managers; SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force
The Judicial Branch will support legislation if proposed by DCF to conform state law to federal law regarding concurrent permanency planning	N/A	DCF Judicial Branch Office of the Attorney General	October 1, 2012	State law that requires concurrent permanency plans for children removed from their homes		Copy of Public Act	Public Act will be distributed to by court administrators to local court managers. Implementation plans for the Act will be discussed with the SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force.
Concurrent Permanency Planning Training curriculum will be deliver to a multidisciplinary group that includes, DCF, attorneys, judges and court staff	SCIP Training Grant	Judicial Branch DCF OCPD OAG	May 1, 2012	80 to 100 individuals will receive the training.	Those who participate in the training will have a clear understanding of the concepts associated with Concurrent Permanency Planning and be able to sue the concepts in their day-to day work.	Attendance sheets from the training; Pre/Post training questionnaires	SCIP Training Workgroup will receive the result of the pre/Post Training Questionnaires.

Narrative: The Connecticut SCIP Program formed a workgroup to explore how to improve the use of concurrent permanency planning following receipt of the final report of the CFSR. Consultants from the NRC for Legal and Judicial Issues and NRC for Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning were engaged and a training curriculum was developed and piloted to approximately 100 stakeholders. Modifications were made to the training curriculum following its initial pilot phase and Connecticut faculty were selected and trained to deliver the revised curriculum, and a mock training was held. Two training sessions are now scheduled for March 2012. The workgroup has also recommended that the Court OTC/Case Management Order be revised to include a section to document concurrent permanency planning. The revised form is being piloted in several court locations and will be disseminated statewide for use at all courts. DCF has indicated a willingness to propose legislation to improve the language associated with concurrent permanency planning in state statutes. The Judicial Branch anticipates that it will support DCF's efforts during the legislative process.

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Outcome #4: Increased availability of information regarding confidentiality and information-sharing laws that are relevant across the juvenile court system including child welfare, juvenile justice, health, education, etc.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: The Judicial Branch/DCF Executive Implementation Team (EIT) for Joint Strategic Plan (JST) identified the need to address issues related to the release of information verses the right to confidentiality for juveniles. The JSP report and the MacArthur Foundation, Models for Change, Information Sharing Project, provided the data and information that serve as the basis for this project.

Measurable Objective: Completion and posting of an online information-sharing guide.

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X Capacity Building ☐ Court Function Improvement ☐ Systemic Reform

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Development of information sharing guide	SCIP Basic Grant	Judicial OCPH OCSA SDE DCF Private Bar	July 2012	Online information-sharing guide published on internet	100% of Users will have access to information regarding confidentiality and information sharing laws	Number of visit (hits) to the Guide on line.	The SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force will receive semi annually updates on the use of the Information Sharing Guide.

Narrative: The Joint Strategic Plan is an interagency plan between the Judicial Branch and DCF which outlines an integrated system for planning, implementation, and evaluation of juvenile court services. One recommendation included in this plan focuses on identifying issues related to the release of information verses the right to confidentiality for children. Development of the information-sharing guide has been identified as one solution that is anticipated to provide members of the public and professionals with an overview of relevant laws, as well as direct users where to find additional information.

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Outcome #5: Reduction in the number of removals and time spent in out-of-home care for children of parents who require substance abuse treatment.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: The results of Connecticut's CFSR included findings related to Safety Outcome One "Children are first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect: Item 1 "Repeat maltreatment and Permanency", Outcome 1, Item 5: "Children have permanency and stability in their living situation, Item 5:"Foster Care Reentry", Item 8: Reunification, guardianship and placement with relatives." These findings, in part, showed that children whose parents come to the attention of the DCF because of substance abuse are more likely to be removed from their homes and remain in out-of-home care longer than children from non-substance abusing homes and are also at risk for reentering foster care due to relapse. This led to the development of the RSVP Program, and its ensuing evaluation.

Measurable Objective: Develop expansion plan with project partners; Provide training to local stakeholders; Provide data for the ongoing evaluation..

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X Capacity Building

X Court Function Improvement

X Systemic Reform

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Recovery Specialist Voluntary program will be expanded and stakeholders will receive training about substance abuse and its affects on child	SCIP Training Grant	DCF DHMAS Judicial Branch ABH	July 1, 2012 for expansion plan, September 1, 2012 for training of	Local stakeholders will have a better understanding of substance abuse and its affects on families and the recovery process.		Attendance sheets for training	RSVP Core Team

permanency.			local stakeholders				
The University of Connecticut (UConn) Department of Community Medicine and Health Care will provide data analysis and monitoring to the project partners	SCIP Basic Grant	DCF DHMAS Judicial Branch DHMAS	Ongoing, update annual outcomes July 1, 2012.	Data will show improved outcomes for the RSVP target population	Less than 5% of all children will have returned home will have a subsequent neglect petition filed within 12 months of exiting care through reunification; 75% of children exiting care whose parents are enrolled in the program will do so within 12 months; 100% of children whose parents are enrolled in the program will do so within 24 months. 75% of parents will participate in the case status conferences.	CPIs system data UConn Evaluation Data File Review	Data will be shared with RSVP Core Team DCF Leadership Judicial Branch Managers Chief Administrative Judge for Juvenile Matters

Narrative: The Recovery Specialist Voluntary Program was established as a pilot program by means of collaboration between DCF, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DHMAS) and the Judicial Branch in an effort to enhance early identification of parents requiring substance abuse treatment and recovery support, to engage them more fully in their court cases, and to enhance timely child permanency through reunification, transfer of guardianship and adoption, and to reduce foster care reentry due to relapse. Together, the agencies developed and implemented, in conjunction with Advanced Behavioral Health (ABH), the statewide substance abuse provider organization, an integrated system of care for families in need of substance abuse treatment services. This included changing policies, procedures and practices, and developing a coordinated network of behavioral health and support service. The objectives of the pilot program are to:

- o Improve substance abusing parents/caregivers' access, engagement and retention in substance abuse treatment;
- o Increase access to case management, support and recovery services;
- o Promote inter-agency data sharing and collaboration for program development and strategic planning;
- o Show improvements in rates and timeliness of child permanency decisions;
- o Reduce repeat cases of child maltreatment and re-entry to DCF due to parental/caregiver substance abuse;
- o Reduce costs associated with out of home placements and court proceedings; and
- o Develop a plan for ongoing outcomes and performance monitoring.

RSVP provides eligible parents with a "Recovery Specialist" and recovery case management. The Court convenes more frequent and enhanced case status conferences with the attorneys, parents, and recovery specialist to share information, monitor case progress, and to ensure expedited access to substance abuse assessment and treatment for parents. The program has been operating in three sites and expansion plans are being developed. SCIP supports the work of the RSVP Program by providing training for stakeholder groups at each site, by jointly funding an evaluation of outcomes, and by monitoring the program for model fidelity.

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Outcome #6: Increased timeliness and quality of court ordered psychological evaluations.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Delays in obtaining court ordered evaluations were identified in the Court Improvement Re-Assessment completed in 2007, and were cited as a contributing factor leading to delays in the timeliness of adoption in the CFSR as referenced by Permanency Outcome 1: "Children have permanency and stability in their lives. Item 9 "Adoption, Composite 2 Timeliness of Adoption and in the SCIP Re-Assessment Report. Court ordered evaluations can often cause considerable delays in case resolution and many times involve the participation of multiple parties over many days. Multiple evaluations are sometimes ordered in the same case because evaluations are not responsive to the courts requests.

Measurable Objective: Peer review and training will be conducted quarterly, quality and timeliness, as measured by an audit instrument will increase..

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X Capacity Building

X Court Function Improvement

X Systemic Reform

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Credentialing of all psychologists who perform court evaluations will be done initially upon application and every three years thereafter.	SCIP Basic Grant	DCF Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare (CAQH) Advanced	On-going	All psychologists providing court evaluations will be credentialled by the Judicial Branch.	100% psychologists will be subjected to the credentialing review process	CAQH data source	Data will be shared with the SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force and the Chief Administrative Judge for Juvenile Matters

		Behavioral Health (ABH) UConn School of Psychiatry					
Peer Review of psychologist work produce will be conducted at least 3 times per year	SCIP Basic Grant	DCF Judicial Branch UConn School of Psychiatry	On going	Peer Reviews will identify deficiencies in conducting evaluations and failure to adhere to Branch policies of conducting evaluations.	75% of reports subjected to peer review will have a favorable outcome on the audit instrument	UConn Peer Review Outcome data	Outcome data will be shared with the Chief Administrative Judge for Juvenile Matters, With local court managers and staff and with the psychologists who conduct the evaluations.
Training for credentialed psychologists will occur at least 3 times per year	SCIP Basic Grant	DCF Judicial Branch UConn School of Psychiatry	On going	Credentialed psychologists will have enhanced knowledge about conducting evaluations in accordance with Branch policies and professional standards	50 to 75 psychologists will attend 2 or more trainings.	Attendance Sheets Participant Surveys	SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force will receive results of the Participant surveys.

Narrative: The Judicial Branch has continued its quality improvement initiative for court ordered evaluations with the support of SCIP. As a result, the court ordered evaluation form has been revised and is currently in use, and the Judicial Branch is now credentialing all psychologists who conduct court ordered evaluations so that only psychologists who have been credentialled by the Judicial Branch may conduct evaluations. Additionally, the Judicial Branch has entered into a contract with the University of Connecticut School of Psychiatry and its consultants to conduct peer review and training for psychologists to further support this quality improvement effort.

The Judicial Information Technology Division is developing an application within the Court's case management system that will monitor case level data where evaluations have been ordered, including developing quality assurance reports that provide data to examine any reduction in delays.

Policies have been put in place, a peer review audit instrument has been developed to help assess quality improvement.

Ongoing training and a peer review in anticipated to take place by April 1, 2012 with a minimum of two additional sessions sometime thereafter.

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Outcome #7: Parents, children (when appropriate), foster parents, and other family members will be engaged in and encouraged to fully participate in collaborative decision making in their cases.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: In Connecticut, parents, foster parents, and other significant individuals are excluded from court conferences and therefore do not actively participate in any collaborative decision making related to their children's cases. The Child Protection Mediation program (CPM) has been developed to provide a process for collaborative decision making and timely case resolution. However, the program presently is underutilized. The lack of participation by parents, foster parents, and children was identified in the Court Improvement Reassessment Report completed in 2007.

Measurable Objective: Develop and maintain a qualified, ready pool of mediators. Identify cases that are best suited for mediation. Provide training for attorneys about effective advocacy for their clients in mediation. Maintain data about referral, participation, and outcomes of mediations.

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Provide training for new mediators	SCIP Training Grant	DCF Judicial Branch	February 1, 2012	There will be a ready pool of qualified mediators available to accept referrals from the Child Protection Mediation Program		Roster of Mediators	Chief Administrative Judge for Juvenile Matters Judges and Local Court Mangers will be provided the roster of mediators.

Identify cases types best suited for referral to CPM	N/A	DCF AAGs OCPD AAGS	March 1, 2012	Increase the types of cases referred to Child Protection mediation	Case types other than Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) will be referred to CPM; Parents, foster parents and other significant participants will meaningfully participate in CPM.	CPM Data collection instrument aggregate data	SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force will receive semi annual statistics about the CPM Program
Provide Mediation Advocacy Training for agency and parents' and children's attorneys	SCIP Training Grant	DCF AAGs OCPD OAG Quinnipiac University School of Law Dispute Settlement Center	July 1, 2012	Increase the knowledge of agency attorney, and attorney who represent children and parents about the mediation process and the best practices for representing and advocating for clients during mediation.	75 to 100 attorneys will attend the mediation training;	Attendance Sheets; Pre/Post Tests	SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force will receive results of the Pre/post test.

Narrative: The Child Protection Mediation Program has been in place since 2003 and receives 2-3 referrals per month. A workgroup was recently convened to explore ways to increase the referral rate and to improve stakeholders understanding of the mediation process and its value to child protection cases. The group has made recommendations to the Chief Administrative Judge for Juvenile Matters regarding classes of cases best suited for mediation and has recommended the development of training for attorneys. A new pool of mediators was trained in January 2012 and is accepting referrals for mediation on an ongoing basis.

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Outcome #8: Judges, attorneys, and court and DCF staff will have increased knowledge in the area of domestic violence and children, with particular focus placed on families involved with the child welfare agency and in the court system.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: The "Structured Decision Making System for Child Protective Services Management Report. February 1-April 30, 2007; May 1-July 31, 2007; August 1-October 31, 2007 identified domestic violence as a safety factor in 7.9%-9.1% of child protection investigations, twice topping the list as the most common safety factor identified. In addition, stakeholders who completed the Court Improvement Training Assessment in June 2012 identified "Domestic Violence and Children" as an area where training was needed. Many child protection cases have petitions filed in the court and children are often removed because of the ongoing domestic violence in the home. Judges, court and agency staff, and attorneys for children and parents are sometimes not familiar with the laws related to domestic violence, the manner in which domestic violence affects children, and various approaches in working with victims while holding perpetrators accountable.

Measurable Objective: Development of a guidebook, draft curriculum, and delivery of training to judges, court staff and key stakeholders.

Strategic Category: *Classification of activities/projects strategized to reach desired outcome.*

☒ Capacity Building

☐ Court Function Improvement

☒ Systemic Reform

Activity or Project Description <i>Specific actions or project that will be completed to produce specific outputs and demonstrate progress toward the outcome.</i>	CIP Funding Stream <i>Grant(s) used to fund activity; can be basic, training, data and/or other grants or funding sources as appropriate.</i>	Collaborative Partners <i>Responsible parties and partners involved in implementation of the activity.</i>	Timeframe <i>Proposed completion date or, if appropriate, "ongoing".</i>	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activity <i>What the CIP intends to produce, provide or accomplish through the activity.</i>	Target Improvement <i>Where relevant and practical, provide specific, projected change in data the CIP intends to achieve.</i>	Data Source <i>Where relevant and practical, name the specific sources where data will be drawn to measure anticipated changes due to CIP activity.</i>	Feedback Vehicle <i>Brief description of stakeholders the data will be shared with and methodology/products for dissemination of findings.</i>
Work with selected contractor to develop the DV Guidebook, curriculum for training;	SCIP Basic Grant	Judicial Branch DCF Attorneys	Ongoing Completed by 12/30/2012	Judges, court staff, DCF staff, Attorneys and the public will have access to information about domestic violence	# of visits (hits) to the Guidebook online.	Website data	The SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force will receive semi annual data about the visits to the website.

CIP will produce an On Line and print DV Guidebook DV Curriculum.			laws and the effect of domestic violence on children involved in the child welfare system			
CIP will provide training consistent with the guidebook.	SCIP Training Grant	Judicial Branch DCF Attorneys	Ongoing Completed by 12/30/2012	Judges, Court Staff and attorneys will be able to identify the laws and needs of children in DV cases	Attendance Sheets Pre/Post Training test results.	Results of the Pre/Post test will be shared with the SCIP Training Workgroup

Narrative: The Court Improvement Program has selected a contractor who will work with a stakeholder group to develop a state-specific Domestic Violence Guidebook for Connecticut. The guidebook will include information concerning the laws related to domestic violence in Connecticut, information about the effects of domestic violence on children, especially those in the child welfare system, and how the child welfare system and the courts can assist victims and their children and hold perpetrators accountable. The guidebook will serve as the basis for curriculum development and training for judges, court staff, DCF staff, and attorneys for parents and children.

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Outcome #9: Court dockets (including case aging information and certain audio transcripts) will be made available online so that they can be accessed by agency attorneys, attorneys for parents and children and DCF.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: The SCIP Re-Assessment Report indicated that attorney appearance in court has been a significant problem. This contributes to delays in case processing and increases the amount of time to permanent placement. By allowing attorneys to access scheduled cases through its e-services portal, and by providing additional information related to the case, it is anticipated that the appearance rate of attorneys in child protection matters will be improved.

Measurable Objective: User acceptance testing (project completion). Availability of E-Services Docket Access. Attorney appearance rate.

Strategic Category: *Classification of activities/projects strategized to reach desired outcome.*

☐ Capacity Building ☒ Court Function Improvement ☐ Systemic Reform

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The SCIP Data Development consultant will complete the development of the web based docket access program. The CP court docket will be accessed through	SCIP Data Grant	Judicial Branch-Court Operations and IT Divisions; OCPD OAG DCF - Legal Division	User Acceptance Testing; E-Services Docket Access	Attorneys and DCF will have on line access to Child Protection dockets.	75% of Attorneys and DCF workers will be present at their court hearings.	Website data	Results of the file review will be shared with the SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force.

the Judicial Branch E-Services Website							
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Narrative: The "Docket Access" project is in the final stages of development. Scheduling information will include the number of days a case is pending in court to draw attention to case aging information. A demonstration for key stakeholders has been provided, and final development to provide access to the docket through the Judicial Branch E- Services portal is underway. The online docket is anticipated to be made available in 2012, with stakeholder user training conducted once the docket is available online. Court Operations managers will monitor usage and provide ongoing support for users

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Outcome #10: Electronic recording of court events that relate to outcomes in child protection matters including appearances, findings, orders and court dates.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Case file review and feedback from judges assigned to Juvenile Matters has shown that the documentation of court hearings, known as the "Memorandum of Hearing" (MOH) may be missing information or may be completed in an inconsistent manner by different courts across the state. The Memorandum of Hearing contains information about service of process, appearances, court findings, and orders, and is signed by the judge. An incomplete Memorandum of Agreement can lead to delays in the completion of required court orders, completion of data entry, and in the permanent placement of children.

Measurable Objective: Completion of the Business Process Requirements for the MOH. User Acceptance Testing of the MOH will begin.

Strategic Category: *Classification of activities/projects strategized to reach desired outcome.*

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The SCIP Data Development Consultant will work with Court Operations staff to develop Business process requirements.	SCIP Data Grant	Judicial Branch Court Operations and Information Technology Divisions	By July 1, 2012	Court hearings including appearances, findings, court orders and scheduling information will be recorded in a timely and accurate manner.	Improved documentation of court hearings and data entry.	Business Process Requirements (BPR) Documentation.	Judicial Branch Court Operations Administrative staff and local court managers will review and approve BPR.
Court Operations staff will conduct	SCIP Data Grant	Judicial Branch Court Operations	January 1, 2013	Court hearings including appearances,	Improved documentation of	MOH will be available for testing.	Judicial Branch Court Operations

user acceptance testing of the MOH		and Information Technology Divisions		findings, court orders and scheduling information will be recorded in a timely and accurate manner.	court hearings and data entry.		Administrative staff and local court managers will participate in testing and approve final "MOH"
Local court staff will be trained and use the electronic MOH	SCIP Data Grant	Judicial Branch Court Operations and Information Technology Divisions	September 1, 2013	Court hearings including appearances, findings, court orders and scheduling information will be recorded in a timely and accurate manner.	Improved documentation of court hearings and data entry.	Internal CQI Reports	Judicial Branch Court Operations Administrative staff and local court managers will review Internal CQI reports.

Narrative: Currently, there is no method other than a physical review of court files to document appearances and other information related to child protection matters. The MOH project will result in an electronic system that will provide ready access to appearance information, including whether parents/foster parents received notice of the hearing and were present, and will also populate other data elements in the CPIS system. This will reduce data entry delays and errors and help to provide more accurate, timely and accessible data from which to develop continuous quality improvement efforts. Development of business process requirements is currently underway and once completed, the Data Developer will work in consultation with Court Operations staff to move the project into the user acceptance stage.

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Outcome #11: Increased knowledge of matters related to child welfare by Judges, attorneys, and court and DCF staff.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Providing access to multidisciplinary training has been a priority for Connecticut's State Court Improvement Program from its inception. The SCIP Training Assessment completed in June 2010, as well as online surveys of attorneys completed in June 2012 have been used to identify targeted training needs for different stakeholder groups.

Measurable Objective: Completion of an annual training plan. Various assessment tools will be employed to ascertain the effectiveness of training events offered to key stakeholder groups.

Strategic Category: *Classification of activities/projects strategized to reach desired outcome.*

X Capacity Building ☐ Court Function Improvement ☐ Systemic Reform

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SCIP will issue an RFP and select an individual/organization to assist with developing and coordinating multidisciplinary training.	SCIP Training Grant	Judicial Branch DCF OAG OCPD	RFP to issue by March 1, 2012 Coordinator to be selected by June 1, 2012	The SCIP Training Coordinator will assist the SCIP direct in the development, planning and delivery of multiple training events and other professional			The SCIP Training Workgroup will assist with the evaluation and selection of an individual/organization to serve as the Training

				development activities under the grant.		Coordinator.
SCIP will convene an annual statewide forum for judges, attorneys, court staff and DCF staff.	SCIP Training Grant	Judicial Branch DCF OAG OCPD	By June 1, 2012	200 to 250 Judges, court staff, agency, parent's and children's attorneys, and DCF staff will participate in the Annual Child and Youth Law Forum.	Enhance stakeholders understanding of recent changes in laws, rules, procedures and provide then with practical information to enhance practice	Attendance Sheets Forum Participant Evaluations
SCIP will provide multidisciplinary training on Child Development and Autism Spectrum Disorder	SCIP Training Grant	Judicial Branch DCF OAG OCPD	By June 1, 2012	40 Judges, court staff, agency, parent's and children's attorneys, and DCF staff will participate in each of the two trainings	Enhance stakeholders understanding of principles of child development and the autism spectrum disorder that they can apply to their day to day work.	Results of the Pre/Post Test Results will be shared with the SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force and the SCIP Training Workgroup

Narrative: Connecticut's State Court Improvement Program has been successful in providing timely, relevant, and high quality multidisciplinary training opportunities that meet the needs of key stakeholders in the child welfare system. A standing committee comprised of multidisciplinary stakeholders planned this year's activities based, in part, on the results of a 2010 Needs Assessment that examined professional development activities. Some of these activities include an annual forum which is in its thirteenth year; targeted training programs, and attendance at relevant conferences and symposia. The addition of an individual/organization to support SCIP professional development will enhance its ability to manage professional development activities.

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Outcome #12: Attorneys from the Office of the Attorney General /Child Protection Unit will have enhanced trial skills.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: The SCIP Training Assessment completed in 2010 identified the need for individual stakeholder groups to have specialized training. The Office of Attorney General (OAG)/Child Protection Unit attorneys were identified as one of the groups who might benefit from specialized trial skills training.

Measurable Objective: Completion of training. Various instruments will be used to assess the effectiveness of training.

Strategic Category: *Classification of activities/projects strategized to reach desired outcome.*

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Child Protection Trial Skills Program for Agency Attorneys (Office of the Attorney General, Child Protection Unit)	SCIP Training Grant	OAG, DCF & Judicial Branch	Ongoing	Improved Trial Skills for Agency Counsel Improved understanding of Best Practices in Child Welfare Intervention to Inform Case Analysis and Client	Improved Permanency Outcomes	Attendance Sheets; Pre/Post Test	Results of the Pre/post test results will be shared with the SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force and Training Workgroup

				Counseling			
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Narrative: Assistant Attorney Generals (AAGs) are responsible to assess the competent evidence available in support of agency neglect, abuse and termination of parental rights petitions and the legal sufficiency of that evidence; to identify material facts to support elements of petition; to analyze case strengths and weaknesses; to recommend settlement versus litigation; and, to efficiently, accurately and thoroughly present a case if it proceeds to trial. Currently, trial skills training for AAGs is ad hoc. Attorneys have primarily learned trial skills by doing, but have not received the training necessary to ensure that their practice is consistent with the most advanced trial advocacy skills achievable and that the skill level is consistent among all AAGs throughout the department. Enhanced trial advocacy skills, specifically in the child protection context, will help to ensure that considerations regarding reasonable efforts, concurrent planning, family engagement, children's attachment and permanency needs are factored into case assessment, counseling the agency and formulating case strategy.

The OAG/Child Protection Unit will create a Child Protection Trial Advocacy Program specifically tailored to AAGs. The National Institute of Trial Advocacy (NITA) has worked with several states on designing in-house programs specifically addressing child protection litigation. The OAG will collaborate with NITA and DCF on program design and content, and will coordinate with the Judicial Branch in order to arrange time for the AAGs to attend the program. The program is anticipated to include a minimum of 3 days dedicated to trial skills and 1 day of training in child welfare issues. There are approximately 40 Assistant Attorneys General in the Child Protection Department, and with the cooperation of the Judicial Branch it is anticipated that approximately 24 AAGs can be made available to participate in the first annual training.

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Outcome #13: Attorneys who represent children and parents will have increased knowledge in the area of child welfare law, including the goals of the system, and the laws and procedures applicable in Connecticut.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: The 2010 Court Improvement Training Needs Assessment identified that newly recruited attorneys need specific training in child welfare law before they can represent a client in juvenile court, and that already practicing attorneys have limited access to ongoing training. Case intake statistics from the Office of the Chief Public Defender (OCPD) and from the Judicial Branch indicate that some geographical areas are in need of additional contract attorneys.

Measurable Objective: Completion of training. Various instruments will be used to assess the effectiveness of training.

Strategic Category: *Classification of activities/projects strategized to reach desired outcome.*

X Capacity Building X Court Function Improvement ☐ Systemic Reform

Activity or Project Description	CIP Funding Stream	Collaborative Partners	Timeframe	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activity	Target Improvement	Data Source	Feedback Vehicle
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The OCPD will contract with the Center for Children's Advocacy to provide pre service training to new recruits.	SCIP Training Grant	OCPD Judicial Branch Center for Children's Advocacy	June/July 2012	Topic training that can be offered in multiple locations, trial training, scholarships to national trainings	Attorneys representing parents and children will understand the process and the goals of the court in child protection matters.	Pre/Post Surveys of participants Client Satisfaction Surveys	OCPD Administration SCIP Multidisciplinary task Force
Development and	SCIP Training	Judicial Branch	Ongoing	Topic training that can	Regional trainings,	Attendance records	OCPD

Implementation of a training curriculum in child welfare law practice	Grant	DCF OCPD-CP OCPD Training Private Nonprofits with expertise in Child Welfare Practice	during FY12/13	be offered in multiple locations, trial trainings, scholarships to national trainings	Improved attendance at trainings, Improved level of practice by child welfare lawyers. Improved awareness of federal and state laws, improved awareness of mental health, child development and family dynamics	at trainings, Number of trainings Pre/Post surveys of attendees, general survey of lawyers, clerks, judges	Administration SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force

Narrative: Separate initiatives will be undertaken to train both newly recruited and already practicing attorneys who represent children and parents in the area of child welfare law, including the goals of the system, the law and procedures applicable to Connecticut and issues and topics relevant to the children and families they counsel. Training will be made mandatory for all newly recruited attorneys, and also made more easily accessible to all existing contract attorneys across the state. This will be followed by a requirement that attorneys contracted with by the Office of the Chief Public Defender complete a specified number of hours of training per contract year.

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Outcome #14: Attorneys who represent children and parents in child welfare cases will better versed in case law.

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: Based on conversations with attorneys, Judges and other parties involved in child protection cases, the Office of the Chief Public Defender has identified training in trial practice, and preservation of the record for review on appeal as two important means to improve practice in child welfare cases and reduce the time to permanent placement. Attorneys contracted to represent children and families in child welfare cases will benefit from improved access to the most recent Connecticut cases relevant to child welfare practice.

Measurable Objective: Completion of and posting of electronic casebook. Utilization of electronic casebook.

Strategic Category: *Classification of activities/projects strategized to reach desired outcome.*

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Maintain child protection case book and provide in trial consultation on legal questions and preservation of issues for appeal	SCIP Training Grant	OCPD CP Unit OCPD Training Appellate Consultant Contracted Lawyers	Ongoing	Better trained lawyers	Regional trainings, Improved attendance at trainings, Improved level of practice by child welfare lawyers. Improved	Judicial Branch stats on length of case. OCPD Data on use of Casebook and consultant	OCPD CP Unit OCPD Training Judicial Branch Attorney General's Office DCF

				awareness of federal and state laws, improved awareness of mental health, child development and family dynamics		
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Narrative: This project will support development, maintenance, and training in the use of an electronic casebook to proved attorneys with online access to the most up-to-date legal resources and Connecticut case law. As a result, it is anticipated that fewer and shorter continuances will be needed as attorneys will be able to more quickly research issues that come up during litigation and issues raised on appeal will be addressed by the court and not dismissed or deferred due to lack of an adequate record.

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Outcome #15: The Judicial Branch, through the SCIP, will participate in Child and Family Reviews (CFSR) and the development and implementation of any required Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: In 2008, the CFSR was conducted in Connecticut. The Judicial Branch participated in the on site review, and in the development and implementation of PIP strategies. The SCIP Program used the PIP to develop strategies and activities to address areas needing improvement related to the court's handling of child protection cases. In order to continue to identify strengths and address areas needing improvement and to meet the newly established CQI requirements of the SCIP, the Judicial Branch will participate in any future CFSR conducted in Connecticut.

Measurable Objective: Ongoing, meaningful participation in the CFSR and PIP development and implementation.

Strategic Category: *Classification of activities/projects strategized to reach desired outcome.*
 Capacity Building X Court Function Improvement X Systemic Reform

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SCIP will meet the CIP PI requirements by participating in all aspects of the CFSR, and the development and implementation of court related PIP strategies.	Basic, Training, Data	SCIP Project Director, SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force; Department of Children and Families	TBD based on Federal ACF Scheduling	SCIP will provide data and information as needed in preparation for and to inform the on going CFSR. SCIP will use the information gather from the CFSR to	On going collaboration within the entire child welfare system and Data driven performance outcomes strategic planning	Child Protection Information System CFSR Outcome data and results	The following individuals will receive the results of the CFSR: Chief Administrative Judge for Juvenile Matters;

				identify strengths and weaknesses within the court. SCIP activities will be informed, developed and implemented to address areas needing improvement.	Final Report of the CFSR	Court Operations Managers; SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force
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Narrative: The Child and Family Services Review is held on a periodic basis to provide a systemic review of key indicators related to a state's child welfare system. The CFSR is a federal government program for assessing the performance of the state child welfare systems with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children and families. SCIP staff have participated in each of the two CFSRs that have been held in the state. In preparation for the CFSR, the Judicial Branch has provided data and information for inclusion in the Statewide Assessment and has provided court personnel and judges who participated in the on-site review of cases, interviews, focus groups, exit conferences, and in the development and implementation of the PIP. Connecticut's State Court Improvement Program will continue its on going collaboration with the state child welfare agency and other key stakeholders in the CFSR process and in efforts to use information gained from the review process to improve outcomes for the children involved in the child welfare system.

Annual Update Year #1 *Description of progress, activities, and results of those activities during the fiscal year.*

Submission Date: *Date of Annual Update submission.*

Annual Update Year #2

Submission Date:

Annual Update Year #3

Submission Date:

Annual Update Year #4

Submission Date:

Annual Update Year #5

Submission Date:

State Name: CONNECTICUT
Date Strategic Plan Submitted: February 2012
Timeframe Covered by Strategic Plan: FFY 2012-2014

Overall Goal/Mission of SCIP: Mission of the Connecticut Judicial Branch, State Court Improvement Program is to:

- Promote and improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of children who are subject to child protection cases in the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters;
- Assure that families are engaged throughout the court process;
- Handle child protection cases in fair, timely, and efficient manner.

Outcome #16: The Judicial Branch, through the SCIP, will take participate in Title IV-E foster care eligibility reviews and the development and implementation of any required Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: The Judicial Branch has participated in past Title IV-E foster care eligibility reviews. Results of prior reviews have identified areas in need of improvement, and as a result, changes have been made in court processes to address deficiencies. The Judicial Branch will continue to participate in each Title IV-E foster care eligibility review in order to collaborate with the child welfare agency to identify and address areas in need of improvement, and to meet the newly established CQI requirements of the SCIP.

Measurable Objective: Ongoing, meaningful participation in the Title IV-E foster care eligibility reviews, PIP development and implementation.

Strategic Category: *Classification of activities/projects strategized to reach desired outcome.*
 Capacity Building X Court Function Improvement X Systemic Reform

Activity or Project Description	CIP Funding Stream	Collaborative Partners	Timeframe	Anticipated Outputs and Results of Activity	Target Improvement	Data Source	Feedback Vehicle
<i>Specific actions or project that will be completed to produce specific outputs and demonstrate progress toward the outcome.</i>	<i>Grant(s) used to fund activity; can be basic, training, data and/or other grants or funding sources as appropriate.</i>	<i>Responsible parties and partners involved in implementation of the activity.</i>	<i>Proposed completion date or, if appropriate, "ongoing".</i>	<i>What the CIP intends to produce, provide or accomplish through the activity.</i>	<i>Where relevant and practical, provide specific, projected change in data the CIP intends to achieve.</i>	<i>Where relevant and practical, name the specific sources where data will be drawn to measure anticipated changes due to CIP activity.</i>	<i>Brief description of stakeholders the data will be shared with and methodology/products for dissemination of findings.</i>
SCIP will meet the CIP PI requirements by participating in the Title IV-E Review and the development and implementation of court related needed improvement	Basic, Training, Data	SCIP Project Director, SCIP Multidisciplinary Task Force; Department of Children and Families	June 30, 2012	SCIP will provide data and information as needed in preparation for and to inform the on site Review. SCIP will use the information gather from the Title IV-E to	On going collaboration within the entire child welfare system. Full compliance with Title IV-E requirements.	Child Protection Information System Court files Final Report of the Title IV-E Review	The following individuals will receive the results of the CFSR: Chief Administrative Judge for Juvenile Matters;

strategies.			develop and implement changes to ensure compliance with all Title IV-E court related requirements.		Court Operations Managers;

Narrative: The Title IV-E Review is held on a periodic basis to determine the state's compliance with the requirements of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. The SCIP Director and Chief Clerk for Juvenile Matters have participated in the Title IV-E Reviews each time they have occurred. The Judicial Branch, through the SCIP, and in consultation with the state child welfare agency, has made changes that improved documentation and tracking case specific court findings and orders. The Judicial Branch entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with DCF for data sharing. Data on court findings and disposition is electronically passed to DCF on a "real time" basis to assist with Title IV-E compliance monitoring. As part of the ongoing State Court Improvement Program Continuous Quality Improvement Initiative, quality assurance reports are made available to local court managers for ongoing monitoring of Title IV-E required findings and orders. The Judicial Branch will provide data and information including court documents, if needed, for future reviews, will attend the exit conferences and make any improvements required to ensure full compliance with the Title IV-E court related requirements.

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