



Mailing Address:
1 Baldwin Street
Drawer 33
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-5701

Tel.: (802) 828-2295
Fax: (802) 828-2483

STATE OF VERMONT
JOINT FISCAL COMMITTEE
1 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-5701

MEMORANDUM

To: James Reardon, Commissioner of Finance & Management

From: Rebecca Buck, Staff Associate *RB*

Date: January 3, 2007

Subject: Status of Requests

No Joint Fiscal Committee member has requested that the following items be held for review:

JFO #2278 – \$96,642 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families to the Judiciary. This Court Improvement Program Data Grant will be used to improve data collection and analysis relating to child welfare cases with emphasis on children in foster care.
[JFO received 12/04/06]

JFO #2279 – \$96,922 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families to the Judiciary. This Court Improvement Program Training Grant will be used to provide education and training to judges, attorneys, and other legal personnel to improve the handling of child welfare cases.
[JFO received 12/04/06]

In accordance with 32 V.S.A. §5, the requisite 30 days having elapsed since these items were submitted to the Joint Fiscal Committee, the Governor's approval may now be considered final. We ask that you inform the Secretary of Administration and your staff of these actions.

cc: Linda Morse
Lee Suskin



Mailing Address:
1 Baldwin Street
Drawer 33
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-5701

Tel.: (802) 828-2295
Fax: (802) 828-2483

STATE OF VERMONT
JOINT FISCAL COMMITTEE
1 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-5701

MEMORANDUM

To: Joint Fiscal Committee Members

From: Rebecca Buck, Staff Associate *RB*

Date: December 5, 2006

Subject: Grant Requests

Enclosed please find two (2) requests which the Joint Fiscal Office recently received from the Administration:

JFO #2278 – \$96,642 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families to the Judiciary. This Court Improvement Program Data Grant will be used to improve data collection and analysis relating to child welfare cases with emphasis on children in foster care.

[JFO received 12/04/06]

JFO #2279 – \$96,922 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families to the Judiciary. This Court Improvement Program Training Grant will be used to provide education and training to judges, attorneys, and other legal personnel to improve the handling of child welfare cases.

[JFO received 12/04/06]

The Joint Fiscal Office has reviewed these submissions and determined that all appropriate forms bearing the necessary approvals are in order.

In accordance with the procedures for processing such requests, we ask you to review the enclosed and notify the Joint Fiscal Office (Rebecca Buck at 802/828-5969; rbuck@leg.state.vt.us or Stephen Klein at 802/828-5769; sklein@leg.state.vt.us) if you would like any item(s) held for Legislative review. Unless we hear from you to the contrary by December 19 we will assume that you agree to consider as final the Governor's acceptance of these requests.

cc: James Reardon, Commissioner
Linda Morse, Administrative Assistant
Lee Suskin, Court Administrator

JFO#

2279

STATE OF VERMONT
GRANT ACCEPTANCE FORM

GRANT SUMMARY: This grant from the Children's Bureau Office of Administration, US Dept of Health and Human Services and is to provide education and training to judges, attorneys, and other legal professionals on child welfare cases.

GRANT TITLE: Court Improvement Program Training Grant

FEDERAL CATALOG No.: 93-586

GRANTOR / DONOR: Children's Bureau Office of Administration
Administration for Children and Families, US Dept. of Health and Human Services
370 L'Enfant Promenade SW
Washington, D.C. 20447

DATE: 11/20/06

DEPARTMENT: Judiciary

GRANT / DONATION: This grant is for training to improve handling of child welfare cases. This is first of five annual potential grant awards for this project. The amounts for year 2 through 5 are not yet known. The Judiciary expects the amounts for year 2 through 5 will be similar to year one.

AMOUNT / VALUE: \$96,922.00

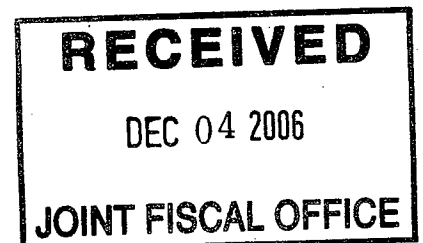
POSITIONS REQUESTED: None

GRANT PERIOD: 9/30/06 to 9/30/08

COMMENTS: This grant has an in-kind match from the state of \$32,307.00. It covers part of the salary of the Vermont Court Improvement Manager (an already existing grant funded position) and for a contract for a special project facilitator.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT:
SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION
SENT TO JOINT FISCAL OFFICE:

(INITIAL) J. Wanda
(INITIAL) MDS
DATE: 11/28/06



STATE OF VERMONT
REQUEST FOR GRANT ACCEPTANCE
 (use additional sheets as needed)

FORM AA-1
 (Rev. 9-90)

1. Agency: Judiciary
 2. Department:
 3. Program: Court Improvement

4. Legal Title of Grant: **Court Improvement Program Training Grant**

5. Federal Catalog No.: 93-586

6. Grantor and Office Address: Children's Bureau Office of Administration
 ACF
 370 L'enfant Promenade SW
 Washington, DC 20447

7. Grant Period: From: 9/30/06 To: 9/30/08

8. Purpose of Grant: (attach additional sheets if needed)
 Provide for education and training of judges, attorneys, and other legal personnel in child welfare cases to improve the handling of child welfare cases.

9. Impact on Existing Programs if Grant is not Accepted:
 Inability to fully train legal personnel in child welfare cases. We currently lack the resources to do this.

10. Budget Information:	(1st State FY) FY 2007	(2nd State FY) FY 2008	
EXPENDITURES:			
Personal Services	\$ 55,069.00	\$ 18,356.00	
Operating Expenses	\$ 41,853.00	\$ 13,951.00	
Grants	\$ 0.00	\$	
TOTAL	\$ 96,922.00	\$ 32,307.00	
REVENUES:			
<u>State Funds:</u>			
Cash	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	
In-Kind	\$ 24,230.00	\$ 8,077.00	
<u>Federal Funds:</u>			
(Direct Costs)	\$ 66,876.00	\$ 22,292.00	
(Statewide Indirect)	\$	\$	
(Department Indirect)	\$ 5,816.00	\$ 1,938.00	
<u>Other Funds:</u>			
(source) Grant	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	
TOTAL	\$ 96,922.00	\$ 32,307.00	<i>Total, both FYs: 129,229.00</i>

<u>Appropriation Nos.</u>	<u>Amounts</u>
212000000	\$ 96,922.00
	\$
	\$

NOTE: This is a 5-year grant program. Although the exact expenditure and revenue amounts are not known for federal years 2-5, we expect the grant award will remain in this range and will be expended in a manner similar to what is specified in years FY07 & FY08. over

RECD NOV 14 2006

11. Will grant monies be spent by one or more personal service contracts?

YES NO

If YES, signature of appointing authority here indicates intent to follow current guidelines on bidding.

X *Lee Susten*

12a. Please list any requested Limited Service positions:

Titles	Number of Positions
TOTAL Positions	0

12b. Equipment and space for these positions:

- Is presently available.
- Can be obtained with available funds.

13. Signature of Appointing Authority

I certify that no funds have been expended or committed in anticipation of Joint Fiscal Committee approval of this grant.

Lee Susten
(Signature)

Nov. 8, 2006
(Date)

Court Administrator
(Title)

14. Action by Governor:

- Approved
- Rejected

[Signature]
(Signature)

11/27/06
(Date)

15. Secretary of Administration:

- Request to JFO
- Information to JFO

[Signature]
(Signature)

11/20/06
(Date)

16. Action by Joint Fiscal Committee:

(Dates)

- Request to be placed on JFC agenda
- Approved (not placed on agenda in 30 days)
- Approved by JFC
- Rejected by JFC
- Approved by Legislature

(Signature)

(Date)



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
ADMINISTRATION ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES
1250 Maryland Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20024

2006 SEP 28 A 8:28

September 20, 2006

Supreme Court of Vermont
Attn : Finance Officer
Montpelier, VT 05609

RECEIVED
Re: **Notice of Grant Award**
State Court Improve.-Training Program
FY 2006

Dear Grantee:

The following award is the allocated amount for the fiscal year indicated for the State Court Improve.-Training Program in accordance with Section 438 of the Social Security Act.

Award Amount:	\$96,922
----------------------	-----------------

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Program Number	Entity Identification Number (EIN)	Appropriation Number	Common Accounting Number (CAN)	Grant Document Number (GDN)
93.586	1-036000274-D6	75-6-1512	2006 G991513	0601VTSCIT

These funds must be liquidated **no later than September 30, 2008**. Any funds that remain unliquidated after that date will be recouped by this agency.

By accepting this award, the State agrees to use these funds only in accordance with the provisions of all applicable Federal laws, regulations, policies and the terms and conditions governing this program and governing the use of Federal funds and the submission of periodic financial reports. Any expenditure found to have been made in violation of these requirements is subject to disallowance and recoupment by this agency and the imposition of additional interest charges under 45 CFR 30.13 and 30.14.

Specifically, the State agrees to comply with the provisions of Federal regulations (31 CFR 205) that implements the Cash Management Improvement Act by limiting the amount and timing of your requests to draw Federal funds to the minimum amount necessary to meet actual and immediate program needs and requirements. Failure to adhere to funds withdrawal and reporting requirements may result in the unobligated portion of your letter-of-credit to be revoked.

Grant funds are made available through the HHS Payment Management System (PMS). Questions concerning payments should be directed to: Division of Payment Management, PO Box 6021, Rockville, Maryland 20852 (Internet web site: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov>), or to the PMS Help Desk at (877) 614-5533. Questions concerning the program should be directed to Emily Cooke, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, at (202) 205-8709 or at emily.cooke@acf.hhs.gov; questions concerning financial reporting should be directed to Michael Bratt, Office of Grants Management at (202) 401-4629 or at mbratt@acf.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Lonergan
Director
Division of Mandatory Grants

NOTE: A copy of the current Terms and Conditions is enclosed with this award.

Vermont Court Improvement Project
FFY2006 Projected Budget Narrative: CIP Training Grant

Grant period: September 1, 2006 - August 31, 2008

Grant award: **\$96,922.00**

I. Personnel: \$41,118.00

This covers the projected salary for a portion of the Vermont Court Improvement Manager (existing grant funded position), a special project facilitator (to be contracted with for personal services), and trainers/presenters (to be contracted with for personal services related to projects, trainings, events), and any other contractual obligations that arise over the course of this grant period. Also includes per-diem reimbursement for Committee members who are not State employees.

II. Travel: \$5,800.00

In-state travel (mileage to statewide conferences, for Justice for Children Task Force meetings, and other meetings); out of state travel to national CIP conference (required by grantor). Other travel-related educational costs are reflected in section VIII below.

III. Equipment: \$500.00

\$500 is a contingency; no equipment purchases are foreseen at this time.

IV. Supplies & Overhead: \$1,100

The Vermont Court Administrator's Office will cover supplies not covered by this allocation. Miscellaneous related expenses (such as phone, supplies, postage, printing, etc).

V. Construction: 0 Not applicable

VI. Other: \$40,650.00

Covers one statewide juvenile docket clerk training (\$1,500), a statewide training for volunteer Guardians ad Litem and court staff (\$6,000), CHINS mediation training (\$2,500), expenses associated with sending judges to NCJFCJ educational programs (\$9,000), educational tools for attorneys for parents and children (\$7,000), costs associated with Best Practices project trainings in every family court (\$13,850). This line item also includes an allotment for miscellaneous initiatives/expenses (\$800).

VII. Indirect Costs: \$7,754.00 (Based on \$96,922.00)

This covers administrative costs for the State of Vermont's financial reporting and other indirect costs, not to exceed 8% of the total grant award. The Executive Branch has established an indirect cost rate of 8% for all departments and branches of government to cover their costs in administering federal grant funds.

Note: In-kind match of \$32,307.00 will primarily come from the Vermont Judiciary. A significant amount of time from the Judicial Branch Education staff is anticipated to plan and execute trainings and develop curricula. Members of the Justice for Children Task Force's "Education and Training" subcommittee will also comprise the in-kind match. Judges' and other professionals' time attending educational programs will also comprise the match. Documentation of in-kind match is maintained at the VT CIP office. The process is the same that is used to track in-kind contributions for the "basic" CIP match.

VERMONT CIP EDUCATION & TRAINING GRANT

Collaboration and Outline of Proposed Activities

July, 2006 (rev. Nov. 2006)

ACTIVITIES PLANNED UNDER THE GRANT:

Improved education and training of judges and legal professionals will assist Vermont courts and attorneys to better provide for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, and to safeguard the due process rights of the parties. Activities planned under the grant are two fold:

- (1) activities that can be accomplished within 1-2 years, designed to enhance the competence of judges and attorneys in juvenile court; and
- (2) longer term activities involving the planning for, and delivery of, curriculum and cross-training.

YEAR ONE PRELIMINARY PLAN

A. TRAINING AND EDUCATION

1. Judges

Objective: improve judges' understanding and preparedness for presiding over juvenile cases.

- a. Improve the standard education program for judges assigned to juvenile cases:
 - Evaluate the current judicial education program (including orientation at the time of judicial rotation) *winter-summer 2007*
 - Identify components of a successful education program (identify the specific skills and areas of knowledge that judges need to best serve children and families); *winter-summer 2007*
 - Convene a planning group to develop a better education plan and curriculum. (This group will follow the Children's Bureau's efforts to create a national curriculum.) *winter-summer 2007*
 - Begin implementation of curriculum in year 2. *summer – fall 2007*
- b. Send judges to specialized education programs and conferences to enhance their knowledge of what is going on across the country, what we can do in Vermont to improve timely permanency and better outcomes for children. (Use funds for travel and registration fees) *start winter 2007*

2. Legal professionals

Objective: Improve the effectiveness of legal professionals through enhanced education and training. (Legal professionals include judges, court staff, volunteer GALs, prosecutors, attorneys for parents, attorneys for children, and Assistant Attorneys General.)

- a. Develop an education and orientation program for attorneys assigned to juvenile cases:

- Evaluate current educational programs *winter-summer 2007*
- Identify components of successful educational programs (identify the specific skills and areas of knowledge that attorneys and other legal personnel need to best serve children and families) *winter-summer 2007*
- Establish a planning group to develop a better education plan and curriculum (pre-service training and continuing training)
- Begin implementation of new curriculum in year 2. *start winter 2007*

b. Provide information designed to inform best practices:

- The Defender General's Office will oversee the production of a newsletter to public defenders, contract counsel, and ad hoc counsel with juvenile caseloads. The newsletter will contain updates on trial and Vermont Supreme Court decisions, as well as practice tips and other useful information on state and federal practice and developments. (This will be piloted for one year with court improvement funds, continued funding will be considered if newsletter is successful.) *spring 2007*
- The Defender General's Office will oversee the updating and revisions of its Vermont Juvenile Law and Practice Manual for defense attorneys. *Spring 2007*

c. Send legal professionals to specialized education programs in Vermont and national conferences to learn what is going on across the country, and what we can do in Vermont to improve timely permanency and better outcomes for children. (Use funds for travel and registration fees) *start winter 2007*

3. Guardians ad Litem and Court Staff

Plan and hold a one-day statewide training for volunteer Guardians ad Litem and the family court staff who recruit, supervise, support, and assign them to cases. The in-service component of this training will be related to building the capacity of the court staff to better serve the volunteers. The cross-training component will include substantive sessions on relevant topics. The training will be in central Vermont in order to maximize attendance. *May 2007*

Train juvenile court staff on new laws and practices such as the Juvenile Court Milestone Standards and companion reporting tools. (In-service training, to be in Montpelier or Berlin) *March 2007*

4. Cross-training and education activities for legal, judicial, and child welfare agency staff will be designed to improve the effectiveness of legal professionals and standards of practice. Examples of content include:

- Educate attendees regarding the values of the Justice for Children Task Force and its work.
- Inform attendees about the Juvenile Court Milestone Standards.
- Inform attendees about the results of the Juvenile Court Practice Inventory Project.

- Give attendees an opportunity to provide ideas on statutory reform to guide the work of the Chapter 55 (Juvenile Proceedings) Statutory Revision Committee.

The location will be geographically central (such as Montpelier, Waterbury, Killington) to maximize attendance. *May 2007*

B. BEST PRACTICES

Implement a project to expand on the work of the Juvenile Court Practice Inventory Project geared toward local problem solving and action. Hold facilitated workshops at each family court for judges, court staff, attorneys, volunteer GALs, DCF workers, and others to review the results of the local "Practice Inventory," prioritize which problem areas to address, and implement a plan for moving forward. *Winter 2007-Fall 2007*

C. CHILD and FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW

The federal CFSR falls during year one of the five-year grant project. Education and training activities for years two through five will be influenced by the CFSR findings and the subsequent Program Improvement Plan (PIP) developed toward the end of the first grant period.

- It is expected that the Family Services Division and the court will collaborate on training and education activities in response to the needs identified in the CFSR.
- In response to the Review, the Family Services Division and the court will jointly identify activities designed to measurably improve indicators as required by the report issued in connection with the CFSR. *July-Aug. 2007*

D. COLLABORATION

The CIP Manager and Family Services Division will establish a plan for review and assessment of progress, successes, and barriers to institutional collaboration. *Winter 2007*

YEARS TWO THROUGH FIVE

The following planning and strategies will be incorporated into the final strategic plan for years 2-5:

- Plan for providing cross-system, multidisciplinary training on topics of mutual interest to different participants in the system, such as mental health, substance abuse, and education.
- Co-locate judicial, court employee, and DCF training, when practical, to allow a combination of cross-system training and separate training on specialized topics.
- In connection with any set of Best Practice Standards that are recommended, hold training and education programs to educate professionals on these standards.
- Evaluate in outlying years how training and education of judges and legal professionals have made them better prepared to handle child welfare cases.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration that has occurred in preparing the grant application:

- CIP Director met with Family Services Deputy Commissioner and Policy and Planning Chief to discuss Year One objectives and time frames for accomplishing them.
- Discussions between DCF Commissioner, Chief Justice, Associate Justice, Director of Judicial Education, and Administrative Judge regarding a statewide conference for which a significant portion of these funds will be devoted.

Meaningful collaboration on the activities for which the grant funds will be used:

The Vermont Judiciary has established a statewide multidisciplinary task force that includes the highest level of the State courts, local trial court, the State agency, and others.

The following people are on the Justice for Children Task Force:

Paul L. Reiber, Chief Justice

Marilyn S. Skoglund, Associate Justice

Amy M. Davenport, Administrative Trial Court Judge

Kathleen Manley, Superior Court Judge

George K. Belcher, Probate Judge

Lee Suskin, Court Administrator

Michael Smith, Agency of Human Services Secretary

Matthew Valerio, Defender General

Joel Page, Esq., Prosecutor & State's Attorneys Association member

Jody Racht, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

Kathryn Piper, Esq., Juvenile Defender

Steve Dale, Department for Children and Families (DCF) Commissioner

Cindy Walcott, DCF Family Services Deputy Commissioner

Jane Kitchel, State Senator

Michael Kainen, State Representative

*Anna Saxman, Deputy Defender General, Office of Defender General

*Bob Sheil, Juvenile Defender, Office of Defender General

*Ann Pugh, State Representative

*Cindy LaWare, Secretary, VT Agency of Human Services

*(Names with * indicate participation without formal designation by the Vermont Supreme Court)*

Vermont has an existing culture of collaboration between the courts and agency. This collaboration is fairly well "institutionalized." At the 2005 national Meeting of the States and Tribes, the Vermont CIP Manager and DCF Policy and Planning Chief appeared on a panel about agency/court collaboration. Examples of ongoing collaboration include:

1. Holding regular meetings between courts and child welfare agencies at both the State and local levels to review policies and procedures, share data and case analysis information, and sponsor joint training activities:
 - o When local family court judges hold "bench/bar" meetings, representatives from the local DCF district office attend;

- Policies and procedures at the state level are often discussed in a forum with court and DCF personnel. For example, the Permanency Planning Implementation Committee met for eight years to discuss state level policy matters.
 - During the time of the first CFSR PIP, DCF sent to the CIP Director the quarterly outcome reports
 - Designated individuals at DCF have access to the Court's web-based Vermont Case Access System (VCAS), which allows authorized users to view docket sheets of confidential cases and other case information relevant to their work.
2. Promoting active participation in the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) and the Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Reviews by judges, CIP, and other legal and judicial staff:
 - The Vermont Court Administrator and CIP Manager attended the secondary IV-E Review Exit Meeting in May 2005
 - CIP Manager attended CFSR Region I meeting in Boston in July 2006
 - Family court judges will learn about the 2006/07 CFSR at the September 2006 Annual Family Court Workshop
 3. The State's Chief Justice and State Child Welfare Director are visibly and jointly involved in convening, leading, and developing court and agency activities that improve outcomes for children:
 - At the 2002 statewide "Children Can't Wait" conference, opening remarks were made by both the Vermont Chief Justice and State Child Welfare Commissioner.
 - At the 2006 "Connections Count: Permanency Convening" statewide conference, both the Family Services Deputy Commissioner and the Chief Justice made opening remarks.
 4. Drafting state legislation: The Vermont Administrative Judge chairs a committee that is currently reviewing Vermont's Juvenile Proceedings Act for the purpose of recommending to the legislature revisions to the statute that will help expedite permanency for children. This requires meaningful and ongoing collaboration between the Judiciary and child welfare agency. Two management level persons from DCF serve on this committee.
 5. DCF and the Judiciary have ongoing collaboration on a dependency mediation project. During FY06, a new court site was chosen for this project. There is a cost-sharing arrangement between DCF and the Judiciary to cover the costs of mediation services.
 6. DCF and the CAO jointly developed procedures for ensuring that foster parents and caregivers receive notice of permanency hearings as required by Vermont statute.



Department for Children and Families
Family Services Division
103 South Main Street, Osgood 3
Waterbury, VT 05671-2401
www.dcf.state.vt.us/fsd/

[phone] 802-241-2131
[fax] 802-241-2407

Agency of Human Services

July 27, 2006

JoAnn Vizzello
Administration for Children and Families
JFK Federal Building, Room 2000
Boston, MA 02203

Dear Ms. Vizziello:

I am writing this letter in support of the Vermont CIP Education and Training grant application. We have a long history of meaningful and productive collaboration with the Vermont Judiciary which includes identifying and working towards shared goals and activities.

We have several forums that provide us with opportunities to work together to identify issues, set goals and determine how we will work together to achieve improved outcomes. One of which is the Justice for Children Task Force established by the Vermont Judiciary. This statewide multidisciplinary task force includes State and local courts as well as the Secretary of the Agency of Human Services and the Deputy Commissioner of Family Services. This task force has developed a strategic plan aimed at increasing safety, permanency and well-being of children in the child welfare system.

We have reviewed the grant application and look forward to working with the CIP to develop activities with measurable goals related to education and training of the legal, judicial and child welfare agency staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cynthia K. Walcott".

Cynthia K. Walcott
Deputy Commissioner
DCF/Family Services



VERMONT CIP EDUCATION & TRAINING GRANT

Collaboration and Outline of Proposed Activities

July, 2006 (rev. Nov. 2006)

ACTIVITIES PLANNED UNDER THE GRANT:

Improved education and training of judges and legal professionals will assist Vermont courts and attorneys to better provide for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, and to safeguard the due process rights of the parties. Activities planned under the grant are two fold:

- (1) activities that can be accomplished within 1-2 years, designed to enhance the competence of judges and attorneys in juvenile court; and
- (2) longer term activities involving the planning for, and delivery of, curriculum and cross-training.

YEAR ONE PRELIMINARY PLAN

A. TRAINING AND EDUCATION

1. Judges

Objective: improve judges' understanding and preparedness for presiding over juvenile cases.

- a. Improve the standard education program for judges assigned to juvenile cases:
 - Evaluate the current judicial education program (including orientation at the time of judicial rotation)
 - Identify components of a successful education program (identify the specific skills and areas of knowledge that judges need to best serve children and families);
 - Convene a planning group to develop a better education plan and curriculum. (This group will follow the Children's Bureau's efforts to create a national curriculum.)
 - Begin implementation of curriculum in year 2.
- b. Send judges to specialized education programs and conferences to enhance their knowledge of what is going on across the country, what we can do in Vermont to improve timely permanency and better outcomes for children. (Use funds for travel and registration fees)

2. Legal professionals

Objective: Improve the effectiveness of legal professionals through enhanced education and training. (Legal professionals include judges, court staff, volunteer GALs, prosecutors, attorneys for parents, attorneys for children, and Assistant Attorneys General.)

- a. Develop an education and orientation program for attorneys assigned to juvenile cases:

- Evaluate current educational programs
- Identify components of successful educational programs (identify the specific skills and areas of knowledge that attorneys and other legal personnel need to best serve children and families)
- Establish a planning group to develop a better education plan and curriculum (pre-service training and continuing training)
- Begin implementation of new curriculum in year 2.

b. Provide information designed to inform best practices:

- The Defender General's Office will oversee the production of a newsletter to public defenders, contract counsel, and ad hoc counsel with juvenile caseloads. The newsletter will contain updates on trial and Vermont Supreme Court decisions, as well as practice tips and other useful information on state and federal practice and developments. (This will be piloted for one year with court improvement funds, continued funding will be considered if newsletter is successful.)
- The Defender General's Office will oversee the updating and revisions of its Vermont Juvenile Law and Practice Manual for defense attorneys.

c. Send legal professionals to specialized education programs in Vermont and national conferences to learn what is going on across the country, and what we can do in Vermont to improve timely permanency and better outcomes for children. (Use funds for travel and registration fees)

3. Guardians ad Litem and Court Staff

Plan and hold a one-day statewide training for volunteer Guardians ad Litem and the family court staff who recruit, supervise, support, and assign them to cases. The in-service component of this training will be related to building the capacity of the court staff to better serve the volunteers. The cross-training component will include substantive sessions on relevant topics.

Train juvenile court staff on new laws and practices such as the Juvenile Court Milestone Standards and companion reporting tools. (In-service training)

4. Cross-training and education activities for legal, judicial, and child welfare agency staff will be designed to improve the effectiveness of legal professionals and standards of practice. Examples of content include:

- Educate attendees regarding the values of the Justice for Children Task Force and its work.
- Inform attendees about the Juvenile Court Milestone Standards.
- Inform attendees about the results of the Juvenile Court Practice Inventory Project.
- Give attendees an opportunity to provide ideas on statutory reform to guide the work of the Chapter 55 (Juvenile Proceedings) Statutory Revision Committee.

B. BEST PRACTICES

Implement a project to expand on the work of the Juvenile Court Practice Inventory Project geared toward local problem solving and action. Hold facilitated workshops at each family court for judges, court staff, attorneys, volunteer GALs, DCF workers, and others to review the results of the local "Practice Inventory," prioritize which problem areas to address, and implement a plan for moving forward.

C. CHILD and FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW

The federal CFSR falls during year one of the five-year grant project. Education and training activities for years two through five will be influenced by the CFSR findings and the subsequent Program Improvement Plan (PIP) developed toward the end of the first grant period.

- It is expected that the Family Services Division and the court will collaborate on training and education activities in response to the needs identified in the CFSR.
- In response to the Review, the Family Services Division and the court will jointly identify activities designed to measurably improve indicators as required by the report issued in connection with the CFSR.

D. COLLABORATION

The CIP Manager and Family Services Division will establish a plan for review and assessment of progress, successes, and barriers to institutional collaboration.

YEARS TWO THROUGH FIVE

The following planning and strategies will be incorporated into the final strategic plan for years 2-5:

- Plan for providing cross-system, multidisciplinary training on topics of mutual interest to different participants in the system, such as mental health, substance abuse, and education.
- Co-locate judicial, court employee, and DCF training, when practical, to allow a combination of cross-system training and separate training on specialized topics.
- In connection with any set of Best Practice Standards that are recommended, hold training and education programs to educate professionals on these standards.
- Evaluate in outlying years how training and education of judges and legal professionals have made them better prepared to handle child welfare cases.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration that has occurred in preparing the grant application:

- CIP Director met with Family Services Deputy Commissioner and Policy and Planning Chief to discuss Year One objectives and time frames for accomplishing them.
- Discussions between DCF Commissioner, Chief Justice, Associate Justice, Director of Judicial Education, and Administrative Judge regarding a statewide conference for which a significant portion of these funds will be devoted.

Meaningful collaboration on the activities for which the grant funds will be used:

The Vermont Judiciary has established a statewide multidisciplinary task force that includes the highest level of the State courts, local trial court, the State agency, and others. The following people are on the Justice for Children Task Force:

Paul L. Reiber, Chief Justice
Marilyn S. Skoglund, Associate Justice
Amy M. Davenport, Administrative Trial Court Judge
Kathleen Manley, Superior Court Judge
George K. Belcher, Probate Judge
Lee Suskin, Court Administrator
Michael Smith, Agency of Human Services Secretary
Matthew Valerio, Defender General
Joel Page, Esq., Prosecutor & State's Attorneys Association member
Jody Racht, Esq., Assistant Attorney General
Kathryn Piper, Esq., Juvenile Defender
Steve Dale, Department for Children and Families (DCF) Commissioner
Cindy Walcott, DCF Family Services Deputy Commissioner
Jane Kitchel, State Senator
Michael Kainen, State Representative
*Anna Saxman, Deputy Defender General, Office of Defender General
*Bob Sheil, Juvenile Defender, Office of Defender General
*Ann Pugh, State Representative
*Cindy LaWare, Secretary, VT Agency of Human Services

*(Names with * indicate participation without formal designation by the Vermont Supreme Court)*

Vermont has an existing culture of collaboration between the courts and agency. This collaboration is fairly well "institutionalized." At the 2005 national Meeting of the States and Tribes, the Vermont CIP Manager and DCF Policy and Planning Chief appeared on a panel about agency/court collaboration. Examples of ongoing collaboration include:

1. Holding regular meetings between courts and child welfare agencies at both the State and local levels to review policies and procedures, share data and case analysis information, and sponsor joint training activities:
 - When local family court judges hold "bench/bar" meetings, representatives from the local DCF district office attend;

- Policies and procedures at the state level are often discussed in a forum with court and DCF personnel. For example, the Permanency Planning Implementation Committee met for eight years to discuss state level policy matters.
 - During the time of the first CFSR PIP, DCF sent to the CIP Director the quarterly outcome reports
 - Designated individuals at DCF have access to the Court's web-based Vermont Case Access System (VCAS), which allows authorized users to view docket sheets of confidential cases and other case information relevant to their work.
2. Promoting active participation in the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) and the Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Reviews by judges, CIP, and other legal and judicial staff:
 - The Vermont Court Administrator and CIP Manager attended the secondary IV-E Review Exit Meeting in May 2005
 - CIP Manager attended CFSR Region I meeting in Boston in July 2006
 - Family court judges will learn about the 2006/07 CFSR at the September 2006 Annual Family Court Workshop
 3. The State's Chief Justice and State Child Welfare Director are visibly and jointly involved in convening, leading, and developing court and agency activities that improve outcomes for children:
 - At the 2002 statewide "Children Can't Wait" conference, opening remarks were made by both the Vermont Chief Justice and State Child Welfare Commissioner.
 - At the 2006 "Connections Count: Permanency Convening" statewide conference, both the Family Services Deputy Commissioner and the Chief Justice made opening remarks.
 4. Drafting state legislation: The Vermont Administrative Judge chairs a committee that is currently reviewing Vermont's Juvenile Proceedings Act for the purpose of recommending to the legislature revisions to the statute that will help expedite permanency for children. This requires meaningful and ongoing collaboration between the Judiciary and child welfare agency. Two management level persons from DCF serve on this committee.
 5. DCF and the Judiciary have ongoing collaboration on a dependency mediation project. During FY06, a new court site was chosen for this project. There is a cost-sharing arrangement between DCF and the Judiciary to cover the costs of mediation services.
 6. DCF and the CAO jointly developed procedures for ensuring that foster parents and caregivers receive notice of permanency hearings as required by Vermont statute.