

Nevada

Court Improvement Program

Strategic Plan
for

FFY 2017



Supreme Court of Nevada
Administrative Office of the Courts
November 2016

The State of Nevada
Court Improvement Program

Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan Template

State Name: Nevada

Date Strategic Plan Submitted: November 16, 2016

Timeframe Covered by Strategic Plan: October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2021

Overall Goal/Mission of CIP: *The Court Improvement Program enables the courts and agencies involved in the child welfare system to develop systemic, statewide changes to significantly improve the processing of dependency cases while ensuring compliance with state and federal laws regarding child dependency and child welfare matters.*

Priority Area #1: Quality Court Hearings

Outcome #1: *Enhanced judicial leadership, stronger courts for children and families, improved quality of hearings, and accountability within and throughout the child dependency system.*

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: How do you know this is a need in your state? *The statewide quality hearing study conducted by NCJFJC, the Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission reports, the statewide assessment of parents’ attorneys conducted via the Capacity Building Center for Courts (CBCC) consult, APSR Self-Assessment Judiciary Focus Groups, and information from the 2015 post CIC Summit follow-up survey completed by the judiciary.*

Theory of Change: *the Judiciary and stakeholders will have a better understanding of what constitutes a quality hearing, and judges will have a better understanding of what constitutes reasonable efforts which will lead to an increase in depth of information brought to court by all parties because stakeholders will better understand the information needed by the court. This will lead to long term outcomes such as improved time to permanency and overall timeliness of cases.*

Activity or Project Description	Collaborative Partners	Anticipated Outputs of Activity	Goals of Activity (short and/or Long-term)	Timeframe	Resources Needed	Plans for Evaluating Activity	Status of Project/ Activity
<i>Specific actions or project that will be completed to produce specific outputs and demonstrate progress toward the outcome.</i>	<i>Responsible parties and partners involved in implementation of the activity.</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. Goals should be measurable. Progress toward Outcome</i>	<i>Proposed completion date or, if appropriate, “ongoing”.</i>	<i>Where relevant identify the resources needed to complete the activity.</i>	<i>Where relevant, how will you measure or monitor change?</i>	<i>Completed, Ongoing, Abandoned</i>

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<p>Project 1 – The Nevada CIP continues supporting and informing the Community Improvement Councils as they implement their annual CIC Action Plans to improve court processing of dependency cases as its means of continuously monitoring and improving the quality of dependency court proceedings including court hearings and reviews. With input and guidance from the CICs, CIP also plans to create a structure of accountability that monitors hearing quality via CIC self-reports of accomplishments, peer discussion and data-driven dialogue, and peer-to-peer court observation. By providing the courts and their CICs data to help them identify areas needing improvement and information about empirically-supported and best practices, with CIP support and guidance, the courts make systemic changes to improve hearing quality. Because each judicial district is unique, the specific local activities and interventions for that district will continue to be built upon a foundation of empirical data and consensus among the key stakeholders and constituency of that district.</p>							
<i>Action Step 1 – Support CICs’ development and implementation of annual action plans.</i>	CIP CICs Child Welfare	CIP collects, assesses, analyzes, and distributes permanency and timeliness data regularly. CICs follow through on action plans created at 2016 CIC Summit. CIP works with stakeholders to develop and disseminate training and resources for the judiciary and CICs.	Improve court functioning, build capacity, decrease time to permanency and improve hearing timeliness.	On-going		CIC meeting activities and annual report. Improved time to permanency and overall case timeliness; improved reunification rate as reflected in DCFS UNITY data reports (CFS 775 and CFS 732) and Centralized Case Index.	Ongoing

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<i>Action Step 2 – Monitor the quality of hearings.</i>	CIP CICs CBCC	CIP locates funds for travel to CIC meetings and to conduct CIC Summit. CIP encourages CICs to create meaningful agendas and take and distribute minutes.	CIP attends and supports CIC meetings. CIP holds Statewide CIC Summit.	On-going	Leverage CIP funds to access other funding sources to enable CIP to continue its training and data sharing work.	CIC agendas and meeting minutes focusing on steps to improve hearing quality. CIC Summit agenda	On-going
<i>Action Step 3 – Create a structure of accountability for the courts and CICs.</i>	CIP CICs Child Welfare CBCC	Document approach to continuous monitoring (e.g., self- report from the courts, peer discussion and data driven dialogue). Develop peer/mentored court observation pilot project to including an observation toolkit for judges and evaluation plan. Initiate pilot peer/mentored court observation project. CICs implement the <i>Guide to Integrating CQI into the Work of the CIC</i>	Structure of accountability is in place that encourages improved outcomes. Improved understanding of how to interpret data. Improved time to permanency. Increased number of courts inviting youth into court. Increased evidence that families and caregivers are engaged in the courtroom. Increased number of courts implementing trauma reduction efforts.	January 2018	Leverage CIP funds to access other funding sources, thereby, enabling CIP to proceed with accountability efforts. Completion of the data sharing efforts: court event notification and the centralized case index		On-going

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<i>Action Step 4 – Working with the CBCC, CIP will develop a peer observation tool and process to monitor hearing quality</i>	Judicial officers CBCC	Court observation toolkit for judges	Increased understanding of components of quality hearings Improved engagement of parties Increased discussion of key issues within the court Increase in the number of children placed with relatives Improved permanency outcomes	Toolkit will be completed in early 2017 with initial site visits to follow; process will occur on an ongoing basis	CBCC assistance.	Judges will turn in court observation tools and CIP will debrief following each visit to gather qualitative impressions.	Ongoing
<i>Action Step 5 – Court’s develop customized court orders reflective of court order templates and local practices.</i>	CIP CICs CBCC	Increase in reasonable efforts and other pertinent findings made on the record.	Improved clarity and understanding so that court orders are followed. Improved identification of Indian children. Increased number of courts providing orders immediately following hearings.	September 2020	Resource to measure ICWA compliance.	Improved compliance with ICWA. Improved timeliness as reflected in DCFS UNITY data reports (CFS 775 and CFS 732) and Centralized Case Index.	On-going

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<p><i>Action Step 6 – Collaborate with Child Welfare Agencies to ensure understanding of and contribution to quality hearings</i></p>	<p>CIP CICs Child Welfare CBCC</p>	<p>Child Welfare explains the CFSR/CFSP/APSR and case file review processes to the courts. Increase child welfare contributions to and participation in CIC meetings and activities. Each CIC receives a presentation from DCFS QA re: CFRS.</p> <p>CICs are regularly used as Focus Groups for Child Welfare issues such as notification and right to be heard.</p> <p>Courts/CICs are trained on the child welfare safety model.</p> <p>Develop survey of courts to assess their understanding of Child Welfare required reports and initiatives.</p>	<p>Courts feel that they understand and are contributing to the CFSR/CFSP/APSR and case file review processes.</p> <p>Increase frequency of periodic reviews where appropriate to improve parental engagement in the case plan.</p> <p>Child welfare stakeholders better understand the information the courts need timely.</p> <p>Increase in depth of information brought to court by caseworker.</p> <p>Improve timeliness of hearings.</p> <p>Improve time to permanency.</p> <p>Increase in permanency in 12 months of children entering foster care.</p> <p>Possible increase in reunification rates.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>CBCC assistance on developing, administration and analysis of court survey.</p>	<p>Court survey results.</p> <p>Improved timeliness of hearings and time to permanency and reunification rates as reflected in DCFS UNITY data reports (CFS 775 and CFS 732) and Centralized Case Index and AFCARs data.</p>	<p>On-going</p>

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<i>Action Step7 - CIP continues to actively align its work with that of the Child Welfare Agencies</i>	CIP CICs Child Welfare CBCC	<p>CIP continues to provide input into attaining PIP and IV-E, CFSP/APSR, and CFSR goals.</p> <p>Child Welfare actively participates in the development of the CIP Strategic Plan and its implementation.</p> <p>CIP and Child Welfare share data, program assessment results, etc.</p> <p>Regular meetings take place with Child Welfare managers & supervisors, SQIC Committee, QA TA Subcommittee and CIP.</p> <p>Child Welfare is fully represented and active on the CIP Select Committee.</p>	<p>CICs continue their successful endeavors as outlined in their action plans.</p> <p>Hearing and court order quality improve.</p> <p>Relevant statistical evidence (timeliness, permanency, and reunification) demonstrates continued improvement.</p> <p>CIP and Child Welfare Agency reports and documents reflect active and joint participation.</p>	On-going		Success of court hearing quality improvement efforts, pilot project implementation, and CICs.	On-going

Priority Area #2: Quality Legal Representation

Outcome #1: Improved quality of legal representation *in dependency cases*

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: *How do you know this is a need in your state?* The statewide quality hearing study conducted by NCJFJC, the statewide assessment of parents’ attorneys conducted via the CBCC consult, CIC Action Plans expressing intent to improve quality of and/or increase legal presentation for both parents and children, Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission reports, and information from the 2015 post CIC Summit follow-up survey completed by the judiciary.

Theory of Change: *By better educating attorneys regarding federal and state mandates, the quality of legal representation is likely to improve; thereby, increasing the likelihood of adhering to AFSA timelines and achieving permanency more quickly, increasing the engagement of parents and, hence, reunification rates, the well-being of children and ensure their best interests. By educating CICs on the positive impacts of legal representation, increased legal representation is likely to occur*

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Project 1 – Educate all attorneys, DAs, DAGs, Parents and Children’s Attorneys about federal and state laws and regulations governing child dependency cases (NRS 432B) including but not limited to Adoption and Safe Families Act, Fostering Connections, ICWA and its new regulations. Open appropriate trainings to Child Welfare staff, as well.							
Action Step 1 – Implement the on-line attorney training.	CIP CICs Child Welfare	AOC Judicial Ed Unit modifies on-line Attorney Training to accommodate Distant Education web-site format. Judicial Ed teaches CIP how to register trainees. Judicial Ed technically administers project.	On-line attorney training is available on the AOC Distant Education web-site under a separate CIP tab. Training is available for registration.	January 2017 February 2017 On-going	Judicial Ed Unit assistance with finalizing upload of course into Distant Ed web-site under CIP tab. Judicial Ed staff training of CIP staff on how to register participants.	On-line Attorney Project is available for participants.	Ongoing

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<i>Action Step 2 – Inform courts and CICs that the on-line Attorney Training Is available for trainees.</i>	CIP	Announcements to courts and CICs that on-line Attorney Training is available and instructions re: how to register.	80% of attorneys practicing in dependency court will complete course.	January 2017 On-going		Announcement email. Announcement in the CIC newsletter.	On-going
<i>Action Step 3 - Courts order attorneys to complete the training.</i>	CIP Courts Attorneys	<p>Significant proportion of attorneys in each JD complete course.</p> <p>Attorneys understand that dependency cases are different from criminal cases.</p> <p>Attorneys have improved understanding of state and federal law applying to dependency cases.</p>	<p>Improve knowledge and skills of attorneys.</p> <p>Attorneys better understand the needs of their clients and the services available to them.</p> <p>Parties are more engaged.</p> <p>Improved court timeliness data.</p> <p>Improved child permanency timeliness and reunification data as reflected in DCFS UNITY data reports (CFS 775 and CFS 732), AFCARS, and Centralized Case Index.</p>	On-going	<p>CBCC assists with another statewide survey re: legal representation in dependency cases.</p> <p>CBCC assists with assessment of number of continuances.</p>	<p>Satisfaction is measured upon completion.</p> <p>Knowledge gains are measured through pre and post-tests during the course of the training.</p>	On-going

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<i>Action Step 4 – CIP invites Child Welfare Agencies to utilize on-line Attorney Training course for caseworkers.</i>	CIP Child Welfare Agencies	Child Welfare Agencies will investigate utility of course for their caseworkers.	If appropriate, Child Welfare Agencies will encourage or require caseworkers to complete the course. Improved court timeliness data. Improved child permanency data as reflected in DCFS UNITY data reports (CFS 775 and CFS 732) and Centralized Case Index.	On-going		Satisfaction is measured upon completion. Knowledge gains are measured through pre and post-tests during the course of the training.	On-going
<i>Action Step5 – Attorneys’ standards of practice in dependency case developed and implemented.</i>	CIP Courts CICs BRK Statewide Attorney Standards Committee CBCC LACSN Washoe County Legal Services DAs AG	Attorney practice standards discussed at CIC meetings. Where appropriate such standards developed and implemented locally until statewide standards are in place. Build local JD’s capacity to apply CQI once attorney standards have been implemented.	Improve knowledge and skills of attorneys. Improved court timeliness data. Improved child permanency data as reflected in DCFS UNITY data reports (CFS 775 and CFS 732) and Centralized Case Index.	On-going	CBCC assists with another statewide survey re: legal representation in dependency cases.	ADKTs approved for local court rules and for statewide standards.	On-going

Priority Area #3: Other

Outcome #1: *Increased likelihood of timely reunification with parents for children entering foster care whose dependency cases have been mediated.*

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: *How do you know this is a need in your state?* The statewide quality hearing study conducted by NCJFCJ, the Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission reports, and information from the 2015 post CIC Summit follow-up survey completed by the judiciary. Data sources include UNITY data, AFCARS, and NCJFCJ outcome evaluation.

Theory of Change: *The engagement of all case parties in a non-adversarial process when disagreements occur (e.g., denial of the petition or TPR petition, and disagreements over case plan or placement), is expected to reduce contention among the parties, lead to agreement, and allow both the professionals and the parents to feel fully engaged and vested in the process. This will lead to long term outcomes such as improved time to permanency and reunification rates, as well as increased parental engagement.*

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<p>Project 1 – The Statewide Dependency Mediation Program is designed to improve the quality of the dependency process by providing the parties an opportunity to enter into a discussion in which the parties voluntarily resolve the issues that brought the family into the dependency system and produce a written agreement in lieu of a potentially traumatic, contested hearing. Mediations tend to focus on the family’s strengths. Benefits of mediation in child dependency cases include: improved outcomes for children time savings, efficiency, parental engagement, and improved outcomes for children.</p>							
<p><i>Action Step 1 – Finalize implementation of the Statewide Juvenile Dependency Mediation Program (JDMP).</i></p>	<p>CIP CICs Child Welfare</p>	<p>Courts with support of or recommendation from Child Welfare refer and program mediates 70 cases in first year of implementation.</p> <p>75% of mediations come to agreement within one month of the mediation.</p>	<p>Improved permanency outcomes for children and engagement for parents.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>Continuation of the VOCA grant to fund JDMP in subsequent years.</p> <p>Identify funding for JDMP Administrator if no training and data funds are available.</p>	<p>Mediation court order referrals.</p> <p>Mediation program data sheets and independent process and outcome evaluations conducted by NCJFCJ.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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<i>Action Step 2 – Continued training of JDMP mediation panel to ensure that mediators are adhering program design and process.</i>	CIP CICs	<p>Monthly training calls take place and are attended.</p> <p>JDMP Administrator conducts co-mediations to ensure adherence to program design and process.</p> <p>JDMP Administrator assesses and verifies mediation agreements, mediator statements, and mediation data sheets prior to approving payment.</p> <p>Courts and stakeholders' surveys are analyzed to ensure that parties are satisfied with mediation process.</p>	<p>All mediators attend training calls.</p> <p>JDMP Administrator verifies with CIP that all mediators are adhering to program design and process.</p> <p>Mediation agreements are being filed with the courts.</p>	On-going	Leverage CIP funds to access other funding sources to enable CIP to continue the JDMP.	Call agendas Stakeholder and participant satisfaction surveys.	On-going

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<i>Action Step 3 – Create and fully implement an educational process for courts and stakeholders</i>	CIP CICs Child Welfare CJA Task Force Saltman Clinic at UNLV	<p>Apply for and receive CJA grant to develop educational tools.</p> <p>Develop a court/stakeholder toolkit (e.g., informational toolkit, parents brochure) to educate CICs, courts, stakeholders, parents on dependency mediation.</p> <p>JDMP Administrator travels to JDs to educate stakeholders on how to best use mediation.</p> <p>With the court and the UNLV Saltman ADR Clinic, develop and implement strategy to initiate JDMP in the 8th JD.</p> <p>JDMP Administrator trains child welfare staff on mediation and their input and participation.</p>	Courts and stakeholders comprehend the use and expectations of JDMP.	On-going	Leverage CIP funds to access other funding sources, thereby, enabling CIP to proceed with mediation educational efforts.	<p>Toolkit developed and distributed to courts and child welfare.</p> <p>Court and stakeholders survey results.</p>	On-going

Priority Area #4: Well-Being

Outcome #1: *Bring increased educational stability, instructional continuity, and well-being to the State’s foster children.*

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: *How do you know this is a need in your state?* The collaborative efforts among the courts and the executive branch agencies, joint actions are taken to implement PIP, IV-E Review, CFSP, APSR, PL 113-183, other applicable federal law, Court Improvement Council (CIC) action plan strategies and Blue Ribbon for Kids Commission recommendations to help bring increased educational stability and well-being to the State’s foster children.

Theory of Change: *Improved and consistent communication among the Child Welfare Agencies, the Department of Education, the school districts, and the courts, will increase trust among the entities resulting in an increased likelihood that efforts to improve educational stability and instructional continuity for foster children will take place.*

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<p>Project 1 – The Nevada CIP continues to facilitate the Statewide Child Welfare, Education, and the Courts Collaborative to develop and implement a statewide strategic plan to enhance collaborative efforts to ensure that federal legislation and regulations are reflected in NRS, to share data, to support implementation of pilot projects and efforts that inform and enhance educational stability among foster children.</p>							

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<i>Action Step 1 – Continue to collaborate with the Nevada Department of Education, DCFS, WCFSS, and CCDFS to enhance educational stability for foster children as reflected in Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 and the Child Welfare, Education and the Courts Summit (11/11)</i>	CIP Staff DCFS WCDSS CCDFS DOE Other partners such as the courts	Review and revise the Statewide Collaborative’s Strategic Roadmap. Invite Tribal representation into the group to assist with implementation of ASFA, Fostering Connections and ESSA.	Strategic Roadmap implementation process takes place. Incorporation of practice, policy, or procedure changes and CQI plan for monitoring implementation and outcomes Collaborative subcommittees and the Policy and Planning Group impact policy and day to day operations Improve educational stability and continuity of instruction among foster children throughout the state.	September 2017		Collaborative meetings and activities. Finalized Strategic Roadmap.	Ongoing
<i>Action Step 2 – Memorialize ESSA in NRS.</i>	CIP Staff DCFS WCDSS CCDFS DOE Other partners such as the courts	Identify a legislator to carry the Bill draft Request (BDR) that will memorialize EESA in NRS. Work with Legislature to pass bill.	ESSA provisions passed into NRS.	July 2017		Bill enacted.	On-going

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<i>Action Step 3 – Continue data sharing via Infinite Campus</i>	CIP Staff DCFS WCDSS CCDFS DOE Other partners such as the courts	MOU agreed to between the AOC and Washoe County School District. Washoe County School Districts and Centralized Case Index (CIC) Pilot Projects implemented.	Schools are aware when a child becomes a foster child in near real time. Children remain in their school of origin if in their best interests and transportation is jointly provided by the school district and child welfare. If the school of origin is not appropriate, children are accepted into their new school without usual required paperwork. Foster children’s educational statistics e.g., standardized tests, graduation rates, credits toward graduation) improve to be comparable with other students.	January 2021	Funding to complete the CIC.	Washoe County School District Data on foster children is pushed into UNITY and UNITY data is being absorbed by Infinite Campus to be utilized by both child welfare and the school district. Infinite Campus data on foster children in Washoe County is being received by the Centralized Case Index and dashboard data is available to judges.	On-going

Activity or Project Description <i>Specific actions or project that will be completed to produce specific outputs and demonstrate progress toward the outcome.</i>	Collaborative Partners <i>Responsible parties and partners involved in implementation of the activity.</i>	Anticipated Outputs of Activity <i>What the CIP intends to produce, provide or accomplish through the activity.</i>	Goals of Activity (short and/or Long-term) <i>Where relevant and practical, provide specific, projected change in data the CIP intends to achieve. Goals should be measurable.</i> Progress toward Outcome	Timeframe <i>Proposed completion date or, if appropriate, "ongoing".</i>	Resources Needed <i>Where relevant identify the resources needed to complete the activity.</i>	Plans for Evaluating Activity <i>Where relevant, how will you measure or monitor change?</i>	Status of Project/ Activity <i>Completed, Ongoing, Abandoned</i>
<i>Action Step 4 – Align the Coalition to Prevent CSEC with the Statewide Educational Collaborative</i>	CIP Staff DCFS WCDSS CCDFS DOE CSEC Coalition Other partners such as the courts	Participation of Educational Collaborative members on Subcommittees to Prevent CSEC and Care and Coordination.	CSEC victims’ educational needs identified and addressed	September 2020	Coalition to Prevent CSEC Coordinator		On-going

Priority Area #5: Preventing Trafficking and Strengthening Families

Outcome #5: *Promote judicial understanding of how to identify and respond to child victims of commercial sexual exploitation in the courtroom to improve outcomes for child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.*

Need Driving Activities & Data Source: *How do you know this is a need in your state?* P.L. 113-183 states that judicial officers must be trained. Nevada judicial officers did receive initial training during the Family Law Conference in March 2016, but more is needed according to judicial input.

Theory of Change: *The greater the Judiciary and stakeholder understanding of how to identify and respond to CSEC victims in the courtroom, the greater the likelihood that this population of children will have improved outcomes.*

Activity or Project Description <i>Specific actions or project that will be completed to produce specific outputs and demonstrate progress toward the outcome.</i>	Collaborative Partners <i>Responsible parties and partners involved in implementation of the activity.</i>	Anticipated Outputs of Activity <i>What the CIP intends to produce, provide or accomplish through the activity.</i>	Goals of Activity (short and/or Long-term) <i>Where relevant and practical, provide specific, projected change in data the CIP intends to achieve. Goals should be measureable.</i> Progress toward Outcome	Timeframe <i>Proposed completion date or, if appropriate, "ongoing".</i>	Resources Needed <i>Where relevant identify the resources needed to complete the activity.</i>	Plans for Evaluating Activity <i>Where relevant, how will you measure or monitor change?</i>	Status of Project/ Activity <i>Completed, Ongoing, Abandoned</i>
Project 1 – CIP will participate in the Coalition to Prevent Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children as a Governor-appointed member. As such, CIP will not only inform the coalition regarding court activities, but will share educational information with the judiciary and the Court Improvement Select Committee, as well.							
<i>Action Step 1 – Support and inform the Governor’s Coalition to Prevent the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.</i>	CIP CSEC Coalition	As a member of the CSEC Coalition, CIP participants in all Coalition meetings. CIP assists and informs the CSEC Coalition Coordinator.	Coalition successfully complies with P.L. 113-183	On-going		CSEC Coalition meetings and reports.	Ongoing

Activity or Project Description <i>Specific actions or project that will be completed to produce specific outputs and demonstrate progress toward the outcome.</i>	Collaborative Partners <i>Responsible parties and partners involved in implementation of the activity.</i>	Anticipated Outputs of Activity <i>What the CIP intends to produce, provide or accomplish through the activity.</i>	Goals of Activity (short and/or Long-term) <i>Where relevant and practical, provide specific, projected change in data the CIP intends to achieve. Goals should be measurable.</i> Progress toward Outcome	Timeframe <i>Proposed completion date or, if appropriate, "ongoing".</i>	Resources Needed <i>Where relevant identify the resources needed to complete the activity.</i>	Plans for Evaluating Activity <i>Where relevant, how will you measure or monitor change?</i>	Status of Project/ Activity <i>Completed, Ongoing, Abandoned</i>
<i>Action Step 2 – Educate courts about CSEC</i>	CIP CICs Child Welfare CSEC Coalition	CIP locates funds for educational efforts. CIP identifies judicial training opportunities (e.g., NCJFCJ) to invite judicial officers to attend.	Judicial officers and court staff have enhanced awareness of CSEC, courtroom protocols, victim safety in the courtroom, when to request CSEC screening. CSEC red flags are recognized and reviewed in courts. Judicial officers are aware of any required findings in orders necessary to provide services to CSEC victims.	On-going	Educational opportunities from such entities as NCJFCJ	Trainings have taken place and evaluations demonstrate increased knowledge.	On-going