NEVADA'S COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE PROTECTION AND PERMANENCY OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN (CIP) COORDINATOR'S ANNUAL TRAINING ASSESSMENT REPORT DECEMBER 2009



Nevada Supreme Court Administrative Office of the Courts

STATE OF NEVADA COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) COORDINATOR'S ANNUAL TRAINING ASSESSMENT REPORT – DECEMBER 2009

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The past year has been one of the best years yet for the Court Improvement Program. Building on its foundation and continuing the work of such a progressive and proactive program has been a true honor. I have also appreciated the opportunity to work with the leadership of Supreme Court Chief Justice James Hardesty, Associate Justice Nancy M. Saitta, and Associate Justice Michael Douglas. Without their wisdom, clear direction, passion, and patience, the Nevada Court Improvement Program would not be where it is today. Such strong leadership and advocacy protects the rights of all of our children and families, and assures CIP will continue to make progress toward improving outcomes for children and families.

CHAPTER 1

COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) SELECT COMMITTEE

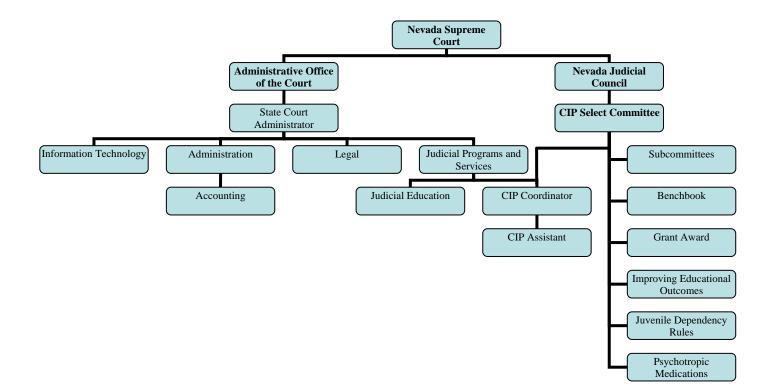
The Court Improvement Program is a multidisciplinary program that seeks improvement of interrelated systems serving children and families who enter the child welfare system. The program operates through team-oriented court and agency initiatives. The goal of CIP is to make the system more efficient and reduce the amount of time child victims of abuse and neglect spend in the foster care system.

As a standing committee of the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada, the Committee serves in an advisory capacity. Each year the CIP program begins with the CIP Annual Meeting/Retreat where the CIP Select Committee reviews progress on the strategic plans and priorities for the current year. Agendas for the subsequent quarterly meetings are structured around specific action items and are developed by Select Committee members in coordination with the CIP coordinator. The CIP Select Committee Chair serves on CIP-related subcommittees, helps direct and oversees policy development, and reviews and approves new project proposals for funding. A CIP Select Committee Roster is attached as **Appendix A**.

The CIP Select Committee is directly supported by two individuals employed by the Nevada Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), specifically, the CIP Coordinator and a full time CIP Assistant. Additionally, CIP is supported by other departments within the AOC on an as-needed basis. The following organizational chart depicts the structure of CIP as well as the Supreme Court and departments within the AOC which support CIP.

Finally, the work of CIP could not be accomplished without the dedicated teamwork and assistance of Nevada's federal, state, and local collaborative partners, which are listed in the attached **Appendix B**.

COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



CHAPTER 2

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES AND STATUS

The table starting on the next page lists the activities found in the Education and Training (or "Training") Strategic Plan as well as providing a list of initiatives associated with each activity and the status of each of these initiatives.

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Education and Training (ED) or "Training" Strategy ED1

Provide training opportunities for child welfare stakeholders, lawyers, members of the judiciary to keep current on national trends, federal child welfare law, and best practices

Strategic Plan Activity Code	Current CIP Initiatives	Status
ED 1.1	Send up to three representatives to national conferences.	Washoe County Deputy Public Defenders Jennifer Rains and Paige Dollinger attended the ABA conference on Improving Representation for Parents in the Child Welfare System: <i>Representing Your Client and Advocating for Change</i> <i>in Challenging Times</i> : The 2009 National Conference on Children and the Law May 13-16, 2009. Attendees will provide a 1-hour presentation on best practices at the Youth Summit scheduled in September 2010. (See AP6.3). An analyst with the Administrative Office of the Court's Judicial Programs and Services Division attended the 12 th National Child Welfare Data and Technology Conference June 22-24, 2009 to gain a better understanding of national standards for data collection on juvenile cases. The analyst is involved in finalizing Phase II Uniform System of Judicial Reporting requirements for juvenile case types and has already applied information gained at the Conference to data collection, identifying outcome measures, and analyzing of the CIP Early Representation pilot project.
(continued on next page)	(continued on next page)	Tom Morton, Director of the Clark County Department of Family Services, attended the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators Child Welfare Directors' Policy Summit in Washington, D.C., September 14-16, 2009. Mr. Morton submitted a CD and binder of materials to the CIP office as part of his report that will be delivered at the January 22, 2010, CIP meeting.

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Strategic Plan Activity Code	Current CIP Initiatives	Status
ED 1.1 (continued)	Send up to three representatives to national conferences.	Nevada Supreme Court Associate Justice and CIP Chair Nancy Saitta extended invitations to attend the Third National Judicial Leadership Summit on the Protection of Children sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trust and Casey Family Programs to Eighth Judicial District Family Court and Lead Model Court Judge Diane Steel, Clark County Department of Family Services Director Tom Morton, Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) Administrator Diane Comeaux, and the CIP Coordinator. The Summit was held October 15-17, 2009, in Austin, TX and the team of five participated. Prior to attending the Summit and working with Administration for Children and Families Region IX Representatives, Jewel Roberts and Linda Mitchell, retired Judge CIP Contract Liaison Joanne Brown, Executive Director of Government Relations Office for the National Center of State Courts Kay Farley, Principal Court Management Consultant Dick Van Duizend, and DCFS Quality Improvement Manager Jan Fragale, preparatory materials were gathered and distributed to the team by the CIP Coordinator and Assistant. In November 2009, CIP training opportunities such as the Beyond the Bench conference in California in June 2010 were distributed to judges and masters who have calendars of NRS432B cases.
ED1.2	Appoint CIP member to work with Youth Advisory Councils as required by FCIA (aka Chaffee)	Appointment to be made at the January 22, 2010, quarterly CIP meeting.

Develop a	<u>Education and Training (ED) or "Training" Strategy ED2</u> Develop and implement continuing education programs and materials for Judges and Juvenile Hearing Masters on child welfare issues		
Strategic Plan Activity Code	Current CIP Initiatives	Status	
ED2.1	In collaboration with the Judicial Education Division of the AOC and national consultants, establish a baseline for training curriculum and priorities	Request granted to form a training Ad Hoc Working Group to be appointed approved by CIP Chair Justice Saitta. A meeting was held between the AOC Manager of Judicial Education and his staff, and the CIP Coordinator, on December 10, 2009, to discuss the logistics, assistance from Judicial Education staff, budget, and potential dates for the Youth Summit in September 2010. A list of training issues developed by CIP Coordinator was provided to the Judicial Education Manger.	
ED2.2	Develop "nutshell" dependency training in conjunction with agency, AOC Judicial Education, correlated with the Judicial Benchbook on child welfare cases for courtroom practice	The Ad Hoc Working Group will be utilized to advise the development of the curriculum.	
ED2.3	Adapt "nutshell" dependency course as a 4-hour refresher courses (for subsequent years)	The Ad Hoc Working Group will be utilized to advise the development of the curriculum.	
ED2.4	Provide training on child welfare issues at annual Family Law Judges and Nevada District Judges Association conferences	Agenda was already established for 2009 conferences; the Ad Hoc Working Group will collaborate with AOC Judicial Education staff to schedule training for the 2010 judicial conferences. The CIP Coordinator made a connection between the AOC Judicial Education Manager, his staff, and Judge James Payne from Indiana. Judge Payne offered his PowerPoint presentation on the Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR) to be used at an appropriate training for Judges, and the CIP Coordinator shared that information along with contact information for Judge Payne.	
ED2.5	Send up to two judicial officers to Child Abuse and Neglect Institute (CANI) National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) training	No applications were received in 2009. In addition to the existing link to NCJFCJ on the CIP webpage, the CIP Coordinator will continue sending out email to Judges and Hearing Masters regarding similar training opportunities during 2010.	

Education and Training (ED) or "Training" Strategy ED3 Develop and implement continuing education programs and materials for court staff involved in child welfare issues		
Strategic Plan Activity Code	Current CIP Initiatives	Status
ED3.1	Identify and develop baseline training and education material for court staff involved in child welfare cases	 The original plan to distribute information from the Senior Model Court was modified as CIP members were notified that materials would be available in the CIP office, and electronic versions would be provided upon request. Due to the large volume of the dependency manual materials and the specific and technical information regarding one specific case management system utilized in the Second Judicial District, the above materials were not used. Additional materials for the webpage may be considered. A CIP display board with information about piloted projects and the state and federal partnership was put on display throughout the 2009 Court Staff Conference. Color printouts of statewide piloted projects and CIP contact and webpage information was disseminated to 150 participants. A one-page CIP informational brochure was developed and will be circulated at the 1st quarterly CIP Select Committee meeting in 2010.
ED3.2	Update training and education material for court staff (for subsequent years)	
ED3.3	Provide training on child welfare issues at the Court Administrators and Clerks Conference	

Develop and i	Education and Training (ED) or "Training" Strategy ED4 Develop and implement collaborative multi-disciplinary training and education regarding child welfare court law, standards, and best practices		
Strategic Plan Activity Code	Current CIP Initiatives	Status	
	Organize four regional conferences: at minimum, one-half-day long trainings on specific practice, policy, subject matter, research, best practices, on-going collaboration, and issues identified in the representation surveys, including but not limited to: Judicial leadership regarding change in the treatment of parties involved in child abuse and neglect cases, safety and risk assessment, ASFA requirements and timeframes, the <i>Resource Guidelines</i> and other best practices in child protection cases, Diligent search, compelling reasons, reasonable efforts, understanding concurrent planning, purpose, scope, and expectations for each hearing type, increasing parental involvement in case planning, improve visitation practice, older youth, PIP strategies designed to improve the case planning and case review process, and new child welfare agency policies and practices.	Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada (LACSN) for an Early Representation Project. The goal of the Early Representation Program (ERP) was to establish a pilot project to achieve better outcomes for children by using a variety of methods including the provision of legal representation for both parents and children at the initial protective custody hearings. The LACSN continuing education program for volunteer attorneys representing children, scheduled for late January 2010 will focus on utilizing best practices when representing a child at the earliest stage. The curriculum is designed to not only teach lawyers strategies related to early stage representation, but also assign them to a specific child, which will increase the number of children who are represented by legal counsel.	

Strategic Plan Activity Code	Current CIP Initiatives	Status
ED4.1 (continued)	Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada Pro Bono Attorney and Educational Surrogate Training	Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada Children's Attorneys Project (CAP) Pro Bono Lawyers and a Surrogate Education Advocacy Project, (described in more detail in Basic Assessment Report AP2.1), provided training for pro bono attorneys to assist prospective adoptive parents finalize adoptions and four training sessions for Educational Surrogates. One hundred nine (109) new CAP cases/clients were placed with attorneys during the reporting period.
		LACSN completed training materials and conducted an Adoption Subsidy Training for volunteer lawyers on June 26, 2009. Fifteen (15) volunteer attorneys attended.
	Volunteer Attorneys for Rural Nevadans CASA volunteer training on Co- Occurrence of Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment	Volunteer Attorneys for Rural Nevadans (VARN) received \$10,000 funding to develop a curriculum and conduct training for CASA volunteers on the <i>Co-Occurrence of Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment</i> . Training occurred on April 2, 2009, at the Carson Plaza Convention Center in Carson City, and on November 7, 2009, in Elko. Approximately 60 persons were trained including CASA volunteers, attorneys, and service providers. The curriculum included materials and presentations on topics such as:
(continued on		 Relationships between domestic violence and child abuse and neglect; Dynamics of domestic violence; Nevada law and domestic violence; Effects of domestic violence on children: The New Hampshire Approach; Other considerations: Safety planning and confidentiality; Protection orders; and Working within the court system and with attorneys.
next page)		A binder was produced containing the curriculum that can be used for further training in this area and as a reference. A copy is located in the CIP Office.

Strategic Plan Activity Code	Current CIP Initiatives	Status
ED4.1 (continued)		Regional Partnership Grant – The 6-hour institute sponsored collaboratively by CIP, the National Foster Parents Association, and Sierra Association of Foster Families was held on May 4, 2009, in Reno, funded through a regional partnership grant on methamphetamine abuse, was one example of the development of a best practices curriculum regarding substance abuse and its impact on families and courts.
		A DVD is being produced from the presentations at the institute as a training tool entitled, <i>Methamphetamines: Parental Use and the Crisis in the Child Welfare System.</i> It will be available for distribution statewide and is expected to be completed by the end of January 2010.
	Specialty Court Conference – CIP funded training on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Alcohol Related Neurological Disorders	Specialty Court Conference – Subgrant funding to CIP from DCFS through a federal Regional Partnership Grant allowed a three-hour session taught by Ira Chasnoff, M.D., on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Alcohol Related Neurological Disorders as part of the AOC's Specialty Court Conference December 2-4, 2009 at the Peppermill in Reno, NV.
		Dr. Chasnoff is a professor of clinical pediatrics at the University of Illinois College of Medicine, and president of the Children's Research Triangle in Chicago. A fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Dr. Chasnoff is renowned for many years of research on the potential effects of maternal drug use on long-term child development. By way of background, from 2001-2005, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funded the Children's Research Triangle (CRT) to develop and evaluate a Neurocognitive Habilitation Project, involving the identification and assessment of children ages 6-12 with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder or Alcohol Related Neurological Disorders. The curriculum was designed to educate parents and other interested professionals about FASDs and give them strategies for managing the neurodevelopmental effects of prenatal alcohol exposure, with a focus on teaching children self-regulation skills.

	Education and Training (ED) or "Training" Strategy ED5 Support training and education for specific groups of stakeholders	
Strategic Plan Activity Code	Current CIP Initiatives	Status
ED5.1	Work with stakeholders to develop training programs and materials for stakeholders regarding best practices in child welfare cases, including: ASFA mandates and timeframe requirements, the <i>Resource Guidelines,</i> and other best practices in child protection cases, adoption stability, behavioral health, child development, educational rights/services, roles and responsibilities, increasing parental involvement, meaningful visitation, older youth, and new child welfare agency policies and practices	CIP funded and administered 11 contracts/subgrant agreements over the course of 1 year, including those listed below. These include working with Supreme Court and AOC staff as well as staff from each of our statewide partners. Collaborating entities are listed in parenthesis within the project descriptions below, together with numerous community volunteers (identified as our collaborative partners in Appendix B to this report) on the following pilot projects:
(continued on next page)	Licensed Kinship Caregivers	Sierra Association of Foster Families was the grantee for the Licensed Kinship Caregivers Project. The project, funded at \$18,000, reinforces relative caregivers as an important resource for the child welfare system not only for the stability they provide to children, but for their ability to reduce or ameliorate the impact of the removal of the children from their parent(s). Although the project serves all 85 "licensed kinship foster parents" with services and support, the majority of these caregivers are single grandmothers, many in their late 60s and 70s, and the children most likely to be in their care, are older (8+ years). Recognizing the special challenges faced by these caretakers, this project provides ongoing day-to-day programs developed specifically to help address issues of youth placed in the homes of relatives. Those trainings included Lifebooks (offered year round), Dependency Court Proceedings (05/04/09), Six Heart Emotions/Grief (05/04/09),

Strategic Plan Activity Code	Current CIP Initiatives	Status
ED5.1 (continued)	Licensed Kinship Caregivers	Fostering Medically Fragile Children (05/08/09), Kinship Care (09/11/08), Preventing Academic Disruption (10/09/08), Positive Discipline (11/13/08), Trust (01/22/09), Foster Parents and Biological Parents Working Together (02/26/09), Emotional Intelligence (03/09/09), Tapping to Relieve Stress (04/09/09), and Grief and Loss (06/02/09). All trainings were provided to the licensed kinship foster parents from Washoe County and rural communities. The Dependency Court Proceedings and Grief and Loss classes were provided to licensed kinship foster parents from Washoe County and rural county, Clark County, and rural counties. Training was presented during the first 6 months by a team of a foster parent and a biological mother focusing on the challenges of placing with a relative and working together as a team for the best interests of the child. Training was provided the second half of the grant period on requested topics such as shame, grief and fear, positive discipline, healing from grief caused by disruption, and preventing academic disruption. Additionally, Dr. Joseph Galata, as the Executive Director, is available as a special daily advocate for the grandparents and youth in care.
(continued on	Parent to Parent Mentoring	Sierra Association of Foster Families was the grantee for the Parent to Parent Mentoring Project (\$45,720). When a child is placed in a foster home, social services notifies the Sierra Foster Family Association, which as soon as possible, matches the newly licensed foster parents with a volunteer foster parent mentor who is trained in a wide range of topics including community resources, interpersonal relations, social services and the legal system. The Association provides mentoring and training for mentors throughout all of Northern Nevada and Pahrump. Over the grant period, 172 foster parents were provided mentoring from SAFF; approximately 98% of those have retained their licenses and are continuing to mentor. A minimum of 4 hours/year
next page)	(continued on next page)	training was provided to foster parents in addition to opportunities to

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Strategic Plan Activity Code	Current CIP Initiatives	Status
ED5.1 (continued)	Parent to Parent Mentoring	attend specialized ongoing training. The majority of mentors received over 20 hours of training during the year. The primary concern of newly licensed foster parents is how to navigate through the system including the courts. The CIP subgrant funds a small stipend for mentors (\$ 50-100/month), reimbursement for travel expenses, and some money for administrative support.
	Adoption Subsidy	• Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada Children's Attorneys Project (CAP) Adoption Subsidy Project allowed LACSN to develop written information to assist prospective adoptive parents with understanding adoption laws and regulations, the federal and state requirements for adoption subsidy, and their rights and responsibilities as prospective adoptive parents. A copy of an informational pamphlet, <i>Navigating</i> <i>Nevada's Adoption Subsidy Program - A Guide for Clark County</i> <i>Families,</i> has been developed with the assistance of CIP funding and is available at no cost to the public on the LACSN website.
		To begin to clear up the adoption backlog, the Presiding Judge of the Eighth Judicial District Family Court agreed to create a special adoption calendar every other month. As part of the project, an LACSN staff attorney screens cases to identify those in which an attorney for the child might make a difference in expediting the adoption. Law students are also available to provide information to adoptive parents. The goal is to determine what has stalled the adoption and get the adoption back on the fast track. A dedicated CAP staff attorney has been spending an average of 60 hours per month on these cases. On new cases, to ensure that additional backlog does not occur, the Court has agreed at the Termination of Parental Rights Hearings to assign a CAP attorney to every child with a permanency plan of adoption. In addition, all adoption cases are
(continued on next page)		now being put on a special 60-day fast-track docket instead of on the regular six-month review hearing schedule.

Strategic Plan Activity Code	Current CIP Initiatives	Status
ED5.1 (continued)	Adoption Subsidy	LACSN collaborated with the Department of Family Services to compile the adoption subsidy attorney training materials. The UNLV Boyd School of Law is co-sponsoring the training. The law school has been assigning students from its clinical programs to assist adoptive parents during the special adoption calendars.
	Educational Surrogates	• Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada's Educational Surrogate Project (described in more detail in the Basic Assessment Report Status column AP2.1 at the second bullet). The program met its goals and during the current grant period; four trainings have been conducted. Currently, 31 surrogates are assigned to 90 children and a total of 50 have been trained.
		Training goals were met in a variety of ways. First, the training materials used to teach Special Education law to the volunteers have been organized into a Special Education Manual. This Manual, created collaboratively by staff at LACSN, presents a summary of federal and state law in an easily understandable form. It also contains useful information about the Clark County School District, including an overview of how the District is structured and the District's regulations regarding Special Education.
		Training combines basic training and access to resources relating to specific issues, (e.g., services for the visually-impaired, information on the disciplinary procedures under an accommodations plan). Training on specific topics has been provided in small group meetings, but more frequently in case specific consultation. During this grant period, LACSN staff attended meetings with each new surrogate at the school. At each of these student specific meetings, the staff used the time as a teaching opportunity for the surrogate.

APPENDIX A

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

(Revised August 27, 2009)

Justice Nancy M. Saitta, Chair Supreme Court of Nevada

Diane J. Comeaux Administrator Division of Child and Family Services

William "Bill" E. Fowler Executive Director Nevada CASA Association, Inc.

Tom Morton Director Clark County Dept of Family Services

Kathleen M. O'Leary Chief Deputy Public Defender Washoe County Public Defender's Office

Judge Andrew Puccinelli District Court Judge 4th Judicial District Court

Cynthia "Cindy" Pyzel Chief Deputy Attorney General Office of the *Nevada* Attorney General Kevin Schiller Director Washoe County Dept of Social Services

Judge Deborah E. Schumacher District Court Judge 2nd Judicial District Court

Assemblywoman Debbie Smith Assembly District 30, *Nevada*

Chief Judge Teresa Sprouse Tribal Judge Duckwater Shoshone Tribal Court

Judge Cynthia Dianne Steel District Court Judge 8th Judicial District Court! Family Division

Ron Titus Director and State Court Administrator Administrative Office of the Courts

Erika Pike Turner, Esq. Attorney at Law Gordon Silver Janice Wolf, Esq. Attorney at Law Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada

Members Emeritus Mike Capello Consultant

Judge Michael Gibbons District Court Judge 9th Judicial District Court

Mary Herzik Director Washoe County CASA

Tammy Tovey Stephenson Senior Deputy Attorney General Office of the *Nevada* Attorney General

Pat Thacker Director Clark County CASA

Committee Staff Sheryl A. Overstreet, CIP Coordinator **Robbie Taft**, Administrative Assistant Court Improvement Program (CIP) Administrative Office of the Courts

APPENDIX B LIST OF NEVADA COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

Administration for Children and Families Administrative Office of the Courts Attorney General's Office Attorneys for Children Attorneys for Parents Bureau of Indian Affairs Casey Family Programs Child and Family Futures Program Children's Bureau **Clancy Productions** Clark County Department of Family Services Clark County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association Clark County Special Public Defender's Office Community Volunteers Court Improvement Program Select Committee & Members Emeritus Creating Effective Organizations Department of Public Safety State Parole & Probation District Attorney's Offices (Carson City, Clark, Lander, and Washoe Counties) Division of Child & Family Services Foster Parents Government Financial Management, Inc Great Basin CASA Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada National Association of Drug Court Professionals National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators National Foster Parents Association National Resource Centers Nevada CASA Association, Inc. Nevada Indian Commission Nevada Inter-Tribal Council Nevada Judges, Hearing Masters, & Court Staff Nevada Network Against Domestic Violence Nevada State Legislature Northeastern Nevada CASA Sierra Association of Foster Families State CIP Coordinators Supreme Court & Staff Supreme Court Clerk's Office Supreme Court Law Library Tru Vista Program

University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) Volunteer Attorneys for Rural Nevadans Washoe County Department of Social Services Washoe County Public Defender's Office Washoe Legal Services Waterhole Software, Inc. WestCare

<u>Table of Collaborative Partners</u> includes agencies and individuals who have at some time worked on a CIPrelated project, including our contract and subgrant partners, and/or individuals or entities (including both staff and volunteers) who share our common goal(s).