

## **Juvenile Justice Reform Implementation Report of the Louisiana Supreme Court April 15, 2005**

The Louisiana Supreme Court has been engaged in the following Juvenile Justice Reform activities since the last report:

- The Court provided a series of trainings on Juvenile Waiver of Counsel and Competency to reach all judges with juvenile jurisdiction in the state. Judges are providing monthly reports to the Supreme Court on all cases in which juveniles ordered to secure placement, and a 3 judge panel is monitoring compliance.
- The Court conducted a new judges training at the Spring Judges Conference in Lafayette. Judges in courts with juvenile jurisdiction were provided information on the child and family related programs of the Court, Children & Youth Planning Boards, recent developments in juvenile law, ASFA and CAPTA compliance tools, and CASA, FINS, TASC and delinquency information. Judges in appellate courts were provided with expedited appeal requirements, and judges in courts with no juvenile jurisdiction were given information relative to jurisdictional issues.
- The Court's CASA Assistance Program and Court Improvement Program provided financial and technical support for the annual statewide CASA conference in New Orleans on February 16 and 17. The conference emphasized collaboration and provided a forum for regional OCS and CASA to meet and conduct local strategic planning.
- The legislative Task Force on Legal Representation in Child Protection Proceedings (co-chaired by the Chief Justice) is finalizing its recommendations to the legislature for the upcoming session. The recommendations include both required short-term improvements as well as more substantial system reform.
- Court Improvement Program staff served on a committee to develop the Louisiana PIP, the Program Improvement Plan required as a result of the federal ASFA audit, which has been approved by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. The CIP will actively participate in the implementation of the PIP by establishing attorney standards for representation in child in need of care cases. Another CIP initiative under the PIP is the collaborative development with OCS and others of an ASFA education package for state child welfare stakeholders. CIP is researching permanent funding to continue and expand the pilot Dependency Mediation programs in Orleans and Jefferson Juvenile Courts, including collaboration with DSS/OCS and universities. The CIP continues to

collect information from courts regarding time delays in CINC cases. This information will be used to develop systemic strategies aimed at improving timely permanence for children in foster care. In order to update its strategic plan, CIP is conducting a reassessment of its activities and outcomes relative to ASFA compliance. CIP also continues development of the web-based IJJIS-CINC, the part of the Integrated Juvenile Justice Information System that will enhance local court administration, case management, and data sharing and reporting capabilities.

- The Court continues to administer the 04-05 TANF dollars appropriated to DSS for the purpose of continuing CASA services statewide. Due to insufficient appropriation last year, program funding is budgeted only to the end of the state fiscal year. Funding for CASA statewide has been included in the proposed Judicial Budget for 2005-2006.
- With funding from LCLE and TIF, the Court continues working with the Children's Cabinet on development of IJJIS software for delinquency and traffic cases.
- The local rules of court are being finalized by the Juvenile and Family Rules Committees.
- The FINS Assistance Program has completed the truancy component of the IJJIS-FINS database and case management system and is in the final phase of the developing the FINS component. In addition, the FINS-AP Program has initiated an informal FINS process evaluation, which is underway.
- The Drug Court Program continues to administer 15 juvenile drug courts across Louisiana, which offer court-supervised, community-based rehabilitation and support services to children and their families. Funding has recently been approved for an additional juvenile drug court program, and operations are expected to commence in the near future.