

Juvenile Justice Reform Implementation Report of the Louisiana Supreme Court October 11, 2004

The Louisiana Supreme Court is currently engaged in the following Juvenile Justice Reform activities:

- The court-appointed Task Force to Study the Specialization of Family and Juvenile Courts has met and further research is underway for membership dissemination and discussion. No recommendations are made to the Commission at this time. The legislative Task Force on Legal Representation in Child Protection Proceedings (co-chaired by the Chief Justice) met regularly prior to the 2004 Regular Session to formulate both short and long-term strategies for providing counsel. Specifically, the Task Force supported efforts to adequately fund the payment of legal fees in child protection cases pursuant to R.S. 46:460.21, to amend Louisiana law for consistency with CAPTA, and to continue its efforts. Regular meetings are being scheduled to commence in November.
- Court Improvement Program staff has been working with DSS/OCS on the Louisiana PIP, the Program Improvement Plan required as a result of the federal ASFA audit. CIP is also administering pilot Dependency Mediation programs in Orleans and Jefferson Juvenile Courts.
- The Court has been administering TANF funds for CASA and has agreed to again administer the 04-05 TANF dollars appropriated to DSS for the purpose of continuing CASA services statewide.
- With funding from LCLE and TIF, the Court is working with the Children's Cabinet on development of IJJIS software for delinquency and traffic cases. A Project Manager has been retained and selection of the vendor (via RFP process) is imminent. Volunteer work groups have been meeting to discuss data elements, functional requirements, and process recommendations.
- Continuing work is underway by the Juvenile and Family Rules Committees to organize and update local court rules.
- The FINS Assistance Program has been involved in discussions about and is considering opportunities to improve services to FINS children and their families consistent with the priorities of the juvenile justice reform initiative.
- The Court participates on the National Policy Academy on Improving Services for Youth With Mental Health and Co-Occurring Disorders Involved with the Juvenile Justice System. The Louisiana Policy Academy has developed a Louisiana Strategic Plan and is, has been working on plans for a community-based screening/assessment/referral center for children that could be piloted in one or more areas of the state.
- The Drug Court Program has administrative responsibility for 15 juvenile drug courts across Louisiana. These programs offer community-based rehabilitation and support services to children and their families.