

**Office of Children, Families and the Courts
2009 Court Improvement Project
Strategic Plan – Basic, Training and Data Grants**

Introduction

In an effort to create more positive outcomes for foster children, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania created the Office of Children and Families in the Courts (OCFC) within the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC). The OCFC's principal goal is to minimize the length of time that dependent children must spend in foster care or in other temporary living situations when they have been removed from their parents under court order as a result of abuse or neglect. The OCFC also aims to reunite children safely and timely with their families, expedite the adoption process for those children with the goal of adoption; increase the incidence of legal guardianship; and enhance/expand ongoing permanent adult connections for those children who remain in the foster care system.

Background

The overarching structure for Pennsylvania's Court Improvement effort is seen in Pennsylvania's Roundtables for Children Initiative. These roundtables have created a statewide infrastructure that allows for effective administration and communication via a three tier system. Local Children's Roundtables are the first level of our infrastructure and occur within each judicial district.

The Children's Roundtable is convened and chaired by a judge. Members could include supervisory and dependency judges, children and child welfare agency personnel (this is essential as one of the goals of the Initiative is to encourage a strong collaboration between the judiciary and child welfare agencies), county solicitors, child and parent advocates, academic experts, and anyone believed to make a positive contribution to the effective functioning of dependency matters within the counties.

The second or intermediate level of the infrastructure is known as the **Leadership Roundtables**. There are eight (8) Leadership Roundtables which were developed by dividing Pennsylvania's 60 judicial districts based on size. There is a minimum of five (5) judicial districts per roundtable. The number of judicial districts per Leadership Roundtable was varied slightly to keep like-size judicial districts together. These Leadership Roundtables are comprised of three members from each local Children's Roundtables. These three members must include the dependency judge, the Children & Youth Administrator and one additional Children's Roundtable member. All Leadership Roundtables meet two times per year, spring & fall. The meetings provide a forum wherein members can discuss what is occurring in their judicial districts and take back to their Children's Roundtables what is occurring in other judicial districts.

A recent addition to the structure of the Leadership Roundtables is the concept of co-chairs. The co-chairs are selected by each of the Leadership Roundtables

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and with the support of the OCFC, set the Leadership Roundtable agenda and facilitate the Roundtable Meetings and provide additional follow-up to discussions at the meetings. The Leadership Roundtable Co-Chairs list is attached.

The final tier of the Children's Initiative infrastructure is seen in the **State Roundtable**. This overarching Roundtable is comprised of two members from each Leadership Roundtable and other leaders having specific expertise in dependency matters. In addition to facilitating intrastate communication, the State Roundtable is involved in the dependency reform movement at the national level to keep Pennsylvania apprised of the evolving trends and best practices.

Our expectation is that this organizational structure will contribute to a free flow of ideas, challenges and solutions. Issues will come from local Children's Roundtables for discussion at Leadership Roundtables. Like issues from Leadership Roundtables will flow upward to the Statewide Roundtable for discussion and priority setting. All activities and initiatives of the OCFC will come from priority setting done annually at the Statewide Roundtable meeting. Once decided upon, information will be shared with Leadership Roundtables and ultimately local Children's Roundtables.

The role of the OCFC, in part, is to facilitate this process of communication and decision making. Moreover the role of the OCFC is to assist in the implementation, oversight and evaluation of all statewide priorities, activities and initiatives connected with the Court Improvement Project.

Activities

- **Roundtables (see information on Roundtables above and matrix p. 1):**
 - Fall 2009 (Leadership Roundtables to coincide with Annual Children's Roundtable Plenary Session)
 - Spring 2010 (eight Leadership Roundtables)
 - Summer 2010 (one Statewide Roundtable)
 - FFY 2009-2010 (67 Children's Roundtables)
 - These roundtables occur at the local level and may occur at various times throughout the year as the county deems necessary.
 - The OCFC will be supporting the counties in their efforts with these meetings.

- **Coordination/Collaboration**

The grant application for the Court Improvement Project was developed in collaboration with the Department of Public Welfare, Office of children, Youth and Families (DPW/OCYF). The letter of support from the Deputy Secretary for

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Children, Youth and Families is attached to this document. Many of the projects and initiatives developed were created in collaboration with the OCYF and various staff members.

- **State Agency/State Court Meetings (matrix p. 1)** – The OCFC director and Deputy Secretary for Children, Youth and Families meet regularly to discuss the ongoing initiatives identified in this application. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure that cooperation between the two agencies occurs and services are not duplicated.
- **Expedited Appeals Subcommittee (matrix p. 2)** - Justice Baer requested the Appellate Rules Committee to develop expedited appeals for TPR hearings. To accomplish this task the Appellate Rules Committee developed a subcommittee which includes members of the Appellate Rules Committee, Juvenile rules Committee, Domestic Relations Rules Committee and Orphan’s Court Rules Committee. The development of these rules will expedite appeals of dependency, TPR and adoption hearings throughout the state and will aid in decreasing the time a child spends in care by several months to years. A draft of the expedited rules has been completed and is currently available for public comment. The press release for these expedited appeals is attached.
- **Juvenile Court Rules Committee (matrix p. 2)** - Sandy Moore, OCFC Director was appointed by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania as an Ex Oficio member of the Juvenile Rules Committee. As an Ex Oficio member, Sandy can bring specific Dependency issues before the rules committee for consideration. In February 2007, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania adopted Rules of Juvenile Court Procedures – Dependency Matters, which were developed by the Juvenile Rules Committee. Additionally, the Rules committee has been integral in reviewing the court orders and forms that are part of the CPCMS Dependency System. Sandy’s participation in this committee will be ongoing.
- **Coordination of Dependency Court/Orphans Court Practices and Policies (matrix p. 2)** – The coordination of dependency courts and orphans courts is an essential partnership in Pennsylvania. This coordination is not necessary in every county, in most of Pennsylvania’s smaller counties both courts are heard by the same judge. In many of Pennsylvania’s larger counties, after parental rights are terminated the case moves to Orphans Court until finalization, which may be heard by a different judge who is new to the case. The OCFC is dedicated to helping the courts to coordinate more closely to expedite a case through the system and provide the child with

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permanency more quickly. The OCFC will accomplish this through training, site visits and the roundtable structure. The dependency data system will also aid us in this task. Timeframes for permanency will be tracked in the system and those counties who have dual courts for these purposes will be required to collaborate to ensure that the necessary data is entered into the system. Discussion of these practices will occur at the spring Leadership Roundtables and at the Dependency conference.

- **National Governor’s Association – Policy Academy – PA Permanency Team (matrix p. 2)** - Pennsylvania was one of six states to be selected to participate in the National Governor’s Association - Policy Academy. Sandy Moore was selected to participate as a member of this team to represent Pennsylvania Supreme Court and more specifically Pennsylvania’s Dependency Courts.

The Policy Academy consists of a wide range of child welfare experts from Pennsylvania whose goal is to reduce the number of children in Foster care through a variety of strategies and collaborations. The National Governor’s Association – Policy Academy will continue on an ongoing basis.

- **OCYF Children’s Cabinet (matrix p.2)** - The Children’s Cabinet is the Advisory Counsel for the State’s OCYF Deputy Director, Richard Gold. The Cabinet is comprised of the OCFC Director, Children & Youth Administrators, Juvenile Probation Chiefs and other stakeholders. The aim is to provide input and suggestions related to issues impacting abused & neglected children as well as review/comment on proposed regulation & bulletin changes.
- **International Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Blueprint Committee (matrix p. 3)** - Sandy Moore, OCFC Director, is a member of this committee. This is an international committee who will develop and issue a standard blueprint, which outlines, in detail best practice standards for FGDM. This is an ongoing committee.
- **FGDM Statewide Leadership Team (matrix p. 3)** - The FGDM Statewide Leadership Team provides guidance to the state for development and implementation of FGDM as well as training opportunities for the state related to FGDM. As one of the foundations of the Pennsylvania Permanency Initiative the OCFC has been an active member of FGDM Statewide Leadership Team. The OCFC is represented on this committee by Sandy Moore.

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- **CFSR/PIP (matrix p. 3)** - The OCFC has been involved in the CFSR/PIP process since 2007. Staff from the OCFC has been members of the CFSR Steering Committee, participated as a state reviewer and were interviewed as state stakeholders. The OCFC will continue to participate in the development and implementation of Pennsylvania's PIP, particularly as it pertains to Dependency Courts and collaboration between courts and agencies. OCYF has already convened PIP planning meetings. Staff from OCFC will participate in this committee on an ongoing basis.
- **Practice Standards Revision Committee (matrix p. 3)** - Pennsylvania has initiated revising the best practice standards. Staff from OCFC are members of this committee. The purpose of this committee is to revise the current Child Welfare Practice Standards for Pennsylvania. This project will be ongoing.
- **Technical Assistance**
 - **Direct contact/support of local Children's Roundtable Teams (matrix p. 3)** – OCFC staff will be hired and assigned to a region to provide direct TA to courts at a local level. The staff will support all children's roundtable activities in that region and aid local jurisdictions in developing and implementing programs, practices and initiatives. Staffing information is provided below.
 - **Direct contact/support of Leadership Roundtables, including support of Chairpersons (matrix p. 3)** - OCFC staff will be hired and assigned to a region. The staff will coordinate Leadership Roundtable activities by supporting the leadership roundtable chairs. Staff will also encourage inter jurisdictional communication and provide for planning and development of initiatives.
 - **Provide system data/explanation and assist with strategic planning to address data identified needs (matrix p. 3)** - OCFC Regional staff will support the counties in their region through data analysis. Staff can share data trends within the county and support strategic planning, development of programs and implementation of practices that may correct any concerns.
 - **Provide expertise regarding practice initiatives for PPI (See Below) (matrix p. 4)** – Information related to the PPI is provided below and in the attached concept paper.

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- **Conferences/trainings**

- **Second Annual Children’s Roundtable Plenary Session – September 2010 (matrix p. 5)** - The OCFC will be presenting the second annual Children’s Roundtable Plenary Session in September 2010. This conference will provide a variety of workshops, keynotes and presentations related to Dependency/Permanency issues. The conference will be open to members of children’s roundtable members from across the commonwealth, plus various statewide partners, which include OCYF, Juvenile Court Judges Commission (JCJC) and many others.
- **Graduated Curriculum for Dependency Judges** – The Dependency Benchbook will be completed in August 2009. At that time a committee will be gathered to develop a graduated curriculum for Dependency Judges. This will occur in September 2009. The bulk of this work will be completed after October 1, 2009.

An evaluation process from all OCFC trainings including those as a result of the curriculum will be evaluated. This will be an ongoing process to gauge the effectiveness of the OCFC trainings and curriculum and to identify topics and ideas for future trainings.

- **Educational/Information Initiatives**

- **Winter/Spring, 2010 - State Trial Court Judges Conferences Dependency Workshops (matrix p. 5)** - The AOPC offers the State Trial court Judges Conference two times per year. The topics of the conference cover a wide variety of judicial topics. The OCFC has a standing workshop time to provide information related to court improvement. The conference workshop will be presented by OCFC Director, Sandy Moore.
- **Training/Program Guide for Dependency Court Stakeholders (matrix p. 5)** – The OCFC is planning to develop specific training sessions and quick reference program guides that will mirror the dependency Benchbook. The training will be specific to masters, parent attorneys/advocated and children attorneys/Guardians Ad Litem. The training can be provided in a variety of arenas, such as the annual dependency conference, roundtable meetings and special sessions as requested. Development of these training and program guides will occur after completion of the Pennsylvania Dependency Benchbook in fall 2009.

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- **Website Design and Development (matrix p. 5)** - The OCFC has begun drafting a request for proposals to identify a vendor to provide requirements specification, design, development, and hosting for an interactive website for the OCFC. The site will support the OCFC's vision and provide electronic information to courts, children, families and professionals in Pennsylvania.

The website will also maintain a section to inform judges, attorneys and other professionals on upcoming trainings as a well a means for conference registrations.

- **Web-based Distance Learning (matrix p. 6)** - A section of the website will be devoted to distance learning, which will allow judges to interactively receive necessary information and training without leaving their judicial districts. We are anticipating development of the website to be complete in summer 2009. The development of the distance learning module will occur in fall 2009.
- **Expedited Appeals Training** – As the expedited appeals process is completed by the Appellate Rules Committee training will be developed to educate judges, attorneys and child welfare agencies to the new processes. This new process will present a new way of doing business in Pennsylvania and courts and stakeholders will need to be made aware. The training can be provided in a variety of arenas, such as the annual dependency conference, roundtable meetings and special sessions as requested. The expedited appeals are anticipated to be completed in summer 2009. When the expedited rules are completed, training is be developed to get information to judges, attorney's and child welfare agencies. This training can be provided by a number of methods, such as the training/program guide, the Dependency Conference or specialized trainings.

- **Data System**

- **Completion of Pennsylvania Dependency Data System “Roll-out” (matrix p. 7)** - The AOPC Judicial Automation Department has developed a Dependency Data System. Roll out of the system commenced in March 2008. The Judicial Automation Department anticipates 65 of the 67 counties to be live on the system by December 2008. Due to their complexities, the remaining two counties (Allegheny and Philadelphia) are scheduled to “go-live” by summer of 2009.

Although Judicial Automation Staff are implementing this system using state funds, OCFC staff will provide ongoing Programmatic Support to the Judicial Automation Dept and local jurisdictions.

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To implement this system the AOPC Judicial Automation Department added a module to the current Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS) and collaborated heavily with the OCFC, OCYF, JCJC and the Juvenile Rules Committee. The forms and court orders that are a part of the system and that will be utilized statewide by Dependency courts were reviewed by our partners.

In September 2007 and again in December 2007, several county child welfare agency directors, court administrators and other local staff from across the state were selected to participate in a Joint Application Development (JAD) meeting. This group was the equivalent of a focus group to help guide our IT staff in development of the project. In February 2008 three counties were selected as Pilot counties and staff who would be users on the system were provided with a week-long training on the current system. Feedback from those users provided further information regarding development.

The forms and court orders that would be part of the system were created using current orders of court developed by JCJC as well as information from other states. These forms and orders were reviewed by JCJC, OCYF and the Juvenile Rules Committee for accuracy and functionality.

In spring 2008 the Judicial Automation Department provided a brief overview of the system, forms and orders to all 8 Leadership Roundtable meetings. Any comments and feedback were used to further develop the system.

Beginning in March 2008 staff from the Judicial Automation Department began site visits to counties to assess their needs for implementation of the Dependency Module. As of August 2008, 66 of the 67 counties have had a site visit. The final county is being scheduled. After the site visit occurs a “go-live” date is determined for the county. At go-live the Judicial Automation Department sends a team of staff to the county for a week of training and technical assistance on the system. Further comments and feedback received from the county aids in further development of the system. Comments related to the forms and orders are captured and reviewed by the Juvenile Rules Committee. As of August 2008, 59 counties have training/go-live dates scheduled, two counties (Allegheny and Philadelphia) are scheduled for 2009, and the remaining seven counties are in the processing of scheduling dates.

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- **Mini-grants for Data input and backlog clean up (matrix p. 7) -** OCFC will provide counties who request services with funding and support to allow each county to input backlog data and clean up any current data in Dependency Data System. This will allow each jurisdiction in the Commonwealth to be online using the Dependency Data System with all cases entered. Completing this will allow counties to immediately begin producing complete data reports upon implementation of the data system. This method of utilizing mini-grants will be particularly beneficial when Allegheny and Philadelphia go online. Do to the size of these counties it will be necessary to provide support to them to enter all outstanding data. This will be completed when these two counties go online in summer 2009.

- **Development & initiation of Data Reports (matrix p. 7) -** The AOPC Judicial Automation staff with input from the OCFC will develop data reports that can be pulled from the dependency system. These reports will provide statewide aggregate Dependency data reports as well as county specific data. This data will be provided to local jurisdictions as well as Children’s, Leadership and Statewide Roundtables. Based on data trends, OCFC can provide TA and support to aid local courts in their implementation of practices and initiatives which will support timely and safe permanency for children.

- **Development & initiation of Research Reports on Best Practice Permanency Initiative (PPI) – Phase One (matrix p. 7) (See more information below)**

- **Data Sharing (matrix p. 7) -** The OCFC and OCYF have arranged to share various data reports on an ongoing basis. The Dependency Data system can only provide information related to children and families who have entered the court system, additional data can be gathered from OCYF related to abuse/neglect and services provided, which may occur prior to court involvement. The mutual sharing of data will provide a wider picture of the dependency system in Pennsylvania. More complete data will allow us to effectively target high need areas.

- **Best Practice - Permanency Initiative (see attached Concept Paper for additional details)**

This project is a collaborative effort between the AOPC/OCFC, DPW/OCYF, FGDM Statewide Implementation Leadership Team, Family Development Credential Program through the Community Action Association of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program (CWTP), and

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the Statewide Adoption Permanency Network (SWAN) along with local child welfare agency directors and local judges.

The team identified above originally selected 15 counties to participate in Phase 1 of the project. The same team will select up to an additional 16 counties to participate in Phase 2 of this project. Phase 2 is expected to run from October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010.

The Phase 2 counties are required to have the following services, practices and/or initiatives in place or the capacity to immediately (within 6 months of the project initiation) meet these requirements:

- a. Three (3) Month Court Review Hearings (minimum)
- b. Family Search Capacity (as a front-end service)
- c. Active Local Children’s Roundtable (local initiative oversight team)
- d. Family Group Decision Making
- e. Family Finding/3-5-7 Model
- f. Family Development Credentialing

After the counties are selected an assessment of needs will be provided to each of the counties to determine their status with respect to the above mentioned practices. Counties will be provided support to initiate or enhance these practices. The needs assessment of counties is to be completed by October 30, 2009.

To accomplish the project’s goals and outcomes as described in the concept paper we will use a combination of funding and services from a variety of sources. The OCFC use of CIP funds will provide for training for Family Finding, three month review hearings and the roundtable project.

The OCFC will support counties in training of Family Finding and will also support the counties in moving to three month review hearings as needed. Other areas of the project will be funded through DPW/OCYF.

Technical Assistance will be provided to all Phase 2 counties through the agencies mentioned above with additional assistance from representatives from Phase 1 counties. Teams of representatives of each of the agencies will provide site visits to counties as needed to provide information, support and training in those areas identified in the needs assessment.

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Staffing

To accomplish the identified activities the OCFC will require additional staffing.

Additional staffing:

- Three (3) program analyst level staff will be added to the OCFC compliment in 2008. All three analysts will serve specifically assigned county courts/Children’s Roundtables. Two analysts will be maintained in the Central Office (Harrisburg) and one will be regionally based to correspond with the PPI.
- Each staff would additionally be assigned Leadership Roundtables (between 10 -35 judicial districts, depending on county size)
- Staff will provide TA to Children and Leadership Roundtables, individual counties and will participate in PPI TA Team.
- Staff will provide an analysis of data and ongoing support, including assisting local Roundtables in development of strategic plans to address data identified needs
- Staff will be trained in FGDM, FF & FDC to act as lead TA for PPI

Outcomes

By incorporating strength-based social work practices with specific court related changes the OCFC is anticipating the following outcomes over the next two years:

- Enhanced Judicial Oversight of Dependency Matters.
- Increased education of dependency court participants (judges, attorneys, advocated, child welfare staff, etc.)
- Continued and enhanced collaboration with the courts and agencies at the state and local levels
- Shared analysis of data with courts
- Directed TA to counties at a local level
- Reduced number of children/youth adjudicated dependent and in court-ordered placement
- Reduced time children/youth spend in the foster care system.
- Reduced number of children/youth who re-enter care
- Reduced Dependency Court Caseload
- Reduced caseworker court caseload
- Reduced costs of children in care (Reduction of placement costs means that funds could be redirected to other services (such as prevention, aftercare, adoption, pilot services, etc.)
- Reduced level of care (i.e. – reduced number/percent of restrictive placements and increase in kinship care, when placement is needed)
- Increased Placement Stability (less moves for children).

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Attachments

- List of Statewide Roundtable Members
- Pilot Project concept paper
- CPCMS Dependency System overview and “roll-out” calendar
- Save the Dates
- Leadership Roundtable structure chart
- PPI handout
- Expedited Appeals Press Release

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BASIC GRANT					
Focus Area	Activity	Responsibility	Timeframe	Interim Benchmark	Planned Outcome
Pennsylvania Roundtables for Children Initiative	Children's (Local) Roundtables	OCFC Local Jurisdictions	Ongoing	All counties will have functional Children's Roundtables Children's Roundtables will convene as necessary as determined by the local roundtable	Each jurisdiction will have functional local roundtables and will represent their jurisdiction at the next level of Leadership Roundtables. All 60 Judicial Districts will have functional Children's Roundtables by 2010. The Children's Roundtables will provide enhanced judicial oversight of Dependency matters at the local level.
	Leadership Roundtables	OCFC Leadership Roundtable Co-chairs Representatives of Local Roundtables	Bi-yearly Ongoing	Leadership Roundtables have met in the Fall at the Annual conference and will meet again in Spring 2010.	Leadership Roundtables will be lead by 2 representatives from Children's Roundtables. Two members of this group will represent the Leadership Roundtables at the Statewide Roundtable. Leadership Roundtables will meet once in the Spring and once at the annual conference. The Leadership Roundtables will provide enhanced judicial oversight of Dependency matters at the state/local level.
	Statewide Roundtable	Justice Baer OCFC	Annually; Ongoing	Statewide meeting will June 2010	Information will be filtered up from local and Leadership Roundtables to the Statewide Roundtable and back again. All OCFC initiatives will be presented to the Statewide Roundtable for approval prior to implementation. The Leadership Roundtable will provide enhanced judicial oversight of Dependency matters at the national/state/local level.
Coordination and Collaboration	State Agency/State Court Meetings	Sandy Moore Richard Gold Jim Anderson	Ongoing; Monthly	This group has initiated monthly meetings, these meetings are scheduled throughout the year	This meeting will encourage the OCFC Director, JCJC Executive Director and Deputy Secretary for Children, Youth and Families to meet on a regular basis to discuss Dependency issues.

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Focus Area	Activity	Responsibility	Timeframe	Interim Benchmark	Planned Outcome
	Development of Expedited Appeals Process	Appellate Rules Committee Sandy Moore Expedited Rules Subcommittee	January 2009	Appellate Rules Committee developed a subcommittee which includes members of the Appellate Rules Committee, Juvenile Rules Committee and Orphan's Court	Development of rules that expedite the appeals of TPR and adoption hearings. The expediting of the appeals process could decrease the length of time of children in care by several months to years.
	Juvenile Court Rules Committee	Juvenile Court Rules Committee Sandy Moore	Ongoing	Sandy Moore, OCFC Director appointed as an Ex Oficio member of the Juvenile Rules Committee	Dependency court rules can be developed or enhanced to meet OCFC/CIP goals as a result of Sandy's direct participation as Ex Oficio member
	Coordination of Dependency Court/Orphans court Practices an Policies	OCFC Juvenile Rules Committee Orphans Court Rules Committee	September 2010	Meetings have been initiated between the rules committees	Efforts between Dependency Courts and Orphans Courts need to be coordinated to ensure timely permanency is achieved for children in foster care.
	National Governor's Association Academy (NGA) – Pennsylvania Permanency Team	NGA Sandy Moore Pennsylvania Permanency Team	Ongoing	Pennsylvania was one of 6 states to be selected to participate in the National Governor's Association Academy. Sandy Moore was selected to participate as a member of this team to represent Pennsylvania Supreme Court and more specifically Pennsylvania's Dependency Courts.	The Policy Academy aims to reduce the number of children in Foster care through a variety of strategies and collaborations.
	OCYF Children's Cabinet	Sandy Moore	Ongoing	Sandy Moore was asked to join this group to represent the needs/views of Dependency Courts	The Children's Cabinet is the Advisory Counsel for the State's OCYF Deputy Director, Richard Gold. The Cabinet is comprised of various Children & Youth Administrators, Juvenile Probation Chiefs and other stakeholders. The aim is to provide input and suggestions related to issues impacting abused & neglected children as well as review/comment on

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Focus Area	Activity	Responsibility	Timeframe	Interim Benchmark	Planned Outcome
					proposed regulation & bulletin changes.
	FGDM International Blueprint Committee	Sandy Moore	Ongoing	A proposed initial blueprint document will be shared at the 2009 International Conference	The group will develop and issue a standard blueprint document outlining, in detail, best practice standards for FGDM.
	FGDM Statewide Leadership Team	Sandy Moore	Ongoing	The Statewide Leadership Team meets every other month.	The Statewide Leadership Team provides guidance to the state for development and implementation of FGDM.
	CFSR/PIP Steering Committee	Angelo Santore	Ongoing	Angelo represents the OCFC on the CFSR Steering committee and is a State reviewer for the onsite CFSR review.	OCFC staff will participate in this group in an ongoing basis through the PIP development and implementation. The needs identified in the PIP related to the court will be priorities for upcoming years.
	Practice Standards Revision Committee	Angelo Santore	Ongoing	Angelo represents the courts on the Practice standards committee	OCFC will represent the court needs as they pertain to best practices in dependency matters.
Technical Assistance	Direct contact/support of local children's Roundtable Teams	OCFC	Ongoing	Staff will be approved and hired by the OCFC.	OCFC staff will be hired and assigned to a region to provide direct TA to courts at a local level. The staff will support all children's roundtable activities in that region and aid local jurisdictions in developing and implementing programs, practices and initiatives.
	Direct contact/support of leadership Roundtables, including support of chairpersons	OCFC	Ongoing	Staff will be approved and hired by the OCFC.	OCFC staff will be hired and assigned to a region. The staff will coordinate Leadership Roundtable activities by supporting the leadership roundtable chairs. Staff will also encourage inter jurisdictional communication and provide for planning and development of initiatives.
	Provide system data/explanation and assist with strategic planning to address data identified needs	OCFC	Ongoing	OCFC regional staff will provide information compiled from the Dependency Data System.	OCFC Regional staff will support the counties in their region through data analysis. Staff can share data trends within the county and support strategic planning, development of programs and implementation of practices that may correct

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BASIC GRANT					
Focus Area	Activity	Responsibility	Timeframe	Interim Benchmark	Planned Outcome
					any concerns.
	Provide expertise regarding practice initiatives for Best Practice Permanency Initiative (BPPI)	OCFC BPPI Planning Committee TA Team	Phase II – October 2009 through September 1010	BPPI Planning committee is currently meeting regularly to develop this pilot project.	Staff will provide oversight and participate on group TA teams for the pilot project. TA Teams will work in the identified pilot counties to implement a combination of court and social work best practice which will reach the following outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of placement • Children spending less time in substitute care • Placement stability • Reduction of re-entry into substitute care For more information on this pilot project please refer to the attached concept paper.

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TRAINING GRANT

Focus Area	Activity	Responsibility	Timeframe	Interim Benchmark	Planned Outcome
Conferences/ Trainings	2 nd Annual Statewide Children's Roundtable Plenary Session	AOPC, OCFC, OCYF, Conference Planning Committee Children's Roundtables, Leadership Roundtables, Statewide Roundtable,	September 2010	This conference date and preliminary agenda has been set. A conference planning committee comprised of local courts/agencies is being organized.	The annual statewide conference will provide a forum for all members of the Roundtables Initiative to receive information related to the progress of the OCFC. Attendees will be provided information related to dependency court issues throughout the state based on information gleaned from roundtables. Participants will include teams from each Children's roundtable as well as dignitary's and OCFC staff.
	Graduated Curriculum for Dependency Judges	AOPC, OCFC	October 2009 through September 2010	The Pennsylvania Dependency Benchbook was completed and distributed.	In addition to being a reference guide, the Benchbook will be used a textbook for a graduated curriculum for judges. Various trainings and workshops will be developed throughout the year for judges based on the information in the Benchbook.
Educational/ Information Initiatives	State Trial Court Judges Conference Dependency Luncheon	AOPC, OCFC	Winter 2010 and Spring 2010	At each State Trial Judges Conference time will be set aside at lunch to provide the opportunity for information to be presented to Pennsylvania State Trial Judges.	The OCFC will use the allotted time at the Trail Judges Conference to update Dependency judges on current Dependency issues, provide updates or arrange for experts in various Dependency related matters to educate judges
	Training Program Guide for Dependency Court Stakeholders	AOPC, OCFC, ABA, PBA	September 2010	Development of a Program Guide	Program guides will be distributed to the public and training sessions will be developed around the program guide for court stakeholders including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masters • Parent Advocates • Guardians Ad Litem
	Website maintenance	AOPC, OCFC	Ongoing	OCFC has "gone live" with its website.	The OCFC website will allow OCFC to provide up to date information related to the efforts of the OCFC. Information will include various initiatives, conference schedules and secure pages for Roundtable members.

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Focus Area	Activity	Responsibility	Timeframe	Interim Benchmark	Planned Outcome
	Web-based distance learning	Judicial Education, Judicial Automation, OCFC	September 2010	OCFC has "gone live" with its website.	The website can provide OCFC with the method to provide distance learning through the website. Short training sessions could be provided via the web to dependency judges providing them with the opportunity to receive updates without leaving their jurisdictions.
	Expedited Appeals Training	Judicial Education, Expedited Appeals Subcommittee, OCFC	December 2009	Expedited Appeals Subcommittee has begun drafting a new rule related to expedited appeals for dependency cases.	The expediting of the appeals process could decrease the length of time of children in care by several months to years. The appeals training will be developed to inform all parties of the new rules,

2009 PENNSYLVANIA COURT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT STRATEGIC PLAN

DATA GRANT					
Focus Area	Activity	Responsibility	Timeframe	Interim Benchmark	Planned Outcome
Dependency Data System	Ongoing support of Pennsylvania Dependency Data System	AOPC/Judicial Automation, OCFC	December 2009	The AOPC Judicial Automation Department has developed a Dependency Data System. All jurisdictions are “live” on the system.	OCFC staff will provide ongoing Programmatic Support to the Judicial Automation Dept and local jurisdictions
Dependency Data Reports	Ongoing production of Data Reports	AOPC/Judicial Automation, OCFC	Ongoing	Judicial Automation staff have developed data reports based on NCJFCJ, ABA and NCSC performance measures	OCFC provides statewide aggregate Dependency data reports as well as county specific data. This data is provided to local jurisdictions as well as Children’s and Leadership Roundtables. Based on data trends, OCFC can provide TA and support to aid local courts in their implementation and development of practices and initiatives.
	Development and initiation of research Reports on Best Practice Permanency Initiative – Phase II	AOPC/Judicial Automation, OCFC, BPPI Planning Committee TA Team	January 2010; ongoing	Local data reports can provide information to phase II pilot counties involved in the initiative.	Data reports will provide local jurisdictions for baseline data for the pilot project. The analysis of trends will allow the TA teams to assist the local jurisdiction in the implementations of various initiatives.
	Data Sharing	OCFC, OCYF	Ongoing	Both offices have initiated dialogue regarding the sharing of data between courts and agencies.	The mutual sharing of data will provide a wider picture of the dependency System in Pennsylvania. More complete data will allow us to effectively target those areas most in need of services.