



Court Improvement Program OVERVIEW

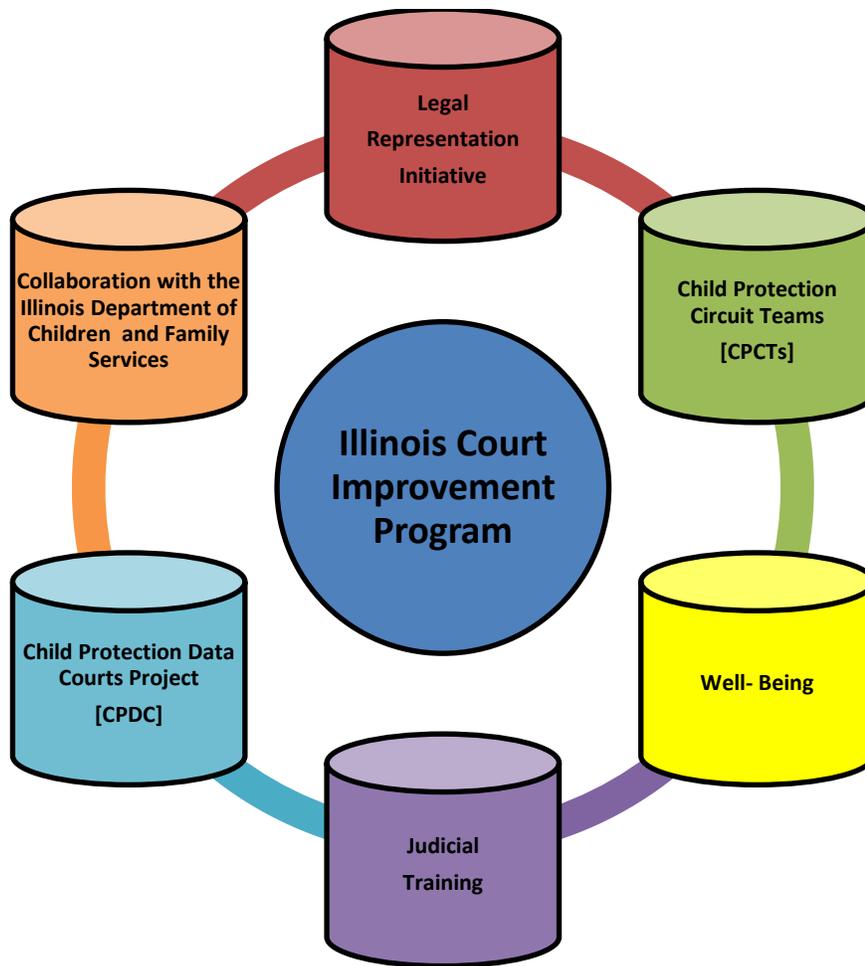
Illinois Court Improvement Program

- The Court Improvement Program (CIP) is a federally funded grant initiative administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- The CIP was established in 1993 as part of the Family Preservation and Support Act. The grant program was established in response to the dramatic increase in child abuse and neglect cases and the expanded role of courts in achieving stable, permanent homes for children in foster care.
- Funding to state court systems was specifically to improve handling of abuse, neglect, foster care and adoption cases over a four-year period. Legislation has since extended the CIP through Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021.
- In FFY2000, the Supreme Court of Illinois began administration of the Court Improvement Program through its Administrative Office, Court Services Division.
- In FFY2006, two new CIP appropriations were made for FFYs 2006-2010. The first appropriation, the Data Collection & Analysis Grant, is for developing court data systems while the second, the Training Grant, is to improve courts' training of judges, and other child welfare practitioners. Those CIP appropriations have been extended through FFY 2021.
- The Courts, Children and Families Unit (CCFU) works to initiate interagency collaboration and implement the CIP Basic, Training, and Data grant program activities as it relates to children and families involved with the judicial system due to child abuse and neglect.

The Six Pillars of the Illinois Court Improvement Program

The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts continues to develop the foundation and infrastructure for improved court practice in child protection cases by concentrating its efforts on the six pillars of Illinois Court Improvement Program funding and programming. These pillars include: The Statewide Legal Representation Initiative; Child Protection Circuit Teams; Judicial Training; The Child Protection Data Courts Project; Well-being; and Collaboration with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.





 **Statewide Legal Representation Initiative:** Since 2010, the CCFU has focused on improving outcomes for Illinois' endangered families by enhancing the effectiveness of legal representation of children, parents, the state, and the child welfare agency in child abuse and neglect, and termination of parental rights proceedings. The Initiative includes attorney training, resource development, and funding local programs and projects that enhance the effectiveness of legal representation.

 **Child Protection Circuit Teams (CPCTs):** The CCFU is involved in a multi-year engagement strategy to connect with and engage Child Protection Circuit Teams (CPCTs). CPCTs promote coordination between courts and child protection stakeholders to ensure safety and stability for children and families involved in child abuse, neglect, and dependency court proceedings. The CPCTs help to identify service gaps and breakdowns in coordination or communication between agencies. They enhance the professional skills and knowledge of individual team members by providing a forum for learning about the strategies, resources and approaches used by various disciplines.





Judicial Training: The CCFU is committed to developing and maintaining an effective system of training and technical assistance for judges. The priorities include the planning, design and delivery of training events which build knowledge, competencies and judge skill sets, as well as increasing professional networking opportunities.



Child Protection Data Courts (CPDC) Project: Through the CPDC Project, the CCFU collects and analyzes court performance measures in child abuse and neglect cases including: achievement of child permanency, time to TPR, time to first permanency hearing and time to permanent placement. Ten CPDC sites are involved in court data collection activities and uses data to enhance local practice and inform CIP activities.



Collaboration with the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (IDCFS): The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts collaborates with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services by participating in the Children and Families Services Review (CFSR) and subsequent Program Improvement Plan (PIP), Title IV-E Review, implementation of Family First Prevention Services Act as well as additional collaborative initiatives. IDCFS has representation on the Court Improvement Program Advisory Committee (CIPAC). CIPAC assists in determining the goals and direction of the CIP.



Well-being: Improving the court's response to issues that affect the well-being of abused and neglected children under its care is a CIP priority. Courts have a responsibility to ensure children are receiving a good education and are physically and emotionally healthy. Examples of well-being projects include issues related to LGBTQ+ youth, trauma informed practice, substance abuse, and disproportionate minority representation, immigrant parents and youth, education. In addition to the Well-being Pillar, components of the well-being court performance measures are woven throughout the other five pillars.

Key Projects funded through the Illinois Court Improvement Program include:

- Attorney trainings
- Judicial trainings
- University of Illinois College of Law *Family Advocacy Clinic*
- Southern Illinois University *Juvenile Justice Clinic*
- Dedicated Guardians *ad Litem* Projects
- Child Protection Data Courts Project
- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges- *Child Abuse and Neglect Institute Judicial Scholarships*
- CASA Projects
- Local Trainings

