

Item 16



Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: June 25, 2013

Prepared By/Phone Number: Lori Kennedy, Managing Attorney, OPR, x47301; Leslie Hill, Managing Attorney, OCR, x47308

Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head: Roger Jefferies, County Executive Justice and Public Safety, 854-4759

Commissioners Court Sponsor: Samuel T. Biscoe, County Judge

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Samuel T. Biscoe", written over the name of the County Judge in the previous block.

AGENDA LANGUAGE:

RECEIVE UPDATE ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF PARENTAL REPRESENTATION AND OFFICE OF CHILD REPRESENTATION

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST AND ATTACHMENTS:

The Office of Child Representation and Office of Parental Representation, established in 2009, provide legal representation and social services to indigent parents and children in CPS cases before Travis County's civil district courts. The two offices have an oversight committee with representation from the Commissioners Court, civil courts, defense bar, and state Child Protective Services. The oversight committee's bylaws direct the two offices to provide an annual update to the Commissioners Court on their activities.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

No recommendations are being made at this time.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

Please see attached presentation.

FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

The annual budgets of OPR and OCR are fully funded by Travis County. Justice and Public Safety, together with PBO and Civil Courts Administration, will convene a study group in FY 2014 to analyze the drivers of the civil indigent defense expenditures and the impact that OCR and OPR are having on that budget.

AGENDA REQUEST DEADLINE: All agenda requests and supporting materials should be submitted as a pdf to the County Judge's office, agenda@co.travis.tx.us by **Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m.** for the next week's meeting.

REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS: N/A

C:

Civil Courts Administration
PBO
OPR/OCR Oversight Committee

AGENDA REQUEST DEADLINE: All agenda requests and supporting materials should be submitted as a pdf to the County Judge's office, agenda@co.travis.tx.us **by Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m.** for the next week's meeting.

Office of Child Representation

Office of Child Representation

- Established in 2009
- Began with seed money from the Texas Supreme Court Children's Commission (FY 2009 – FY 2011)
- Includes 6 attorneys, 1 paralegal, 1 social worker, 2 legal secretaries
- FY 2013 Budget - \$930,390 (includes 1 grant funded attorney)

Goal: To increase the quality of representation and legal services provided to children and youth in CPS cases, and to decrease the number of private attorney appointments.

Table 1 – OCR Case Closures

	FY 10	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13*
# New CPS Case Filings	328	434	457	301
% Change From Previous FY	12%	32%	5%	
Total OCR Appointments	248	155	283	124
Appointments as % of all CPS Case Filings	76%	36%	62%	41%
Cases with Conflict	33	24	51	21
Successful Closures	55	114	158	102
Other Closures	4	1	8	18
Total Closures	59	115	166	120
% Change From Previous FY	NA	95%	44%	
% of Successful Closures	93%	99%	95%	85%

*FY 13 is Oct 2012 through May 2013 only

Table 2 – OCR Closure Breakdown

	FY 10	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13*
Family Reunification	46	87	119	91
Adoption/Termination	9	27	39	11
Total Successful Closures	55	114	158	102
Dept. Awarded PMC w/o Termination	1	1	0	3
Aged Out of Care	1	0	4	11
Dept. Awarded PMC/Termination	0	0	2	4
Miscellaneous Closures	2	0	2	0
Total Other Closures	4	1	8	18
TOTAL CLOSURES	59	115	166	120

*FY 13 is Oct 2012 through May 2013 only

Social Services

- In FY 12, OCR's social worker had 982 client referrals
- Held over 140 Case Service Planning Meetings
- Serves on the Education Committee of the Model Court and conducts community outreach to area schools, hospitals, child placing agencies, and other related entities

Office of Parental Representation

Office of Parental Representation

- Established in 2009
- Began with seed money from the Texas Supreme Court Children's Commission (FY 2009 – FY 2011)
- Includes 5 attorneys, 2 paralegal, 1 social worker, 1 administrative assistant
- FY 2013 Budget - \$820,062

**Goal: To increase the quality of
representation and legal services
provided to the primary custodial
parent, and to decrease the
number of private attorney
appointments**

Table 1 – OPR Case Closures

	FY 10	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13*
# New CPS Case Filings	328	434	457	301
% Change From Previous FY	12%	32%	5%	
Total OPR Appointments	176	133	227	134
Appointments as % of all CPS Case Filings	54%	31%	50%	45%
Cases transferred/withdrawn/conflict	19	22	16	16
Successful Closures	64	109	127	116
Other Closures	13	12	15	20
Total Closures	77	121	142	136
% Change From Previous FY	NA	49%	11%	
% of Successful Closures	83%	90%	89%	85%

*FY 13 is Oct 2012 through May 2013 only

Table 2 – OPR Closure Breakdown

	FY 10	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13*
Case Dismissed	6	7	4	3
Completed COS/Home	28	30	27	28
TMC-Completed/Home	6	27	46	44
TMC-No Termination/Final Order	8	21	24	18
TMC-Termination/Relative	16	24	26	23
Total Successful Closures	64	109	127	116
TMC-Termination	13	12	15	20
Total Other Closures	13	12	15	20
TOTAL CLOSURES	77	121	142	136

*FY 13 is Oct 2012 through May 2013 only

Social Services

- In FY 12, OPR's social worker logged 1,289 direct client hours (22% increase over FY 11)
- During FY 12, 619 hours were spent in 206 separate community outreach, training, intern activities
- In FY 13*, OPR's social worker logged 738 direct client hours
- During FY 13*, 475 hours have been spent in 176 separate community outreach, training, intern activities

*FY 13 is Oct 2012 through May 2013 only

Next Steps

- PBO, JPS, and the Civil Courts are forming a study group to determine the drivers of the increases in civil indigent fee expenditures.
- The study group will begin work in October 2013, and present their findings and recommendations in early 2014.