

The Vermont Juvenile Court Improvement Program

Congress created the State Court Improvement Program (CIP) in 1995. The Court Improvement Program provides grants to state judiciaries to develop and implement plans for system improvements necessary to provide for the safety, well-being, and permanence of children in foster care. This federal program is administered by the Children's Bureau of the U.S. [Administration for Children and Families](#), Department of Health and Human Services. For more information on the national Court Improvement Program, [click here](#).

In 2005, the Vermont Supreme Court created the [Justice for Children Task Force](#) as a collaborative, interdisciplinary effort that brings together those who are in charge of decisions that can improve outcomes for children in foster care. The Task Force works closely with the Court Improvement Program to develop and implement the CIP strategic plan and monitor progress.

The overall goal of the Vermont **Court Improvement grant** is quality dependency court proceedings that promote children's safety, permanency, and well-being. Numerous activities support this goal:

- 1: Improve the timeliness of Termination of Parental Rights proceedings
- 2: Improve the timeliness and quality of Probate Division adoption finalization hearings for children in the child welfare system.
- 3: Identify and implement efficiencies in processing abuse/neglect cases
- 4: Improve the quality of court data
- 5: Collaboration between the court, agency, and other partners in the child welfare system
- 6: Promote high quality legal representation
- 7: Judges and court personnel are knowledgeable and prepared to work with child welfare cases
- 8: Volunteer Guardians ad Litem who advocate in juvenile proceedings are adequately trained and supervised

Federal CIP grant funds support activities designed to achieve the above outcomes.