

Dependent Children's Services Division

DEPENDENCY CASE PROCESSING INITIATIVE GRANT AGREEMENT

Gila County

Funding Period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2018

This Agreement is entered into by and between the Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts, ("AOC"), and the Gila County Superior Court ("Grantee").

1. TERM AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of this Dependency Case Processing Initiative (DCPI) Grant is to assist the Grantee in a targeted effort to improve outcomes for children involved in dependency matters by expediting permanency and reducing the number of children in care over the two-year grant cycle. Through the application process, the Grantee identified a specific Project Plan (Exhibit A, attached and incorporated herein) to guide their efforts over the grant cycle. This Agreement becomes effective upon execution by the parties, and shall remain in effect through June 30, 2018.

2. MODIFICATION AND TERMINATION

This Agreement may be modified or terminated by the AOC if in its judgment such action is necessary due to: (a) lack of funding; (b) statutory or administrative changes in the program; (c) Grantee's failure to implement or operate this Funding Agreement; (d) Grantee's non-compliance with this Agreement or other program requirements, (e) Grantee's failure to expend funds in accordance with Exhibit B, attached and incorporated herein or (f) other circumstances necessitating such action. Either party may terminate this Agreement upon a thirty (30) day written notice to the other party by certified mail.

3. FUND ACCOUNTING

Funds distributed to Grantee shall be deposited in a special revenue account established for the execution of this Agreement. Any interest earned on these monies while in the possession of Grantee shall accrue to the fund for use by Grantee in accordance with this Funding Agreement.

4. EXPENDITURES

a. Distribution of Funds. The AOC may retain all or any portion of the funds allocated to Grantee for the performance of this Grant Agreement and may authorize direct expenditures for the benefit of Grantee. The specific amounts to be retained by the AOC for direct expenditures for the benefit of Grantee and to be disbursed to the Grantee are set forth in the Exhibit B to this Agreement. The AOC may periodically modify the distribution of funds contained in the Exhibit B based on its determination of Grantee's need for and usage of the funds.

b. Reporting Requirements. Grantee shall submit performance and financial reports as indicated in the following table:

Quarter	Report Type	Reporting Period	Due Date
1 st	Performance	July 1, 2016 – September 30, 2016	October 31, 2016
2 nd	Performance, Financial	October 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016	January 31, 2017
3 rd	Performance	January 1, 2017 – March 31, 2017	April 30, 2017
1 st Year	Performance, Financial	July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017	August 31, 2017
5 th	Performance	July 1, 2017 – September 30, 2017	October 31, 2017
6 th	Performance, Financial	October 1, 2017 – December 31, 2017	January 31, 2018
7 th	Performance	January 1, 2018 – March 31, 2018	April 30, 2018
Final	Performance, Financial	July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2018	August 31, 2018

In the event reports are not received on or before prescribed dates, funding will be suspended until such time as delinquent reports are received.

c. Unexpended Funds. Funds unencumbered as of June 30, 2018 and unexpended as of July 31, 2018, plus all unexpended interest accrued on such funds while in the possession of Grantee, shall be transmitted to the AOC for reversion no later than August 31, 2018. The reversion shall be accompanied by a closing financial statement signed by the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court.

d. Inappropriate Expenditures. The Grantee shall expend funds only for the purposes and uses specified in the approved Project Plan (Exhibit A) and budget (Exhibit B). Grantee agrees to reimburse the AOC for any unauthorized or inappropriate expenditures which are not in compliance with the approved Project Plan and Budget. All equipment purchased solely with AOC funds shall be used solely for purposes outlined in the Grant Agreement unless written permission is received from the AOC.

e. Budget Modifications. Funds shall not be moved to or from any budget category described in Exhibit B without prior written authorization from the AOC. All budget modifications shall be in accordance with the AOC Budget Modification Policy. Budget modification forms may be acquired from the AOC.

f. Termination of Funding. In the event that this Agreement is terminated prior to June 30, 2018, all unexpended funds in the possession of Grantee shall be returned to the AOC within 30 days of such termination, along with, but not limited to: (1) a closing financial statement; (2) a final report outlining the program achievements; and (3) an inventory, including serial numbers, location and intended use, of all equipment purchased with grant funds. If termination is due to failure of Grantee to comply with this Grant Agreement, the AOC may require return of equipment and supplies purchased with grant funds.

5. BOOKS AND RECORDS

a. Financial Records and Examination. Grantee shall maintain and shall require its subcontractors to maintain acceptable accounting systems, records, and documents to properly reflect all funds expended in the performance of this Grant Agreement. All books, records and other documents relevant to this Agreement shall be retained by Grantee and its subcontractors for a period of five (5) years after the final payment has been made, or until after the resolution of any audit questions or contract disputes, whichever is longer. AOC, state, or federal auditors, as applicable, and any other persons duly authorized by the AOC shall have full access to, and the right to examine, audit, copy and make use of any and all said materials. All subcontracts shall

include a provision acknowledging the authority of the AOC to conduct such audits or examinations.

b. Program Records and Evaluation. As a condition of receipt of grant funds, the Grantee, and any subcontractor, agree to maintain and provide to the AOC such data and statistics as may be required by the AOC for purposes of evaluation. Grantee further agrees that authorized agents of the AOC shall have the right to conduct on-site visits for purposes of compliance monitoring and program evaluation. The AOC may monitor and evaluate the local plan to determine its effectiveness. All subcontracts shall include a provision acknowledging the authority of the AOC to conduct such inspections and evaluations.

6. INVENTORY

Equipment purchased with funds received pursuant to this Agreement shall become the property of Grantee, and Grantee shall maintain written inventory and property control policies and procedures covering the equipment. Grantee may use its existing inventory system, but must at a minimum maintain the information required by AOC policies and procedures.

7. USE, LOSS AND DISPOSITION OF EQUIPMENT

Equipment must be used as required by this Grant Agreement for three (3) years, unless written permission is given by the AOC. After this time, purchased equipment may be transferred upon approval of the presiding juvenile judge. Grantee is responsible for any maintenance, loss or damage to the equipment and the AOC makes no assurances regarding its repair or replacement. Purchased equipment which is no longer needed or usable shall be placed in surplus as required by this Agreement. If no such requirements are included in the Agreement, then local surplus property procedures may be utilized. Leased equipment will follow the guidelines of the lease.

8. SANCTIONS

In addition to any other remedy available pursuant to this Agreement, Grantee may be placed on financial sanction status for deficiencies including but not limited to, delinquent submissions, delinquent reports, inaccurate reporting of statistics, inadequate records, expenditures outside of the approved budget and non-compliance with this Grant Agreement. During the period of sanction status, the AOC may take any appropriate action including:

- a. Written warning with request for immediate compliance.
- b. Withholding all or any portion of future program fund or equipment disbursements.
- c. Withholding all disbursements from all program funds.
- d. Requiring monthly submission of expenses prior to disbursement.
- e. Requiring monthly submission of expenses for reimbursement of actual costs incurred.
- f. Recovery of funds or equipment already disbursed.

To receive reimbursement while in sanction status, Grantee shall submit a monthly request to the AOC detailing expenses in funding categories as delineated on Addendum A. State funds shall not be used for any adverse financial costs or interest charged or incurred due to Grantee's financial sanction status.

9. ASSIGNMENT OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Any reports or information developed during the course of implementing the requirements of this agreement will be the joint property /ownership of the Grantee and the AOC. The Grantee and the AOC shall have full and complete rights to reproduce, duplicate, disclose, perform and otherwise use all information prepared under this Agreement.

10. PERFORMANCE LIABILITY

Except as otherwise provided by law, in the performance of this Agreement, both parties hereto are acting in their individual governmental capacities and not as agents, employees, partners, joint ventures, or associates of each other. The employees, agents, or subcontractors of one party shall not be deemed or construed to be the employees or agents of the other party. Each party is solely responsible for the actions of its employees under this Agreement.



Gila County Superior Court

By: 
Honorable Bryan B. Chambers
Presiding Juvenile Judge

Date: 10/10/2012

Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts

By: 
Mike Baumstark, Deputy Director
Administrative Office of the Courts

Date: 9/23/14

EXHIBIT A

Arizona Supreme Court
Administrative Office of the Courts
Dependent Children's Services Division
Dependency Case Processing Initiative Grant

Fiscal Year 2017 and FY 2018
Gila County Application & Budget Request

The purpose of this DCPI Grant is to assist the Juvenile Court, over a two-year grant cycle, in improving outcomes for children involved in dependency matters by *expediting permanency and safely reducing the number of children in care*. The funding amount for this initiative is calculated based on the number of children in your county with an open petition as of January 1, 2016. Gila County's budget total for this initiative is \$18,980.

Submitted by  Jonathan Bozrup Court Administrator
Name, Title

9/19/16
Date

Approved by  Honorable Timothy M. Wright, Presiding Juvenile Judge

9/20/16
Date

**Arizona Supreme Court
Administrative Office of the Courts
Dependent Children's Services Division
Dependency Case Processing Initiative Grant
Project Plan**

Please provide a plan detailing how these funds will be used to safely expedite permanency for children in care. Your plan should include how you will identify and track those in your targeted population. You should also estimate how many children you anticipate will be effected by this initiative and how you will track the success of your efforts.

The Juvenile Dependency Court of Gila County intends to utilize Dependency Surge Funding to pilot and potentially establish a Progress Conference Program. The goal is to safely expedite permanency through intensive case management programming designed to promote positive participation in reunification services by parents.

Currently, the Juvenile Dependency Bench conducts "Report and Review" Hearings on a compressed ninety (90) day scheduling cycle. Under the Progress Conference pilot, a Progress Facilitator, acting under the authority of A.R.S. 8-846(C), would conduct the first Progress Conferences approximately thirty (30) days after the Preliminary Protective Hearing; all subsequent Conferences would then occur at regular forty-five (45) day intervals between the Report and Review Hearings and again before any Permanency Hearing.

At the Progress Conferences, the Progress Facilitator would meet with the parents, a designee from the Dept. of Child Safety if possible, and, should they elect to participate, attorneys appointed to parties in the given matter. Local service providers will also be encouraged to attend. The tenor of the Conference would be informal in nature to provide a setting open to efforts of collaboration.

The Facilitator would be appointed at the time of Preliminary Protective Hearing and provided the authority to issue scheduling documents and prepare reports.

The focal point of the Progress Conference is to assist parents in their efforts to execute a reunification case plan; this would be accomplished by 1) providing an educational element to Dependency Caseflow participants and, importantly, to parents; 2) directly aiding parents in scheduling or participating in services through an action plan; and 3) systemic reporting to court and counsel detailing the results of the Conference.

In order to successfully develop an action plan, parents would likely benefit from a general understanding of procedural implications and participation requirements. Once this baseline is established, the Facilitator could directly aid parents in executing the actions by facilitating provider contacts, scheduling service appointments, and afterwards apprising parties of the progress through regular reporting. Parents will be provided with a three ring binder (with calendar and notes) to help keep their resource materials and reunification activities organized. With the Facilitator bridging any gap between DCS or service providers, parents will know exactly what is expected of them and have some real help in staying with the reunification case plan. The Facilitator would also file the Progress Reports into the court record. The Progress Report would detail who appeared for the Progress Conference, the general results of the activities, and any agreements made.

**Arizona Supreme Court
Administrative Office of the Courts**

**Dependent Children's Services Division
Dependency Case Processing Initiative Grant**

While the Progress Conference is not intended to assess alternative permanency solutions, if an obvious, appropriate solution such as a Title 8 Guardianship or a Title 25 action is discussed, the Facilitator would report that information to the Court and counsel.

The Program would be piloted in Globe with every other filed petition being diverted onto the Progress Conference track. The projected total impact would see approximately 12-14 cases transferred into the Program in FY17 with funding for an additional 4-6 cases in FY18; given current case averages, approximately 30 children in southern Gila County could be positively effected.

Although DCS caseworkers and attorneys work with parents routinely as obligated, the organization of the Progress Conference Program would provide an informal and helpful compliment to the current process. Expedited permanency through family reunification is the desired outcome; by providing this comprehensive support structure we can improve our case management to align with this goal and limit recidivism by parents.

**Arizona Supreme Court
Administrative Office of the Courts
Dependent Children's Services Division
Dependency Case Processing Initiative Grant**

Performance Measures

Identify what data indicators you will use to determine whether your Project Plan outcomes are successful. Data indicators need to be collected at the beginning and throughout the grant cycle. Please include data indicators such as how many cases closed last year and how many you anticipate closing in each year of the grant cycle (FY17 and FY18). This should include the permanency outcome (Return home, relative placement, severance, adoption, etc. Please note that cases in which a child turns 18 and exists the system is not considered as achieving permanency and that you will be required to provide updates on all data indicators at regular grant reporting intervals.

In order to determine the impact to Permanency, Progress Conference pilot cases will be primarily measured against two values: 1) Baseline Time to Permanency; and 2) Time to Permanency of non-Progress Conference Cases.

Baseline Time to Permanency: 551 days. By measuring the length, in days, between removal date and close of the case, a Baseline Time to Permanency value has been established for the period of 1/1/2015 and 8/27/16. This date coincides with local changes in bench assignment and process and accurately describes our current result. Progress Mediation pilot cases would record the length of time with the same parameters for comparison against current performance.

FY17 / FY18 Time to Permanency Comparison: Beginning with FY17 Globe-based dependency petitions, both pilot and non-pilot cases will have Time to Permanency values measured for side-by-side comparison and analysis.

Progress Conference Statistics: Additionally, data capture will be initiated to monitor the activities of the Progress Facilitator and the Progress Conferences – such information will include 1) the number of conferences held, 2) number of parents appearing (total), 3) number of reports generated, 4) number of scheduling contacts made, and 5) number of Progress Reports generated.

Permanency Outcome Statistics: The total number of closed cases, with individual permanency outcomes recorded, will be compiled and maintained for FY16 (baseline comparator), FY17, and FY18.

All of these performance measures can be reported on a monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual basis as required.

All purchases of equipment will be documented and recorded.

GILA DCPI - Progress Conference Program

Facilitator Activities

The Gila County Juvenile Dependency Court intends to utilize Dependency Surge Funding to pilot and explore the possibility of establishing a permanent Progress Conference Program. The goal would be to safely expedite permanency through intensive case management programming and promote positive participation in reunification services by parents.

In speaking to Dependency Attorneys, DCS workers, parents, and dependent children, the predominant obstacles preventing permanency are rooted in communication, resources and access.

Under the proposed Progress Conference Program, the Court would appoint a Progress Facilitator who would be responsible for conducting Progress Conferences, objectively assimilating case information, providing parties with support clarification regarding specific services and bridging the education and communication gaps between the parties, agencies and attorneys. The Facilitator will receive all reports, updates, motions and orders on the case by any party or court appointed advocate, Foster Care Review Board etc that are contained within the Court file. The Court would order that the parents and a representative from each of the behavioral health providers be present at a minimum of two progress conferences to be conducted at crucial case intervals. Attorneys would be welcome to attend and so would a representative from the Department of Child Safety.

Initial Progress Conference:

At the first Team Decision Making (TDM) meeting, when the child or children are removed, the Department of Child Safety (DCS) specifies an initial permanency goal that is in the child's best interest and then submits it to the court for approval at the Preliminary Protective Hearing (PPH). However, for obvious reasons at that initial TDM and PPH, all parties have a limited comprehension of all permanency options and the steps that must be taken to effectuate permanency for the child. Usually, the parents and the child(ren) have not had the opportunity to discuss the case meticulously with counsel and discuss all possible permanency options. Often, other possible placements or permanency alternatives have not been thoroughly explored. Additionally, within thirty to sixty (30-60) days the parents are required to have an Adult Recovery Team (ART) meeting, the child is required to have a Child Family Team (CFT) meeting and all parties are supposed to participate a Case Plan Staffing.

However, parents and children are in dependency cases precisely because they have challenges with conformity to social, legal and/or community standards. Consequently, they often have extreme difficulty understanding what is required of them, what resources are available and how to achieve permanency. These families frequently find it difficult to coordinate multiple meetings with unfamiliar agencies or individuals. Parents are often initially overwhelmed by the dependency system and/or bewildered and confused by what is expected of them. Frequently, behavioral health providers, legal counsel and the Department of Child Safety are placed in the position of having to schedule and reschedule multiple appointments with a single parent.

Therefore, to help address this challenge, the Court Appointed Facilitator will conduct an Initial Progress Conference approximately thirty days after the PPH or Initial Hearing to provide additional support to parents at the beginning of a dependency case.

An Initial Progress Conference would increase the chance of an early start for the permanency process. The focus of these meetings would be outlining the specific services, frequencies of service, contact information for service providers and connecting parents with service providers directly. This hands on approach would prevent the inevitable miscommunications and frustrations that ensnare parents, service providers and often DCS in the beginning stages of the permanency process and which are not revealed to the Judge and/or legal counsel until the first report and review hearing

In order to successfully develop an action plan, parents would likely benefit from a general understanding of procedural implications and participation requirements. The Facilitator would present foundational information to the parties about dependency cases. Once this baseline is established, the Facilitator would directly aid parents in executing the actions by facilitating provider contacts, scheduling service appointments, and afterwards apprising parties of the progress through regular reporting.

The Facilitator would provide concrete objectives in a digestible format to the parents in written form at the conclusion of the initial thirty day meeting. The Facilitator will provide a list of resources and, if beneficial, provide a calendar of important dates for the parent to follow. By the end of the initial thirty day meeting, it would be clear to the parents what is expected of them and what the obvious barriers the child(ren) may have to permanency. Alternatives to family reunification may be discussed with the parents in a caucus format or in front of the group. Parents would leave the thirty day meeting with resources and appointments which would best prepare them for success.

At the Initial Progress Conference, the Facilitator would effectively be able to instigate a multidisciplinary approach to minimize the amount of initial meetings that the parents would need to attend. This approach would not only reduce the amount of coordination associated with arranging attendance, but would assist in communication between the parties.

With the Facilitator moderating and bridging any gap between DCS or service providers, parents will know exactly what is expected of them and have some real help in staying with the reunification case plan.

At the conclusion of the meeting or within twenty-four (24) hours afterward, the Facilitator will e-mail or physically provide a copy of the written report to the assigned attorneys, a representative from DCS, an assistant attorney general, behavioral health representative. These reports will be devoid of opinion and serve to inform and foster unbiased communication regarding the status of services.

The Facilitator would file the Progress Reports into the court record. The Progress Report would detail who appeared for the Progress Conference, the general results of the activities, and any agreements made. While not intended to assess alternative permanency solutions, if an obvious, appropriate solution such as a Title 8 Guardianship or a Title 25 action is discussed, the Facilitator would objectively notify the Court and counsel that alternatives were posited.

Progress Conference Checklist:

Currently, the Juvenile Dependency Bench conducts "Report and Review" Hearings on a compressed ninety (90) day scheduling cycle.

Under the current system, at this point in the case, the communication gap between the Department of Child Safety, Service Providers, Parents and Attorneys is particularly strained. The gap in time between the offering of a service and transmittal of the efficacy of that service to the parent's attorney and subsequently to the Court is problematic. The Department of Child Safety frequently has to work with service providers to timely receive reports regarding a parent's progress. Then there is a commonsensical time gap between when the Department of Child Safety receives that information, can process that information and is subsequently able to communicate it to the assigned attorney. The attorney then must attempt to contact the parent and address the issue. However, by the time the attorney receives the information and is able to communicate with the client precious time has elapsed and the information may not still be accurate.

Judges often witness this frustration in Court and it is almost impossible to ascertain what information is accurate. Judges are then unreasonably expected to make life changing rulings based on seemingly contradictory information from what appears to be multiple reliable sources. The situation appears cyclical. The parents often claim that they have difficulty contacting the Department of Child Safety worker and/or the Service Provider. Then the Department of Child Safety explains that there are issues with the Service Provider. Next the Service Provider claims that the issue is with both the parent and the Department of Child Safety. The transfer of fault can be dizzying. The result is that Judges are less likely to have the legal justification to make important decisions regarding permanency and permanency is delayed.

Therefore, at this critical stage, the Facilitator would conduct a Progress Conference Checkup thirty days after the Report and Review Hearing. The Progress Report will outline the current advancement and improvement of the parent with services since the child was removed and/or the initial progress conference. At one hundred and twenty day mark, the parties and the court should have sufficient reliable data to indicate whether a party may need to advocate for a change or acceleration in the permanency plan. The Facilitator will add a level of neutral accountability to this process. The Facilitator will be permitted to add information directly from any reports or pleadings filed by the parties, court appointed advocates, Foster Care Review Board etc that are contained within the Court file.

Again, at the conclusion of the meeting or within twenty-four (24) hours afterward, the Facilitator will e-mail or physically provide a copy of the written report to the assigned attorneys, a representative from DCS, an assistant attorney general, behavioral health representative.

By providing additional support to parents at crucial junctures through increased communication between all parties, objective compilation of case information and ease of access to services, the children in Gila County will achieve expedited permanency.

GILA DCPI - Progress Conference Program

Office Supplies

The Court intends to provide those parents in the pilot program with certain administrative or clerical supplies to assist in organization. The Facilitator's supplies will be used to support the parents' notebooks and to track / record the pilot's results.

Parent's Notebooks (x 40)

- 1.5" or 3" Binder

- Calendar

- Dividers

- Pencil Pouch

- Pens

Facilitator Supplies:

- Copy paper

- Colored paper

- Printer cartridge(s)

- 3 hole punch

- 3" Binder(s) for tracking

EXHIBIT B

COURT IMPROVEMENT SURGE Juvenile Court in Gila County for Fiscal Year 2017 & 2018

Addendum date: September 22, 2016 NOTE: This addendum supersedes all previously dated addenda

TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED: \$ **18,980.00**

APPROVED BUDGET - FY2017		
Category	FTEs	Amount
Personnel—Salaries	0.00	\$ -
Personnel—ERE		\$ -
Contract Services		\$ 12,000.00
Equipment		\$ -
Travel		\$ -
Operating		\$ 735.00
TOTAL DISBURSED AMOUNT		\$ 12,735.00

APPROVED BUDGET - FY2018		
Category	FTEs	Amount
Personnel—Salaries	0.00	\$ -
Personnel—ERE		\$ -
Contract Services		\$ 6,000.00
Equipment		\$ -
Travel		\$ -
Operating		\$ 245.00
TOTAL DISBURSED AMOUNT		\$ 6,245.00

SCHEDULED DISBURSEMENTS				
July 29, 2016	October 31, 2016	March 17, 2017	May 26, 2017	
\$ -	\$ 6,368.00	\$ 3,184.00	\$ 3,183.00	

SCHEDULED DISBURSEMENTS				
July 31, 2017	October 31, 2017	March 16, 2018	May 25, 2018	
\$ 1,561.00	\$ 1,561.00	\$ 1,561.00	\$ 1,562.00	

Signed: 
 Caroline Lantt-Owens, Director
 Dependent Children's Services Division—Arizona Supreme Court

9/23/16
Date

Signed: 
 Presiding Judge

10/4/16
Date

AOC Finance Office Receipt:

 AOC Fund Manager

Date