

Strengthening Abuse and Neglect Courts of America

MIS Project

GEORGIA

Final Report

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I. Executive Summary

The SANCA MIS project was completed April 30, 2006 (two years from the grant start date). Georgia was the first SANCA site to complete the requirements of the grant. Twenty-five (25) of the twenty-seven (27) Packard measures were successfully captured and reported in Georgia with the use of AFCARS Agency data and approved proxies where required.

Georgia selected one pilot court to implement its MIS SANCA project – DeKalb County Juvenile Court. With enthusiastic engagement from the court, amidst administration changes and personnel losses, the pilot court initially pursued improved practices for three (3) SANCA due process measures and ultimately acted upon two of them. Practices that were perceived to be more critical, but also more difficult to analyze during the six month timeframe of Phase III, were prioritized as immediate next steps following the official grant cycle.

Short term improvements were identified and implemented in the court with modest results. Measure 3A, perfected service of process to parents within fourteen (14) days of the adjudication hearing increased 5.1% over a four (4) month period. Measure 3E, appointment of legal counsel of parents prior to the 72 hour hearing, increased 4.3% for mothers and 10.8% for fathers. Reasons and insights into the practices and report changes are discussed in more detail in the Project Status and Review Section (Section

II), however the modest results primarily resulted from a short improvement period (6 months). Phase III was compressed and therefore it was difficult to both create sustainable change AND realize the results of the changes within the same time period. On the other hand, the trends are positive and it is anticipated that significant increases in both of these measures will be realized over the next six (6) months.

Currently, while the grant cycle has ended, the pilot court is continuing the data-entry processes created by the SANCA project. Due to limitations of the court at present, the CIP team remains a critical factor in continuing its efforts. The court is exploring more integrated options for court personnel involvement at present until funding is available for the court measures effort.

Georgia has launched a second court, Troup County Juvenile Court as a CIP participant in data collection and analysis. CPRS is the sole instrument for data capture and initial reporting has been completed in Troup County.

As for Georgia's next steps in a statewide rollout, the Georgia Court Improvement Initiative Courts (a program modeled after the NCJFCJ Model Court project), as well as the CIP oversight committee courts, have either committed to participating or are being actively pursued in order to grow the effort. CIP funding is critical to advancing court measure efforts in Georgia, however long term budget appropriation by the state legislature may be required in order to get all 159 counties on board. In the meantime,

the CIP team is investigating more cost effective solutions to assist courts and hopefully alleviate some of the funding burden. Those alternatives include a digital faxing service that could import data directly into CPRS via faxed forms or a call center transcription service where data could be verbally reported via a 1-800 number. Georgia is committed to sourcing, establishing, and supporting innovative and creative methods for data collection statewide that are both economical and sustainable.

II. Project Status/Review

This Final Report details Georgia's full implementation of Phase II and Phase III of the MIS SANCA project as well as summarizes the challenges and lessons learned.

This section summarizes the activities and corresponding findings according to phase. The Project Plan Review section (Section III) gives a more detailed account of the timing and completion of the tasks required to accomplish these summarized results.

Phase II Summary

The prominent activities from this pilot implementation phase were: 1) case selection and criteria that yielded the sample of court cases to be analyzed; 2) the data entry and process flows used throughout the pilot process; 3) initial reporting and the report debugging process; and 4) report distribution and data analysis.

1) Case Selection and Criteria

Case selection criteria specifically for SANCA reporting and analysis was important for two reasons. The first was the size of the court. In DeKalb County, four (4) full-time judges hear full deprivation calendars on three (days) each week. Our budget allowed up to twenty (20) hours of data entry per week by the on-site data manager, therefore the total number of cases heard by the court was too large to capture. The second reason was that Georgia was starting with a new database, therefore a case selected on the court calendar also needed its history entered into CPRS for the SANCA reports to be meaningful.

Ultimately the following criteria were used to create the SANCA case sample for Georgia's project. 294 cases ultimately comprised the sample. The criteria were:

- 1) Cases calendared within the pilot period (July 25, 2005 through April 30, 2006)
- 2) Cases calendared for three (3) judges of the four (4)
- 3) Removal date on or after July 1, 2004
- 4) Cases that had a disposition hearing (This is related to a limitation of the CPRS system. Only cases that have a case plan qualify as a "case" in the system)

Please see **Appendix A** for a complete case log of the SANCA cases reported and analyzed.

2) Data Entry and Process Flows

As reported in the Georgia Phase I Transition Report, a batch data-entry process was utilized by the court to capture the proscribed data elements in the Case Plan Reporting System (CPRS). The court file was the primary source of hearing information as well as due process elements such as attorney representation and service of process. The CMS of the court (BANNER) was also utilized in order to determine the legal parties to the case. A court action slip generated by BANNER was completed during the hearing by the tribunal clerk and the on-site SANCA data manager then transcribed applicable information from it, other documentation and court orders into CPRS. Data entry occurred twice a week. See **Appendix K** for an example of the BANNER Court Action Slip.

Another work flow element of significance was implemented by DFCS. It was the action of "case discharge" in order to capture the date a child was discharged and the reason a child was discharged where a measure utilized case closure as a reference date. The function of "case discharge" was added to CPRS and DFCS adopted the function into their work flows in CPRS. DFCS performed case discharges reliably, however, often times DFCS closed cases too early which prevented a proper discharge date from being entered.

Finally, during Phase II, two important events occurred from a work-flow perspective that affected *court participation*. There was a change in court leadership during the

pilot period. A new Chief Judge was appointed in DeKalb Juvenile Court in November 2005. Once the change in leadership was announced (June 2005) the CIP team assumed a larger role during the pilot phase than originally anticipated. While ideally court personnel would have trained and subsequently assumed the data entry responsibilities, the court was understandably reluctant to change or add responsibilities to any job functions during the pilot. Therefore, the primary data entry responsibilities remained with the on-site data manager throughout the project period.

The second event was a discovery during the report debugging process in Phase III. The reporting revealed that DFCS case workers were closing cases in CPRS prior to the Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) hearing. Therefore, case managers were limiting the scope of CPRS to reunification dispositions versus permanency dispositions. This practice invalidated the measures for 4F, 4G, and 4H because they are calculated from the TPR finalization date. Because TPRs were not a chosen area of improvement by the court, the SANCA team deprioritized the flushing out of this process during the project period. In order for 4F, 4G and 4H to be utilized the court, this process must be corrected. However, for purposes of this report, measures 4F, 4G and 4H have been eliminated from the working measures and analysis performed with the pilot court.

3) Report Verification

From the initial test data (July through September 2005), we ran three (3) test cycles of reports for all twenty-five (25) measures that Georgia implemented. It was a valuable exercise in that we found three (3) reports where the original calculation/algorithms had to be revised in order to report correctly. The modification was an easy one and in October 2005, the first pilot reports were shared with the court. The SANCA team felt confident in the accurate reporting of the information that had been inputted as well as the accuracy of the inputted data. While we did recognize that the tabular reports were not as user-friendly as we would have liked, they were informational and were of simple tabular format in a large, non-intimidating font. We reported only one (1) measure per page to further ease any burden the reader might feel when initially examining these reports. However, the SANCA team took extra steps to introduce the initial reports to the court with training materials and measure explanations as described below in the Report Distribution section.

Once the reports were revised, re-run, and verified as accurate, the initial reports remained somewhat suspect. They revealed that the court file was lacking documentation fairly consistently regarding due process issues such as attorney appointments, changes and releases. Notice and service of process were also unreasonable high values in comparison to court practices that the court stakeholders described and followed. Therefore, it was nearly impossible to distinguish authentic court process issues/problems from the simple issue of our

ability to capture the effect of the current court processes accurately or at least adequately. Our first instinct was that a two-step process was emerging: 1) to establish new requirements and practices to thoroughly document current court processes and 2) to then analyze those practices with accurate reports that the stakeholders ultimately bought into as "representative". Therefore, Phase III was taking form as a court improvement initiative to agree upon new and improved documentation practices by attorneys and judges to accurately reflect, and give credit, to what the court was doing right as well as where reform should take place.

4) Report Distribution

Initially, the reports for the court were manually distributed in report format. Measure explanations, measures themselves and project status were integrated into single reports for two (2) months and distributed both to the Chief Judge and a cross section of court-selected stakeholders such as the Intake Unit, Court Clerk and the Child Advocate Attorney's office. (See **Appendix J** for the status reports). Ten (10) measures were introduced in the initial report and then ten (10) additional measures were introduced in the next report. Finally, all measures (excluding the TPR Reports previously discussed) were introduced to the entire stakeholder group in December 2005 by way of a manually distributed Power Point presentation that facilitated training and follow-up discussion of Phase III court actions.

During the latter months of Phase III, we transitioned report distribution to a website developed for the Georgia SANCA project (see **Appendix E** for screen shots of the current website or see <http://www.gasanca.org>). The website lists the monthly reports generated since October 2005 through today's date. The website also includes the reports generated from AFCARS data, namely the Safety and Permanency measures.

Ultimately it was determined that this would be the official vehicle of distribution and that the reports would be reviewed both individually by court stakeholders (an email distribution of the reports readiness would prompt a gasanca.org visit) and as a group being the initial agenda item of each stakeholder meeting (held monthly or bi-monthly). The website is easy to use and gives a forum for any updates the court or project team wishes to communicate to court stakeholders. It is an ideal tool for ongoing communication and distribution of the court performance measures.

Phase III Summary

The prominent activities from this full implementation phase of the project were: 1) introducing reporting and data analysis to the court and court stakeholders; 2) reaching consensus on measures for targeted improvement within the project limitations; and 3) implementing and measuring changes in the selected measures.

1) Introduced Reporting to Stakeholders

Discussions, between the SANCA JAG team and the entire court stakeholders group, of potential court improvements associated with the SANCA measures began December 9, 2005. As previously mentioned, the forum was led by the Chief Judge and the SANCA Project Manager by use of a Power Point presentation summarizing the reported calculations since October 2005 (See **Appendix F** for the primary Phase III Power Point presentation).

Fourteen (14) measures were the primary focus of the group over the Phase III period. These measures were the most relevant to the group members and generated the most debate and insights into current court practices. The fourteen (14) measures were:

Due Process	
1. 3A	Service of Process to Parents
2. 3B	Notice to parties in advance of next hearing
3. 3C	Review of Case Plans within time guidelines
4. 3D	Appointment of legal representation or GAL for CHILD prior to 72 hour hearing
5. 3E	Appointment of legal representation of PARENTS prior to 72 hour hearing
6. 3F	Change of legal counsel of PARENT during the case
7. 3G	Change of legal counsel of CHILD during the case
8. 3H	Legal counsel of parties present at each hearing
9. 3I	Hearings heard by one judge

Timeliness	
10. 4A	Time to adjudication hearing
11. 4B	Time to disposition hearing
12. 4C	Cases adjudicated within 30 to 90 days of removal
13. 4D	Cases with disposition within 30 to 90 days of removal
14. 4E	Time to permanent placement

While these measures generated a healthy debate (ie. time to adjudication measuring at 36 days and time to disposition measuring at 72 days), it was determined by the group that the length of time needed to analyze, agree and modify practices across each stakeholder affected exceeded the grant period. Therefore those measures would be the first pursued following April 30, 2006. Instead, the due process measures that seemed to be the most controversial (ie. 28% of parents had service perfected within 14 days of the adjudication hearing, 57% of mothers without appointed attorneys, and 81% of fathers without appointed attorneys) were a more realistic target for improvements per forum agreement.

The stakeholders, while skeptical of the data, and rightfully so, unanimously agreed that the quantitative discussion of these issues was a huge leap in productivity of the stakeholders' meetings over the anecdotal debates which were previously the norm.

2) Selecting Measures and Proposing Changes

Ultimately, the due process measures 3A (notice prior to subsequent hearings), and 3B and 3E (mentioned above) were agreed upon by the stakeholders as those processes on which the group would focus its Phase III implementation efforts.

However, 3B fell out of the improvement efforts due to lack of time to get consensus on legal requirements regarding notification of parties prior to each hearing when they failed to appear at the adjudication hearing where service was perfected.

Regarding 3A, the SANCA on-site data manager revealed that there was rarely a copy of the SAAG's service of process in the court file. Therefore, the stakeholders proposed that the SANCA measure was not accurately capturing current practices of the court. Further, the stakeholders realized that practices between judges and attorneys differed as to what documentation was routinely submitted to or required by the court.

Regarding 3E, the attorneys and judges acknowledged that the 72 hour court order did not contain routine language or consistently include any language regarding parent attorney representation. Whether the parent was to apply for court-appointed representation or waived it all together was unclear from the court order. It was agreed that the court order was the proper place for recording the events of initial

representation and therefore, 3E did not accurately represent current court practices as a result.

A more detailed discussion of these findings is included in the Project Plan Review section which follows. These were the substantive findings of the court stakeholders as a result of presenting SANCA data and facilitating a group discussion on where to best test this concept of effecting change in a reasonable manner projecting that fairly immediate results would be reflected in the reports, and aiming for a success in its initial efforts of the project in order to serve a larger platform, perhaps with a larger group, in the post-grant-period where results would take longer to achieve.

Finally, it was agreed that reports, such as CHILD appointed legal counsel, were not reflective of current practices and that the data entry processes still needed to be verified for accuracy. The SANCA team agreed and in post-grant efforts, data entry process and flows will be further analyzed for those reports that were of concern to the court.

3) Implement and Measure Changes

From January 2006 through April 30, 2006, practices were modified that improved documentation which in turn would increase the accuracy of 3A and 3E reporting such that a better understanding of where the court needed actual legal representation and service of process improvements.

While both short term and long term solutions were identified, short term solutions were immediately implemented in order to determine whether longer term solutions were critical or could be de-prioritized for more focus on "low hanging fruit" projects revealed by the court reports.

A short term improvement for 3A included submitting paper copies of service process consistently to the court (by the SAAG's) and its uniform filing in the court file going forward. Another identified improvement was a new checklist to be filled out by court personnel (who was to be determined) and included as part of the court file. This check list would document oral reports in court, including but not limited to perfected service of the parties, in order locate that information for data-entry purposes where it is currently missing or very difficult to locate in the court file when it is there.

A short term solution for 3E was to consistently include language in the court order describing parent attorney assignments and actions. A longer term solution was proposed where modifications to the CMS system would require the tribunal clerk to document the attorney information while in court. Both expense and conservative changes currently tolerated by the court were reasons to categorize the CMS/BANNER solution as longer term.

Finally, what were the results? Relatively modest improvements were realized from a reporting perspective in the four months that the modifications were implemented (end of the grant period for purposes of this report). For 3A, the percentage of parents properly served rose from 25.22% to 30.37% in four (4) months. Regarding 3E, attorney representation for mothers rose from 28.57% to 32.89% and fathers rose from 8% representation to 18.8%.

However, five months of data preceded the changes and therefore it is anticipated that a longer period may be required in order for the data to reflect substantive improvement. Further, the practice changes were not perceived to be diligently recognized and pursued immediately. In March and April the documentation required appeared in the file more regularly than was observed in January and February. Therefore, actual changes in true representation of court process may be a few months away. If that is not the case, then the modest improvements are likely pointing to the longer term solutions where the data is required either in the CMS or CPRS before the user can exit the applicable screen.

Ultimately the stakeholder group is satisfied with these interim results but anticipates the numbers should reflect higher percentages. Only continued data entry and reporting will provide the evidence needed as the root cause of the noted issues - data availability or a failure in court process. DeKalb is continuing its data entry and review currently to that end.

III. Project Plan Review

This section is a discussion of the high level Phase II and III project plan tasks and the current status of each. All tasks in each phase were completed. Please refer to **Appendix C – Updated Project Schedule** for the Phase II tasks (10.00 through 13.12) and Phase III tasks (100.00 through 151.00) projected and actual completion dates.

Phase II – Pilot Implementation

a. Implementation and Training [Task 10.00]

Overall Status: Complete

Implementation and training tasks were completed according to the project plan. Technical support guides were written and published in CPRS. The help page for the hearing date screen is included in **Appendix B – CPRS SANCA Help Screen**. This screen provides definitions for guidance in completing the data capture process.

The pilot test start date was communicated to the Chief Judge, Clerk of Court and related personnel in early July 2005. Data collection began on July 25, 2005 and continued through April 30, 2006, as scheduled.

The On-Site Data Manager entered cases meeting the previously outlined criteria into CPRS. All previous hearings pertaining to the child were also entered in the CPRS. Information for the measures was collected from the court files and from data entered into BANNER.

b. *Release CPRS v4.x to Production [Task 11.00]*

Overall Status: Complete

CPRS v3.8 was released to production May 1, 2005. This version of CPRS contained changes that affected caseworkers, administrators, supervisors, and judges as well as all the modifications required to collect the SANCA timeliness and due process data. The data capture for the On-Site Data Manager utilized the Docket and Hearing Date screens of CPRS.

c. *Initial System Implementation [Task 12.00]*

Overall Status: Complete

The initial system implementation was scheduled over three months, including pilot data input and testing (Task 12.11) and data verification/interpretation (Task 12.30). All tasks are complete. The On-Site Data Manager entered data two days a week and served as the primary contact for the Court and the Project Managers. **Appendix A -**

Project Case Log details each of the entries into CPRS and captures the hearing date, child's identifying information, presiding judge and date of entry into CPRS. The last name of each child listed in the case log has been omitted to preserve confidentiality.

As the process for data entry and management took shape in the pilot court, several process modifications were made. An initial modification included waiting two weeks after a hearing date to enter the court information into the CPRS docket screens. In the hierarchy of data sources for data capture, the court order was the primary source of information about the parties present and attorney representation. Waiting the appropriate amount of time to allow for review of the court order was essential to the data capture process. In October 2005, the process was modified again to include a three-week wait time between the hearing date and data entry in CPRS. This additional week addressed the time required for the complete file to be available for data capture.

d. *Completion of Phase II [Task 13.00]*

Overall Status: Complete

The Phase II Transition Report and Phase III Report have been combined into this Final Report.

II. Phase III – Full Implementation

a. *Improvement Plans [Task 100.00]*

Overall Status: Complete

The SANCA team began to run production reports in late October, immediately after system acceptance. The nineteen (19) measures gathered in CPRS are reported through an Oracle based reporting system. The six (6) safety and permanency measures were calculated from raw case data and published on the same website with the nineteen (19) CPRS measures. Please see **Appendix D- April 2006 SANCA Measures** for a complete set of measures for the pilot court. Screen captures of the website, www.gasanca.org can be found in **Appendix E - Georgia SANCA Website**. The website includes information on the Georgia SANCA project as well as the measures for the pilot court.

Stakeholder meetings were held during Phase III to discuss the SANCA measures, focusing on timeliness and due process. The multi-disciplinary reviews were conducted in October, November and December addressing many of the issues highlighted by the measures, omitting the measures addressing TPR. In addition, the data analysis process included regular review meetings with the Chief Judge prior to the meetings where the measures were presented to the county stakeholders.

The data collected in the pilot site has been shared with the county stakeholders: Representatives from the Office of the Child Advocate Attorney, Special Advocate Attorney General, Clerk of the Juvenile Court, Juvenile Court Judges, and the Department of Family and Children Services. The review of the SANCA measures with the pilot court stakeholders fostered much needed discussion about the practices leading to the numbers. The discussion went beyond the usual anecdotal observations to specific practices potentially impacting the measures. Please see **Appendix F- December Stakeholder Meeting** for the measures presented to the stakeholders.

During the December stakeholder meeting, the attendees initially discussed three measures (Due Process 3A, 3B and 3E) to target for tracking improvement during the grant period. Timeliness measures 4A and 4C were identified for ongoing efforts beyond the grant period. The group was unable to reach consensus on the process impacting measure 3B regarding notice to parties in advance of all hearings so we moved forward with improvements for measures 3A and 3E only. Below are the issues identified by the stakeholders in improving measures 3A and 3E:

- **SANCA 3A** - Perfected Service. It was determined that the language addressing service should always be a part of the court order. It was

suggested that a field for service of process be added to the court action slip, perhaps as a drop down box (See **Appendix K** for an example Court Action Slip). This type of change to the court action slip as generated from the CMS would require a system modification request to the CMS vendor. The time to implement the change to the court action slip was unknown at the time of the meeting.

Alternatively, the Special Advocate Attorney General (SAAG) could submit a copy of the summons to the court for inclusion in the child's case file. **Appendix G – Service of Process** is a sample of the in-court form reflecting service of process in the pilot court.

- **SANCA 3E** - Parent Attorney Appointment Before the 72-Hour Hearing (preliminary protective hearing). It was determined that in all cases, there should be either an appointment of counsel or a waiver for each parent. The documentation in the 72-hour hearing order could be standardized to include the parents' appointments and waivers of counsel. **Appendix H – Counsel Waiver/Appointment Order** includes the language regarding attorney appointment or waiver found in a typical 72-hour hearing order in the pilot court and an example of standardized language that could be used in a template. It was also suggested that an order template be utilized to capture the appointments, waivers and the parties present at the hearing.

Alternatively, the tribunal clerk could capture the appointment/waiver in

the court action slip, but the concern continued to be the potential for over-burdening the tribunal clerk.

There were modest, positive changes in the targeted measures between December 2005 and the completion of the project at the end of April 2006. **Appendix I - Tracking SANCA Measures** includes the comparison between measures collected during the two periods.

b. *Quality Assurance [Task 120.00]*

Overall Status: Complete

This Phase III task is complete. The primary data entry responsibilities remained with the On-Site Data Manager throughout the project period.

Ideally, the court personnel were to participate in data entry. Transitioning the data entry from the On-Site Data Manager to court personnel will be discussed further. Current plans include court personnel participating in training and education regarding the measures during monthly review meetings.

c. *Phase III –Maintenance [Task 130.00]*

Overall Status: Complete

This task is complete. There were no modifications to CPRS between Phases II and III.

d. Phase III –Reporting [Task 140.00]

Overall Status: On-going

The format of the reporting to the pilot court remained constant throughout the grant period (See **Appendix J – Status Reports to Pilot Court**). The goal of creative reporting involving case level detail exceeded the project funding. We are actively working with the pilot court to develop dynamic, responsive ways to present the SANCA measures to county stakeholders.

IV. Challenges/Opportunities/Lessons Learned

a. Initial Challenges

1) Decentralized Court Management Systems

Nearly every county in Georgia has a different, stand-alone Court Management System (CMS), yet all of the 159 counties use CPRS. CPRS provided a reliable, proven platform on which to build the necessary screens to collect the hearing information. In addition, CPRS was already capturing much of the data needed for reporting the measures. A new component to CPRS was written to accommodate nineteen (19) of the SANCA measures.

2) Incompatible and Unreliable Data

Some of the data for the measures already existed in the pilot court's CMS, but the majority of the data was not collected in a manner that was useful for SANCA measures. Six (6) measures were addressed through state AFCARS data, bringing the total number of measures reported in Georgia to twenty-five (25). The remaining hurdle was creating the reports. For this purpose, a separate reporting system using Oracle reports was created.

There were two measures that were not part of our reporting: 4I and 4J. Both 4I and 4J are Timeliness measures related to the date of the adoption petition. We were unable to gather data because CPRS relies on DFCS to provide the date of the adoption petition. These measure can only be calculated if DCFS can provide the date of the adoption petition and it was not determined if DFCS's system had accurate enough information.

3) New DFCS System

Currently, CPRS is a shared system with the DFCS. There is no need for data transfer because both DFCS and court personnel enter case tracking and case planning information directly into CPRS. However, as new DFCS systems are in development, the future of the data sharing benefits of CPRS is uncertain.

b. *Opportunities*

1) Potential System/Process Changes

In the pilot court, several on-going initiatives have been identified as a result of the data gathered and reported through SANCA. One initiative involves modifications to the Court Action Slip, the document generated from the CMS that allows tribunal clerks to capture notes from the hearing including parties present, presiding judge, legal representation, and hearing outcome. The modifications suggested would address the limited information captured regarding notice/service.

The data included in the Court Action Slip is generated by the tribunal clerk during the hearing. Because the tribunal clerk is present in the hearing recording this information, it may be efficient to have the clerk also capture the additional SANCA related information. The challenge involved in this approach is that the increased amount of data to be captured during the hearing will potentially overburden the tribunal clerk and negatively impact the clerk's existing job duties.

2) Efficient Use of AFCARS Data

We relied on the AFCARS data, reported by the Department of Family and Children Services to the federal government on a quarterly basis, to produce the Safety and Permanency SANCA measures. Specifically, the AFCARS data was used for 1A through 2D. These proxy measures increased overall project efficiency through providing safety and permanency numbers within the time and budget constraints of the project. Other courts and systems considering this work can also utilize state AFCARS data to efficiently report on permanency and safety.

c. Successes

1) Defining the Project

By far, the most important task that the SANCA Georgia team managed successfully was defining and maintaining the project scope. Success or failure of a project often hinges on the ability to accurately define the scope of the project and actively protect the project from scope creep. Utilizing the JAD for system design, and managing the tasks with the necessary attention to budget and time constraints all contributed to the ultimate success of the Georgia SANCA MIS project.

2) Creating the System

It is also noteworthy that the team successfully managed the creation of the data capture/reporting system. It helped to have an open source, flexible

software system. It was especially helpful to have a company involved in the programming that understood the data related to child deprivation from previous database work.

d. *Lessons Learned*

1) Flexibility of Data Entry

The Georgia SANCA team designed the system to measure timeliness and due process at anytime period; measuring against previous hearings as well as capturing future hearings. With this flexibility the user does not have to wait a full year to begin the measurement process.

2) Importance of Internal Reports

Internal reports were critical to filtering out inappropriate data and to performing data quality checks. These reports should be a part of the initial implementation process. Delaying the use of these reports can result in incorrect information being measured.

3) DFCS Interface with CPRS

Relying on a third party agency to enter in data was problematic. The data from the Case Tracking and Legal screen in CPRS is completed by the case worker. Within our current process we rely on this information to calculate the

SANCA measures. If the court is going to have the case worker input the data on the CT&L screen, continuous communication is necessary to prevent incomplete or incorrect data. Going forward, the courts may take on responsibility for the data on the CT&L screen.

4) Invest in Data Entry and Management

If the court cannot collect their own data and an additional resource has to be hired to do the data entry and management, it is necessary to get someone the stakeholders will trust on accuracy and competence. Interns or temporary workers may not possess the experience required to adequately perform this task and defend the validity of the measures.

V. Recommended Changes to the Federal Measures

The Packard National Performance Measures do not include a measure reflecting removal rates. Removal rates directly correlate to the number of cases coming before the juvenile courts. This is the beginning of the child's potential court involvement and should be reviewed in light of the related court processes.

The SANCA project led the Georgia team to utilize AFCARS data for safety and permanency measures state wide. While this data is very helpful, we also learned that re-entry does not completely reflect the child's safety. The

addition of county re-abuse rates would create a more accurate safety measure.

In addition, we might focus first and foremost on safety and permanency measures first with the pilot courts (child outcome measures) versus collecting and reviewing them as well as the timeliness and due process measures (court measures) at once. Looking at permanency numbers can better guide the review of the court processes. For example, if times to reunification are longer than the state average, hearing timeliness becomes a critical next step for study.

VI. Conclusion

While the Georgia SANCA MIS Project is complete, there are several tasks that we are focusing on for the future. Those tasks address: 1) technical changes to the data capture and reporting process; 2) full implementation in DeKalb County; and 3) expansion into all juvenile courts in Georgia

1) Technical Process Changes

From a technical perspective, the goal is to create reporting that is easier to use by building a GUI interface to the reports. This is a time and resource intensive proposition, but it would save time for running the reports and increase flexibility in the types of reports that can be produced. Currently, the

reporting is a manual, multi-step process that requires several uninterrupted hours to complete. Other reporting changes would include allowing the end-users in the courts to specify a subset of counties to report on at a time. At this time, reporting can be generated for one county at a time. There are also plans to change the data entry interface to allow the user to enter information on multiple hearings at once instead of forcing the user to select one screen at a time for each hearing.

2) Full Implementation

In DeKalb County, going forward, we will continue to conduct post-review in Stakeholder meetings and e-mail the updated link to the stakeholders prior to the meeting. The AFCARS generated measures are integrated in the website so that www.gasanca.org is a single point of access.

3) Expanding to Other Courts

To date, we have expanded data collection and targeted review of the measures to one additional site in Troup County. While the population in DeKalb County was estimated at 675,725, Troup County was estimated at 61,201 in the 2004 US Census. Together, the pilot locations provide diverse demographics and juvenile court processes on which to build the plans for expansion.

Going forward, the Child Placement Project will likely target Court Improvement Initiative Courts to explore the outcomes and court process measures. The initial plan for expansion includes general education for all courts through mini-summits in all the circuits and regular reporting of measures through e-mail updates. Our next efforts will focus on courts collecting their own measures and we will assist with analyzing the data to identify key focus areas in each court.

This can potentially be expanded to include all juvenile courts in the state, but the method for expansion is uncertain. Possible methods for expansion include: 1) legislative mandate with the AOC as a service organization; and 2) various technology alternatives that involve calling or faxing in the hearing data to an outsourced data entry resource.

In conclusion, the Georgia SANCA Project is complete. The majority of the tasks have been completed as outlined in the Georgia Project Plan. All grant requirements have been satisfied upon submittal of this final report. Going forward, we are exploring methods or expanding to all juvenile courts in the state.

APPENDIX A
PROJECT CASE LOG

APPENDIX B

CPRS SANCA HELP SCREEN

APPENDIX C

UPDATED PROJECT SCHEDULE

APPENDIX D

APRIL 2006 SANCA MEASURES

APPENDIX E
GEORGIA SANCA WEBSITE

APPENDIX F

DECEMBER STAKEHOLDER MEETING

APPENDIX G
SERVICE OF PROCESS

APPENDIX H

COUNSEL WAIVER/APPOINTMENT ORDER

APPENDIX I

TRACKING SANCA MEASURES

APPENDIX J

STATUS REPORTS TO PILOT COURT

APPENDIX K

BANNER COURT ACTION SLIP