

CJA Task Force Meeting

Date: May 18, 2023, 12:00-1:00pm

Summary Statement: The CJA Task Force is a federally mandated, multidisciplinary advisory board that reviews and evaluates statewide front-end child welfare policies and practices and makes recommendations to DHS and others for systemic, equitable improvements to promote children's justice and well-being.

I. Welcome (12:00-12:15)

Role (42 U.S.C. §5106c (c)(1))	Name	Meeting Attendance
1. Law enforcement	Barrett Chrissis	
2. Criminal court judge	Vacant	
3. Civil court judge	Eric Braaten	
4. Prosecuting attorney	Heather Griesert	Present
5. Defense attorney	Sarah Ellsworth	
6. Attorney for children	Wanda Gierman	
7. Guardian ad litem	Roberta Ryan	
8. Health professional	Sarah Lucken	Present
9. Mental health professional	Vacant	
10. Child protection services	Nikki Miller	
11. Parent representative	Joanne Hodgeman	
12. Foster care survivor	Dawn Hyland	Present
13. Individual experienced working with children with disabilities	Kate Rickord	Present
14. Individual experienced working with homeless children/youth	Tyler Modderman	
Ad hoc	Mitzi Hobot (CAC)	
Ad hoc	Marcia Milliken (CAC)	Present
Ad hoc	Tracie Clanaugh (CAC)	Present
Ad hoc	Jill Esch (OAIF)	
Ad hoc	Debra Schumacher (DHS CJI)	
Ad hoc	Judy Peterson (Courts CJI)	
Ad hoc	Muriel Gubasta (OBFF)	Present
Ad hoc	Manuel Zuniga (OBFF)	Present
Ad hoc	Ann Hill (OBFF)	
CJA Task Force coverage	Lydia Pfluger	Present

II. Discussion (12:15-12:55)

- DHS updates
 - Staffing updates
 - CJA Coordinator position: Interviews have concluded, and a top candidate has been identified. DHS in the final stages
 of formalizing the job offer. An announcement should be forthcoming soon with an anticipated start in early or midJune.
 - CJA Annual Application/Report
 - The application/report is in the final stages of internal approval. The report will be shared with CJA members once it is submitted.
 - CJA Annual Meeting
 - The annual grantee meeting is occurring May 23-24th in Baltimore, MD. Kate will be attending to represent a CJA member and Rebecca to represent DHS. Typically, the chair attends but since the CJA leadership is in transition, DHS decided to send one of the subcommittee chairs that represent a CAPTA member. Attending the annual meeting is a grant requirement and it is an opportunity for state representatives to connect and learn what other states are doing and bring that back to their state.
- Subcommittee updates
 - CAC/MDT/FIT Marcia/Barrett
 - Focus: increasing access to culturally responsive interviewers, environments, and practices.

- Hypothesis/theory behind this. There are not enough Black, Indigenous, and interviewers of colors to serve the
 diversity of children who receive interviews. It is in the best interest of children to have an interviewer that matches
 their identity.
- A few months ago, the subcommittee was interested in engaging with forensic interviewers (FIs) who work at Child Advocacy Centers (CACs), then expanded to include all CAC staff/advocates. However, the subcommittee soon realized that there are still relatively few employees who work within the 13 CACs. The focus has expanded to engage with all FIs across the state to gather more information on this topic, not just those within CACs. Planning to try to partner with the Child Safety and Permanency (CSP) Research team to conduct a survey.
- Next steps: determining what questions and how many questions to ask. Currently thinking of questions related to demographics, their perception of the importance of the culture/racial identity of the child matching that of the interviewer, what practices are currently being utilized to support cultural responsiveness when the interviewers' identity does not match the child's, etc. Also thinking about how to get the greatest response and mailing lists to get the survey to interviewers. Want to keep the survey to 5 key questions or less to get a greatest response rate.
- Discussion:
 - How many FIs are there throughout the state? There are hundreds that have gone through the training, however, that doesn't mean that they actively conduct interviews. This is something the subcommittee is working to define or incorporate into the survey.
 - Please reach out if interested in participating in this subcommittee.

o "CFC" - Kate

- Focus: support law enforcement removal practices to support timely engagement with relatives/kin and to reduce trauma for children.
- Working on changing the subcommittee name to reflect this shift in focus.
- The subcommittee has gone back and forth on focus based on feedback and where current projects are at (licensing, emergency relative placement). Landed on bringing youth engagement into the DHS-led workgroup that will be addressing recommendations for DHS to develop law enforcement training recommendations from the OLA Child Protection Removals Report. Partnering in this work provides a place where the information can land and influence change.
- There was youth engagement in this initial report, however, what was written was minimal. The subcommittee wants to increase the depth of content as well as the number of youth that provide their perspective. Engagement efforts have begun with youth from the Youth Leadership Councils (YLCs). Kate and Lydia attended a YLC quarterly meeting in late April to introduce this topic for the youth to provide them the opportunity to reflect on the topic and determine if they are interested in providing feedback. There appeared to be interest based on their engagement in the meeting.
- Law Enforcement Training Workgroup: There is a seat for a CJA member to attend this workgroup and the subcommittee still needs someone to serve as a representative. Meetings dates so far are June 1st from 1:00-3:00pm and June 13th from 1:00-3:00pm.
- Next steps: working on details to meet with youth again to gather their feedback this summer. Working to develop the questions and be trauma-informed in questions to not cause unintentional harm for youth.
- Discussion:
 - Would be interested to know what has changed regarding law enforcement training in recent years/decades.
 - Manuel expressed interest in participating in this workgroup. Lydia will check with the workgroup lead to
 determine if the Ombudspersons for Families can attend these meetings through their role separate from
 their membership on the CJA.
 - Please reach out if interested in engaging in this subcommittee.
- Open space/announcements
 - Lydia expressed thanks to members for their continued participation in the CJA and subcommittees despite the transitions and uncertainties and offered words of encouragement for recent progress on goals and objectives.

III. Wrap-up (12:55-1:00)

- Tabled items or next steps: Stay tuned for the announcement of the new CJA coordinator and the annual CJA Report/Application.
- Next meetings:

Meeting	Schedule	Date
Task Force	3 rd Thursday every other month 12-1pm	July 20
CAC/MDT/FIT subcommittee	2 nd Wednesdays 1-2pm	June 21 (one time change)
CFC subcommittee	4 th Tuesdays 12-1pm	May 30 (one time change)