

2021

NEVADA CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT TASK FORCE ANNUAL REPORT

SUBMITTED BY
THE NEVADA DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

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TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP AND FUNCTION

The Nevada Task Force was established in 1994 by the Administrator of the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS). The Task Force and its subcommittees, meets quarterly, or as needed to work on identified projects. The Task Force is facilitated by a DCFS Program Specialist who works with the Chair to identify agenda items and to monitor progress on goals.

The Task Force met four times during the reporting period. The Task Force meets through video conferencing, teleconferencing and on-line conferencing as members are located throughout the State including the two largest cities, Reno and Las Vegas, which are 450 miles apart and multiple rural communities. The Task Force has maintained full membership throughout the year despite several membership changes; There are no vacancies.

The following information is presented with each member's required professional category, name, title, and brief description of relevant professional experience. The Task Force has additional members at large including all the directors of the Child Advocacy Centers. (See appendix A).

PRIOR YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT

CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT TASK FORCE GOALS 2021 – 2023

These goals were developed for the 2021 Three (3) Year Assessment. A new triennial assessment due in May 2024.

Goal 1: Provide child protection workers and stakeholders "front end" specialty, discipline specific and advanced training. Training should be prioritized, but not limited to, child protection model assessments, Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), sexual abuse, domestic violence, forensic interviewing, mandatory reporting, trauma-informed practices, substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders and training needs identified in collaboration with Court Improvement Program. (ABC)

Goal 2: Support the implementation of the Commercially Sexually Exploited Child (CSEC) Model Coordinated Response Protocol and provide training and support for the formation of Multidisciplinary Teams (MDT) and Task Forces. (ABC)

Goal 3: Support the establishment of new Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) or other multidisciplinary team approaches and improve the capacity of existing CACs to provide a multidisciplinary response for victims of child sex abuse and exploitation, physical abuse and child victims with disabilities. (AB)

Goal 4: Fund technology requests to improve the investigation, assessment and prosecution of child abuse and neglect through the through use of latest technology and to support the use of new and existing training technologies. (B)

Goal 5: Identify new or needed changes to policy, regulation and/or legislation to meet requirements of federal program improvements plans and other federal and state initiatives. Support training and policy needs related to new or revised policy, regulation and legislation. (C)

Key: Required categories for use of CJA funds:

A= Investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect.

B= Experimental, model and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches.

Report on Activities from May 2021 through May 2022

ACTIVITY 1: MAINTENANCE OF THE NEVADA CHILDREN'S JUSTICE TASK FORCE (ABC)

Narrative description of activity: Support and maintain the full multidisciplinary Task Force through member recruitment and attendance of meetings, including the CJA Annual Grantees meeting. Task Force members monitored the implementation of objectives for training and policy through approved activities. They supported interagency collaboration, implementing the intent of the CJA grant and serving as a feedback loop for the Court Improvement Program (CIP) and Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and can make recommendations in their dual role as a Citizens Review Panel (CRP). The CJA Task Force was provided with information regarding Nevada's APSR and CSFP to familiarize the CJA Task Force with Nevada's current efforts. The CJA Coordinator also serves as the CAPTA Coordinator and collaborates with the Chair to develop agendas and support the work of the Task Force.

Subgrantee implementing the activity: Not Applicable.

The current Task Force goals that are addressed by this activity: All Task Force Goals

Description of evaluation work related to this activity, including the following (as appropriate):

Evaluation methods: Monitoring of membership and activities of the Task Force by the Chair, DCFS Program Specialist / CAPTA Coordinator to ensure the Task Force has members in each of the required categories and that the activities of the Task Force are supporting progress in meeting objectives. To better engage Task Force members, a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), process continues to be implemented which allows sub-grants to be awarded by the Task Force rather than the DCFS.

Outputs: The Task Force met quarterly to monitor progress in completing recommended priority activities. The CJA Coordinator attended the virtual annual CJA meeting. The Task Force continues to successfully implement the CJA NOFO process and actively reviews the process to modify and make improvements. There is crossover membership with multiple CJA Task Force members and the CIP and PIP teams.

Outcomes: During the report period, monitoring of goals of the Three-Year Assessment was accomplished at regular meetings of the Task Force. The CJA NOFO award process continues to be utilized, helping the Task Force work towards the goals of the CJA. The continued review of the NOFO process has increased the participation and understanding of the Task Force when voting for subawards.

ACTIVITY 2: MULTIDISCIPLINARY PROFESSIONAL TRAINING (AB)

Narrative description of activity: Multiple trainings were provided to professionals that are involved with the continuum of child abuse investigation and prosecution. This included training on best practices to improve investigations and prosecutorial outcomes while supporting safety and well-being for all children and forensic interview training.

Subgrantee implementing the activity:

- Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)
- Great Basin Children's Advocacy Center (GBCAC)
- Nevada Outreach Training Organization (NOTO)
- Washoe County Children's Advocacy Center (WCCAC)

The current Task Force goals that are addressed by this activity: Goals 1 and 3

Description of evaluation work related to this activity, including the following (as appropriate):

Evaluation methods: Attendance Lists; Number of participants; Ability to conduct forensic interviews; Evaluations were completed by participants.

Outputs: The CJA supported the following multidisciplinary trainings:

- CCDFS contracted with National Children’s Advocacy Center (NCAC) to provide multiple five-day trainings on the forensic interviewing of children to participants who primarily work in the investigation, law enforcement and prosecution of suspected child abuse cases.
- GBCAC had two local detectives participate in advanced forensic interview training.
- NOTO had 10 local MDT members attend the 37th Annual Child and Family Maltreatment Conference.
- WCCAC invited local MDT members, case managers and child welfare staff from the local CAC to attend:
 - Crimes Against Children’s Conference (38 members of MDT attended)
 - Cornerstone Advanced Forensic Interview Training

Outcomes: Professionals have ability to conduct forensic interviews in suspected child sexual abuse cases and/or testify to such interviews. Participants who conduct forensic interviews have ability to gain accurate and sufficient information while limiting the trauma of the interview to the child victim. Participants who do not conduct interviews, have a better understanding of the forensic interview process, allowing them to reduce trauma to the child victim and avoid interference that could impede the investigation.

ACTIVITY 3: SUPPORT CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS (AB)

Narrative description of the activity: Multiple trainings were provided to CAC members and stakeholders which were included in activity 2. Great Basin CAC, located in eastern rural Nevada has successfully obtained funding to build their own CAC building; Construction started in March 2022. The CJA assisted with the furnishing of a “soft interview” room for the CAC in another eastern rural Nevada area they provide services to increase capacity for conducting forensic interviews. The CJA Task Force collaborated with the Western Regional Child Advocacy Center (WRCAC) and Nevada’s CAC representatives to determine how the CJA can best support Nevada’s CACs. The decision was made to have the Nevada State Chapter of Nevada’s CACs become a task force member to further support Nevada’s CACs. The Task Force chair is also a training specialist with the WRCAC.

Subgrantee, implementing the activity:

- Great Basin Child Advocacy Center (GBCAC)

The current Task Force goals that would be addressed by this activity: Goals 1, 2, and 3

Description of evaluation work related to this activity, including the following (as appropriate):

Evaluation methods: Number of interviews completed; feedback regarding new interview room.

Outputs: The soft interview room was completed and ready for use in March 2022 eliminating lengthy travel for child victims and promoting a comforting and child friendly environment for forensic interviews to take place. Nevada’s CACs have representation on the CJA Task Force through CAC directors, the Nevada CAC Chapter Coordinator, and a WRCAC training specialist.

Outcomes: Increase in the number of successful child victim forensic interviews in eastern rural Nevada while limiting the lengthy travel and reducing trauma to child victims which will improve investigation outcomes. There is a consistent feedback loop of the current efforts and needs of Nevada's CACs with the CJA Task Force.



ACTIVITY 4: SUPPORT USE OF LATEST TECHNOLOGY (AB)

Narrative description of the activity: Provided funding for technology requests to improve the investigation, assessment and prosecution of child abuse and neglect through use of latest technology and to support use of new and existing training technologies.

The current Task Force goals that are addressed by this activity: Goal 4

Subgrantee implementing the activity:

- Division of Child and Family Services (Rural Region)
- Nevada Outreach Training Organization (NOTO)

Description of evaluation work related to this activity, including the following (as appropriate):

Evaluation methods: Evaluations were completed by individuals who received laptops.

Outputs: 30 laptops and docking stations were provided to “front end” child welfare staff at DCFS Rural Region. NOTO was able to use funds to pay for an annual subscription for forensic interview video storage. The annual proprietary software allows forensic interviews to be securely stored and allows only the custodian to grant permissions for others, as necessary, to view the recordings, which allows front-line workers, investigators, and prosecutors to have access to forensic interviews indefinitely.

Outcomes: Caseworkers have enhanced access in the office and field. The process is more efficient and streamlined in managing case notes and other documentation critical in the assessment and investigation of child abuse and neglect. Caseworkers have timelier access to case history and documentation of case details and outcomes. Case information is documented faster and more succinct when caseworkers can speak the information rather than type it, thereby allowing more time to be spent on direct child contacts rather than administrative work. Enabled the improvement of assessment and investigative abilities from the field as well as remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ACTIVITY 5: SUPPORT THE PARENT COURT PROCESS GUIDE (AB)

Narrative description of the activity: The Court Improvement Program (CIP) coordinator presented to the CJA Task Force on the newly developed Child Welfare Court Process Guide for Families Handbook and Quick Guide Roadmap. The CJA Task Force and the CIP provided funding for the printing of the Handbook and Roadmap. These materials were created as part of Nevada's Program Improvement Plan (PIP) in collaboration with the CIP and they are distributed to parents and stakeholders when a child welfare agency has taken legal custody of a child.

Subgrantee, implementing the activity:

- Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)
- Washoe County Human Services Agency (WCHSA)

Description of evaluation work related to this activity, including the following (as appropriate):

Evaluation methods: Number of materials printed for each jurisdiction.

Outputs: The Roadmap and Handbooks were distributed to child welfare staff, courthouses and community partners to provide to families who are involved in the court process. This material is also located online which allows for easy access and reading for these families.

Outcomes: The families and stakeholders are educated in the court process which improves the judicial handling of child abuse and neglect cases.

ACTIVITY 6: SUPPORT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TRAINING FOR CHILD WELFARE STAFF (ABC)

Narrative description of the activity: Domestic violence training addressing risk and protective factors for families developed and provided by the Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence (NCESDV). Three virtual trainings have been offered to child welfare staff throughout the state. The last training by NCESDV will conclude in June 2022. Nevada has contracted with Health Management Associates (HMA) to conduct a comprehensive assessment to understand the needs and practices of Nevada's child welfare staff in relation to the intervention of families involved in the child welfare system who are also experiencing domestic violence. They will use the assessment to develop and provide a training to child welfare staff.

Subgrantee implementing the activity:

- Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence (NCESDV)

The current Task Force goals that are addressed by this activity: Goal 1

Description of evaluation work related to this activity, including the following (as appropriate):

Evaluation methods: Pre and post testing; written evaluations

Outputs: Child welfare staff who often work with families experiencing domestic violence have received training and have more knowledge about the risk and protective factors for families experiencing domestic violence. HMA presented their project to the Task Force and received feedback from Task Force members. NCESDV is partnering with HMA instead of providing their own training about domestic violence to ensure continuity in education about families involved in the child welfare system who are also experiencing domestic violence.

Outcomes: Caseworkers and supervisors have demonstrated increased knowledge in the protective and risk factors for domestic violence, which improves caseworkers' abilities to intervene with and safety plan with families experiencing domestic violence. Evaluations have provided NCEDSV with information about the quality and content of the training and child abuse or neglect. Collaborative efforts with HMA and stakeholders have helped to inform the assessment and implementation planning.

Key: Required categories for use of CJA funds:

A= Investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect.

B= Experimental, model and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches.

C= Reform of state laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, and procedures.

PRIOR YEAR LINE-ITEM BUDGET EXPENDITURE (MAY 2021 – MAY 2022)

Recipient/Subgrantee:	Obligated Amount
Clark County Department of Family Services Subgrant	\$27,000
Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence Subgrant	\$30,000
Washoe County Child Advocacy Center Subgrant	\$19,207
Nevada Outreach Training Organization Subgrant	\$23,977
Great Basin Child Advocacy Center Subgrant	\$19,448
Technology Support for DCFS – Rural Region	\$54,240
Parent Court Process Handbooks	\$38,620

APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

CHILDREN’S JUSTICE ACT TASK FORCE GOALS 2021-2023

Goal 1: Provide child protection workers and stakeholders “front end” specialty, discipline specific and advanced training. Training should be prioritized, but not limited to, child protection model assessments, Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), sexual abuse, domestic violence, forensic interviewing, mandatory reporting, trauma-informed practices, substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders and training needs identified in collaboration with Court Improvement Program. (ABC)

Goal 2: Support the implementation of the Commercially Sexually Exploited Child (CSEC) Model Coordinated Response Protocol and provide training and support for the formation of Multidisciplinary Teams (MDT) and Task Forces. (ABC)

Goal 3: Support the establishment of new Children’s Advocacy Centers (CACs) or other multidisciplinary team approaches and improve the capacity of existing CACs to provide a multidisciplinary response for victims of child sex abuse and exploitation, physical abuse and child victims with disabilities. (AB)

Goal 4: Fund technology requests to improve the investigation, assessment and prosecution of child abuse and neglect through the through use of latest technology and to support the use of new and existing training technologies. (B)

Goal 5: Identify new or needed changes to policy, regulation and/or legislation to meet requirements of federal program improvements plans and other federal and state initiatives. Support training and policy needs related to new or revised policy, regulation and legislation. (C)

Key: Required categories for use of CJA funds:

A= Investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect.

B= Experimental, model and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches.

C= Reform of state laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, and procedures.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR (MAY 2022 THROUGH MAY 2023)

PROPOSED ACTIVITY 1: MAINTENANCE OF THE NEVADA CHILDREN’S JUSTICE TASK FORCE (ABC)

Narrative description of the activity: To support and maintain the full multidisciplinary Task Force through member recruitment, training and provision of technical assistance/consultation and travel to attend meetings. Task Force members will develop and monitor the implementation of objectives for training and policy through approved activities. The Task Force will support interagency collaboration and Court Improvement Plan (CIP) collaboration implementing the intent of the CJA grant.

Proposed sub-grantee, if applicable: Not applicable

Explanation of the extent to which this activity contributes to the reform of State systems handling of cases of child abuse and neglect: The Task Force will meet four times a year to evaluate the child protection system related to investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, including child abuse and sexual exploitation. The Task Force will make recommendations for training and other activities to improve the “front end” of the system.

The current Task Force goals that would be addressed by this activity: All State Task Force Goals

Description of proposed evaluation methods related to this activity, including desired outputs and/or outcomes: Membership and activities of the Task Force will be monitored by the Chair, DCFS Program Specialist who is also the CAPTA Coordinator to ensure the Task Force has membership in each of the required categories and that the activities of the Task Force are supporting progress in meeting goals. The CJA grantees will provide quarterly reports to the CJA Task Force on the progress of their projects.

PROPOSED ACTIVITY 2: MULTIDISCIPLINARY PROFESSIONAL TRAINING (AB)

Narrative description of the activity: Provide child protection workers and/or stakeholders “front end” specialty, discipline specific and advanced training. Training will be prioritized, but not limited to, CSEC, sexual abuse, and forensic interviewing, all of which will support trauma-informed practice.

Proposed sub-grantee, if applicable:

- Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)
- Great Basin Child Advocacy Center (GBCAC)
- Washoe County Human Services Agency (WCHSA)

Explanation of the extent to which this activity contributes to the reform of State systems handling of cases of child abuse and neglect: This activity improves child protection and other professional stakeholders’ skills and abilities to investigate, assess and prosecute cases of child abuse and neglect in a manner that limits additional trauma to victims and their families.

The current Task Force goals that would be addressed by this activity: Goals 1, 2, and 3

Description of proposed evaluation methods related to this activity, including desired outputs and/or outcomes: Trainings will be provided to multiple disciplines in urban and rural districts throughout Nevada. Evaluations to assess the improvement of abilities to investigate, assess, and prosecute cases of child abuse and neglect and/or pre and post training tests to assess changes in knowledge.

PROPOSED ACTIVITY 3: SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF CSEC PROTOCOL (ABC)

Narrative description of the activity: Support CSEC protocol implementation in Nevada through collaboration with Nevada CSEC Coordinator. Efforts include the development of a statewide database that will track CSEC victims across multiple agencies and to establish a baseline dataset of this population and training for stakeholders to identify CSEC victims.

Proposed sub-grantee, if applicable:

- University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Explanation of the extent to which this activity contributes to the reform of State systems handling of cases of child abuse and neglect: Collaboration will continue between the DCFS CSEC Coordinator and CJA Task Force to identify ways that the CJA Task Force can support CSEC efforts in Nevada. This database will allow for child welfare agencies and stakeholders to track CSEC victims. Training of stakeholders and staff will allow to identify CSEC victims.

The current Task Force goals that would be addressed by this activity: Goals 2, 3 and 4

Description of proposed evaluation methods related to this activity, including desired outputs and/or outcomes: Data regarding CSEC victims will be collected. There will be increased collaboration between stakeholders who are involved in the investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of these CSEC victims.

PROPOSED ACTIVITY 4: SUPPORT CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS (AB)

Narrative description of the activity: Multiple trainings are proposed to provide to CAC members and stakeholders which were included in activity 2. Western Regional Child Advocacy Center is to provide a trauma informed MDT training to new and existing MDT members to strengthen the MDTs in Nevada. The largest CAC in Nevada is in the final stages of refurbishing their CAC to provide a safe place for children of abuse to disclose their trauma. Child appropriate furniture and supplies will be purchased as well as furnishing the MDT conference room where community partners convene.

Proposed sub-grantee, if applicable:

- Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)
- Great Basin Child Advocacy Center (GBCAC)
- Washoe County Human Services Agency (WCHSA)

Explanation of the extent to which this activity contributes to the reform of State systems handling of cases of child abuse and neglect: Through the support of the CJA Task Force, the CACs will receive training for forensic interviewing to increase their abilities in conducting forensic interviews and/or MDT training to strengthen existing MDTs which will improve the investigative and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and exploitation cases, while limiting trauma to the child victims. CAC intends to improve their facilities in order to make them friendly for child victims who will be interviewed in these rooms. A rural CAC will distribute materials to increase awareness of the services they provide.

The current Task Force goals that would be addressed by this activity: Goals 1, 2, 3 and 4

Description of proposed evaluation methods related to this activity, including desired outputs and/or outcomes: Data collected will demonstrate an increased capacity to serve more children in the counties due to improved facilities. There will be increased skills and ability for CAC staff to conduct forensic interviews for children.

PROPOSED ACTIVITY 5: SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW LEGISLATION AND/OR POLICY AND IDENTIFY NEW OR NEEDED CHANGES TO LEGISLATION AND/OR POLICY (ABC)

Narrative description of the activity: Review and assess needed changes to legislation and/or policy that governs child protection, specifically addressing the “front-end” of the child welfare system.

Proposed sub-grantee, if applicable: Not applicable

Explanation of the extent to which this activity contributes to the reform of State systems handling of cases of child abuse and neglect: The CJA Task Force will ensure needed policy are written and/or trainings delivered related to newly enacted laws that contribute to the reform of State systems handling of cases of abuse and neglect. Additionally, by utilizing the Task Force as a Citizens Review Panel for feedback and collaboration, changes can be evaluated and recommendations for improvement made.

The current Task Force goals that would be addressed by this activity: Goal 5

Description of proposed evaluation methods related to this activity, including desired outputs and/or outcomes: Child welfare staff and other affected parties receive training and/or assistance in developing new policies to be in compliance with new or updated policies and/or laws.

PROPOSED LINE-ITEM BUDGET EXPENDITURE (MAY 2022 – MAY 2023)

Type of Expense:	Amount
Task Force Maintenance	\$5,000
Clark County Department of Family Services Subgrant	\$45,430
Great Basin Child Advocacy Center Subgrant	\$14,520
Washoe County Child Advocacy Center Subgrant	\$40,050
CSEC Support	\$37,100