

Joe Lombardo  
*Governor*



Richard Whitley  
*Director*

# Children's Justice Act Task Force

Division of Child and Family Services- Family Programs Office

Dylan Nall

April 8, 2025



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Department of Health and Human Services

*Helping people. It's who we are and what we do.*



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# Welcome

- 1. Call to order**
- 2. Roll call / Introductions**



# Initial Public Comment

## **3. Initial Public Comment (Discussion Only: Action may not be taken on any matter brought up under this agenda item until scheduled on an agenda for action at a later meeting.)**

- To provide public comment telephonically, dial 775-321-6111. When prompted to provide the conference ID, enter 924252538#. If providing public comment during the Teams Meeting, unmute your microphone prior to speaking. Persons making comment will be asked to begin by stating their name for the record and to spell their last name.*



# For Information

## **4. For Information- Review of the Children's Justice Act Task Force Goals-***Dylan Nall, Division of Child and Family Services*



# CJA Goals

- **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, interpersonal 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, witness to interpersonal violence, 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:** This task force will monitor policy, regulation and/or legislation regarding child abuse and neglect trends and when appropriate collaborate with other parties and/or entities to support new and/or revised policy, regulation, and legislation. (C)

**Key: Required categories for use of CJA funds:**

1. A: Investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect.
2. B: Experimental, model and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches.
3. C: Reform of state laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, and procedures



## For Possible Action

### **5. For Possible Action– *Salli Kerr, Chair***

- Consideration and Approval of February 7, 2025, meeting minutes



## For Possible Action

### **6. For Possible Action**— *Dylan Nall, Division of Child and Family Services*

- Consideration, Discussion and Possible Approval of the 2025 Annual Citizen's Review Panel (CRP) recommendations to DCFS





# Proposed CRP Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** The Children's Justice Act Task Force (CJA) recommends the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) continues to prioritize training for all child welfare staff and community partners in the State of Nevada to improve the investigation and handling of child abuse, neglect, or cases involving both, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation. This training recommendation includes but is not limited to:
  - Further enhance family and interpersonal violence training to include screening and safety assessment;
  - Initial and advanced forensic interviewing training based on evidence-based protocols;
  - Continuous quality improvement of child protection assessment and system of care models;
  - Mandatory reporting awareness and responsibilities;
  - Evidence-based and research-informed medical forensic interventions;
  - Integrating trauma-informed interventions;
  - And cultural awareness and responsiveness.
- **Recommendation 2:** The Children's Justice Act Task Force (CJA) recommends the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) support Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) efforts:
  - To translate best practices and support community-specific needs to coordinate the multidisciplinary response to child abuse, neglect, or cases involving both, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation;
  - To ensure child victims have access to the constellation of services offered within the Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs);
  - To establish and maintain access to CACs in conjunction with the Nevada State CAC Chapter as appropriate.



## For Possible Action

**7. For Possible Action:** Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Subcommittee recommendations for subawards for funding for state fiscal year 2026 to move forward to DCFS for consideration – Salli Kerr, Chair



# Carson City District Attorney's Office

- **National Drug Endangered Children Alliance Training**

- The department will contract with National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children to provide the training. National DEC has provided expert training, technical assistance, program, resources, and support to thousands of professionals, partners, organizations, parents and caregivers nationally every year since 2003. National DEC believes that the best way to address the needs of drug endangered children is a coordinated approach that puts children's needs first as they have historically been the first impacted and often the last identified. DEC defines drug endangered children as children who are at risk of suffering physical or emotional harm because of legal and/or illegal drug use, possession, manufacturing, cultivation, or distribution and/or children whose caretaker's legal and/or illegal substance misuse interferes with the caretaker's ability to parent and provide a safe and nurturing environment.
- Requested: \$19,126
- NOFO Subcommittee Suggestion: \$16,326



# Clark County Family Services

- **Forensic Interview Training- National Children Advocacy Center Forensic Interview Protocol.**
- The National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC) forensic interview protocol provides a structured approach that prioritizes rapport-building, ensuring that children feel safe and understood. The process begins with general discussions about the child's life before transitioning to topics related to the alleged incident. Children are encouraged to seek clarification when needed and are guided to speak only about real and truthful events. Up to 60 participants. 2 Classes total with a cap of 30 people per class.
- Requested: \$40,000
- NOFO Subcommittee Suggestion: \$33,000



# No To Abuse

- **San Diego International Conference- 14 MDT members**
- The Nye County Children's Advocacy Center (NCCAC) intends to send 14 people from the MDT to the San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment in January 2026. This would include 2 staff from each discipline including child advocacy, forensic interviewers, law enforcement, prosecution, medical, mental health and child protective services. The training provides specific training for all disciplines in our MDT focusing on the multidisciplinary response for victims of child sex abuse and exploitation, physical abuse and child victims with disabilities and the prosecution of those cases.
- Requested: \$27,990
- NOFO Subcommittee Suggestion: \$27,675



# NVIFN

- **Cortexflo Machine**

- NVIFN is requesting \$30,000 to enhance forensic imaging capabilities for child survivors of sexual abuse and assault by acquiring a second Cortexflo Machine and the necessary technology to support it. \$25,000 will fund the purchase of the second Cortexflo machine, an advanced forensic imaging system designed for high-resolution photographic evidence collection in forensic exams. This trauma-informed technology improves documentation accuracy while ensuring the comfort and well-being of young survivors. The remaining \$5,000 will cover the computer technology required for secure operation, including cloud-based storage that integrates with NVIFN's first Cortexflo machine, maintaining full HIPAA compliance while ensuring forensic images are protected and easily accessible for medical and legal use.
- Requested: \$30,000
- NOFO Subcommittee Suggestion: \$30,000



# Washoe County Human Services Agency

- **Trainings and Technology Update**

- Three (3) staff will attend a remote 1-week forensic interview training that will then qualify them for additional CSEC specific training at no cost. WCHSA and the vendor will enter into a contract with a defined scope of work. The vendor will invoice for the costs as outline in the contract. Attendance will be collected for the training. Program staff will be in charge of coordinating the training and monitoring the staff that will attend, and fiscal staff will monitor the contract, invoicing, and payment to the vendor. Photographic and related technology and equipment for documentation purposes to support the medical units and improve the assessment, investigation, and prosecution of cases (e.g. camera, storage, etc.).
- Requested: \$24,100
- NOFO Subcommittee Suggestion: \$24,100



# For Information

**8. For Information:** Updates to the Task Force on activities and spending of Children's Justice Act funds by current grantees (Please see supporting materials)—  
*Salli Kerr, Chair*

- I. Clark County Family Services*
- II. Nevada Institute of Forensic Nursing*
- III. Nye County*
- IV. Washoe County Human Services Agency*





# For Information

**9. For Information:** Task Force Member  
Announcements Regarding Their Agencies– *Salli Kerr,*  
*Chair*



# Final Public Comment

**10. Final Public Comment (Discussion Only: Action may not be taken on any matter brought up under this agenda item until scheduled on an agenda for action at a later meeting.)**

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# Adjournment

## **11. Adjournment- *Salli Kerr-Chair***

- Thank you for your time and commitment to improving services for children and youth in Nevada.

## Grantee Updates

Evaluation from the Nye County MDT

Training: 40th Annual San Diego International Conference on Child & Family Maltreatment

Dates: January 27-30, 2025

Funded by: CJA Taskforce

Eight individuals from Nye County attended the San Diego Conference, with five of them receiving funding from the CJA Taskforce. Each participant has provided a summary of their experience, detailing the key takeaways and how the training significantly impacted their personal roles within their respective disciplines. Additionally, they have shared insights into how the knowledge gained has influenced their work on the Nye County MDT (Multidisciplinary Team).

### Child and Family Advocate

*Hello,*

*I recently had the opportunity to attend the 40th Annual San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment, held from January 27-30, 2025, and I am truly grateful for the experience. I attended with seven other MDT (Multidisciplinary Team) partners, including individuals from the District Attorney's office, DCFS, Nye County Sheriff's Office, Owl Light Counseling, and a forensic interviewer, most of whom had never been part of an MDT before.*

*Throughout the conference, I had the privilege of attending ten different classes, each offering invaluable insights that directly benefit my work. A few highlights included:*

*Adolescent Psychosexual Development in the Digital Age (Discussing Sexting): This class provided crucial insights into the unique challenges adolescents face in the digital age, particularly concerning sexting, and how we can better support and protect them in this evolving landscape.*

*Yes, CACs Can Serve Children and Families Impacted by Problematic Sexual Behavior: This session was particularly eye-opening as it challenged existing protocols that currently restrict us from working with youth affected by problematic sexual behavior. The knowledge gained will hopefully influence how we approach these cases, enabling us to offer better support to caregivers and the youth involved.*

*Come Prepared and Leave in Sync: Structuring Pre/Post Forensic Interview Discussions to Boost MDT Collaboration: This session focused on the importance of timing and structure before and after forensic interviews (FIs) to improve communication and collaboration within MDTs. The impact was immediate, and we have already implemented pre- and post-interview meetings, as well as a task list for MDT partners after every forensic interview conducted at the CAC.*

*Beyond the educational sessions, the team-building aspect of the conference was invaluable. Collaborating closely with my MDT partners, many of whom were new to this type of collaboration,*

*has not only strengthened our working relationships but will undoubtedly have a positive impact on our future efforts in Nye County.*

*Given the tremendous value of this conference, I believe it is an essential opportunity, and I would love to attend again in the future, ideally with additional members from our partnering agencies.*

**Senior Deputy District Attorney**

*I am writing to you following my attendance at the Annual San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment. I wanted to share how incredibly valuable this experience was for my work as a prosecutor with the Nye County District Attorney's Office, and how it directly impacts our ability to effectively handle the most challenging cases of child rape, sexual assault, child sex trafficking and exploitation cases. As you know, I prosecute some of the most heinous crimes imaginable, those involving the rape of child, sex trafficking and manufacturing and distribution of child pornography. This conference provided me with invaluable insights and practical strategies from leading experts in the field, which will directly enhance our prosecution efforts.*

*Specifically, the sessions I attended, including:*

*"What the Forensic Interviewer Needs Before Testifying"*

*"Generational Differences"*

*"We're Just Going to Talk: Presenting Your Case in Opening Statement"*

*"Sex Trafficking Investigation of the Self Professed Child Lover"*

*"What Prosecutors Need to Know About Social Media"*

*"Where the Boys are: Investigating & Prosecuting Cases When Victim is Male"*

*"Understanding Abusive Head Trauma"*

*"Ask the Tough Questions: Strategies for Addressing Numerosity"*

*"Gathering Details in Child Sex Trafficking Forensic Interviews"*

*"Courage to Convict: Jury Selection in a Child Sexual Abuse Case"*

*These sessions directly addressed critical challenges we face in our cases. For instance, the session on "Strategies for Addressing Numerosity" was particularly helpful in addressing the complexities of a recent case involving multiple young victims of forced fellatio. I was able to discuss specific case details with experts and gain insight on how to best present this type of case to a jury. Furthermore, the "Presenting Your Case in Opening Statement" and "Jury Selection in a Child Sexual Abuse Case" sessions provided crucial techniques for strengthening my presentations and selecting jurors who are prepared to handle the graphic and emotionally challenging nature of these trials. I also attended the forensic interviewing classes to increase my ability to question very young child victims on the stand.*

*The opportunity to network with other professionals, including forensic interviewers, and learn about their roles in supporting prosecutions, was also incredibly beneficial. This also included spending time at night and during breaks with the Nye County MDT to plan how to improve our ability to help children with the local Nye County Team. These interactions provided a more holistic understanding of the entire process and reinforced the importance of collaboration.*

*Ultimately, the knowledge and skills I gained at this conference will allow me to more effectively advocate for child victims and hold perpetrators accountable. This directly aligns with the mission of the Nye County District Attorney's Office and the needs of our community.*

*Positive impact from the conference:*

*The immediate practical application of the knowledge gained at the conference was evident this past week. Working alongside our Nye County multidisciplinary team, comprised of our forensic interviewer, victim advocate, and detective (all of whom attended the conference), we were able to swiftly and effectively respond to a report of child abuse. A young girl reported that her stepfather had touched her inappropriately. Leveraging the skills acquired at the conference, our forensic interviewer conducted a sensitive and thorough interview, facilitated by our victim advocate. Within 48 hours, our detective, also benefiting from the conference training, collaborated with me and the other Deputy District Attorney who attended the conference to draft a criminal complaint alleging the defendant inappropriately touched the girl's breast and compelled her to undress. This rapid and coordinated response allowed us to immediately detain the defendant and keep him custody, ensuring the girl's safety and preventing further potential harm. This case exemplifies the direct and tangible impact of the conference on our ability to protect the children of Nye County!*

*I believe highlighting the impact of this training on our ability to prosecute these difficult cases could be a powerful component of future grant applications. This conference directly increases the effectiveness of our office in dealing with child maltreatment.*

*Thank you for your dedication to securing resources for our office.*

## **Deputy District Attorney**

*Attending the 40th Annual Chadwick Conference sharpened my skills in trying these complex cases and strengthened my ability to work within a multidisciplinary team. I gained valuable insights on forensic interviews, presenting child testimony, child abuse injuries, and handling sensitive evidence—making me a more effective advocate in the courtroom. The conference also reinforced the importance of collaboration with law enforcement, child advocates, and medical professionals, helping me better navigate the team approach to these cases. Overall, it enhanced my ability to seek justice while minimizing trauma for survivors.*

### **Classes Attended**

- *Keynote: Honoring our Past, Embracing Our Future*
- *Attendee Meet Up: Investigators/Legal*
- *From Rote Beginnings To Child Led Interviews: How Science Directs Forensic Interviewing*
- *Ensuring We Get Cases Right: Identifying Mistakes that Lead to Child Abuse Being Ruled*
- *We're Just Going to Talk: Presenting Your Case In Opening Argument and Closing Argument*
- *The Sex Trafficking Investigation of The Self-Professed Child Lover "Uncle Tommy"*
- *What the Prosecutors & MDT Professionals Need to Know About Social Media*
- *Where the Boys Are: Investigating And Prosecuting Cases When Victim is A Male*
- *Understanding Abusive Head Trauma For The Non-Medical Professional*
- *Drug Endangered Children - Often The Forgotten Ones*
- 
- *Attorneys, Judges, Law Enforcement, Investigator Professionals - Forum*

- Addressing Delayed Disclosure
- Keynote: Leave No Child Sexual Abuse Survivor Behind
- Courage to Convict: Jury Selection In A Child Sexual Abuse Case

## **Nye County Sheriff's Office Detective General Assignment Unit**

*I am reaching out regarding the Annual San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment and the significant impact it had on my role as a detective investigating crimes against children in Nye County. This conference provided critical training that directly enhances our ability to investigate and successfully prosecute cases involving child sexual abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and severe physical abuse.*

*The training provided valuable insights into the latest investigative techniques, victim-centered approaches, and strategies for building strong cases against offenders. Learning from experts in the field has enhanced my ability to handle these complex and sensitive investigations, ensuring that evidence is properly collected, and victims receive the best possible support throughout the process. One of the most valuable aspects of the conference was the opportunity to collaborate with our multidisciplinary team—including prosecutors, victim advocates, and forensic interviewers. This training has already proven beneficial in recent investigations, where the skills and strategies learned have helped strengthen cases and expedite justice for child victims.*

*This conference is a vital resource for law enforcement, equipping us with specialized knowledge that is essential for investigating and prosecuting these complex cases. Continued support for this training directly improves our ability to protect the most vulnerable members of our community. The training provided valuable insights into the latest investigative techniques, victim-centered approaches, and strategies for building strong cases against offenders. Learning from experts in the field has enhanced my ability to handle these complex and sensitive investigations, ensuring that evidence is properly collected, and victims receive the best possible support throughout the process. As investigative methods, legal standards, and offender tactics continue to evolve, it is crucial to stay informed and adapt to these changes. Attending this conference annually ensures that I receive the most up-to-date information, allowing me to continuously improve my investigative skills and better serve the victims in our community.*

*Thank you for your efforts in securing funding to make these opportunities possible. I would be happy to provide any additional information on how this training benefits our work.*

## **Division of Child and Family Services Social Work Supervisor II**

*Each of these classes that I attended are of benefit to me in my practice. Some of the classes gave specific methods of practice that could be shared with my colleagues, or certain programs that could be adopted to help the community, so that community partners could also find roles within these programs. Some of the classes I attended alongside my fellow colleagues from different disciplines, others we all attended separately. Whenever we were in free time during the day, we all shared what we were learning and discussed how we could incorporate this new information in our meetings and work as an MDT. I felt like the team that gathered this year truly felt like a team and I walked away inspired and excited to work alongside these colleagues to truly cultivate change in our community. I would love nothing more than to continue to attend this conference every year that I am able, as I have found value in each class I have taken, this year and last, and I believe that my attendance will*

*continue to inspire me to work hard in bettering the child welfare system in rural Nevada and working with my community partners with a clear focus on the goals of each discipline.*

*Classes I attended:*

*Engaging Bio Caregivers in Three Trauma Treatments for Children in Foster Care*  
*Ensuring We Get Cases Right: Identifying Mistakes that Lead to Child Abuse Being Ruled Out*  
*R.L.'s Story: The Intersection of Child Abuse & Neglect*  
*Tips for the MDT from the Perspective of a Child Abuse Pediatrician*  
*What We Know About Forensic Interviewing of Adolescents: From Science to Practice & Back*  
*Where the Spirit Meets the Bone: Cultivating Compassion for Difficult Clients*  
*Drug Endangered Children: Often the Forgotten Ones*  
*Understanding Grooming Behavior: Critical for Prevention & Intervention*  
*Child Welfare Professionals Forum*  
**Forensic Interviewer**

*I attended the following classes:*

*Embracing our Future*  
*From Rote Beginnings to Child-led interviews: How science directs forensic interviewing*  
*Child Interviewing 2025: Update on Research & practice*  
*Get Out of My Life, but first could you drive me to the CAC: Serving ALL Teens at CAC's.*  
*One Size Does not Fit ALL: Practices to Support Skill Development in Forensic Interviewers*  
*What We Know about Forensic Interviewing of Adolescents: From Science to Practice & Back*  
*What is the Next Best Question?*  
*Responding to Suicidality at the CAC: Considerations for Forensic Interviewers*  
*Asking The Tough Questions; Strategies for Addressing Numerosity, Dating & Severity*  
*Interviewing Child Victims with Autism*  
*Gathering Details in Child Sex Trafficking Forensic Interviews*  
*Leave No Child Sexual Abuse Survivor Behind*  
*Relieving Reluctance; The Power of Holding Space for Appropriate Reactions through Disclosure*  
*All the classes that I attended the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual San Diego International Conference on Child & Family Maltreatment were valuable. As this is a constantly evolving field, I gained some valuable insight into the current best practices and the upcoming changes that the experts are making.*

*Hearing several speakers speak on the importance of bringing adolescents to the CAC was eye opening. As we currently do bring most adolescents to the CAC, we do not bring them all. It was valuable to have these discussions with our attending team in the evenings on how to best address this issue and what we could do differently as a team to meet their needs.*  
*We are seeing more and more children with disabilities both learning physically and emotionally. In Interviewing Children with Autism, it was reassuring to hear that what we are doing is good and learning that we can tweak a couple of things and ask a few questions up front that can make it even better. Hearing from her what she allows in the room vs what she does not was also helpful.*

*Beings that we live 45 minutes from one of the largest youth trafficking cities in the United States it was great to gain useful techniques on interviewing trafficked victims. It was valuable to me to gain insight on what to ask prior to the interview - such as what are the goals that their team are hoping to get from the interview. Such an important question to narrow down your question asking in regard to "the pimp, John's, which locations, etc." - and gaining understanding that we are not going to get details on both in 1 interview.*  
*I was able to have a DA attending numerosity, dating and severity with me - which turned out to be great! It was wonderful for him to hear how victims are not going to be able to give specific dates,*



*the number of times something happens, etc. It was nice for him to hear from an expert something that we have discussed several times.*

*The conference as a whole was excellent. I learned a lot and look forward to implementing things that I learned and returning to hear about what is new and evolving, however the team building that took place over lunch and in the evenings is invaluable. We were able to discuss things that were learned at our respective classes - how it would benefit specific disciplines and see if we could implement it without impeding on other disciplines. It was great to have uninterrupted collaboration and make some plans on how we can move forward as a team. As a matter of fact - one the items that we discussed was implemented the week of our return - which in turn has led to additional charges in an evolving case.*

*This conference is a must attend for anyone who works in our discipline.*

## **MA, LCPC, CATP, CCTP**

*I attended the 40th Annual San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment this past January. I found a lot of value in the classes offered and the one's I chose to attend. It was difficult at times to choose because there were multiple that I felt would add to my ability as a therapist. The following classes are the ones that really resonated and benefitted me professionally.*

**ENGAGING BIOLOGICAL CAREGIVERS IN THREE TRAUMA TREATMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE:** *Foster care carries a unique set of challenges for children, especially in the realm of attachment. This class was helpful in learning how to best include parents in treatment, even if their child is in foster care, and how to foster attachment during it.*

**DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF AUTISM TO FACILITATE MORE EFFECTIVE TRAUMA TREATMENT-PART 1:** *I work with a lot of the Neurodivergent community. This was very well put together and helped widen my Neuro Affirming lens and approaches with my clients.*

**SEXUAL HEALTH CONVERSATIONS IN TRAUMA TREATMENT: WHERE HAVE WE BEEN, AND WHERE ARE WE NOW?** *This was one of my favorites as it really helped me understand what the term Sexual Health meant. As many of my child and adolescent clients have sexual trauma, this class was very beneficial in helping me understand how to approach them to help them have healthy views and make good decisions surrounding their sexual health moving forward.*

**SHAKE IT OFF: USING PSYCHOSENSORY TECHNIQUES TO PROMOTE CLIENT EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND POST TRAUMATIC GROWTH DURING TREATMENT PHASE:** *This class was very practical and helpful in further filling my toolbox with ways to help my traumatized client's come out of survival mode and move into a more adaptive level of functioning. Using creative arts, movement and somatic techniques, it helped me bolster my ability to help my clients move from the freeze state they are often in.*

*These are only a few of the classes that were impactful for me as a professional. I also really enjoyed the team building aspect of the experience. The MDT team spent time together, simply getting to know each other and building rapport. By the time I returned home, I felt closer to them and much more comfortable working on this team. It was valuable to me to hear their side of things and gave me greater appreciation for all they can bring to the table. I would truly love to attend again next year. This was my second year and neither year disappointed me in the value and knowledge I was able to gain. Thank you!*

**Key Outcomes:**

**Enhanced Knowledge and Skills:** The team gained invaluable knowledge on best practices in child forensic interviewing, trauma-informed care, legal strategies, and the latest trends in handling child abuse cases. The classes covered a broad range of relevant topics, such as the challenges of adolescent psychosexual development in the digital age, investigative techniques for child sex trafficking, trauma treatments for children in foster care, and understanding abusive head trauma. The breadth of information allowed each member of the MDT to gain insights directly applicable to their roles, strengthening their capacity to serve the children and families in Nye County.

**Immediate Application:** The training from the conference has already been put into practice within our MDT. For instance, Kirsty Mills, the Child and Family Advocate, noted the direct impact of learning new methods for structuring pre- and post-forensic interview discussions, which have already been implemented within the MDT's procedures. Similarly, the knowledge gained by our forensic interviewer, Emily Smith, on interviewing children with autism, has provided a clear framework for improving interviews with children with disabilities. The ability to implement new approaches promptly has led to improved collaboration and more efficient responses to cases involving child abuse.

**Strengthened MDT Collaboration:** One of the most significant takeaways from this experience has been the strengthened collaboration within the MDT. For many team members, this was their first experience working together as part of an MDT. However, through shared learning, group discussions, and team-building activities during the conference, relationships were formed, and a shared understanding of each other's roles developed. This has translated into more effective communication and coordination back in Nye County, which is essential for the timely and effective handling of cases involving child maltreatment.

**Focused Case Impact:** Jason Gunnell, Senior Deputy District Attorney, highlighted how the skills learned at the conference had an immediate impact on a case involving a 12-year-old girl. Leveraging the insights from the conference, the MDT was able to respond swiftly and effectively, ensuring the safety of the child and bringing the perpetrator to justice. This real-time application of knowledge demonstrates how vital such training is in creating meaningful change in the lives of those we serve.

**Professional Development and Team Spirit:** The conference allowed team members not only to enhance their professional skills but also to bond as a cohesive team. Mary Wilson, a counselor from Owl Light Counseling, emphasized how the shared learning experience has improved her understanding of trauma-informed care and deepened her appreciation for the diverse roles within the MDT. This sense of unity and mutual respect has fostered a collaborative spirit that will continue to benefit our community as we work together to address child maltreatment.

The Nye County MDT's attendance at the 40th Annual San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment has been incredibly valuable. It has not only enhanced individual knowledge and skills but has also resulted in immediate improvements in our team's ability to respond to and prevent child abuse and maltreatment. The conference

reinforced the importance of a multidisciplinary approach, strengthened our ability to collaborate effectively, and directly benefited the children and families in Nye County.

We are grateful for the funding provided by the CJA Taskforce and look forward to future opportunities to attend this impactful conference, as the insights gained are critical to our ongoing efforts to protect and advocate for the children in our community.

## **Clark County Updates**

Clark County utilized \$40,000 in grant funding to conduct two forensic interview trainings for our community partners. The first training took place in July 2024, and the second in October 2024. A total of 34 professionals were trained in the National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC) Forensic Interview Protocol—20 participants in July and 14 in October.

This five-day training equips participants with the necessary tools to conduct forensic interviews with children who have disclosed abuse and/or neglect. The overwhelming feedback was that the training was not only instrumental in teaching a research-based,

unbiased approach to interviewing children, but it also provided valuable insight into child development and effective strategies for asking open-ended questions. These skills are critical in eliciting as much relevant information as possible when investigating allegations of child abuse.

During the training, each participant had the opportunity to practice the techniques they learned. While they will not need to attend the basic training again, we offer ongoing peer review opportunities to help them maintain and refine their skill sets. Our dedicated forensic interviewers review the interviews conducted in the field and provide constructive feedback to support continuous improvement.

The training and peer review process significantly enhance our ability to gather comprehensive information, allowing us to make informed decisions regarding the safety and well-being of children in Clark County. Participants have expressed appreciation for this training, recognizing its value in their work, and many have encouraged their colleagues to attend future sessions.

## **NVIFN Updates**

We are able to assign proper patient identification, case and MR number to the photographic evidence in real time. Second, the system allows us to remain in HIPAA compliance in every way. Third, the system comes with an iPad for ease of photo verification and clarity as well as ability to take photos via voice control. These exams often times requires the nurse to use both hands for assessment and a foot pedal to take the photo. The voice control is a game changer, especially with children who have a hard time sitting still. The iPad also allows for involvement of the survivor in the exam which has aided in taking the fear out of the photo portion. They will often ask to see the photos and I can clinically and competently provide them information about their own bodies. Lastly, the quality of the photos and ability to add documentation to the photo itself without changing the original photo keeps every

photo admissible in court and provides jurors with clear, precise photos. We are using the camera system for every exam now that all our nurses are trained to use it.”

We can provide more information once we return from the conference if you need. I hope this helps for now. I didn’t want to wait till next week to reply. Thank you for this grant to purchase this. It’s been amazing

## CJA Grantee Quarterly Update

As a CJA Grant funds recipient, it is mandatory that a thorough and complete report be provided to the CJA coordinator each quarter during the grant funded year. Failure to provide these reports may result in a withdrawal of grant funds. If you have any questions about the reporting requirements, please contact the CJA Coordinator, Dylan Nall, [dnall@dcfs.nv.gov](mailto:dnall@dcfs.nv.gov)

### Grantee Information

Name: Ida Peeks	Date: 3/24/2025
Agency: Washoe County Health and Human Services	
SFY2025 Grant Funds Received: \$15,000	
Funds expended to date: \$5155.28 (\$3,096 billed)	

### **Part One: Activities Funded and Evaluation Work**

#### **Per Grant Application, funded activities:**

1. WCHSA will provide a range of discipline specific and advanced trainings for the CAC team and members of the CAC multi-disciplinary (MDT) to enhance services and stay current with emerging trends and best practices. Trainings are specific to child interviewing for forty-five welfare staff, Safe & Together Model training for three supervisors and four welfare staff, and International Symposium on Child Abuse Conference for two welfare staff. Additionally, WCHSA will purchase 6 Remarkable tablets with the intent of providing technology to staff members at the CAC to improve the investigation and assessment of child abuse and neglect.

#### **Describe all work related to the funded activities above. This includes objectives, activities completed, results of the activities and any barriers your agency incurred during this quarter:**

1. WCHSA will provide a range of discipline specific and advanced trainings for the CAC team and members of the CAC multi-disciplinary (MDT) to enhance services and stay current with emerging trends and best practices. Trainings are specific to child interviewing for forty-five welfare staff, Safe & Together Model training for three supervisors and four welfare staff, and International Symposium on Child Abuse Conference for two welfare staff.

Objectives: Increase front end knowledge and information gathering techniques to improve the quality of evidence and information gathered and utilized to make safety decisions.

Activities Planned: March 2025 – CAC conference in Alabama  
April/May 2025 – Domestic violence training  
May 2025 – child interview training

Activity Completed: Child Abuse Symposium

Results of Activities: Two members of the CAC unit attended a multidisciplinary conference held in Alabama, designed to strengthen knowledge, skills, and collaboration within Child Advocacy Center (CAC) teams and their multidisciplinary team (MDT) partners.

## CJA Grantee Quarterly Update

Throughout the conference, participants engaged in specialized training sessions aimed at enhancing their ability to effectively coordinate investigations and services in cases involving child abuse.

Key discussion topics included strategies for the prevention of child abuse, as well as best practices for the assessment and evaluation of information to determine whether abuse has occurred. The symposium placed a strong emphasis on the critical role of MDT collaboration in gathering comprehensive and reliable evidence while minimizing trauma to child victims.

Participants also explored methods for improving communication patterns, balancing workloads, and managing conflict within MDTs to promote efficiency and cohesion. The knowledge and best practices gained from the conference will be shared across the CAC unit and the MDT to strengthen ongoing efforts in child abuse prevention, investigation, and support for victims and their families

Any Barriers: The Child Welfare League annual conference was full, and we were unable to send staff to this conference. We completed a budget modification and revised this activity to a remote domestic violence training, which will have a greater impact for the Agency, allowing additional staff to be trained beyond the original two planned to attend the conference.

2. WCHSA will purchase 6 reMarkable tablets with the intent of providing technology to staff members at the CAC to improve the investigation and assessment of child abuse and neglect.

Objectives: To allow for more technology resources to better manage caseloads and assist staff with through documentation of case activities. reMarkable allow for paperless signatures on forms from the field and paperless note taking in the field.

Activities Planned: In the final quarter of the grant award we will purchase additional pens and replacement tips that are specific to the use of the reMarkable tablets, and as budget allows, review for the possibility of purchasing a 5<sup>th</sup> tablet.

Activity Completed: reMarkable tablets were purchased in a prior quarter and are being utilized consistently in the field.

Results of Activities: reMarkable tablets have been distributed to staff who have shown difficulties in case documentation. The flexibility of these devices allows staff to use them from the field and work more efficiently without needing an internet connection. We have seen improvements with documentation timeliness and thoroughness for those who were distributed tablets.

Any Barriers: No current barriers have been identified.

### **PART TWO: NARRATIVE**

Please provide complete answers to the following questions.

1. If any materials were produced with grant funds, please provide a copy (copies) electronically with this report.
2. Please provide a brief success story with the use of this CJA funding during the current quarter.

## CJA Grantee Quarterly Update

Enhancing knowledge and expanding tools have a direct and measurable impact on multidisciplinary team (MDT) operations and child welfare practice within Washoe County. Notably, one attendee immediately applied prevention strategies from the recent training to an active case, utilizing techniques to guide a family in understanding appropriate disciplinary practices.

Washoe County has several upcoming training initiatives designed to strengthen frontline skills and improve case practice. A specialized child forensic interview training will provide in-depth instruction to 45 staff members, refining their abilities to conduct interviews specifically focused on allegations of abuse and neglect. This targeted training will distinguish forensic interviewing techniques from general interview practices, ultimately improving the quality and reliability of information obtained from children.

Additionally, focused training on information gathering will strengthen case documentation, ensuring alignment with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) while meeting the expectations of the SAFE Model. This effort aims to close identified practice gaps and promote consistency in case decision-making.

Upcoming domestic violence training sessions will further enhance staff competencies, equipping them with advanced skills to navigate the unique challenges these cases often present. Staff will be better prepared to ask informed, strategic questions that elicit critical information, helping reduce barriers and supporting improved outcomes for families impacted by domestic violence.

If assistance is needed regarding your grant, please email, **Dylan Nall**, [dnall@dcfs.nv.gov](mailto:dnall@dcfs.nv.gov).

The Quarterly Updates are due to the CJA Coordinator, Dylan Nall, **3 weeks** before the quarterly CJA Meeting. If your agency does not have any current updates, please email Dylan Nall stating, "No quarterly update."

### **2024/2025 Meeting Dates:**

## MINUTES

### Nevada Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force

February 7, 2025

8:30am

#### **1. Call to Order – Salli Kerr, Chair**

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 AM.

#### **Members Present:**

Name	Organization
Britt Young	Nevada PEP
Denise Tyre	Washoe County Human Services Agency
Jamie Wong	Division of Child and Family Services
Jane Saint	Boys Town Nevada
Janice Wolfe	Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada
Isaac Rowe	Deputy Attorney General
Lauren Pow	Children's Cabinet
Laurie Jackson	Division of Child and Family Services
Margaret Pickard	Eighth Judicial District
Michelle Rodriguez	Family Court Master
Rachell Ekroos	Health Professional
Salli Kerr, Chair	Western Regional CAC
Selby Marks	Nevada Department of Public Safety

#### **Members Absent:**

Name	Organization
Angelina Blare	Adult Survivor
Christine Sullivan	Division of Child and Family Services
Massey Mayo	Children's Attorney
Melanie McCormick	Nevada CASA
Wonswayla Mackey	Division of Child and Family Services

#### **Guests:**

Name	Organization
Alicia Summers	Court Improvement Project
Candace Lewis Vaughn	Division of Child and Family Services
Jennifer Bevacqua	Division of Child and Family Services
Kristy Mills	Nevada Outreach Training Organization
Rachael Berg	Great Basin Child Advocacy Center



**Staff Support:**

Name	Organization
Dylan Nall	Division of Child and Family Services

**2. For Information: Roll Call – Dylan Nall, DCFS**

Dylan Nall called the roll. There was a quorum.

**3. Initial Public Comment (Discussion only: Action may not be taken on any matter brought up under this agenda item until scheduled for action at a later meeting) – Salli Kerr, Chair**

There was no comment.

**4. For Information: Review of the CJA Task Force Goals – Dylan Nall, DCFS**

Dylan Nall thanked everyone for meeting on a Friday, which is not the normal day. These are the goals we approved and turned into the Children’s Bureau for our three-year assessment.

Goal 1 is to 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 (ICWA), sexual abuse, interpersonal violence, forensic interviewing, mandatory reporting, trauma informed practices, substance use, and co-occurring mental health disorders in training identified in collaboration with the Court Improvement Program.

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 Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT) and Task Forces.

Goal 3 support the establishment of new Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) or other multidisciplinary team approaches and improve the capacity of existing CACs to provide a multi-disciplinary response for victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation, witness to interpersonal violence, physical abuse, and victims with disabilities.

Goal 4 is to fund technology requests to improve the investigation, assessment, and prosecution of child abuse and neglect through the use of the latest technology and to support the use of new and existing training technologies.

Goal 5 this task force will monitor policy regulation and/or legislation regarding child abuse and neglect trends and when appropriate collaborate with other parties and entities to support new and/or revised policy, regulation, and legislation.

There were no comments.

**5. For Possible Action: Consideration and Approval of October 1, 2024, meeting minutes – Salli Kerr, Chair**

Dylan Nall wanted everyone to understand that she did not push the “record” button for that meeting and the minutes had to be reconstructed from notes. She apologized and assured the group that today is being recorded. If anyone had anything they wished to add, they should feel free. Jane Saint said not to worry, she had done that many times herself. Britt Young noted she was listed as a guest and not a voting member. Rachell Ekroos moved the minutes be approved as corrected. Judge Pickering seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

**6. For Possible Vote to Approve: Consideration, Discussion and Approval of the 2024 Annual Citizen’s Review Panel (CRP) recommendations to DCFS - Dylan Nall, DCFS**

This item was switched with item #7 below, which was discussed first.

The meeting then returned to this item

Dylan Nall said that every year the Children's Justice Act Task Force establishes recommendations that goes to DCFS and its administrator. These are first submitted to the Task Force by the Citizen Review Panel, which drafted these in November 2024:

1. The Children’s Justice Task Force (CJA) recommends the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) continue to prioritize training for all child welfare staff and community partners in the State of Nevada to improve the investigation and handling of child abuse, neglect, or cases involving both, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation. This training recommendation includes, but is not limited to, child protection assessment and system of care models, family and interpersonal violence, mandatory reporting, medical forensic interventions, trauma-informed practices, and cultural responsiveness.
2. The Children’s Justice Task Force (CJA) recommends the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) support efforts to translate best practices and support community-based needs to coordinate the multidisciplinary response to child abuse, neglect, or cases involving both, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation. This Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) recommendation includes introducing, maintaining, and establishing Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) in conjunction with the Nevada State CAC Chapter as appropriate.

Rachell Ekroos said they spent quite a bit of time on them last year and really worked on using language that supports best practices and things of that nature. Then they reviewed all the feedback from last time and the comments and the activities and everything still aligned really well. The one phrase they changed was “interpersonal violence” from “domestic violence.”

Judge Pickard asked, so is it believed that DCFS doesn't follow best practices, and not doing the training? Is that why this recommendation is being issued? Dylan Nall said, no, when we do our notice of funding and the things that we are funding with the CJA, it can be a little bit confusing, but DCFS does prioritize training for all child welfare staff. Judge Pickard said she was just trying to clarify if they're already doing it.

Salli Kerr said that is why it says, "continues to prioritize." Judge Pickard said that is the reason she brought that up. We're all part of a lot of committees, and if we just tell them to do what they're doing, she doesn't think we're making a significant impact to help change the system. What's the primary purpose in issuing the recommendation?

Rachell Ekroos said one of the conversations as these have developed over time has been to ensure that it's a more comprehensive recommendation and approach and not just supporting line items that DCFS may be doing. That is why you see we want to ensure through planning processes with these other committees that we're recommending that all of these items be included. Judge Pickard wondered, by issuing the recommendations, how will that be able to change practices currently followed by DCFS? Justice Saitta brought up recently that we are inundating DCFS with recommendations. That's why she disbanded one of her committees. Judge Pickard is just trying to make sure we have the best impact because otherwise it's just going to be another item that they gloss over because it's not necessarily a unique recommendation. She wonders if it's just another statement that's substantially similar to what was issued last year. Justice Cadish has also said that we need to make impactful statements that are making change and not reiterating what we're already doing.

Rachell Ekroos asked Dylan Nall if she had access to the responses from the last round of making recommendations. Dylan said she should pull them from her e-mail.

Judge Pickard asked if the responses are such that people are feeling like those needs are not being met, the training isn't sufficient, that they're really not doing training

Rachell Ekroos said that out of those recommendations was the training on the death of the child investigation; this is an example of impacts based on recommendations. Judge Pickard said that was not listed here, but Dylan noted that would be "medical forensic intervention."

Dylan Nall put up on the screen last year's recommendation from 2023. We said that we continue prioritizing training to all child welfare and stakeholders in the state to improve investigation handling. Basically the same thing again now; we use "interpersonal violence." Then the response was division accepts this recommendation: child welfare staff receive initial training that includes how to conduct and complete a child abuse and neglect investigation.

Judge Pickard said she got that, but the last sentence says the division encourages the Children's Justice Act Task force to continue prioritizing funding, so you're saying we're issuing the recommendation and based on our articulated recommendation, we're going to assign funding opportunities and they're saying we're doing it, and just want to make sure you continue to prioritize it? So, this recommendation is going to be the same then as last time and the funding opportunities just continue. Is that it? We really have to

to effectuate change, right? We have to call out things that aren't being done. She wants to make sure that we have impact and that we make a difference and that we point out, here's something that needs to be addressed. Now, the response is OK, we already do it, can you please make sure we continue to get funding? Because it sounds like a lot of this is what we did last time.

Jane Saint said she loved Judge Pickard's comments. She wondered if, with some of the recommendations that her other groups are making, do you ever feel that there's pushback or resentment of the recommendations being made, because the Division is like, well, we're already doing that, and you can't tell us what to do.

Judge Pickard thought that was one of the reasons that the Nevada Children's Justice Commission was disbanded, because that's exactly what DCFS said; that this is the 4th or 5th agency that's telling us to do the exact same thing we're doing and Justices Saitta and Cadish pointed that out and said as a result, they disbanded that group because, they said, the same comments over and over and over again, and we're not making progress with this organization and they disbanded.

Janice Wolf said with regard to the Nevada Children's Commission, she thought the issue was at one point the Commission went to the legislature and the governor for funding and authority to be able to actually act, and that was denied. So the Commission was kind of limping along on a wing and prayer, without funding and with minimal staffing and as a result all they could do was make suggestions but didn't really have a lot of authority to actually enforce anything or oversee anything to ensure progress.

Judge Pickard said she was sure that was absolutely true. She just wanted to make sure that there's really change and that the group is progressive and that really we focus on what the needs of the community are and meeting those needs. The comments by DCFS specifically during those meetings was, you're telling us to do the same thing. We really need your funding, but you're telling us do the same thing that we've been doing.

Rachell Ekroos said if you also look at Recommendation 2, from the committees she's been on, she hasn't seen any of them specifically addressing continuing support of or developing the CACs across the state and the reason that recommendation is in there is that in our rural frontier areas we do not have access to the forensic interviews and the quality medical forensic exams that the children with acute and delayed disclosures deserve; so one of the reasons that is in there is to address a gap in services for children across the state. Judge Pickard said that was perfect.

Jane Saint asked how, moving forward, what do we do so that DCFS doesn't look at us as coming in and going, you have to change all this and do this, this and this? How can we partner with them to really have impactful change?

Judge Pickard said she thought by providing recommendations that are very clear and specific, like forensic interviewing in the north part of the state, which is incredibly crucial. But that is not how she reads the current recommendations. Now, DCFS might read this and they gloss over it and they try to meet the needs or they try to read between the lines.

Salli Kerr asked when this is all due. Dylan Nall said, if this is going to cause a little bit of headache, we can definitely push it forward to the April meeting, because she has then writes a report, and has to go through multiple levels of approval for her report and the responses have to be in the report. That is always why she makes sure we get this done in January because it gives her the ability to get her report done without it being late.

Judge Pickard asked if we could we get a list of services that are needed like the list of how to improve the Community resources through DCFS? Something like that. Salli Kerr said we would reconvene the committee in order to do that kind of in-depth work, meaning the committee that puts these recommendations together, chaired by Rachell Ekroos. Judge Pickard said you don't have to change the entire recommendation, but maybe adding some of the specifics would be helpful.

Rachell Ekroos said, for example, for a CAC to be certified, they have to have forensic interviewers and access to the forensic medical exam. That is included if they're going to support the CACs, they are inherently supporting those gaps in services and the CAC, the reason we go with the CAC model is so that it is mandated to have to provide best practices and go through certification and recertification processes.

Judge Pickard asked, is that reading between the lines? Is that comprehensive enough that they'll know what are specific things or practices that are missing? So for example, one of the issues is there is a gap in resources in the North but how do we bring that out to the forefront instead of just kind of using broad language?

Rachell Ekroos said her understanding in the past is, when there were questions about what was recommended that is when we received clarification back from them and there would be that dialogue. Judge Pickard said that sounded good. She had to run, as she had a hearing, and she thanked the committee for having her concerns noted.

Rachael Berg of the Great Basin Child Advocacy Center said if we want further wording in here to help understand what specifically the CACs are needing for training, maybe talking with that state chapter or getting the opinions of all of the CACs here in Nevada as to where our gap of training is might be beneficial. It's all in the recommendation and she can understand it, but she works in the CAC world, so she knows for a reviewer or this task force, they might not understand all the things in the CAC world. For them, a more complete listing might be beneficial, and you get that from the CAC chapter and all of our inputs.

Salli Kerr said she wasn't reading it that way. Because this is more for DCFS perspective specifically, we 're asking them to engage in bringing the MDT and CAC model where appropriate. This is more just saying that we recommend that they support whatever efforts bring to fruition the necessary CAC services, and they have shown themselves to be doing that. Rachael said that made sense.

Rachell Ekroos said that she completely agreed with Rachael Berg about a more focused recommendation, if we were able to do that now for the committee. She wanted to share her understanding of this when she joined the committee a couple of years ago: if we present line item types of training and education, and we try to be prescriptive in exactly how they have to do or what they have to do on the trainings, her understanding is that they would come back because we don't have the authority to do that. They would ask that it be broader in a way that can encompass

more stakeholders that they have to represent. So, we had to be very careful not to do line items that represent a more narrow idea of the stakeholders because DCFS has to meet all the stakeholders needs, if that makes sense.

Denise Tyre wondered if maybe our recommendation could be more productive in having the response provide more information. Like for recommendation #1 how it says front end staff, we could say we recommend that DCFS identifies training that staff are needing in order to improve practices and have that worded in such a way that the response tells us what they've identified. So if she's overseeing front end staff and identified that we are having barriers around child interviewing, so then the response from DCFS would be, statewide these are our training needs and this is how we are going to meet them. The response that they give us now is kind of like a blanket and as the judge was talking about, they're just kind of giving us the words back, but we're not really asking them to provide any more information than the response that they gave us, so she is just wondering if that could be helpful. Then she asked how these recommendations tie to funding distribution from the grants. Are we as a committee supporting our own recommendations through our funding approvals or are we saying DCFS, you need to prioritize training and then giving out 1/10th of the training budget that they've requested?

Dylan Nall said our DCFS administrator has final say on our recommendation of whom we fund. We recommend but she decides. Denise Tyre answered that she just wanted to make sure if we're making recommendations to the state about what they should be prioritizing that we are also prioritizing those things as well as a committee. Dylan answered that last year we did prioritize and saved some money out of our budget to get that TriTech Forensic Training, which we're going to be talking about later, which is going to improve practice for the front end for those child death investigations for the entire state, which is huge, because then all of the state is going to be trained on one specific training regarding child death investigations.

Salli Kerr said that two years ago we brought in the statewide training for interpersonal violence, and they did it across the three regions and for specifically child welfare workers. When we have those opportunities, even the statewide training that's being developed right now is going to be broadly available to all MDT partners, including and with priority to child welfare workers. So we do try and align those things. We have to align them with the goals that we reviewed earlier and then certainly want to offer. If we're making a recommendation, then we would want our funding to align with that where it can and in particular in the recommendation 2. With the CACs, we do a lot of funding directly for either training or equipment, and so it aligns nicely with both the goals and this recommendation.

Rachell Ekroos said she loved this dialogue. Her question is, how specific do we want to get? That's something this committee has to say. Her concern is going back to the subcommittee and being more specific, as in: here's our recommendation, and here's our targeted outcomes for this recommendation. If we do that and we bring it back to the larger committee and it's not what the committee was interested in saying, we need that information now, or we need these members on the subcommittee with us to help wordsmith this. She is all for being more action oriented, and agrees with Judge Pickard and others who have spoken up that that is needed. It is her understanding that our parameters didn't allow that because there was no enforcement component

to it. She is happy to revisit this but is deferring to Dylan on our timelines and to members on this call as to who is also going to attend the subcommittee meeting.

Rachell Ekroos and Dylan Nall agreed on March 10 for the meeting. It was understood that the recommendations above would not be approved and directives made to the subcommittee on what we want and have the subcommittee report to the larger group. Dylan said she had Rachell Ekroos, Jane Saint, Salli Kerr, and Michelle Rodriguez for the subcommittee. Judge Pickard's clerk came on and said she would join. It was agreed to meet at noon on March 10<sup>th</sup>, and Dylan sent out an invite.

## **7. For Information: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Subcommittee Yearly Meeting**

### **Reminder – Sally Kerr, Chair**

Dylan Nall said this was posted to our DCFS Grants Management site on January 6. The due date will be the end of February. The notification date will June 2025. The performance period will be from July 1st, 2025, through June 30th, 2026.

Jane Saint asked who was on the NOFO subcommittee. Dylan answered that she is willing to take volunteers. If you were on it previously, please let her know if you would like to continue. She will be getting out the invitation for the meeting. It normally meets in late March. They submit to the larger Task Force, which will meet April 8.

Jane Saint asked how many people we want to have on the committee. Dylan said we have always had five. If we have a lower number, then it will be harder if someone has to leave or to make a quorum. Jane Saint added that if anyone is questioning the involvement, it's just reading the applications and scoring them. It's very enlightening to read what is written. It gives you a better understanding of how our funding is spent.

## **8. For Information: Reminder of Existing Mandated Reporter Training– Salli Kerr, Chair**

Salli Kerr reminded the meeting that there is Existing Mandatory Reporter Training that is available in Nevada, that the training is free, but to print out a certificate is \$7.99. We have also talked about this committee walking through that training. So, if you have time, you can use the link provided and walk through this training.

Dylan Nall said they had contracted for this training and made it specific to the laws and policies for Child Protective Services, and intakes, and mandated reporters. They are looking at getting it in Spanish and then adding specific course material for childcare providers and more language for medical professionals, law enforcement, etc., to make it more specific towards their professions. When they were putting this together, they had groups from every jurisdiction like Clark, Washoe, and the rural region sit down to make sure we were including everything.

Denise Tyre asked if there was any kind of marketing around this. Do we ask the jurisdictions to push it out through social media or are they allowed to do that? Dylan replied that she had tried advertising. Clark County has not responded, nor has Washoe. Denise said she would e-mail Dylan about this. Isaac Rowe said he would like to participate in this training, as well.

**9. For Information: Provide Task Force with State Fiscal Year 2026 NOFO time-frames – Dylan Nall, DCFS**

This item was passed over, as it was covered by item #7 above.

**10. For Information: DCFS progress on scheduling Trittech Forensic Training – Salli Kerr, Chair**

Dylan Nall gave an update on our Trittech training. We approved last year finding training for all child welfare staff and found there was a need for forensic training for the child death investigations. The guy who worked there had some medical issues, and a trainer was not available until this year. Trainings are now scheduled as follows:

Clark County: July 7 through July 10 (two sessions)

Washoe County: August 4 through August 7 (two sessions)

Rural Region: September through September 23 (one session)

For Clark County, July 7th and 8th is one session and then 9th and 10th is one session. Cheryl Cooley is going to host them. We do have a limit of 40 people per session. We can go up to 80, but we are going to request that they save 10 spots for Pahrump DCFS so that way our Pahrump office can get some people trained as well.

For Washoe County, August 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> is one session and then 9<sup>th</sup> and 10th is one session. We are going to do 80 people total, so 40 people per session and then again, we're asking them to save some seats for the rural region, for the people who are in Carson and maybe in Fernley.

Lastly, the rural region, we're able to get the trainer out to Elko County for one session, and Rachael Berg with the Great Basin Child Advocate Center, is working with us. However, our space is limited at that place. We are up to 30 people there.

We are developing flyers that are in draft right now that we need to push forward to our Trittech partners and then go up to our administration and then they can approve them, so then we can send them out to everybody and get people signed up.

Salli Kerr asked if Trittech provides all of the registration and the certificate. Dylan confirmed they do, while she is the point of contact, to make sure they are not exceeding the numbers for each session. Denise Tyre asked what is the plan for distributing the flyers? Dylan hoped to have them out by April. Denise replied we would also need to get with the individual regions and figure out how to distribute to the right law enforcement, the right advocates, the right district attorneys. Dylan agreed and put up the draft of the flyer on the screen.



## **11. For Information: Court Improvement Program and Judicial, Court and Attorney Measure of Performance (JCAMP) Presentation – Zaide Martinez, Statewide Court Improvement Program Officer**

Zaide Martinez, Court Improvement Officer at the Nevada Supreme Court, introduced herself and her colleague, Dr. Alicia Summers. They have been asked to present about JCAMP (Judicial, Court, and Attorney Measures of Performance). Slides were put up.

JCAMP was developed to make a set of performance measures to help the field understand and improve child welfare court practices. Historically, measures were usually measuring the child welfare system and not the judiciary and legal system. The five measures for the judicial and legal system include family engagement, due process, high-quality legal representation, safety, and permanency. The guiding principles for this are: highlight the child and family experience, incorporate equity, implement analysis meant to be usable and flexible for court stakeholders to inform practice, be guided by research and evidence and best practice recommendations including theories of change for each standard of measure how it relates to outcomes for children and families, and also to complement existing measures. Why Nevada wanted to do this is because we wanted to focus on quality hearing and quality representation efforts. We also wanted data collection and consistency for the judicial-legal aspect of child welfare and also improving dependency, practice and participatory governance. We wanted to hear from our stakeholders, not only in the in this field as professionals, but also our community and those with lived experience.

As you know, we're not a unified court system, and we have three different types of child welfare agencies. So, the JCAMP leadership team was made up of over 20 individuals from different disciplines. We had CASA judges, attorneys, DAs, those with lived experiences, parents, several judges. Magistrate Rodriguez was also part of JCAMP. The JCAMP leadership team eventually identified 37 measures (under the various headings above of family engagement, due process, legal representation, safety, and permanency). Then surveys were sent out to stakeholders. We also wanted to include CFSR items, Child and Family Services review items, so we can also contribute to the review because it's so highly focused on the child welfare agencies and their measures. CIP and Nevada really wanted the judiciary and our legal partners to contribute to that process because it includes both systems to make sure we have the best outcomes for children and families.

Alicia Summer introduced herself. She works nationally as a technical assistance provider to court improvement programs. Mostly her focus is on evaluating child welfare court practices and programs. She is happy to say that Nevada is further along than a lot of our states. A lot of folks had implementation for one year, struggled, and had to go back and do some changes, but Nevada has pushed through. Did year one of data collection and then went in and built a plan to sustain it by reducing the measures so it might be more useful and we're still working on how these data might help contribute to understanding what court practice looks like in relation to the agency practice on some of the metrics that you guys have to improve practice at a statewide level, but we're going to give you kind of a sampling of some of the findings that we had from our first round, we're still collecting data from the second round and it'll be out later this year.

They got some funding from the federal government to develop measures because they noticed some big gaps in the field. There was nothing like CFSR for the courts. There was a tool kit that came

out in 2008 that has court measures. They're mostly outcome measures, like timeliness of case processing or permanency outcomes and what that looks like for families. But there's very little that actually focuses on what's happening within the system. So, recognizing there were some gaps, they funded us to go in and see what was missing and what we needed. And we pulled together a team of 65 plus professionals, parents with lived experience, and youth who have been system involved, and created these measures based on a big review of the research to see what's missing and then conversations with everyone to see what do we think we need in the field to fill in some of these gaps and our hope with this is that this is something the courts can use to look at their own practice to reflect on because of some of the challenges. We're hoping it can be useful in the CFSR process. Some of the challenges in the courts working with the agency in the past have been people thinking, that's an agency measure that doesn't affect us, or that's not the court's job to fix. We're trying to resolve that by saying everybody has a role to play in improving practice and outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system.

This is a way that we identified to try to fill in the gaps. We only had one year to develop the measures, which is a really short time frame, and so we're still kind of testing them out and we're still working to evolve them and provide guidance on how to implement these a little bit better. Just to give you a sense of the way that the system works, you go through, and you prioritize the measures and then you line those up with what's the best way to collect data. There's different ways to collect the data, and we recognize, while surveys are always a good option for collecting the data, they are not always as robust as things like direct observation, depending on what you're looking for.

Luckily, we were able to do more robust data collection, so we used administrative data that's available from the agency to the Court in the 775 report that they get. There are parent focused things and judge practice and quality legal representation focus things. But in terms of youth, some of the things we've looked at are how do judges engage older youth when they're old enough to talk and they show up at court. This illustrates the different strategies judges use when youth are present, and this varies widely by judge. So we have some judges in the state and Nevada has some really good judges in terms of our checklist of hearing quality, they engage folks. They talk about a lot of things and they make findings on the record, but when their youth are present they speak directly to them about 60% of the time and call them by name 55% of the time and give them an opportunity to speak on the record 41% of the time. So, we definitely have some areas for improvement in enhancing engagement, or ask if they understand what happened at court or if they have questions or explain why they're there as part of the process.

We also asked the youth about their experience. Now these are all older youth and their experience might be different from those who are younger. A lot of these are in extended foster care. So, they're over 18. But when we looked at youth here, we asked them these questions and they answered on an agreement scale, and we tried to get a better sense of their understanding or engagement with the process and what they felt. Here are places that they were more likely to disagree, and you can see the numbers are still pretty small. This is only about 30% that disagreed or were neutral, but that they felt the judge heard and understood what they were saying, that they understood what happened in their court hearing. The biggest that we had disagreement on was if they felt prepared for their court hearings for us. This is an opportunity to think through why that is and how we can do better to make sure they understand what happens in court and that the judge is understanding them in a meaningful way. We recognize that this is an important piece for especially older youth, to feel like they have a voice in this process.

Other things we looked at: We asked youth to give us 3 words to describe the court process. "Sad" is the biggest and "long" was also on there. But some said "good", some said "scary" or "confusing." There was some positive and some negative, so there are more things for us to think about in terms of how we can enhance this process.

We asked attorneys to self-report what they felt about the process and most of them were saying that they meet with the youth before the court to prepare them for the hearing. 60% said they always or almost always meet with youth before court. Another 20% said they do that often, so that's 80% of children reporting that they do this. But that's a place where the youth were most likely to disagree that they did not feel prepared. Then there is meeting with the youth after the court hearing to discuss what happens next. That's happening less often, and so for these youth, we are seeing that that's only sometimes they meet afterwards to let them know, to help them understand the court process.

We also asked some questions around due process. Did they feel like their rights were explained to them? This is where we got the most disagreement and these numbers are still pretty low, though it's mostly agreement, mostly positive.

Judge Pickard had returned to the meeting, observing that 69% felt that the judge heard and understood what they were saying and then 7% disagreed. So really most of the kids seem to be feeling like even though there's some neutral in there that they're being heard. She asked if there are specifics then on the final report on how the judges should address it? Could that be sent to her? Zaide Martinez said it would be distributed after the meeting. Judge Pickard would like to send it to all the judges.

Alicia Summer said, one of the things that she found analyzing the data was when you look at their items, where they're noting agreement, it's pretty positive. When you ask them open-ended questions, it's less positive where they're voicing their opinions, so they might agree with some of these, but then when you're asking what that experience is like for them, they're putting things like sad or too long, or it's really overwhelming or confusing. So, we're getting a little bit of discrepancy between the agreement items, which is something we need to think about on our end. Work can be done to improve the presentation of data.

Dr. Summers concluded with some summary data around the quality of legal representation. Here are some things we learned about child attorneys and quality of legal representation. We have self-reporting saying we do this all the time at court, or we do it regularly at court. But then when we observe court, we don't see those things. So, when we observe court, we only saw child attorneys talking about the child's wishes in 20% of our court hearings. So, we see some discrepancies between what folks are saying and the challenges in court. It's not black and white and cut and dry when you're doing the court observation.

The original report is available for dissemination, happy to share. We are working on revising it with new data and showing data over time and also with less measures and we're still trying to figure out good ways to make this data digestible and usable for this committee. Going forward, we'd love to hear back.

Salli Kerr thanked them for the presentation, and asked that the slides and report be sent to Dylan Nall so she can get it to the Task Force. Zaide Martinez said they are working on a detailed report with a lot of data and one of their goals is to make it digestible, especially for judicial legal stakeholders.

Rachell Ekroos said one thing she thought CIP is running into, that she has run into as well, is translating our research findings and the limitations of those findings to the non-research end user. If they would like another set of eyes on their report and how to highlight the discrepancies between qualitative and quantitative she has 25 years working in this multidisciplinary environment and happy to lend a hand if it's useful. Alicia Summer said she would appreciate that. Rachell said she would e-mail her.

## **12. For Information: Updates to the Task Force on activities and spending of Children's Justice Act funds by current grantees – Salli Kerr, Chair**

No one from Clark County or the Nevada Institute of Forensic Nursing was present to report.

Kristy Mills from Nevada Outreach Training Organization (NOTO) said they utilized funding to send their MDT partners and herself to the San Diego Conference. It was absolutely fantastic. This was the first year where they had the entire team. They finally have a dedicated team to the CAC, which is phenomenal, and they were all able to attend. Their DA's office used a little bit of additional funding to send two additional people on top of what they were able to fund. It's been really hard to get everybody on board with actually meeting as a team, utilizing the team for the investigative purposes. So it was really nice to see them truly start to understand the "why" behind "what" they do at the CAC

Jane Saint asked if Kristy would be able to have someone at our next meeting, maybe one or two people who attended the training, if they would be willing to tell us, give us a synopsis of what they brought back. Kristy Mills said she can reach out to the team and see if a couple people would be willing to attend. Jane Saint said she knows that as a member of the committee that reviews the applications for these funding projects, that was one of the things that we had really wanted to have is people who attended the conference and tell us what their takeaways were. Kristy said they had two prosecutors, a detective, a social worker, one of the supervisors, herself, and the systems advocate for our DA's office attend. Several of them would be willing to present what their takeaways were. One of their prosecutors was fairly young and fairly new to the criminal field and he was there along with somebody who's been in this field for a pretty long time. So, it was very eye opening to him on how to investigate and prosecute these cases. They had a meeting after almost every day about how to make changes with the current MDT. She will reach out to them and see if they would be willing to come and talk to that as well.

Salli Kerr added from her own personal experience at this conference that she got to see lots of Nevada folks that we are either currently funding or had funded in the past. She got to meet with the Nevada Institute of Forensic Nursing People who were grateful for the funding for equipment earlier, the Nye County team was really fun to watch, and she spent two days with the Carson City MDT.

Denise Tyre reported from Washoe County. Since the distribution of the grant, they were able to purchase some additional technology for front end staff trying to transition using Remarkable tablets. They're just quite pricey for each individual one. The tablets that were purchased, they have been using as a case management tool basically. They can conduct paperless note taking as well as having clients or families sign forms in the field without access to Wi-Fi through these tablets. All the forms are uploaded onto the tablets and parents can sign directly. They also have a note taking feature where you can translate the notes directly into text. They immediately go onto your computer and can be put into the system. So just looking to increase accuracy in documentation during investigation stages and then also utilizing those as a case management tool to help staff not have to take so much time with the documentation. They purchased six of those and those have been used since the grant distribution.

They are trying to spend more money on trainings that bring contractors to the area so that they can train more people and then also trainings that are specific to a skill set. In May they are bringing in a forensic interview company who put together a custom training for child interviewing specific to front end child interviewing of child abuse and neglect. That is going to be attended by all of the investigators with Child Protective Services, and then they've extended invitations to other members and other parts of the MDT in order to try to see if they can get engagement. It's a training specifically designed around Nevada statutes and also our internal Nevada policies around how to interview kids in the field about an incident of abuse or neglect. So, it's not going to replace forensic interviewing in Washoe. It will be when interviewing kids around substance abuse in the family or lack of supervision or anything that the CAC would not take. Washoe is also sending two people to Alabama for the CAC conference down there. That's in March, and then two individuals for the CWCWLA conference in early April.

Salli Kerr thanked Denise and made the same request to hear from those attending conferences what they brought back, and said she will be in Huntsville, too. Denise replied they are only able to send two people. It's \$3000 to send one person to a conference versus spending just under \$3000 to train 50 people interviewing children. They are going to prioritize that type of funding because they need to be more conservative about what they can get for what they are spending.

### **13. Task Force Member Announcements Regarding Their Agencies – Salli Kerr, Chair**

Jane Saint gave a reminder that Children's Week is going to be March 10th through the 13th. That's being coordinated by the Children's Advocacy Alliance. Then, Nonprofit Day is March 19th. That is being coordinated by United Way of Southern Nevada, and some other groups throughout the state. Judge Pickard asked if there are there any organizations or are there any lobbyists that are addressing any of the pending legislation regarding child welfare? Has anybody had a chance to work with any legislators to address any of those bills? They are due, although they're going to amend them and supplement them.

Jane Saint said the Children's Advocacy alliance does a weekly update on Tuesday from 11:30 to 12:30. They also have a bill tracker of child welfare-related bills.

Rachell Ekroos said she will be attending a meeting with people who are working with committees to get things introduced and it will affect the medical forensic exam services and how they're paid for and how they're offered. It's in the early stages and it hasn't actually been formalized. She will give more information as she finds out more, but it's well meaning, well intended legislation that may have some serious unintended consequences. She is still trying to figure out how it's getting introduced and there's a group trying to watch the bills to see which one it's going to come in under.

Judge Pickard asked what her concerns are. Rachell answered that right now the challenge is nothing has been made public and so they can't really act or do anything until there's something to act on outside of background conversations and meetings. Judge Pickard said, if you have information and you meet with the legislature before it becomes public, they're more likely to make amendments, so they don't experience any public embarrassment. Having been married to a legislator, she knows they want to avoid that.

**14. Final Public Comment (Discussion only: Action may not be taken on any matter brought up under this agenda item until scheduled on an agenda for action at a later meeting – Salli Kerr, Chair.**

No comments.

**15. Adjournment – Salli Kerr, Chair**

The meeting adjourned at 10:11 AM.