

MINUTES

Nevada Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force

April 8, 2025

9:00am

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
Cheryl Cooley	Clark County
Christine Sullivan	Division of Child and Family Services
Desiree Mattice	Department of Public Safety
Fabian Kovac-Lembcke	Children's Cabinet
Isaac Rowe	Deputy Attorney General
Jamie Wong	Division of Child and Family Services
Laurie Jackson	Division of Child and Family Services
Michelle Rodriguez	Family Court Master
Rachelle Ekroos	Nevada Health Right
Salli Kerr, Chair	Western Regional CAC
Wendy Maddox	Humboldt County
Tammi Williamson	Washoe County
Xavier Planta	Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada

Members Absent:

Name	Organization
Jane Saint	Boys Town
Margaret Pickard	8 th Judicial District
Wonswayla Mackey	Division of Child and Family Services

Guests:

Name	Organization
Cindy Milligan	Nevada Institute of Forensic Nursing
Cory Jueke	Nye County
Emily Smith	Nye County
Jailene Stanton	Nevada Institute of Forensic Nursing
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 said it was really important to go over the goals quickly, especially since we are finalizing our Notice of Funding grantees.

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 (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 multidisciplinary response for victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation, witness to interpersonal violence, physical abuse, and victims with disabilities.

Goal 4: 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 February 7, 2025, meeting minutes – Salli Kerr, Chair

Michelle Rodriguez moved approval of the minutes as written. Isaac Rowe seconded. Approved unanimously.

6. For Possible Action: Consideration, discussion and the CJA approval of the 2025 Annual Citizen's Review Panel (CRP) recommendations to move forward to DCFS for consideration - Dylan Nall, DCFS

Dylan Nall said the CRP met in March. Our task force wanted to redo the CRP recommendations in a more eye-friendly format that was easier to read and was more specific. These are the recommendations that they are setting forth:

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:
 - Further enhance family and interpersonal violence training to include screening and safety assessment;
 - Initial and advanced forensic interview training based on evidence-based protocols;
 - Continued 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.

2. The Children's Justice Task Force (CJA) recommends the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) support Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) 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;
 - To ensure child victims have access to the constellation of services offered within the Child Advocacy Centers (CACs);
 - To establish and maintain access to CACs in conjunction with the Nevada State CAC Chapter as appropriate.

Rachell Ekross, who chairs the CRP Recommendations subcommittee, said the core of the recommendations still remains the same. Judge Margaret Pickard gave amazing input to really call out what those examples would look like or at least provide some examples and be a little more specific on our recommendations and that resulted in the bullets for recommendation one and recommendation two which Dylan just reviewed.

There were no questions. Salli Kerr thanked Rochelle and the subcommittee for doing the work on this. The clarity around these and the surrounding recommendations that came out of them were, she said, the best work we've ever sent.

Wendy Maddox moved to approve the recommendations. Desiree Maddox seconded. Approved unanimously.

**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**

Dylan Nall reviewed the funding recommendations from the subcommittee for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025.

Carson City District Attorney's Office submitted an application for \$19,126. This department will contract with the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children to provide training. The National DEC has provided expert training, technical assistant programs, resources and support to thousands of professionals, partners, organization, 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 the 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, cultivating, cultivation or distribution and/or children whose caretaker's legal or

illegal substance misuse interferes with the care ability to parent and provide. The NOFO suggested funding \$16,326.

Clark County Family Services requested \$40,000 for forensic interview training through the National Children's Advocacy Center Forensic Interview Protocol. The National Children's Advocacy Center Forensic Interview Protocol provides a structured approach that prioritizes rapport building, ensuring that children feel safe and understood. The process begins with general discussion 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. It would be up to 60 participants; two classes total with the cap of 30 people per class and the Notice of Funding subcommittee suggests \$33,000.

No To Abuse requested \$27,990 to attend the San Diego International Conference and send 14 MDT members. The Nye County Children's Advocacy Center 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 two 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 the MDT focusing on multidisciplinary responses for victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation, physical abuse and child victims with disabilities and the prosecution of these cases. The Notice of funding subcommittee suggests \$27,675.

Nevada Institute for Forensic Nursing is requesting to add another Cortexflo machine so they would have two instead of one. They are 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 \$5000 will cover the computer technology required for secure operation, including cloud-based storage that integrates with Nevada Institute for Forensic Nursing's first Cortexflo machine, maintaining full HIPPA compliance while ensuring forensic images are protected and easily accessible for medical and legal use. The Notice of Funding subcommittee recommends \$30,000.

Washoe County Human Services Agency is requesting training and technology updates. Three staff will attend a remote one-week forensic interview training that will then qualify them for additional CSEC specific training at no cost. Washoe County and the vendor will enter into a contract with a defined scope of work. The vendor will invoice for all costs as outlined in the contract. Attendance will be collected for this training program. 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 vendor. Also, they request photographic and related technology and equipment for documentation purposes to support the medical units and improve investigation and assessment, investigation and prosecution of these cases. They requested \$24,100 and the NOFO subcommittee suggests \$24,100.

Wendy Maddox noticed on some of them they didn't receive the full funding, and she wondered why things were taken out or how that was decided.

Salli Kerr said sometimes they were taken out because we don't do funding for direct services. Also, travel: some of them were reduced just a little bit based on government rates. All of the things that were reduced in these were based on things that were not allowed. There wasn't anything reduced for any other reason.

Salli Kerr added that something that did come out of the subcommittee going forward is that the committee is going to ask to do a meeting with the applicants and the subcommittee to be able to ask questions about their applications and do kind of an orientation.

Desiree Mattice said one of the things also discussed was how to do the grants, because they did identify in the NOFO meeting that there were some things that were missing. There were things that were definitely glaring that we were requesting that we didn't receive, which kind of made some confusion and a lot of discussion, so that applicants understand what we're looking for, the reasons why we're looking for it and why it's so important and imperative for them to provide that information because it does make the process a little bit smoother that everybody's providing the same information and we're not trying to piece meal each individual grant, which does create some confusion. It doesn't feel very fair if we're not providing funding when there is an absolute need but we don't have enough detail, so being available is key. Being aware of the importance of filling it out fully and entirely is just as vital.

Salli Kerr said the idea of a pre-meeting, prior to application, where we could go over this was also discussed.

Rochelle Ekroos moved the funding recommendations be approved. Desiree Mattice seconded. Approved unanimously.

Rochelle Ekroos and Salli Kerr both expressed their thanks to the NOFO subcommittee for their work.

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

Cheryl Cooley from Clark County said they had finished their forensic interview training for this year. They had a lot of staff turnover, which is why they had the need to do multiple trainings for forensic interviews. It has been really good, though, to see children being able to be interviewed and trying to find the best way for them to tell their experience, to tell their story to the interviewers and to seek justice for kids. As an outgrowth of that, they do have a support group for kids who were interviewed and continue to seek justice for them, making sure that they're safe at home, but they in turn want to give back. And so last year they sold pinwheel pins during April and they raised over \$1000. This group, preteen to high schoolers, then gave that money to the kids at Child Haven, which was just so heartwarming. Then this year, they're doing resource fairs. So, they will open up the gym. They have a survival quilt, it ties in with Denim Day, which is sex abuse awareness during the month of April. They will have people do their own affirmations on pockets of jeans and add that to the quilt. It's just exciting to see things come full circle. Cheryl thanked the committee for all that they've done to really give to them so that they can continue the work in Southern Nevada.

Wendy Maddox wanted to say she was really excited about all these applications. They're very aligned with our goals and the recommendations that we approved. As a chief deputy DA she sees several areas from Human Services and her counterparts in this field where she can reach out to them and learn through them about the trainings and get PowerPoints and all kinds of great stuff. She does share a lot, especially Carson, Clark, and Washoe and is excited that she will be educated in turn as well.

Salli Kerr said she appreciated hearing that really positive feedback. With this group Cheryl Cooley's lead from years ago was to develop Nevada as a support across the state for one another. It has been important to this movement from the very beginning and that really has shown itself to be true across the state and she always appreciates watching and hearing about the collaboration that goes on so that everybody can work better.

Cindy Milligan and Jalaine Stanton from the Nevada Institute of Forensic Nursing spoke next. Cindy Milligan said getting their first Cortexflo machine has really helped during exams, getting good videos or photos for use in court. As it's mobile they can take it to the CAC or put it in their RV to see kids in Pershing and Humboldt counties. Jalaine Stanton said this ties into this the new funding opportunity as they are really working to get telehealth going because Nevada is lacking so many same certified nurses. Their hope is that to can get all of the different Cortexflo machines connected throughout the state, so that if a same certified nurse is not available in a different county or community, and they can't make it in time, that they would be able to help those other counties as well by our state nurses being able to connect right up to another Cortexflo machine. They also received funding this year from a private donor for a second medical mobile van, so that will be another place that they will be able to add in a Coretextflo machine. So, if they have a new nurse who doesn't necessarily have all of the training quite yet, their director of nursing and education can actually be located in Elko County, connect to that machine and conduct the exam from there. So, they're thinking big. They appreciate NOFO so much. This grant has really done wonders for their organization.

Rachelle Ekroos said what they're modeling with using forensic nurses within the state as the experts to provide this overcomes a huge barrier that other states are encountering to moving forward with investigation and prosecution, so she applauds them on that effort.

Desiree Mattice asked if they could share the communities they've already supported and how they plan to expand? Jalaine Stanton said so far they are with Eureka County, White Pine County, Pershing County, Humboldt County and are looking into Churchill, Tonopah, and Carson. The ultimate goal is to get this going statewide just because it's a huge statewide issue. They are pretty much established throughout Northern Nevada and definitely working on connections throughout Southern Nevada, obviously a little bit of a barrier there is getting the Cortexflo machines, which again is why this is such a huge step for them to add a second.

Rachell Ekroos shared that Nevada Health Right provides 24/7 consultation across all of Southern Nevada. They provide that to all the emergency departments as well as any of the advocacy organizations and the community medical providers. They call and consult, screen, connect them to services and ensure wrap around. Jalaine said that is amazing and they should connect.

Desiree Mattice wanted to say thank you. In law enforcement one of the biggest barriers and concerns was trying to get some of our rural victims out to a place where they could actually be seen and sometimes they just couldn't get them there and exams were never done, so being able to have something that's mobile that can get to the kiddos is vital.

Rachell Ekroos said they probably should at some point offline talk about Esmeralda County too, because that's another one that's falling in the middle that's challenged on where to go. Jalaine Stanton said they would love to.

Kristy Mills then spoke for Nye County. At the last meeting she was asked to bring a couple of the MDT members to this meeting to talk about their experience, so she had one their forensic interviewers, Emily Smith, and also one of their deputy district attorneys, Cory Juelke, on the line. They're able to talk about their experience and Nye is super excited to be able to send additional team members this year to the San Diego conference.

Cory Juelke said the conference was a lifesaver. Essentially, he is a department of one in terms of juvenile dependency cases in a county like Nye. You could say good training is hard to come by; it's non-existent absent him going to something like this. It's great to get updated on what best practices are, in just connecting to people that are also in the work as well. It's a good way to feel less isolated. He would love to go to it again.

Emily Smith said she been honored with the offer to go to San Diego a few times now. It is really important to go learn the updated stuff and learn what's changing in the field. But on top of that, it's really good for a small group or very small community to be able to get away from the intense work that they do and be able to collaborate and work together in a setting where they're not just pounding cases, and throw ideas off of each other and figure out different ways that they can do things and change things and make their practices better. The members of the MDT that were able to go were able to collaborate a lot and have a lot of time together that was not just in training.

Kristy Mille said she wanted to piggyback off what Emily said. They were able to send five with the funding from the CJA Task force and an additional three was funded by the District Attorney's Office, so eight in total at the San Diego Conference. She has been in this position for the last six years and this is the first time that she's truly been able to say that they have a team dedicated to the MDT approach and at this conference they were able to learn a lot about what that truly looked like. She had two deputy district attorneys, a forensic interviewer, somebody from the mental health field, one of the law enforcement officers, a detective, and they also had a systems advocate now for the first time, who was able to attend as well, and they spent a lot of time talking about how to change what they're doing in Nye County for the better. She is super excited to be able to go forward and do this again with a much larger part of their team.

Tammi Williamson spoke for Washoe County. Since the last meeting, they were able to send two of the staff to the Alabama Symposium on Child Abuse. They learned several best practices, and it was definitely a different approach and not better but different than the Dallas Conference. This one provided a lot more learning opportunities to bring back to the team. Additionally, the biggest thing they're looking forward to is Cornerstone. They are bringing Cornerstone to Washoe County to do a

specific child interview training and they actually will learn hands-on techniques of how to best interview children in situations like we deal with on a daily basis and they're able by bringing them to Washoe County it is much more cost effective. They are able to have thirty staff members that will attend that interview protocol training. That is in May.

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

Rachell Ekroos said she had more of just a quick note about current legislation that's trying to move through committees and move forward for votes. One of those will directly affect the programs, such as any of the programs that are providing the medical forensic exams and how they are reimbursed. A very well-intended Bill was presented with edits with some unforeseen unintended consequences that we were able to intervene with. Hopefully, if this moves forward as hoped, then it will expand the availability of reimbursement for services across the state, particularly for counties outside of Washoe and Clark, that currently are limited by reimbursement from the States and their local law enforcement agencies. Even though the child advocacy centers are a little bit of a different model, there still has to be reimbursement for exams and they are trying to ensure that this moves forward and expands services and doesn't unintentionally disrupt existing services.

Desiree Mattice said she is retiring next month, so will no longer be with the committee, but am in the works of finding a replacement. That way, there is still that law enforcement component with the state and ensuring that the work continues from that side to assist in anything that we need, because it is kind of a different perspective dealing with different types of crimes and stuff like that. She is super excited for herself, but very devastated at the same time because she has enjoyed being part of the CJA task force and committee for years and some of the things that she's been lucky enough to be involved in creating legislation to benefit all of our kiddos that are in our state is huge and kind of warms her heart to know that she was part of that, so she will miss you all. She did talk to the subcommittee about this and had discussed potentially maintaining her membership. However, her nomination did come from our director back when she started with the team, so being that it is a DPS nomination, I cannot be with the program anymore.

Salli Kerr said she was grateful and thankful for everything that Desiree brought to this group. She was there before Salli and her dedication has been renowned over the decades. She will be missed.

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) – Salli Kerr, Chair

No comments.

11. Adjournment: – Salli Kerr, Chair

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 AM.