

## MINUTES

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

May 11, 2021

9:00am

#### **1. Call to Order- Roll Call**

Salli Kerr, Vice-Chair of the Nevada Children's Justice Act Task Force called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM. She reminded the group that proxies can attend the meeting, as long as written notice is given in advance; e-mails to Beverly Brown are sufficient.

#### **Members Present:**

Name	Organization
Allison Stephens	Statewide Family Network Director NV PEP
Cheryl Cooley	Clark County Department of Family Services- CAC
Desiree Mattice	Sergeant- Dept. of Public Safety
Fran Maldonado	Western Nevada Community College
Jamie Wong	Division of Child and Family Services
Janice Wolf	Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada
Jonathon Slothower, DO	Great Basin Advocacy Center
Kimberly Mull	Victim Advocate
Kristy Mills ( <i>proxy</i> )	Nye County CAC
Laurie Jackson ( <i>proxy</i> )	Division of Child and Family Services
Mari Parlade	Clark County Department of Family Services
Salli Kerr, Vice Chair	Western Regional CAC
Shannon McCoy	Washoe County Human Services Agency
Sharon Benson	Deputy Attorney General

#### **Members Absent:**

Name	Organization
Judge David Gibson	District Court Judge- Eighth Judicial District
Cole McBride	Washoe County CAC
Cory Martin	Great Bain CAC (Elko)
Jennifer Rains	Washoe Public Defender

#### **Guests:**

Name	Organization
Judy Henderson	Training Coordinator for Nevada Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence
Amber Batchelor	Program Director- Nevada Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence
Shannon Gildea	Court Improvement Program

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**Staff Support:**

Name	Organization
Beverly Brown	Division of Child and Family Services
Bruce Cole (recorder)	Division of Child and Family Services

**2. Initial Public Comment**

*No comments.*

**3. Information Only: Review of duties, responsibilities, and goals of the CJA Task Force**

Beverly Brown read the summary of the CJA Goals:

- Training: Front end specialty, discipline specific and advanced.
- Support Implementation of CSEC Coordinated Response Protocol, Task Forces and MDT's.
- Support Establishment of new CAC and improve capacity of existing CAC's or Child Protection MDT's. Use of telehealth and telemedicine.
- Fund requests to improve the investigation, assessment and prosecution of child abuse and neglect through the latest technology and to support the use of new and existing training technologies.
- Identify new or needed changes to policy, regulation and/or legislation to meet requirements of federal program improvement plans and other federal and state initiatives. Support related training and policy needs.

*No questions or comments.*

**4. For Possible Action: Approval of January 12, 2021 meeting minutes. [FOR POSSIBLE ACTION]**

Jonathan Slothower moved to approve the minutes. Sharon Benson seconded the motion. No objections, no abstentions. Minutes approved.

**5. Information Only: Progress report and update from CJA grantees (SFY2020) [FOR DISCUSSION ONLY]**

Clark County- Cheryl Cooley informed the group that they have spent \$13,500.00 on virtual forensic interviewing training. They hope to spend the remaining \$6,500.00 on two upcoming trainings with their community partners.

- Beverly Brown suggested they get in contact with the Grants Management Unit in case there is any question of funds being spent after the end of the fiscal year on June 30. Cheryl said that Debbie Watson had sent in a form regarding that issue.

Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence – Amber Batchelor said they do not expect any need for extensions beyond the end of the fiscal year. Judy Henderson reported that a virtual 2-

day training was conducted for Washoe County and 32 people were awarded CEUs. In evaluations for these trainings, 96 percent of the attendees said their objectives were met, 92 percent found it relevant to their work situation, and 89 percent said their skills were enhanced. In April, this training was held for Clark County. 24 people were awarded CEUs. 95 percent said their objectives were met, 95 percent gained relevant knowledge, and 95 percent said their skills were enhanced. The next training, for the rural communities, is scheduled for June.

Washoe County- Shannon McCoy reported that their grant funds have all been expended. Primarily, the grant funds have been used on laptops for use in the field for more efficient field casework and documentation. Voice recognition software (Dragon Speak) was also purchased. Fourteen staff were funded to attend the Child Welfare League of America training, which ran May 4-6, 2021. A cross-section of staff attended. The county will hold a review of the training, with a plan to share resources and takeaways to the larger staff as a whole

*No further questions or comments.*

**6. For Possible Action: Consideration, discussion, and possible action for Task Force membership vacancy and chair vacancy. [FOR POSSIBLE ACTION]**

Sharon Benson noted, after reviewing the by-laws, that the committee does not actually vote on new members; rather, recommendations are made, and agencies put forward names for consideration.

Beverly laid out the background on the chair vacancy: Master Carr has retired from bench, and so cannot continue, for now, her role on the committee. Master Carr hopes to be taking up a new position in her community which would make her eligible for returning to the committee and to be chair, as well. Beverly asked if the committee then wished to elect a new chair and consider the filling of the now-vacant judicial membership on the committee.

Sharon related that Master Carr had recommend Massie Mayo for replacement in the judicial slot on the committee. Sharon did not know if Massie would be interested but thought she should pass this along.

Cheryl Cooley asked if this would fill both judicial slot and the chair positions. Sharon answered that the chair is separately elected by the committee. An interim chair could be elected, or Master Carr could return as chair via her new role. Beverly confirmed that the vice-chair position will be up for a vote at the August meeting. Kimberly Mull recommended that Salli Kerr be elected chair, leaving the vice-chair position open until August. Salli was willing to do so, as their will be a chair election in January and Master Carr could return to that role. Sharon said the by-laws would not prevent that. Salli said her personal preference would be to remain as vice-chair. No one present indicated any interest in either position, or in nominating someone else. Kimberly wondered if it was a sure thing that Master Carr can return to the committee. Sharon said that it is. Several members expressed their appreciation at how much more active the committee has been with Master Carr as chair. Kimberly Mull moved that matters stay as is re these positions; Sharon seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

**7. For Possible Action: Consideration, discussion, and possible action for Task Force to establish subcommittee to address opportunities for CJA to assist Child Advocacy Centers (CAC). [FOR POSSIBLE ACTION]**

Salli said role of this committee is to establish this subcommittee, and place members on it, to address CJA goal #3.

Janice Wolf said her previous work in Hawaii demonstrated the importance of establishing and supporting CACs and the need for this subcommittee.

Cheryl Cooley said AB 228, passed this year, legitimized the CAC model for abused children, with the goal being it use for all children. The Nevada chapter has four centers, two nationally accredited and two associated, with the goal to have all accredited. Because of the pandemic, new methods (especially for the rurals) such as tele mental health are being explored.

Beverly said she would like to have a subcommittee, so meetings can be solely dedicated to the work of the CACs. Sharon said that one person from each CAC should be on the subcommittee to report to the CJA committee. Salli said the state CAC chapter could give their input to the CJA committee. Cheryl said Lisa Ruggerio is the chapter coordinator and asked if she is member of the CJA committee. Salli wondered if there is a category whereby she could be made a member, and CAC matters would be a standing agenda item. Mari Parlade suggested the CAC chapter report regularly at the CJA meeting and there not be a separate subcommittee. Kimberly Mull gave evidence of a CAC who rescued a child groomed for sexual exploitation and the superiority of that to reliance on law enforcement alone in such situations. Sharon added that from a prosecutorial perspective the evidence from a CAC is a great advantage.

Salli suggested that there be a standing agenda item, with CAC representative reporting. The idea Lisa Ruggerio or another CAC representative becoming a member of the committee should also be explored. There doesn't need to be a formal motion at this time on the matter.

**8. Information Only: Presentation about Court Improvement Program. [FOR DISCUSSION ONLY]**

Shannon Gildea of the CIP gave a presentation and overview of the program. The CIP seeks to support children's right to protection from abuse and neglect. CIP was established in 1995 and is overseen by a committee chaired by Justice Nancy Saita. The CIP oversees Federal grants. CIP focuses its efforts on improving court handling of foster care cases, supporting children's protection from abuse and neglect, avoiding unnecessary family separations, furthering permanency, and cultivating judicial leadership in these areas. CIP funds have been used for the Juvenile Dependency Mediation Program; providing technology to the courts during the pandemic; conducting research and data analysis; educating the judicial, legal, and child welfare communities with conferences and trainings; supporting local Community Improvement Councils (CIC).

*There were no questions or comments.*

**9. For Possible Action: Consideration, discussion and possible action by the CJA Task Force to recommend and/or approve, in whole or in part, the following NOFO applications for an award of funding to serve the project in relation to child abuse and neglect cases in Nevada. [FOR POSSIBLE ACTION]**

Beverly confirmed that there were applications from Kimberly Mull, Salli Kerr, Fran Maldonado, and Janice Wolf. Desiree Mattice, Jamie Wong, and Amber Batchelor all said they had submitted applications. Beverly reminded that committee that funding is to be used for projects and trainings that further enhance the five goals of the CJA; that funds must focus on the front-end of child welfare services and not used for prevention programs or direct services; not used as continuous funding or for routine operations of a program - about five thousand dollars could not be used for the Washoe Child Advocacy Center's recently established victim services position, as that is a direct service. Overall, the NOFO can go over the \$100,000 amount, due to carry-over funds, and that spending was limited somewhat by the pandemic. The current figure for FY 2021 is \$125,212.52.

Sharon asked about funding for training funding requests by Great Basin CAC and Nevada Outreach. Will these be virtual or in-person? Salli said that Nevada Outreach's request was for a hybrid training. Sharon asked further about funding sources for Clark County. Cheryl Cooley said they have contracted with NCAC out of Huntsville, AL, to provide forensic interview training. Sallie asked if carry-over funds would be used by Clark for these trainings. Cheryl said yes and added that they are doing specialized training for interviewing for CSEC and special needs situations. Sharon asked further for the exact amount which Washoe cannot receive for their victim services position. Beverly said it was \$5579.00. Salli asked about scoring results on the applications. Beverly said they had them for the four applications she mentioned at the beginning, but now the later applications will have to be factored in. Both Salli and Sharon wondered if this would make a material difference, especially given the "extra" funds available, and whether the committee needed to see the scoring numbers to make any decisions.

Sharon moved that the funding amounts be approved, with the modification of removing the \$5579.00 from Washoe, leaving a total of \$119,633.00. Janice Wolf seconded. Mari Parlade explained she had to abstain, given her conflict of interest by working for Clark County. The motion passed with no objections and duly noted abstentions from Mari Parlade, John Slothower and Shannon McCoy.

#### **10. Information Only: Announcements. [FOR DISCUSSION ONLY]**

Sharon Benson said there will be golf tournament in Washoe County in October to fund raise against human trafficking. This is new, as they had only done dinners in the past, and there will be more information soon.

*No further questions or comments.*

#### **11. Information Only: Future Agenda Items. [FOR DISCUSSION ONLY]**

Sharon asked if considering how the committee will be meeting in the future (continuing on Teams, in-person, etc.) could be made an agenda item. Beverly thought it likely that the August meeting will be in-person. She added that that establishing a subcommittee for the NOFO process should be a future agenda item, and that the Children's Bureau was interested in seeing evaluations from the grantees about the activities that CJA funds and this too would be an agenda item.

*No further questions or comments.*

#### **12. Final Public Comment [FOR DISCUSSION ONLY]**

*No comments.*

**13. Adjournment**

*Meeting adjourned at 10:25 AM.*