

**MINUTES**

**Nevada Children’s Justice Act (CJA) Task Force**

**October 10, 2023**

**9:00am**

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

Salli Kerr called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM.

**Members Present:**

Name	Organization
Angelina Blare	Adult Survivor
April Stahl	Division of Child and Family Services
Barbara Scofield	
Betsey Crumrine	Division of Child and Family Services
Cheryl Cooley	Clark County Department of Family Services- CAC
Christine Sullivan	Division of Child and Family Services
Desiree Mattice	Lieutenant – Dept. of Public Safety
Fran Maldonado	Division of Child and Family Services
Jamie Wong	Division of Child and Family Services
Jane Saint, Vice-Chair	Boys Town Nevada
Janice Wolfe	Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada
Jennifer Spencer	Deputy Attorney-General
Massey Mayo	
Melanie McCormick	Nevada CASA
Michelle Rodriguez	Family Court Master
Rachell Ekroos	
Salli Kerr, Chair	Western Regional CAC
Tammi Williamson	Washoe County CAC
Wendy Maddox	
Wonswayla Mackey	Division of Child and Family Services

**Members Absent:**

Name	Organization
Cory Martin	Great Basin CAC (Elko)
Margaret Pickard	

**Guests:**

Name	Organization
Kristy Mills	NOTO

**Staff Support:**

Name	Organization
Beverly Brown	Division of Child and Family Services
Bruce Cole (recorder)	Division of Child and Family Services
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 CJA Task Force Goals – Dylan Nall, DCFS**

Dylan Nall said our three-year assessment is due at the end of May and so we will be reviewing our tasks for this upcoming review session. Every three years, the state goes through and makes sure these goals are still something that we want to continue doing. These goals likely may change, and she is sure we will be updating these at the January meeting. Briefly, the five CJA task force goals are: 1. support our CPS workers and stakeholders who are front-and-specialty- discipline-specific with advanced training; this should be prioritized; 2. support the implementation of our Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Coordinator Response Protocol and provide training and support for the formation of the multidisciplinary teams (MDTs); 3. is to support the establishment of new CACs (the children's advocacy centers), or other multidisciplinary team approaches and improve the capacity of existing CACs to provide a multi-disciplinary response for victims of child sex abuse and exploitation, physical abuse, and child victims with disabilities; 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 support the new and existing training technologies; 5. is to identify new or needed changes to policy regulation and or legislation to meet the requirements of federal program improvement plans and other federal and state initiatives, and support training and policy needs related to new and revised policy regulation and legislation. Jane Saint asked if the CJA task force would be doing the review, or an ad hoc committee. Dylan said the task force would do this in January. Betsey Crumrine asked “who” would receive the technology grant this year. In the past, it would go to, say, Washoe one year, Clark County the next. Salli Kerr answered that technology goals now go into considering the funding proposals they review. Jane Saint added that we have found in the last two years at least most of the applications are coming through with providing services as well as technology, so they're using the grant process for technology, as well. Rachell Ekroos asked if it would be helpful, since we have had some new additions and changes and things like that, to send out the original information packet that was sent when she on the task force that has the history, the purpose, all that information. Would that be helpful to send it out to everyone to have it handy for when they're reviewing the goals in advance? Dylan said she could send that along with the attachments a couple of weeks ten days or two weeks before the meeting.

**5. For Possible Action: Approve the last meeting's minutes – Salli Kerr, Chair**

Jane Saint moved that the minutes be approved as submitted. Rachell Ekroos seconded. The motion was approved, with Massey Mayo and Betsey Crumrine abstaining.

**6. For Information: A presentation regarding the CJA conference – Fran Maldonado, DCFS & Jane Saint, Vice-Chair**

Fran Maldonado and Jane Saint attended the annual national CJA conference in Baltimore in May. Jane was accidentally in the wrong session to begin with, but did pick up some useful information: for every increase of a dollar in the minimum wage, there is a decrease in reports of maltreatment by almost 10 per cent; also interesting, but not surprising, that 85% of the children in child abuse and neglect cases that are reported come from families who are at 200% of the poverty rate.

Two sessions really hit home for Jane Saint. There was an afternoon session of sharing where they got together with other individuals from task forces from across the country. There seems to be a new trend within law enforcement that they are now hiring social workers so that they have got that expert in their offices they can rely on them. They don't have to reach out to someone and hope they get back. She thought that was very encouraging. Sadly, the other part that was not encouraging is we're not alone in our issues, everyone is facing staff retention issues, staff burnout, and everybody is having issues with getting foster placement homes and placement. But thing that New York City has taken under their wing to help avoid burnout and staffing issues is they have created a Bureau where the individuals who work there, all they handle are evening and weekend cases and activities. So if you work the nine to five job, then you work the 9:00 to 5:00, but there's a group that comes in and they just handle those evening and weekend cases so that you're not on call to take all the calls over the weekend or in the evening, and that seems to be helping them with their eliminating some of the burnout. One of the things that was brought up in Jane's workgroup was with all the challenges that we're having with foster recruiting, why are we continuing as an industry to question the moving away from congregate care? Unfortunately, no one seemed to have an answer, but it was a discussion that was brought up.

One of the highlights of their conversation was Ira Chesnokov; he's an author, a researcher, a lecturer, president of the MTI Upstream, and he's a professor of Clinical Pediatrics at the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Chicago, and his group there at MTI is actually doing some studies on the impact of a mother and father's substance abuse history on how it's influencing the behavior of children (Jane put a link in about this). It really seems to be an interesting study that they're doing and they're finding there's more correlation between that substance abuse and a child's behavior, which again did not surprise us as a group.

The other area that she went to was an open session for the well-being of LGBTQIA+ youth in child welfare. Those youth are very under-represented in the welfare system who identify as LGBTQIA+, are often misunderstood and their needs are not being met. We had a situation with Nevada CASA. A young lady who was transgender was sent to out-of-state placement residential treatment and unfortunately, because she was now identifying as female, the placement of her was, you were a male at birth, and we're going to put you in a male only group home and that literally just almost destroyed this young lady. Fortunately, she spoke up, and fortunately her CASA took that information to the judge and the judge was very appreciative to know that information because they decided they would make some changes in how they were sending the children out of state for residential treatment. So, the kids that you know, if they have somebody that they can talk to and bring this information up, that's very important for that. The gal who was the presenter was Vida Cavar and she's the project director of the Youth Acceptance Project, which is part of the Family Builders in Oakland, an excellent website, they have a lot of resources on there. Jane shared that link as well. She found it interesting that one in three kids in the child welfare system identify as LGBTQIA+ and one in five youth in the juvenile justice system identifies as

LGBTQIA+, plus LGBTQIA+ youth are three times more likely if they happen to be in foster care to attempt suicide, so this is a group that really needs to be focused on and given the proper attention., The one last thing that Jane Saint had was the SOGIE terms desk aid. She found this interesting and shared this link as well. SOGIE stands for Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression. This is a two-page document that has all the terms and is an excellent little reference guide that you can use and share it with your staff to help you understand what these terms mean.

Dylan Nall said she would put the links Jane mentioned in the CJA e-mail chain. Jennifer Spencer asked if there is a way this can also be added to the supporting documents to this meeting on the web page and then also if any members of the public would like to get a copy, we can certainly provide it. Dylan said she can remediate it and put it on the supporting documents online and then if anyone from the public would like a copy, she will try to get it to the website by the end of the week.

Fran Maldonado agreed with Jane Saint that it was a great conference and she appreciated being able to attend. On the second day when they broke up into small groups, she had a really good discussion with the CJA coordinator in Virginia and they were talking about how Virginia targets CJA grants so they're not giving to the same entities every time they do the grants or the NOFOs and she had talked about what Virginia does and she had said one of the things they look at is if the Division's needs have changed; they also do a geographic poll of what the needs are throughout the state. Then she said that they also meet with their governor, especially one that has been reelected or a newly elected governor, and they ask for any feedback or priorities that the governor may have that will affect the needs of the Division. So, they look at those things when they give out the grants, so they're not always repeating them. Fran wanted to bring that up because that's a discussion this group has had before.

#### **7. For Information: To Review the response from the Children's Bureau regarding the CJA's annual report – Dylan Nall, DCFS**

Dylan Nall said every year we submit our CJA annual reports to the Fed and then they respond back with some feedback or with some things to consider or they want to see in the future, or even some positive feedback. She wanted to present to everyone our CJA report back from the feds, which is good because then they can see the hard work that we are doing.

At this point in the presentation, there was a glitch and Dylan was muted. The captioning of her words showed but we could not hear her.

This, in bold, was the wording of the response from the Children's Bureau, which was up as a slide:

**Overall, the information in NV's submission was clear and easily understood. All activities carried out over the course of the past year, and proposed for the year to come, appear appropriate for the CJA program and aligned with Task Force recommendations.**

**It was great to see that Task Force membership is currently full, and that quarterly meetings continued as scheduled with the addition of one special meeting to monitor the progress of funded activities.**

**The NOFO process appears to be going smoothly and allowing for the implementation of efforts to address current areas of need as identified by the Task Force. We appreciated updates on ongoing funded work to support the Children's Justice Coordinators, multidisciplinary trainings, technology needs, and the CSEC database. We were interested to read about proposed plans for the Task Force to support implementation of new legislation and identify needed changes to existing legislation and look forward to reading about related progress in future submissions.**

## **Items for future consideration:**

**1. We appreciated that each activity included information on evaluation methods, outputs, and outcomes, and we encourage NV CJA to continue to enhance its evaluation-related activities to ensure that chosen methods document outcomes of interest. For example, the report section related to multidisciplinary professional training refers to outcomes such as increased knowledge and skills, but it was not clear how these outcomes were measured or demonstrated.**

**2. We noted that the Task Force was presented with information regarding the upcoming Round 4 CFSR, as well as NV's activities and progress related to the Round 3 CFSR PIP. As preparation continues for Round 4, we encourage the NV CJA Task Force to explore ways to become actively engaged in related processes, such as the statewide assessment.**

After a few minutes, Dylan Nall was able to rejoin the meeting and asked if anyone had any questions about the feedback from the report. Salli Kerr said the response seemed pretty positive. Dylan Nall said that she thought so too and thought that with our evaluation subcommittee we are going to be able to kind of pick up on the things to get them the outcomes that they want us to get.

Salli Kerr said that regarding the #2 above that we're already in the background talking about that Round 4 work. It's probably just a bit premature to bring to this committee right now, but we will be bringing information about what those rounds look like as far as the way that files are pulled and what they are using for audits just so that people are aware of that. Salli has also sent to Dylan a piece of work created by the World Childhood Foundation, and it was a study of 11 states across the country, including Nevada. It's called the Out of the Shadows Index, and they measured a whole lot of pieces of the states to see if the state is child focused. They will also be submitting that to this group and especially to that subcommittee that's looking at writing these kinds of recommendations.

### **8. For Information: CRP Recommendations Subcommittee Reminder – Salli Kerr, Chair**

Salli Kerr gave a reminder about the meeting we will be putting together for that subcommittee in December. This subcommittee is important to be able to start writing that initial annual report to the Children's Bureau. Anybody who is interested in serving on that committee, please email Dylan and she will put together a list of committee members that would come together for that subcommittee meeting. It is not a heavy lift, but it's something we'd like to be able to bring, certainly to the January meeting as a preliminary, we would be voting on it, she thinks in April because it's due to them in May. Dylan Nall said that there is a little bit of a buffer as they are due in June. Both Salli Kerr and Jane Saint recommended that people join one of the CJA subcommittees as this is very enlightening about what is going on in the state.

### **9. For Information: Evaluation Subcommittee update – Salli Kerr, Chair**

Salli Kerr said that the committee will be meeting to do some more additional work on those so that any updates can be completed by the time the NOFO is sent.

### **10. For Information: Grantee Updates for FY 2023 – Salli Kerr, Chair**

Cheryl Cooley said that Clark County CAC did submit their application at the beginning of September for reaccreditation. There are 10 standards that the National Children's Alliance calls you to meet in order for you to maintain your accreditation standard with the National Children's Alliance for children's advocacy centers around the nation. They're looking forward to hearing back from the site reviewers. They will have that meeting with them in March.

Clark had its forensic interview training; not as many people attended as they wanted. As a matter of fact, a chunk of people, between getting sick and work emergencies, kind of dropped off. NCAC had given them a group discounted rate, so it still was less money with these people than if they had to pay the regular rates and amounts. They want to do a deeper dive in that and make sure that they are getting the most bang for their buck for the final February class and then they be looking at the most effective way to keep people trained and make sure that they are doing the best that they can. The greatest news is that the county clerk did purchase a building for a SNCAC expansion. They have purchased a building which is 5 times the size of where they are at now. They are a couple years out with this, but it's exciting to have that happen.

Next week Cheryl is going to Fort Worth and meet with other urban CAC leaders and just see kind of what's going on around the nation. There are over 900 accredited CACs around the nation that have encountered all kinds of situations.

Lastly, she is very excited about the partnership between the four CAC's. They have been meeting to come up with a strategic plan for how we can saturate the state with multidisciplinary responses to child sex abuse. Caitlin Schlesinger has been hired by the chapter as a consultant. She did a deep dive into Nevada statistics. They went through those and are just looking at that and looking how to meet the needs. Salli Kerr thanked Cheryl and added that Nevada is one of those that could really be a model for how well the CACs collaborate and coordinate well within a state. Betsey Crumrine asked if Cheryl might be a good person to talk to about development of CACs another rural area. Cheryl said maybe Betsey would like to attend the next chapter meeting. There are many ways that people across the nation have attacked the rural situations. Some people take a RV, and they make it like a mobile CAC, so it will go to the rural areas and provide services that way. With the advent of technology, doing things from a tele-perspective, although we don't completely have buy-ins from say our district attorneys about tele-forensic interviews, but tele-health is something that is gaining traction. The other thing they have thought about is which cities are hub cities within rural areas? Which cities do those residents often go to for other services, and maybe that's where we need to focus CACs in those kind of hub cities in rural areas. If Betsey wants to shoot Cheryl an email, she will see if she can come and be on the next meeting.

Rachell Ekroos said she can help Betsey Crumrine with that. She has 20 years of experience in working with the multidisciplinary teams and training and education on the multidisciplinary teams about roles, roles overlap, and understanding everyone. She has done a lot of consulting for rural and frontier areas, not just CACs, but for different types of services. Cheryl Cooley mentioned that there were several standards we must meet. So, we had to make sure that they meet the medical standards for the medical exams, both delayed disclosure and recent disclosures. One of the things they're also working on in the background that kind of piggybacks on Cheryl's updates are working on the HIPAA compliant EHR that is specific for patient populations affected by violence. They have set this up so that they can roll it out to providers and other areas and they'll have a secure way to have this, access to it as well as the data for it. By doing that, that would give us the ability, if it was needed for the outlying CACs to have that medical console, but also the external peer reviews, which is one of the requirements for CAC accreditation. They had to put the project on hold through COVID and so are just now reengaging with that project, getting it going again with their development people. Saint noted that one of the things that was brought up at the last Children's Commission meeting is that along with child sex trafficking, is the fact that there are several extremely events coming to Las Vegas. We've got Formula One coming, the Super Bowl, the NCAA tournament. What is the CAC doing to get in front of the potential of what's going to happen with sex trafficking during those events? Cheryl Cooley said she is

part of the Southern Nevada Human Trafficking Task Force. At this juncture for Formula One and especially the Super Bowl, doing a lot of public awareness things. There has been grant money provided for billboards saying prostitution is illegal in Las Vegas. Also, this is now resting with child welfare, not law enforcement. So, if you're a child and you're caught up in a prostitution arrest, you are not a perpetrator of a crime. They recently expanded their At-Risk Youth support team so they are the team that goes out and confirms whether or not children are confirmed as being sex trafficked or not. They also are in partnership with Signs of Hope, which used to be the

Rape Crisis Center, now they're called Signs of Hope, and they have what's called the Rise Program. Rise responds to any human trafficking situation 24/7. They have an on-call situation, so they are trying to communicate and make sure that they are catching the children and adult women as well and men that are caught up in trafficking. They now have a couple of group homes that are now open to take specifically CSEC kids. Substance abuse and mental health are the next things that are that they are trying to tackle to provide more services and resources for because that's how the kids are dealing with their trauma, with self-harm, or suicidal ideations or let me just get high and you know blitz out my brain so that I don't have to think about what I'm caught up in. Salli Kerr said there were written updates from Great Basin and asked about Washoe County. Tammi Williamson said that there was a very thorough report written and then Denise, who sat in for her last time, provided a lot of information about how the grant money was used and how beneficial all that has been, so had nothing further to add.

Kristy Mills from NOTO provided an update. Joyce from Western Regional reached out and offered to come alongside them and assist with hopefully starting the accreditation process again and going to their application process. She has reported a few times the different with Nye County with trying to become accredited and have an MDT that was fully functional and operational. The MDT has become just pretty well case updates, but not much more than that, no case reviews. It's hard to get buy-in from the different agencies that are part of the MDT as to whether they're attending forensic interviews or having any meetings whatsoever. Now they have a new administration who is more than willing to become a part of this task force or that MDT team, but everybody's kind of in the same space to where they're all still hair on fire from the previous administration and things that have gone wrong during that time frame.

They also Cheryl Cooley, who is going to continue to mentor them and help through that process. Thad Rucker is now the Advocate supervisor at Nevada Outreach, and so he was a part of that meeting as well. They came up with a strategic plan to start that process and then also came up with some different ways of reaching out to the MDT members. One of the ways that they had decided to help was to reach out to the other ADAs in Nevada and have them reach out to their District Attorney's office and talk with our DA now about how starting a fully functional MDT will look and how to go about that. She told Cheryl, Lisa, and Joyce to treat her like she's brand new, like she hasn't been here for years because unfortunately, what they've done in the last four years did not work out to having a fully functioning MDT. Cheryl Cooley asked if she could brag on Kristy Mills a little bit? She has been the glue and she's been the lone voice crying out in the wilderness, if you will. She appreciates the way Kristy stuck with our mission and vision for what we can provide kids, because even though you've had the hard times, if you weren't still beating the drum, then where would we be? There was no update from the Nevada Institute for Forensic Training.

#### **11. For Information: Announcements – Salli Kerr, Chair**

There were no announcements.

**12. Final 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 final public comment. Salli Kerr again urged members to service on the various CJA subcommittees.

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:07 AM.

DRAFT