

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE/CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT
PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

July 27, 2018

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children's Justice Act programs was held on Friday, July 27, 2018 at the Richmond Police Training Academy, Richmond, Virginia.

Members Present

Molly Dellinger-Wray
Allison Gilbreath
Sandy Karison
Alicia Lenahan
Robin Morgan
Pat Popp, Chair
Eric Reynolds

Members Not Present

Humberto Cardounel, Jr.
Robin Foster
Julia Fuller-Wilson, Vice Chair
Allison Jackson
Malcolm King
Frederick Rockwell III
Virginia DSS (Vacant)

Staff Present

John Mahoney (DCJS)
Melissa O'Neill (DCJS)
Lynn Sivels (DCJS)
Kristina Vadas (DCJS)
Francesca Vitale (Univ. of Richmond Intern,
DCJS)

- I. **Call to Order:** Pat Popp, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM. Attendees introduced themselves.
- II. **Approval of Minutes:** The committee received and reviewed the draft minutes of the April 27, 2018 and the January 26, 2018 meetings. Due to lack of a quorum, approvals of the draft minutes were deferred to the next regularly scheduled meeting.
- III. **Recognition of Members Completing Terms:** Melissa O'Neill announced the ending terms of Judge A. Ellen White and Nancy Oglesby. The committee engaged in a brief discussion about potential candidates for consideration of appointment for the vacancies.

IV. Scheduling of Meeting Dates: The following dates were scheduled for the committee's meetings of FY2019: November 9, 2018, January 25, 2019, May 10, 2019, and August 9, 2019.

V. Presentation – Families First Prevention Services Act – Allison Gilbreath, Voices for Virginia's Children: Ms. Gilbreath delivered a slide presentation to the committee, titled, *Family First Prevention Services Act*. She presented background information about the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) noting its passage by Congress as part of the omnibus spending bill of 2018. Titles I through VI of FFPSA were overviewed, including their influence on the amendments of Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act (SSA). The FFPSA expands federal support for foster care prevention services and places additional limits on payments for congregate care.

Virginia's implementation of FFPSA will include the objectives of the National Governors Association's Three Branch Institute, which focuses on improving child safety and preventing child fatalities. The Virginia Department of Social Services (DSS) leads Virginia's Three Branch efforts and has recently convened a group of stakeholders to help guide Virginia's implementation of FFPSA. Those stakeholders will comprise the following work groups established by DSS.

- a. Evidence Based Services
- b. Prevention Services
- c. Finance
- d. Appropriate Foster Care Placements

DSS will invite additional stakeholders to serve on the workgroups to aid in key decision making and to address action items related to implementing FFPSA in Virginia.

A copy of Ms. Gilbreath's presentation was distributed electronically to each committee member. It can be accessed online among the documents associated with the committee meeting of July 27, 2018, at www.townhall.virginia.gov.

VI. Child Victims Services Needs Assessment: Melissa O'Neill provided some historical context for the discussion of current needs of child victims. She provided an overview of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding increase received by Virginia in 2015 that enabled enhancements in the provision of direct services to victims of crime, including child victims. She referenced the listening sessions and the survey conducted in 2015 to assess the needs of child victims of abuse and neglect. She described how the increased support of existing programs and services put in place to meet the identified needs contributed to targeted improvements in service delivery to child victims of crime. She reported that DCJS is preparing a revised survey instrument to identify new and continuing direct service needs for child victims of abuse and neglect. Committee members were asked to provide input in developing survey questions related to child

victim services and in recommending potential respondents among constituent stakeholders.

Kristina Vadas, DCJS Victim Services Program Manager, reported Virginia received yet another substantial increase in the VOCA funding. It is anticipated that the FY2019 funding increase will enable existing projects to meet additional needs, and will potentially allow for grant opportunities for the initiation of new projects, including demonstration or time-limited projects

John Mahoney, VOCA Administrator, DCJS, provided an overview of the historical increases in Virginia's VOCA funding since its initial receipt of the funds. He noted that future funding increases are not guaranteed and discussed DCJS' ongoing contingency planning to develop strategies to offset the impact of potential fluctuations, including encouraging programs to develop sustainability plans. He further reported that the funding increases will enable the development and support of innovative victims advocacy initiatives and advancements Programs and service providers will be encouraged to be creative in developing proposals for increasing and diversifying the array of direct services for victims of crime. Mr. Mahoney emphasized that the utilization of VOCA funds must be directly related to service provision to victims of crime.

The committee engaged in a robust discussion surrounding the service needs of child victims. The topics included: the need to support child advocacy centers to enable expansion and increased access, and to reduce variances in the quality of services provided by jurisdictions statewide; the resources needed to address and support child victims of sex trafficking; funding for travel expenses to enable cross-jurisdictional transportation of child victims to operating service providers; projects to aid in collecting evidence to prosecute individuals released from employment due to inappropriate behaviors toward individuals with disabilities in their care; funding to advance social and emotional learning in schools; and, funding (beyond the Virginia Victims Fund) for legal expenses associated with court-ordered victim services.

- VII. CJA Program Update:** The committee was previously provided a written update on the Children's Justice Act Program.
- VIII. CASA Program Update:** The committee was previously provided a written update regarding the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program. Melissa O'Neill provided an overview of the ongoing CASA standards reviews being conducted at the national and local levels and briefed the committee on initiatives underway by the State Leadership Team. She reported that DCJS is planning upcoming on-site visits to CASA programs throughout the state, and that DCJS has completed desk audits of Virginia's 27 CASA programs.
- IX. New Business:** The committee had no new business.

X. Adjourn: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Pat Popp at 12:02 p.m.

Next meeting dates:

- November 9, 2018
- January 25, 2019
- May 10, 2019
- August 9, 2019