



**Advisory Committee to the
Court Appointed Special Advocate
and Children's Justice Act Programs**

AGENDA

Tuckahoe Library

1901 Starling Drive, Henrico, VA 23229
(804) 501-1910

October 29, 2021

- 1. Welcome, Call to Order and Roll Call**
- 2. Approval of Past Minutes**
- 3. Remote Meeting Policy Review**
- 4. Roundtable Discussion on 2022 Child Welfare Legislative Session**
 - Allison Gilbreath, Voices for Virginia's Children
 - Member Priorities (if anyone wishes to share and receive input)
- 5. CASA Program Update – Melissa O'Neill**
 - HESRP Report Highlights
- 6. CJA Program Update – Jenna Foster**
 - Grant Funded Programs Serving Child Victims
 - Three Year Planning Process
- 7. Citizen Review Panel – Shannon Hartung- Virginia Department of Social Services**
- 8. New Business**
- 9. Adjournment**



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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CASA/CJA Advisory Committee Member Remote Participation in Meetings by Electronic Means

Policy Type: State – CASA/CJA Advisory Committee

Responsible Office: Department of Criminal Justice Services

Initial Policy Approved: TBD

Policy Statement and Purpose

In accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Virginia Code § 2.2-3700, et. seq., the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee (“the Committee”) has established a written policy allowing for and governing participation of its members in meetings by electronic communication means in the event of (a) a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition, (b) a family member’s medical condition that requires the member to provide care for such family member, or (c) a personal matter.

This policy shall apply strictly and uniformly, without exception, to the entire membership and without regard to the identity of the member requesting remote participation or the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting.

Participation by a member from a remote location is authorized only when a quorum of the Committee is physically assembled at the primary meeting location and the voice of the remote participant is able to be heard by all persons at the primary meeting location. The fact of the disability or other medical condition that prevented physical attendance or the nature of the personal matter and the remote location from which the member participates will be recorded in the meeting minutes.

Individual participation from a remote location shall be approved unless such participation would violate this policy or FOIA. If such participation from a remote location would violate this policy or FOIA, such disapproval will be recorded in the minutes with specificity.

When individual remote participation is due to a personal matter, such participation is limited by law to two meetings of the Committee per member within one calendar year.

This policy applies to all subcommittees of the Committee.

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Who Should Know This Policy

All CASA/CJA Advisory Committee members (“Committee members”) as a matter of normal course are responsible for knowing this policy and familiarizing themselves with its contents and provisions.

Definitions

Continued meeting

A meeting that is continued to address an emergency or to conclude the agenda of a meeting for which proper notice was given.

Electronic communication

The use of technology having electrical, digital, magnetic, wireless, optical, electromagnetic, or similar capabilities to transmit or receive information.

Primary meeting location

Published location of the meeting of the Committee.

Quorum

A term used to describe the minimum number of members of the Committee that must be present at any of its meetings to make the proceedings of that meeting valid. For the Committee meetings, a quorum is defined in its bylaws.

Remote location

Refers to an alternative location for a Committee member other than the main location where the physical quorum is present. The remote location need not be open to the public and must have a physical address that is recorded in the Committee minutes.

Contacts

The Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) officially interprets this policy. Please direct policy questions to the Committee liaison in DCJS.

Procedures

The Committee member needing to participate from a remote location must notify the Committee Chair, [without unreasonable delay] on or before the day of a meeting, that such member is unable to attend the meeting at the primary meeting location due to (i) a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition; (ii) a family member's medical condition that requires the member to provide care for such family member; or (iii) a personal matter, identifying with specificity the nature of the personal matter.

The Committee Chair shall approve participation from a remote location unless such participation would violate this policy or FOIA. Disapproval of participation from a remote location shall be recorded in the minutes with the specific rationale for such disapproval. The minutes shall include the address of the remote location from which the Committee member participated along with the fact that the Committee member participated remotely due to a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition or due to a personal matter along with the specific nature of the personal matter cited by the Committee member.

The Committee will arrange for the voice of the remote participant to be heard by all persons at the primary meeting location.

The Committee may conduct any meeting wherein the public business is discussed or transacted through electronic communication means, provided that (i) a quorum of the public body is physically assembled at one primary or central meeting location, (ii) notice of the meeting has been given at least three working days in advance of the date scheduled for the meeting, and (iii) members of the public are provided a substantially equivalent electronic communication means through which to observe or listen to the meeting.

If the Committee holds a meeting through electronic communication means, it shall also hold at least one meeting annually where members in attendance at the meeting are physically assembled at one location and where no members participate by electronic communication means.

Notice of any regular meeting shall be provided at least three working days in advance of the date scheduled for the meeting. Notice, reasonable under the circumstance, of special, emergency, or continued meetings held shall be given contemporaneously with the notice provided to members of the public body conducting the meeting.

The notice shall include the date, time, place, and purpose for the meeting; shall identify the primary meeting location and any remote locations that are open to the public pursuant to subdivision public; shall include notice as to the electronic communication means by which members of the public may observe or listen to the meeting; and shall include a telephone number that may be used to notify the primary or central meeting location of any interruption in the telephonic or video broadcast of the meeting. Any interruption in the telephonic or video broadcast of the meeting shall result in the suspension of action at the meeting until repairs are made and public access is restored.

A copy of the proposed agenda and agenda packets and, unless exempt, all materials that will be distributed to members of a public body for a meeting shall be made available for public inspection at the same time such documents are furnished to the members of the public body conducting the meeting.

Public access to the remote locations from which additional members of the public body participate through electronic communication means shall be encouraged but not required. However, if three or more members are gathered at the same remote location, then such remote location shall be open to the public.

If access to remote locations is afforded, (i) all persons attending the meeting at any of the remote locations shall be afforded the same opportunity to address the public body as persons attending at the primary or central location and (ii) a copy of the proposed agenda and agenda packets and, unless exempt, all materials that will be distributed to members of the public body for the meeting shall be made available for inspection by members of the public attending the meeting at any of the remote locations at the time of the meeting.

The Committee shall make available to the public at any meeting conducted in accordance with this subsection a public comment form prepared by the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council.

Minutes of all meetings held by electronic communication means shall be recorded. Votes taken during any meeting conducted through electronic communication means shall be recorded by name in roll-call fashion and included in the minutes. For emergency meetings held by electronic communication means, the nature of the emergency shall be stated in the minutes.

The Committee shall make a written report of the following to the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council by December 15 of each year:

- a. The total number of meetings held that year in which there was participation through electronic communication means;
- b. The dates and purposes of each such meeting;
- c. A copy of the agenda for each such meeting;
- d. The primary or central meeting location of each such meeting;
- e. The types of electronic communication means by which each meeting was held;
- f. If possible, the number of members of the public who observed or listened to each meeting through electronic communication means;
- g. The identity of the members of the public body recorded as present at each meeting, and whether each member was present at the primary or central meeting location or participated through electronic communication means;
- h. The identity of any members of the public body who were recorded as absent at each meeting and any members who were recorded as absent at a meeting but who monitored the meeting through electronic communication means;
- i. If members of the public were granted access to a remote location from which a member participated in a meeting through electronic communication means, the number of members of the public at each such remote location;
- j. A summary of any public comment received about the process of conducting a meeting through electronic communication means; and

- k. A written summary of the public body's experience conducting meetings through electronic communication means, including its logistical and technical experience.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the use of interactive audio or video means to expand public participation.

Forms

There are no forms associated with this policy.

Related Documents

1. Virginia Code § 2.2-3700, et. seq.
2. Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children's Justice Act Programs By-Laws
3. <https://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/about-dcjs/boards-committees/advisory-committee-casacja-programs>

FAQs

There are no FAQs associated with this policy and procedures.

CASA/CJA Advisory Committee Meeting

October 29, 2021 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

REPORT: *Children's Justice Act (CJA)*

Prepared by: Jenna L. Foster, Children's Justice Act Coordinator - DCJS

I. FY22 CJA Grant Application

The FY22 grant application from the Children's Bureau was approved and funded. The final award total was \$408,380.00

II. Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) Partnership

The CJA Coordinator continues to attend bi-monthly meetings with CAC Directors to stay abreast of current child treatment trends and training needs.

III. ChildFirst Training

Child Advocacy Centers of Virginia (CACVA) held the last ChildFirst training was held virtually July 19-23, 2021. Thirty-eight (38) individuals completed the one week course. The next training course will be held (virtually) in November 2021. DCJS continues to sponsor in part this training.

IV. MDT Review

In past years, CJA has offered Multidisciplinary Teams across Virginia training and technical assistance in order to meet the expectations of each mandated team (written in Virginia Code). CJA is exploring current needs of MDTs in an effort to see where support may be needed. Additional resources are being examined to include training from the Commonwealth Attorney's Services Council (CASC) and Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia (CACVA).

Other Child Related Grant Funding:

- V.** The CJA Coordinator has been assigned the role of Grant Monitor for several grants that serve child victims throughout Virginia (VOCA funded).
- VI.** The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding has been made available to Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC) in Virginia. Nineteen programs will receive funding for FY22.

DRAFT

Pursuant to § 2.2-3707.1 of the Code of Virginia this DRAFT of the minutes of the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and Children’s Justice Act (CJA) Advisory Committee is available to the public. The public is cautioned that the information is provided in DRAFT form and is subject to change by the Advisory Committee prior to becoming final. Once the minutes have been finalized, they will be marked “FINAL” and made available to the public.

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

July 30, 2021

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children’s Justice Act programs was held on July 30, 2021 at the Libbie Mill Library in Richmond Virginia.

Members Present

Randy Bonds
Molly Dellinger-Wray
Katharine Hunter
Jennifer Newman
Jeannine Panzera
Giselle Pelaez
Pat Popp
Judge Thomas Sotelo, Chair
Ashley Thompson

Members Not Present

Regina Baker
Kim Barbarji
Robin Foster
Shardell Gerald
Allison Gilbreath
Shannon Hartung
Judge Jerrauld Jones
Sandy Karison

Staff Present

Jenna Foster (DCJS)
Melissa O’Neill (DCJS)
Kelly O’Brien (Intern – DCJS)

Guest

Eric Reynolds (Director, Office of the Children’s Ombudsman)

- I. **Call to Order:** Judge Thomas Sotelo, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM. A verbal roll call was taken.
- II. **Welcome and Introduction of Guest:** Committee Chair, Judge Sotelo, introduced Eric Reynolds, the newly appointed Director of the Office of the Children’s Ombudsman. Mr. Reynolds provided the committee with an overview of the Ombudsman’s office. The statute authorizes the office to investigate citizen complaints regarding children involved

in the foster care system. The office is required to submit an annual report to the General Assembly.

III. Approval of Minutes: The committee received and reviewed the draft minutes of the April 30, 2021 meeting. Ashley Thompson made a motion to approve the minutes. Jennifer Newman provided a second. The motion was approved.

IV. Meeting Dates for FY22: Committee members considered the following dates for meetings in FY22:

Friday, October 29, 2021

Friday, January 28, 2022

Friday, April 22, 2022

Friday, July 22, 2022

Ashley Thompson made a motion to approve the meeting dates and Pat Popp seconded. The motion was approved.

V. CASA Program Update - The committee was previously provided a written update regarding the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing Guidance Policy: The committee was provided an updated draft of the Confidentiality and Information Sharing Guidance Policy. The updates will provide guidance for local programs on the implementation of the changes in the *Code of Virginia* allowing CASA volunteers to attend and participate in certain collaborative stakeholder meetings in between hearings. The committee provided feedback during the April meeting and DCJS sought additional input from stakeholder partners. After a brief discussion, Jennifer Newman made a motion to approve the Guidance Policy as written and Giselle Pelaez seconded. The motion was approved.

CAPTA Legislative Changes: Melissa O'Neill shared with the committee proposed changes to the Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA). This bill makes significant changes to CAPTA. Of particular interest to CASA organizations, the bill changes the language in the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) provision and moves that provision to a different section of the Act. Those changes could make it so that states are not required to provide a best-interest GAL for children in abuse and neglect court proceedings in the same way they do now. Additionally, the bill creates a requirement for states to provide a client-directed "Attorney ad Litem" for all children in abuse and neglect court proceedings. The committee discussed the various impacts this change would have in Virginia should it pass.

VI. Children's Justice Act Program Update - The committee was previously provided a written update regarding the Children's Justice Act Program. Jenna Foster highlighted areas of interest.

Other Specialized Training for Child Welfare: In Spring 2021, DCJS heavily focused on providing substantial training for child welfare professionals through collaborations and

direct training offerings. A variety of training regarding Trauma was provided during the inaugural DCJS Trauma Summit in May. A three-part Substance Use and Abuse training was offered in May followed by a four-part Vicarious Trauma series in June. Other topics requested include community organizing, building collaborations, and sustainability. DCJS is working to support MDTs in order to meet the needs of the first two topics. The latter will be addressed directly via ongoing sustainability training at DCJS to grantees and constituents.

Multidisciplinary Team Discussion: Recently, DCJS has received requests for specific support for established Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs). Assistance for onboarding new Commonwealth Attorneys to their MDT responsibilities is needed. DCJS is referring to the Commonwealth Attorney’s Services Council (CASC) for specific training and guidance for MDTs. The Committee discussed other opportunities to provide support for MDTs from the CJA standpoint, including ways of providing targeted technical assistance to Commonwealth Attorneys seeking support in the development of Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs).

Judge Sotelo moved that DCJS pursue development of a guidance document to set out a best practice vision for implementation of the MDT code based on best practice standards. The model will include flexibility for the needs of the locality and include training on the implementation and continuation of MDTs. Jennifer Newman seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

VII. Child Protective Services/Citizen Review Panel

A written report was provided by the Virginia Department of Social Services and will be distributed to the committee for review.

VIII. New Business

Remote Participation in Public Meetings: The committee discussed the requirements for remote participation in public meetings according to the Freedom of Information Act. The first requirement is to develop a policy in accordance with the Act. Members were in agreement to develop a policy. DCJS will bring a draft policy for consideration to the next meeting in October. Jennifer Newman made a motion that the committee will develop a policy and Katharine Hunter seconded. The motion was approved.

IX. Adjourn – Giselle Pelaez moved to adjourn the meeting and Ashley Thompson provided the second. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM.

Next meeting dates:

- Friday, October 29, 2021
- Friday, January 28, 2022
- Friday, April 22, 2022
- Friday, July 22, 2022

CASA/CJA Advisory Committee Meeting

October 29, 2021 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

REPORT: *Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Programs*

Prepared by: Melissa O’Neill, CASA Coordinator - DCJS

I. CASA Network State Leadership Team Updates

The State Leadership Team (SLT) met in September to continue to further goals of the Strategic Plan. The SLT is focused this next year on development and implementation of a CASA Network survey to assist in updating the strategic plan. The following is a highlight of accomplishments of the SLT efforts during this reporting period.

1. Data Committee

DCJS continued to facilitate a CASA Manager Workgroup to develop a Virginia CASA Manager Practice Guide. The Workgroup met three times during the reporting period and completed the first draft of the Practice Guide. The draft was distributed to the CASA Manager User Group for feedback and input. This work is anticipated to continue throughout 2021.

The CASA Survey was developed in partnership with DCJS and the SLT and is scheduled to launch on October 18, 2021. The survey will assess statewide CASA Program needs and will assist DCJS and the SLT in prioritizing those needs. The results will be used to update the SLT strategic plan and to provide overall statewide program data. The strategic plan provides guidance to DCJS and the SLT for projects, initiatives, and activities supporting local CASA programs.

2. Training Committee

DCJS continued to facilitate meetings for the Training Committee to update the Pre-Service Training to adapt to the Virginia Case Studies Curriculum so that it complies with NCASA/GAL requirements. A first draft of the revised curriculum was completed during this reporting period. Committee members are currently reviewing the draft document for consistency and additional revisions. Committee members met once this reporting period. This work is anticipated to continue throughout 2021.

The CASA College continued during this reporting period. DCJS held two sessions this reporting period. The first was a CASA Conversations session facilitated by Allison Gilbreath, Voices for Children Policy Analyst for Foster Care and Juvenile Justice held on August 17, 2021 for 36 participants. Ms. Gilbreath provided an update on new laws that were passed during the 2021 General Assembly Session of interest to CASA programs. The second session was an Advo-chat held on October 5, 2021 facilitated by Sarah Farber, LCSW, Behavioral Health Counselor, The

Motivate Clinic on the subject of addiction and successful treatment strategies. Over 200 CASA volunteers attended the session.

II. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grants

DCJS made available funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to CASA programs for the FY22 grant year. The funding is distributed on a formula basis. The total amount of funding available for CASA programs is \$1,070,000. The funding includes \$80,000 for a statewide volunteer recruitment initiative to be administered by a local CASA program on behalf of the state network.

III. Network Support Meetings

DCJS facilitated three CASA Network Support meetings using virtual technology during this past quarter. These meetings were initiated at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to assist local programs with navigating program operations and management during the pandemic, and have continued because they have proven useful to the field.

IV. Highly Effective Standards Review Process

DCJS completed the NCASA/GAL Highly Effective Standards Review Process (HESRP) in April and May 2021. Local programs, key stakeholders and DCJS staff members participated in the review process. The initial report provided to DCJS indicated there were fifteen requirements that would require corrective action. DCJS met with NCASA/GAL representative, Paige Beard on October 12, 2021 to discuss the report findings. Ms. Beard explained that after reviewing other publicly administered state organizations (DCJS was the first reviewed), NCASA/GAL realizes the standards and HESRP are not designed to evaluate this model. Therefore, a revised report with four requirements that will require corrective action was provided to DCJS. Further, publicly administered state organizations will not be evaluated on the HESRP established continuum. DCJS is very pleased with this significant shift by NCASA/GAL.