



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

AGENDA

Virtual Committee Meeting

January 27, 2023

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89594468196>

Meeting ID: 895 9446 8196

Passcode: CASAcja1!!

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,89594468196#,,,,*4706667430# US (Washington DC)

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Meeting ID: 895 9446 8196

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- **Welcome and Introduction of Guests**
- **Review of October 28, 2022 Minutes**
- **Legislative Update: Bill Tracking**
- **Three Year Plan Recommendations Review**
- **CASA Program Update**
 - a) **Handling Complaints About Local Programs - Discussion**
 - b) **CASA Appointments to Custody Cases - Discussion**
- **CJA Program Update**
- **Citizen Review Panel**
 - a) **Update on Family First Prevention Services Act in Virginia**
- **Adjournment**

Report to the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee

January 27, 2023 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Children’s Justice Act (CJA)

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

I. Child Death Investigation Protocol: Train-the-Trainer

Twenty law enforcement investigators, child protective service investigators, and prosecutors attended a three-day Child Death Investigation training in November in preparation for the train-the-trainer initiative of the Child Death Investigation Protocol (CDIP). In March, trainers will attend a one-day session to familiarize themselves with the CDIP training material including slides and the printed protocol. Regional CDIP training for law enforcement, CPS, and prosecutors will begin in April 2023. One training is scheduled each month in various localities through November 2023.

II. MDT Stakeholder Group: Statewide MDT Support Initiative

DCJS is collaborating with Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS), Child Advocacy Centers of Virginia (CACVA), and the Commonwealth Attorney’s Services Council (CASC) to provide training and technical assistance to underdeveloped multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) in the Commonwealth. Representatives from each agency meet monthly to identify how best to support these teams. Three training offerings are being crafted by the stakeholder group to better support MDTs that are in different stages of development and operation.

III. Telemedicine Pilot Project: Phase Two

Two additional health centers have expressed interest in using the VCU Telehealth model to continue to provide telehealth services to children in rural localities in Virginia. DCJS is exploring options to support these two sites in FY24.

Child-related VOCA Grant Programs

- IV.** All VOCA grants with the primary purpose of serving child victims under the Victim Services Grant Program (VSGP) have received notice of FY24 award amounts. DCJS is pleased to offer funding to these programs at a 10% reduction for FY24.
- V.** Site visits, both in-person and virtual, continue to VSGP child grant programs. The frequency and type of site visit is based on the grant amount and overall risk. At a minimum, programs have a site visit with DCJS grant monitors at least once every three years.

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

October 28, 2022

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children’s Justice Act programs was held on October 28, 2022 at St. Joseph’s Villa in Richmond, Virginia.

Members Present

Randy Bonds
Kim Barbarji
Eugene Butler
Shamika Byars
Shardell Gerald
Shannon Hartung
Katharine Hunter
Judge Jerrauld Jones
Sandy Karison
Jeannine Panzera
Giselle Pelaez
Eric Reynolds
Judge Thomas Sotelo, Chair

Members Not Present

Regina Baker
Jackie Robinson Brock
Allison Gilbreath
Pat Popp
Ashley Thompson

Guests

Angela Alvernaz, DCJS
McKayla Burnett DCJS
Cayla Morris, VDSS
Lora Smith, VDSS

Staff Present

Jenna Foster (DCJS)
Melissa O’Neill (DCJS)
Terry Willie-Surratt (DCJS)

- I. **Call to Order:** Judge Thomas Sotelo, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM. Members introduced themselves.
- II. **Approval of Minutes:** The committee received and reviewed the draft minutes of the July 22, 2022 meeting. Giselle Pelaez made a motion to approve the minutes. Shannon Hartung provided a second. The motion was approved.
- III. **Overview of Three-Year Plan Requirements**

The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee met to prepare the 2024-2027 Three-Year plan for the Children’s Justice Act. Jenna Foster, DCJS Children’s Justice Act Program Coordinator, provided committee members with an overview of the purpose of the federal requirements for consideration when developing recommendations.
- IV. **State of the Commonwealth Presentations – Current Initiatives**

Committee members heard presentations on the following topics:

 - Human Trafficking Response – Angela Alvernaz, DCJS State Trafficking Response Coordinator
 - Virginia Department of Social Services – Shannon Hartung, Protection Program Manager, Virginia Department of Social Services
 - Office of the Children’s Ombudsman – Eric Reynolds, Director
 - Safe and Sound Task Force – Eric Reynolds, Director, Office of the Children’s Ombudsman
 - Law Enforcement Response to Child Abuse – Lieutenant Randy Bonds, Christiansburg Police Department
- V. **Review of Feedback from Current Recommendations**

Jenna Foster prepared a summary of the feedback provided from committee members during meetings held the previous year where the current plan recommendations were reviewed and evaluated.
- VI. **Development of 2024-27 Three Year Plan Recommendations**

Committee members incorporated information from the previous discussions held throughout the year and from the presentations during the meeting to formulate new recommendations. Members worked in teams to determine general themes for updated recommendations.

The following topic areas were identified as priorities for inclusion in the final recommendations: Multi-Disciplinary Teams; best practices; policy; CASA programs; multi-systems training; and diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging. DCJS will develop recommendations based on the information provided during the discussions and provide a draft of these recommendations to the Committee for review at the January 27, 2023 meeting.
- VII. **Adjourn** –The meeting adjourned at 3:13 PM.

Next meeting dates:

Friday, January 27, 2023 (this meeting will be held virtually)

Friday, April 28, 2023

Friday, July 28, 2023

**Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children’s Justice Act Programs
Strategic Planning Meeting**

2024-2027 THREE-YEAR RECOMMENDATIONS DEVELOPMENT

Proposed Three-Year Recommendation Themes	1. MDT Support	2. Best Practices	3. Policy	4. CASA Support	5. Multi-Systems Training	6. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Access
Draft Recommendation Language	Develop state level collaborative teams that support sustainability for regional and local multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) that focus on child abuse and neglect, including child exploitation.	Promote evidence-based best practices and support innovative promising practices while examining past challenges to address child abuse and neglect in Virginia.	Develop, support, and monitor new and existing policies and legislation that may have an impact on the criminal justice and child protection systems.	Encourage the implementation, development, and growth of CASA programs throughout the Commonwealth in pursuit of the vision that every child in every jurisdiction have access to a CASA volunteer.	Continue collaborative partnerships with allied agencies to support trauma-informed practices and services that support child and families involved in the investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect cases in Virginia.	Promote and incorporate language and practices that prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and access along with a focus on trauma-informed care for professionals and volunteers involved in the investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect in Virginia.

Priority Areas

A-investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as intrastate, interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, in a manner which reduces the additional trauma to the child victim and the victim's family and which also ensures procedural fairness to the accused;

B-experimental, model, and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques which may improve the prompt and successful resolution of civil and criminal court proceedings or enhance the effectiveness of judicial and administrative action in child abuse and neglect cases, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation cases, including the enhancement of performance of court appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem for children, and which also ensure procedural fairness to the accused; and

C-reform of State laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children, which may include those children involved in reports of child abuse or neglect with a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as intrastate, interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, from child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring fairness to all affected persons.

	A/B/C	B	C	A/B	A/B/C	A/B/C
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Report to the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee

January 27, 2023 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Programs

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

I. CASA Network State Leadership Team Updates

The SLT is focused this year on updating and implementing the goals of the strategic plan. The following is a highlight of accomplishments of the SLT efforts during this reporting period.

A. Training Committee

DCJS continued to facilitate meetings of the Training Committee to adapt the Virginia Case Studies Curriculum pre-service training so that it complies with NCASA/GAL requirements. The sub-committee finalized revisions to the case study and distributed it to the Training Committee reviewers in January 2023. Once the review is completed, a Training of Facilitators will be developed to implement the new curriculum statewide.

The CASA Program Directors held their annual retreat in November, for the first time since the COVID pandemic. The Retreat included a DCJS-sponsored training on Board Governance and Leadership, and Effective Grant Management, led by consultant Amy Nisenson.

DCJS facilitated a CASA College training session on December 14, 2023. The session offered participants an opportunity for a discussion with the Office of the Children's Ombudsman. The session included an opportunity for guided discussion and feedback from the CASA perspective on child welfare trends, best practices and system improvement needs.

B. Marketing Committee – Statewide Volunteer Recruitment Campaign

As stated in a prior report, DCJS made available funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to CASA programs for the FY22 grant year. Included in the total of \$1,040,000 which was distributed to local programs was an award of \$80,000 to Colonial CASA for a statewide volunteer recruitment initiative on behalf of the state CASA network. The State Leadership Team (SLT) Marketing Committee is overseeing the volunteer recruitment project.

The Idea Center, a marketing and public relations firm located in Richmond, is the company implementing the campaign. The campaign included development of three commercials and a long form video. The third commercial was completed during this reporting period. The long form video is scheduled for completion in the next quarter. The marketing assets can be viewed on the Virginia CASA YouTube channel site here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC05gF7K4DlgyvWXf9IDZosw>.

C. Data Committee

DCJS worked with CASA Manager to develop a revised and improved CASA Connect aggregate reporting tool. The development included testing by DCJS and several local CASA program users to identify any issues prior to launching. As part of this tool, CASA Manager developers included a Virginia Performance Measures Report. This report includes all the data points DCJS currently tracks. This new report will improve efficiency and data efficacy. The new report launched in January 2023.

II. Network Support Meetings

DCJS facilitated three CASA Network Support meetings using virtual technology during this past quarter. These meetings assist local programs with navigating program operations and management concerns; the field has expressed that these meetings continue to be useful.

Over one third of CASA programs have experienced staff turnover in CASA program leadership positions. DCJS initiated monthly New Director Support calls this fiscal year to assist in supporting new leaders in their positions. Only one New Director Support Call was held during this reporting period due to the holidays.

III. DCJS FY24 CASA Grants

DCJS announced the grant application process for the FY24 CASA grants. The total amount available to local CASA programs is \$1,533,415 in state general funds and \$1,499,364 in federal VOCA funds, for grant awards totaling \$3,032,779.

DCJS announced the availability of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for the purpose of CASA program expansion to unserved localities in the state. This funding will be available for one year, from July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024. Potential applicants were

invited to submit a Letter of Interest by January 13, 2023. DCJS received five Letters of Interest. Invitations will be made to apply by January 30, 2023.

IV. Highly Effective Standards Review Process for Local Programs

Virginia CASA programs completed National CASA/GAL self-assessments in April 2022 to determine compliance with local program standards. The results were completed and sent to DCJS during this reporting period. 23 programs received ratings of 90 – 100%, and 6 programs received ratings of 80 – 89%. Overall, Virginia CASA programs received excellent reviews.

O'Neill, Melissa (DCJS)


From: Hollywood, Kathleen (VDSS) <Kathleen.Hollywood900@dss.virginia.gov>
Sent: Friday, December 2, 2022 7:36 AM
To: Poulin, Nicole (VDSS); O'Neill, Melissa (DCJS); Diduk-Smith, Ryan (VDH)
Cc: Hartung, Shannon (VDSS)
Subject: FW: Link to Child Protective Services Reports & Studies - Virginia

Good morning,

Thank you again for meeting with Shannon and me earlier this week to provide feedback on the Citizen Review Panels' expectations regarding Report Outs at each CRP meeting going forward into 2023. A colleague of mine put together this information in response to a data request, and we thought it would be helpful for all three Citizen Review Panels to have this source of information through the VDSS public website. Thank you Brandi Peterson!

Visit the CPS Reports & Studies page on the VDSS website via the following link:

https://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/children/cps/all_other.cgi



Child Protective Services Reports & Studies - Virginia

To design and deliver high-quality human services that help Virginians achieve safety, independence and overall well-being.

www.dss.virginia.gov

Once you get to the main page, you will have access to various reports under each year from 2000-2022. The "Referrals & Findings" link contains data directly related to the questions you asked. The Law Enforcement column data reflects referrals that were sent to LE/LE was involved. This data is not indicative of criminal charges. For that information, please refer to the column titled Commonwealth Attorney. In addition to the above, you may also find some of the information on the CPS Accountability Website helpful in your research. You may access the site via the following link:

<https://cpsaccountability.dss.virginia.gov/index.html>

Under the **Social Services tab**, you will find data regarding the number of referrals received, etc. for the years 2009-2020 (which should be similar to the data on the CPS Reports & Studies page). Under the **Virginia Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Courts tab**, you will find various data regarding court intervention through Emergency Removal Order (ERO), Preliminary Removal Order (PRO), etc. I hope you find this information helpful.

Thank you,
Kathleen Hollywood

