



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

AGENDA

In-Person Committee Meeting

Libbie Mill Library

2100 Libbie Lake E St, Richmond, VA 23230

October 27, 2023

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

- 1. Welcome, Roll Call and Introduction of Guests**
- 2. Review and approval of April 28, 2023 Minutes**
- 3. Review Meeting Dates for Next Year**
- 4. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair – Jeannine Panzera and Eric Reynolds – Nominations Committee**
- 5. Remote and Virtual Meeting Policy Review**
- 6. CJA Program Update**
 - Child Advocacy Center Update
 - Child Death Investigation Protocol Update
 - Virtual Training Series for Child Abuse Awareness Month
 - Virginia Crime Victims Rights Week – Focus on Children
- 7. CASA Program Update**
 - CASA Program Expansion Projects
 - CASA Program Regulatory Review
 - NCASA/GAL Association Update
- 8. Citizen Review Panel**
- 9. Adjournment**

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

April 28, 2023

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children’s Justice Act programs was held on April 28, 2023, at the Henrico Training Center in Richmond, Virginia.

Members Present

Kim Barbarji
Randy Bonds
Jackie Robinson Brock
Eugene Butler
Shamika Byars
Katharine Hunter
Jeannine Panzera
Giselle Pelaez
Pat Popp, Vice-chair
Eric Reynolds
Lora Smith for Shannon Hartung
Judge Thomas Sotelo
Ashley Thompson

Members Not Present

Regina Baker
Shardell Gerald
Allison Gilbreath
Judge Jerrauld Jones
Sandy Karison

Staff Present

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

- I. **Call to Order:** Pat Popp, Committee Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM. Members introduced themselves. One member participated virtually (Judge Thomas Sotelo) due to medical leave.

II. Approval of Minutes: The committee received and reviewed the draft minutes of the October 28, 2022 meeting. Judge Thomas Sotelo made a motion to approve the minutes. Eric Reynolds provided a second. The motion was approved.

III. Final Outcome of Tracked General Assembly Bills: The committee received a final list of bills passed during the 2023 General Assembly session involving the investigation, prosecution and judicial handling of child abuse cases.

IV. Appointment of Nominations Committee for Chair and Vice-Chair
The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee elects a Chair and Vice-Chair every two years. A Nominations Committee is needed to develop a slate for consideration by the full Committee at the July meeting. Jeannine Panzera and Eric Reynolds volunteered to serve as the Nominations Committee.

V. CJA Program Update
The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee was provided with a written report detailing significant activities of the CJA program this quarter.

The Committee had the opportunity for discussion around the upcoming 2024-2027 Three Year Plan and application for funding. As a reminder, the Committee met in October to plan and prepare the 2024-2027 Three-Year plan for the Children’s Justice Act. Jenna Foster, DCJS Children’s Justice Act Program Coordinator, provided a final review of the recommendations for approval. Ashley Thompson made a motion to approve the plan and Shamika Byars provided a second. The motion was approved.

VI. Citizen Review Panel
In order to finalize recommendations to the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) for the upcoming year, Committee members were provided copies of the 2022 recommendations in advance of the meeting for review. Pat Popp led the committee in a discussion of the recommendations as presented. Several amendments were made to the document during the discussion. DCJS staff will incorporate the changes discussed and forward to VDSS by the May deadline. A motion was made by Ashley Thompson to accept the amended 2023 CRP Recommendations, a second was made by Eugene Butler. The motion carried.

VII. CASA Program Update
The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee was provided with a written report detailing significant activities of the CASA program this quarter.

The Committee reviewed a draft update of the Guidance Policy on the use of CASA volunteers in custody/visitation cases. Committee members engaged in discussions around the suggested changes and the need for additional clarity for local programs and courts. Eric Reynolds made a motion to accept the changes as proposed and Shamika Byars provided the second. The motion was approved.

VIII. New Business - Members provided updates, information and news from their respective agencies and disciplines. Kim Barbarji shared that she will be moving out of the country in the summer of 2023 and therefore will be resigning from the Advisory Committee.

IX. Adjourn – Eric Reynolds made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Ashley Thompson provided the second. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 11:57 AM.

Next meeting dates:

Friday, July 28, 2023

Report to the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee

October 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 State Leadership Team (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

The Training Committee continued the implementation of the 2023 CASA College training plan.

DCJS facilitated six training sessions since the last advisory committee meeting. Topics included Suicide Prevention, Advocating with Neurodivergent Children, Best Practices in Volunteer Recruitment, Volunteer Management, Volunteer Screening and Interviewing.

The Training Committee continues efforts to revise the Virginia Case Studies Pre-Service Training Curriculum. The trajectory for completion of the curriculum is on track for the Spring of 2024.

B. Marketing and Volunteer Recruitment Committee – Statewide Volunteer Recruitment Campaign

The State Leadership Team (SLT) Marketing and Volunteer Recruitment Committee completed oversight of the Statewide Volunteer Recruitment project. The project goals were to increase statewide awareness of the CASA Programs and assist in the recruitment of CASA volunteers. A final report presentation was provided to the State Leadership Team in September by The Idea Center, the marketing and public relations firm contracted to implement the campaign. Metrics for success of the campaign included increased traffic to the Virginia CASA website, increased awareness of CASA through measured analytics of digital media and CASA volunteer recruitment and retention. Overall, the campaign exceeded the projected goals.

The campaign included production of high quality, commercials using Virginia CASA stories. These were launched in a highly targeted digital marketing campaign that included Google, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. The

combined grand total results included 2,454,432 impressions and 16,584 visits to the Virginia CASA website; 82% of which were new visitors. Additionally, donations increased markedly on the Virginia CASA website during the campaign.

A recent AmeriCorps study on volunteerism indicates there was a 7% decline in volunteer participation between 2019 and 2021. This is the largest decrease since the survey began in 2002. CASA programs across the country report a decrease in volunteer recruitment. The Virginia Volunteer Recruitment Campaign was in effect during FY22. Interestingly, Virginia CASA volunteer rates remained steady FY22.

Local CASA programs will be invited to attend a presentation in December to gain more information about how to utilize the digital assets created during the project on the local level.

C. Data Committee

The Data Committee worked on additional data improvements within CASA Manager during the reporting period. These improvements included defining particular fields used for required reports and working with the CASA Manager vendor to ensure those fields are locked to ensure data is consistently tracked for Virginia programs.

The Data Committee began review of outcomes tracked by CASA programs to determine if they continue to have relevance. The committee is also reviewing data collected regarding volunteers and will make recommendations for improvements to this section of the Virginia Performance Management Report.

II. Network Support Meetings

DCJS facilitated five CASA Network Support meetings using virtual technology during this reporting period. These meetings assist local programs with navigating program operations and management concerns.

DCJS continues to host monthly New Director Support calls to assist in supporting new leaders in their positions. Five New Director Support calls were held during this reporting period.

III. CASA Expansion Grants

Through the availability of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, DCJS was able to award three grants to local programs for the purpose of CASA program expansion to unserved localities in the state. These grants will allow three programs to expand into a total of six previously unserved localities. This funding will be available for one year, from July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024.

Report to the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee

October 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. MDT Stakeholder Group: Statewide MDT Support Initiative

DCJS continues to collaborate with Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS), Child Advocacy Centers of Virginia (CACVA), and the Commonwealth Attorney’s Services Council (CASC) to institutionalize the MDT 101 virtual training for newly established, re-engaged, and struggling MDTs in Virginia. Using a train-the-trainer model, the goal is to facilitate this training quarterly beginning in January 2024. Additional training and technical assistance offerings are being considered.

II. Telemedicine 2.0 Update

Two additional health centers that serve child victims of sexual abuse have been funded to provide telehealth services to children in rural localities in Virginia for FY24. DCJS is working with Valley Urgent Care (Harrisonburg) and Highlands Community Service Board (CSB) to implement the original VCU telehealth model for children in these areas and surrounding rural localities.

III. CJA 2024-2027 Three-Year Assessment

The 2024-2026 3YA was submitted to the Children’s Bureau in May. DCJS received notification in July that the submitted 3YA and 2023 annual application was moved forward for final approval. *Thanks to this Advisory Committee for crafting a great 3YA!*

**The Court Appointed Special Advocate/Children’s Justice Act Advisory
Committee (CASA/CJA)
POLICY FOR THE REMOTE PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS**

1. AUTHORITY AND SCOPE

- a. This policy is adopted pursuant to the authorization of Va. Code § 2.2- 3708.3 and is to be strictly construed in conformance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA), Va. Code §§ 2.2-3700—3715.
- b. This policy shall not govern an electronic meeting conducted to address a state of emergency declared by the Governor or the Board of Supervisors. Any meeting conducted by electronic communication means under such circumstances shall be governed by the provisions of Va. Code § 2.2-3708.2. This policy also does not apply to an all-virtual public meeting.

2. DEFINITIONS

- a. “Advisory Committee” means the Court Appointed Special Advocate/Children’s Justice Act Advisory Committee (CASA/CJA Advisory Committee) or any committee, subcommittee, or other entity of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee.
- b. “Member” means any member of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee.
- c. “Remote participation” means participation by an individual member of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee by electronic communication means in a public meeting where a quorum of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee is physically assembled, as defined by Va. Code § 2.2-3701.
- d. “Meeting” means a meeting as defined by Va. Code § 2.2-3701.
- e. “Notify” or “notifies,” for purposes of this policy, means written notice, such as email or letter. Notice does not include text messages or communications via social media.

3. MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Regardless of the reasons why the member is participating in a meeting from a remote location by electronic communication means, the following conditions must be met for the member to participate remotely:

- a. A quorum of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee must be physically assembled at the primary or central meeting location; and
- b. Arrangements have been made for the voice of the remotely participating member to be heard by all persons at the primary or central meeting location. If at any point during the meeting the voice of the remotely participating member is no longer able to be heard by all persons at the meeting location, the remotely participating member shall no longer be permitted to participate remotely.

4. PROCESS TO REQUEST REMOTE PARTICIPATION

DRAFT

- a. On or before the day of the meeting, and at any point before the meeting begins, the requesting member must notify the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee Chair (or the Vice-Chair if the requesting member is the Chair) that they are unable to physically attend a meeting due to (i) a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition that prevents the member's physical attendance, (ii) a family member's medical condition that requires the member to provide care for such family member, thereby preventing the member's physical attendance, (iii) their principal residence location more than 60 miles from the meeting location, or (iv) a personal matter and identifies with specificity the nature of the personal matter.
- b. The requesting member shall also notify the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee staff liaison of their request, but their failure to do so shall not affect their ability to remotely participate.
- c. If the requesting member is unable to physically attend the meeting due to a personal matter, the requesting member must state with specificity the nature of the personal matter. Remote participation due to a personal matter is limited each calendar year to two meetings or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater. There is no limit to the number of times that a member may participate remotely for the other authorized purposes listed in (i)— (iii) above.
- d. The requesting member is not obligated to provide independent verification regarding the reason for their nonattendance, including the temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition or the family member's medical condition that prevents their physical attendance at the meeting.
- e. The Chair (or the Vice-Chair if the requesting member is the Chair) shall promptly notify the requesting member whether their request is in conformance with this policy, and therefore approved or disapproved.

5. PROCESS TO CONFIRM APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL OF PARTICIPATION FROM A REMOTE LOCATION

When a quorum of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee has assembled for the meeting, the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee shall vote to determine whether:

- a. The Chair's decision to approve or disapprove the requesting member's request to participate from a remote location was in conformance with this policy, and
- b. The voice of the remotely participating member can be heard by all persons at the primary or central meeting location.

6. RECORDING IN MINUTES

- a. If the member is allowed to participate remotely due to a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition, a family member's medical condition that requires the member to provide care to the family member, or because their principal residence is located more than 60 miles from the meeting location the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee shall record in its minutes (1) the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee's approval of the member's remote participation; and (2) a general description of the remote location from which the member participated.

DRAFT

- b. If the member is allowed to participate remotely due to a personal matter, such matter shall be cited in the minutes with specificity, as well as how many times the member has attended remotely due to a personal matter, and a general description of the remote location from which the member participated.
- c. If a member's request to participate remotely is disapproved, the disapproval, including the grounds upon which the requested participation violates this policy or VFOIA, shall be recorded in the minutes with specificity.

7. CLOSED SESSION

If the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee goes into closed session, the member participating remotely shall ensure that no third party is able to hear or otherwise observe the closed meeting.

8. STRICT AND UNIFORM APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This Policy shall be applied 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. The Chair (or Vice-Chair) shall maintain the member's written request to participate remotely and the written response for a period of one year, or other such time required by records retention laws, regulations, and policies.

**The Court Appointed Special Advocate/Children’s Justice Act (CASA/CJA)
Advisory Committee
POLICY FOR ALL-VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETINGS**

1. AUTHORITY AND SCOPE

- a. This policy is adopted pursuant to the authorization of Va. Code § 2.2- 3708.3 and is to be strictly construed in conformance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA), Va. Code §§ 2.2-3700—3715.
- b. This policy shall not govern an electronic meeting conducted to address a state of emergency declared by the Governor or the Board of Supervisors. Any meeting conducted by electronic communication means under such circumstances shall be governed by the provisions of Va. Code § 2.2-3708.2.

2. DEFINITIONS

- a. “CASA/CJA Advisory Committee” means the Court Appointed Special Advocate/Children’s Justice Act Advisory Committee, or any committee, subcommittee, or other entity of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee.
- b. “Member” means any member of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee.
- c. “All-virtual public meeting”, means a public meeting conducted by the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee using electronic communication means during which all members of the public body who participate do so remotely rather than being assembled in one physical location, and to which public access is provided through electronic communication means, as defined by Va. Code § 2.2-3701.
- d. “Meeting” means a meeting as defined by Va. Code § 2.2-3701.
- e. “Notify” or “notifies,” for purposes of this policy, means written notice, including, but not limited to, email or letter, but does not include text messages or messages exchanged on social media.

3. WHEN AN ALL-VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING MAY BE AUTHORIZED

An all-virtual public meeting may be held under the following circumstances:

- a. It is impracticable or unsafe to assemble a quorum of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee in a single location, but a state of emergency has not been declared by the Governor or Board of Supervisors; or
- b. Other circumstances warrant the holding of an all-virtual public meeting, including, but not limited to, the convenience of an all-virtual meeting; and
- c. The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee has not had more than two all-virtual public meetings, or more than 25 percent of its meetings rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater, during the calendar year; and;

DRAFT

- d. The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee's last meeting was not an all-virtual public meeting.

4. PROCESS TO AUTHORIZE AN ALL-VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING

- a. The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee may schedule its all-virtual public meetings at the same time and using the same procedures used by the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee to set its meetings calendar for the calendar year; or
- b. If the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee wishes to have an all-virtual public meeting on a date not scheduled in advance on its meetings calendar, and an all-virtual public meeting is authorized under Section 3 above, the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee Chair may schedule an all-virtual public meeting provided that any such meeting comports with VFOIA notice requirements.

5. ALL-VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING REQUIREMENTS

The following applies to any all-virtual public meeting of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee that is scheduled in conformance with this Policy:

- a. The meeting notice indicates that the public meeting will be all-virtual and the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee will not change the method by which the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee chooses to meet without providing a new meeting notice that comports with VFOIA;
- b. Public access is provided by electronic communication means that allows the public to hear all participating members of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee;
- c. Audio-visual technology, if available, is used to allow the public to see the members of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee;
- d. A phone number, email address, or other live contact information is provided to the public to alert the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee if electronic transmission of the meeting fails for the public, and if such transmission fails, the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee takes a recess until public access is restored;
- e. A copy of the proposed agenda and all agenda packets (unless exempt) are made available to the public electronically at the same time such materials are provided to the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee;
- f. The public is afforded the opportunity to comment through electronic means, including written comments, at meetings where public comment is customarily received; and
- g. There are no more than two members of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee together in one physical location.

6. RECORDING IN MINUTES

Minutes are taken as required by VFOIA and must include the fact that the meeting was held by electronic communication means and the type of electronic communication means used.

7. CLOSED SESSION

DRAFT

If the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee goes into closed session, transmission of the meeting will be suspended until the public body resumes to certify the closed meeting in open session.

8. STRICT AND UNIFORM APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This Policy shall be applied strictly and uniformly, without exception, to the entire membership, and without regard to the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting.