



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

Virtual Committee Meeting

AGENDA

July 24, 2026

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join: <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/265340993634723?p=yyw9dfBBTXwkES0thC>

Meeting ID: 265 340 993 634 723

Passcode: 842zK2Cw

- **Welcome and Introductions**
- **Review and Approval of April 24, 2026, Minutes**
- **Set Meeting Dates for the Upcoming Year**
 - Proposed dates:
 - Friday October 23, 2026 (CJA Planning Session: 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM)
 - Friday January 22, 2027 - Virtual
 - Friday April 23, 2027
 - Friday July 23, 2027 – Virtual
- **CASA Program Update**
 - Regulatory Revision Update
 - Use of Artificial Intelligence Practices
- **CJA Program Update**
 - September MDT Training
 - CJA Strategic Planning Session: Friday, October 23rd (10am-3pm)
- **Citizen Review Panel**
 - Report from National Citizens Review Panel Conference – Rachel Miller
 - Review of Child Fatalities Involving Substance Exposed Infants – Carly Lansden, Child Fatality Specialist, Virginia Department of Social Services
- **Adjournment**

Report to the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee

July 24, 2026, 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 CASA Network State Leadership Team (SLT) is a partnership between the CASA Network and DCJS. DCJS participates on some but not all the committees. DCJS facilitated one meeting of the SLT during this reporting period.

The following is a highlight of accomplishments of the SLT committees during this reporting period.

A. Training Committee

The Virginia Case Studies Training curriculum (VCST) implementation continues across the CASA program network. To date, fourteen programs have conducted pre-service training sessions using VCST. The curriculum has been very well received, with programs expressing strong satisfaction. Staff report that the case study accurately reflects high-quality casework and serves as an effective walk-through for volunteers. They note the curriculum material is extensive and is easy to facilitate and navigate. Overall, programs report strong success using the curriculum and share positive feedback from volunteers.

A summer Training of Facilitators session is scheduled for July 30–31, 2026, with five programs registered to attend. Following this session, 25 out of 26 CASA programs in Virginia will have been trained to facilitate the VCST pre-service curriculum.

DCJS is dedicating significant effort to providing technical assistance and support to local programs to ensure successful VCST implementation. Monthly VCST virtual roundtable meetings are held to discuss successes, challenges, and strategies for enhancement based on feedback from programs that have implemented the curriculum. In addition, the State CASA Training Coordinator offers individualized technical assistance to local programs as needed to support effective implementation.

Development of a comprehensive evaluation framework for all programs to use in assessing the VCST is currently underway.

The CASA College Advo-chat Building Bridges Series is focusing on enhancing communication with key stakeholders, implementing trauma-informed strategies for engaging families, and utilizing effective communication techniques when interacting with children who have experienced trauma. Upcoming sessions are planned for the remainder of the year to focus on the topics of “When the Helpers Need Help: Navigating Professional Burnout”, “Partnering with Foster Families” and “Working with Guardian ad Litem”

Additional CASA College trainings are planned for staff members and include the following topics: 2026 General Assembly Update, Virginia Employment Law Update, 2026 Office of the Children’s Ombudsman Updates. Planning for the 2027 calendar year is underway.

B. Data Committee

The Data Committee met once during this reporting period and finalized the development of a judicial survey template for local programs. The survey template will be utilized by local programs to gain feedback and assess judicial satisfaction with local CASA program operations, as perceived by the judges served by each program.

The Data Committee has begun work on the projects outlined in the 2026 Action Plan, including a comprehensive review of statewide data collection. This review will assess the quality and relevance of current data, identify additional data needs, and conduct an in-depth analysis to evaluate the accuracy and effectiveness of the data collected. The Data Committee is also updating the CASA Manager User Guide for Virginia CASA Programs. Additionally, it continues to track CASA Manager support requests to monitor user trends and identify emerging issues in Virginia.

The CASA Manager User Group (CMUG) met twice during the reporting period.

C. Legislative Committee

The Legislative Committee is chaired by a local CASA program director and meets monthly. The committee continues to monitor state and federal legislation of impact to the CASA programs.

The CASA Network collaborated to advocate for increased state funding for CASA programs during the 2026 General Assembly session. This effort resulted in an increase of state general funds to \$2,385,000 for each year of the biennium, bringing the total annual appropriation to \$4,000,000.

II. Funding Formula Workgroup

DCJS is facilitating a workgroup this summer to evaluate the current CASA funding formula and develop recommendations for potential revisions effective in FY2028. A diverse and representative group of directors has agreed to participate, with the first meeting scheduled for July 16, 2026. Members received a packet of information in advance of the first meeting, including guided questions to help them prepare. The packet contains multiple scenarios and workbooks, incorporating suggestions from the Funding Formula Focus Groups held last fall. DCJS anticipates holding additional meetings, and the advisory committee will be kept informed of the workgroup's progress.

III. Network Support Meetings

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

IV. New Director Orientation

During this reporting period, DCJS undertook a comprehensive refresh of the New Director Orientation training program. The revised program includes an in-person site visit with the new hire, instruction on essential foundational concepts for effective CASA program management, and a tailored training plan designed to address individual learning needs. The orientation will now be delivered over the course of the first year of employment.

V. DCJS CASA Grant Program

The Criminal Justice Services Board (CJSB) awarded grants to local CASA programs for FY2027 based on the previous year's state general fund allocation. However, the General Assembly approved an increase in state general funds for CASA programs in the amount of \$2,385,000 for each year of the biennium, bringing the total annual appropriation to \$4,000,000. As a result, the total amount available to local CASA programs includes \$3,799,708 in state general funds and \$1,499,516 in federal VOCA funds. DCJS is working with CASA programs to revise their grant budgets to reflect the increased funding.

VI. CASA Regulatory Revision

The CASA Regulations have been certified by the Attorney General's Office. The Department of Planning and Budget has completed the Economic Impact Analysis, and the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security will review the regulations prior to submission to the Governor's Office.

Report to the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee

July 24, 2026 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Children's Justice Act (CJA)

Prepared by Jenna L. Foster

I. 2026 MDT Database

DCJS created a MDT Database to provide a centralized avenue for sharing training opportunities, legislative updates, funding opportunities, and other periodic reports. DCJS invites all members who serve on a child sexual abuse, human trafficking, or sexual assault MDT to be a part of the database. This information may be shared with state partners that support MDTs through training and technical assistance.

II. Good to Great 2.0 MDT Training

The interagency training team that created the Good to Great Multidisciplinary Team Training has updated the curriculum. The updated iteration of the Good to Great MDT Training will be offered as a workshop to MDT members during the DCJS Division of Programs and Services Learning Summit on September 3, 2026 in Charlottesville. An application is now available for up to four members of a locality's MDT to participate in this training. Lodging will be provided for selected teams.

III. CJA Strategic Planning Session

The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee will meet on Friday, October 23, 2026, to take a deeper look at the six themes identified during the April 2026 Advisory Meeting. During this session, the committee will focus on advancing discussions and outlining next steps related to each priority area. The themes include:

- MDT Support
- Policy
- CASA Support
- Children with Disabilities
- Multi-Systems Training
- Anti-Trafficking Efforts for Youth