

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

MEETING MINUTES

October 6, 2005

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children's Justice Act programs was held on Thursday, October 6, 2005 at the Richmond Police Training Academy in Richmond.

Members Present

Mike Hall – Chair Person
Sharon England – Vice Chair
Kent Hymel
Mindy Loiselle
Nan McKenney
Ruth Stone
The Honorable Phillip Wallace

Members not Present

Mary Evans
Eric Olsen
Fred Orelove
Claudette Overton
Shawn Schwertfeger

DCJS Staff Present

Denise Hampton
Holly Oehrlein
Melissa O'Neill

Call to Order: The regular quarterly meeting of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, October 6, 2005 at 10:00 a.m., at the Richmond Police Training Academy. The meeting was called to order by A. Michael Hall at 10:15 a.m.

Minutes: The minutes of the July 22nd meeting were reviewed by the committee. One correction was made with respect to the listing of DCJS staff not present. No other additions or corrections being noted, a motion was made to approve and the committee unanimously approved them.

Introduction of new members: Mike Hall introduced Nan McKenney. Ms. McKenney works with the Virginia Department of Social Services.

Citizen's Review Panel: Nan McKenney reported that there were no critical CRP issues to share. She did report that the CPS proposed regulations have been reviewed by the Attorney General's Office and encountered some problems. Ms. McKenney will report on the status of the regulations at the next meeting. The group then had discussion regarding differential response and evaluations as well as the Executive Summary.

Child Fatality Review: The annual report should be ready for the next meeting. There were fifty-six reports of child fatality to Dept. of Social Services, which is less than the previous year. There are still a few pending cases (7 pending and 25 founded).

CASA Program Update:

Critical Issues Discussion

Mike Hall will be attending the NCASAA State Directors Meeting in Seattle along with Melissa O'Neill. Participants have been asked to survey State Boards for the top 3 – 5 Critical Issues facing CASA Programs for discussion during the meeting. CASA/CJA Advisory Committee Members were sent a survey prior to the meeting. Local CASA programs were surveyed and the results were shared with the Advisory Committee. The following issues emerged as the most critical and will be shared at the meeting in Seattle:

1. Diversification of Funding
2. Fund Raising
3. Public Relations/Name Recognition of CASA
4. Training for New Staff/Staff Turnover
5. Relationships with Partner Agencies

COMET Update

An update was provided for the Committee on the progress of the implementation of the COMET program statewide. A suggestion was made to invite the COMET Senior Programmer Analyst, Mr. Bob Holet, to the next meeting to provide a demonstration of the program and the DCJS Reporting Tool along with the Statewide Aggregation feature he is designing. Ruth Stone commented on how valuable Mr. Holet's support for the COMET program is.

Regulations

The Committee discussed potential language revisions to clarify the role of advisory boards for local programs. The Committee also suggested the creating a guide for advisory boards similar to the one DCJS has created for governing boards.

Resource Development Grant

The RFP was released this morning and applicants will be expected to submit proposals by October 28th.

Judge's Conference

DCJS represented the CASA programs at the annual Judicial Conference in August to discuss new program development and enhance existing CASA program relationships. Ruth Stone was able to provide training at the new judges "pre bench training".

Annual reports

The Annual Statistical Reports from local CASA programs were due in September. Most have been submitted. A full report will be supplied to the Committee at the next meeting with a review of the trend in number of children served provided.

CJA Program Update:

Holly Oehrlein briefly went over the training summary from the "Investigating and Prosecuting Serious Injury and Fatal Child Abuse" conference. Overall, good comments were received.

Finding Words Virginia: This intensive child forensic interviewing program will start in 2006. The program endorses the MDT approach to child abuse investigation. We have a contract with VCU for the space and will be working with Theatre IV to obtain actors for one of the interviewing components. Sessions are being scheduled for April, June and September 2006. We will be sending out a "save the date" post card in November. It was also reported that the Beyond Finding Words Training was cancelled in September due to Hurricane Katrina and rescheduled for March 2006.

MDT Development training: Ms. Oehrlein distributed evaluations from the "Developing a Multidisciplinary Child Abuse Team" training that was held in August 2005 at Longwood University. This training was conducted to prepare localities that are not using an MDT approach so that they will be in a position to apply to attend Finding Words next year.

Improving Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse Conference: This conference will be held October 20th and 21st at the Hospitality House in Williamsburg.

John Reid Child Abuse Seminar: This conference is a three-day child abuse seminar which will be held November 1st through 3rd at the Doubletree in Charlottesville. Applications for registration have been recently mailed and we have received a few back.

Meeting with Chiefs and Sheriffs: We have met with representatives from the Association of Chiefs of Police and the Sheriffs' Association to talk about the investigation of child sexual abuse curriculum for law enforcement development and other law enforcement training needs related to child abuse. They suggested development of on-line training opportunities.

The Effects of Child Abuse and Neglect on Brain Development: Ms. Oehrlein advised that the CJA program will be providing funds to the Virginia Institute for Social Services Training Activities (VISSTA) to do 5 regional trainings on the effects of child abuse and neglect on brain development.

Closed-Circuit Television: CJA program staff met with representatives from the Bureau of Justice Assistance regarding the Closed-Circuit Television Project. There appears to be continued funding from the Bureau for Closed-Circuit technology activities. BJA inquired whether Virginia would want to be a learning site to assist other states and national conference next year. A report went to the printer this week on the use of Closed-Circuit equipment in Virginia over a 10-year period. Copies will be provided to the committee.

Child Trafficking in Virginia

Mindy Loiselle provided handouts developed by the United Conference of Catholic Bishops. She went over these handouts with the group and explained the severity of this problem within the United States as well as in our own state. Ms. Loiselle referred the group to the handout titled: "What if a child needs immediate attention?" She explained that there is an issue about whether these cases fall within the CPS domain because there is a question whether a "trafficker" is a "caretaker".

New Business:

None was noted.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.