

MINUTES of Texas Children’s Justice Act Task Force
Meeting date: January 22, 2010

Call to order: A regular meeting of the Texas Children’s Justice Act Task Force, was held at the Texas Center for the Judiciary, Austin, TX on January 22, 2010. The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m., Valerie Milholland presiding.

Members in attendance:

Roy Block
William Briley
Kriste Burnett
Cathy Crabtree
De Shaun Ealoms
Jon Evans
Joe Gagen
Tom Gaylor
Rolf Habersang

Randi King
Valerie Milholland
Margaret Lalk
James Lukefahr
Chris Oldner
Daniela Ontiveroz
Dan Powers
Fairy Rutland

Members not in attendance:

Larry Thorne
Cozette Bustamante
Audrey Deckinga
Denise Hyde
Joyce M. James
Gerry Williams

Staff in attendance:

Heidi Penix
Ginny Woods

Grantees/Guests in attendance:

Dan Capouch
Cathy Cockerham
Sheila Craig
Susan Miller
Jon Olsen
Beth Page
Kenneth Thompson

Welcome and introductions by Valerie Milholland. Ms. Milholland welcomed members and guests. Members introduced themselves. Ms. Milholland announced that CJA staff had updated the content and design of the CJA website.

Approval of October 23, 2009 minutes: Minutes from the October 23rd Task Force meeting had been emailed to the members following the meeting and posted to the CJA website.

Motion was made by Margaret Lalk and seconded by Chris Oldner to approve the minutes of the October 23rd, 2009 meeting. Motion carried without opposition.

2009 Project Outcomes and Wrap Up by Heidi Penix. Heidi Penix presented on the outcomes of CAC of Hidalgo County, CASA of Trinity Valley, Navarro County CAC and Nueces County CAC.

Budget by Ginny Woods. Ms. Woods updated the Task Force on the status of the FY '09 budget. The 2009 grant year has been closed out. The final carry-over amount is \$336,198.65: \$98,431.19 from the budget reserve; \$98,872.42 from University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio for the second year of their two-year grant; \$82,887.93 from the unexpended budgets of the remaining grantees; \$13,279.81 from the Task Force line item; and \$42,727.30 from operating expenses.

Additionally, Ms. Woods reviewed the current status of the FY '10 budget. \$1,242,234.99 has been budgeted to date; \$119,843.59 has been expended; and \$131,695.70 remains for new projects.

Finally, Ms. Woods previewed the following additional budget allocations to be requested during the course of the meeting:

- \$25,000 for a child abuse and neglect training for school personnel
- \$75,000 to train law enforcement on child abuse and neglect
- \$4,000 in additional funding to support the fatherhood roundtable
- \$25,000 in additional funding to support scholarship opportunities

Legislative Committee Report by Joe Gagen. Joe Gagen directed Task Force members' attention to the 81st Legislature Interim Study charges which were included in their meeting folders. He highlighted particular charges related to CJA including sex trafficking, relative care, and child-friendly courts.

First Responder Working Group Report by Dan Powers. The first responder working group met via teleconference on December 17, 2009. They recommended that the Task Force set aside \$100,000 to develop two training events: child abuse and neglect training for school personnel (mandated reporters) and child abuse and neglect training for law enforcement (first responders).

- 1. First Responder training and protocols** – Texas Municipal Police Association (TMPA) has a statewide curriculum available on child abuse and neglect, which includes components on both physical and sexual abuse. However, it is currently not easily accessible or affordable for all officers, particularly those in rural districts. CJA funds would be used to create an updated curriculum based on TMPA's comprehensive SAFVIC model curriculum (which deals with sexual assault and family violence) that would target rural areas. The updated curriculum would focus exclusively on child abuse and neglect with particular emphasis on the MDT model and coordination with CPS. CJA would also pay trainers to travel into the rural communities to deliver the trainings at no cost to the participants.
- 2. Mandated Reporter training and protocols** - The working group discussed issuing a request for proposals (RFP) to develop mandated reporter training curriculum for school personnel. Margaret Lalk reported that she had been in contact with schools throughout the state and that most schools felt that they were in compliance with the mandated reporter laws and didn't seem to see the necessity for training. Cathy Crabtree commented that mandated reporters would require a different approach than first responders. Through the development of an easily replicable and consistent curriculum available through CJA, the correct information will be available to the groups that need it. CJA will need to be proactive in its marketing and dissemination strategies for this curriculum. This project has a relatively short time-line and the curriculum will need to be completed by the middle of summer for availability to teachers by late August/early September.

Motion was made by Margaret Lalk and seconded by Cathy Crabtree to set aside \$100,000 for the Task Force to develop two training and curriculum development projects: child abuse and neglect training for law enforcement and child abuse and neglect training for school personnel.

Children with Disabilities/First Responder Training by Cathy Crabtree. CJA Staff and representatives from CACTX have begun discussions with Nora Baladerian, the Co-Director of the Institute on Violence and Trauma/Alliant University training program. IVAT/Alliant received a grant from the Office of Victims of Crime to develop curriculum and conduct trainings for first responders to child abuse cases involving children with disabilities. This training will involve forensic interviewing of children with disabilities, and therefore, it is critical that CACs be involved in the development of the curriculum. Selena Munoz from CACTX has been selected as a member of the national advisory board to assist in the development of the training. Additionally, Andra Chamberlain, Program Director for the Midland Children's Advocacy Center, has been nominated for the regional technical assistance coordinator for Texas for this project. She is a forensic interviewer and a contracted trainer for the CACTX forensic interviewer training curriculum. Texas will develop a steering committee to work with the national advisory committee that will include members of the Task Force disabilities working group, as well as Ada McCloud of CACTX, and other necessary stakeholders. The trainings will not begin until 2011. No funds are requested at this time.

Grantee updates by Ginny Woods. Ms. Woods updated the Task Force on the status of scholarships. CJA has received an overwhelming response to our scholarship program and anticipates a high volume of requests to the Crimes against Children Conference. Of the \$67,318 budgeted, CJA staff has awarded 68 scholarships totaling \$36,646, and obligated an additional \$12, 284. CJA staff recommends setting aside an additional \$25,000 to support scholarship opportunities.

Motion was made by Cathy Crabtree and seconded by Rolf Habersang to set aside an additional \$25,000 to support scholarship opportunities.

Through the Small Training Grants program, CJA has obligated nearly \$15,000 of the \$20,000 budgeted and supported the CACTX Annual Conference, as well as the Bexar County Children's Court Ad Litem Training. Other small training grant awards have been made to CAC of Smith County in Tyler and the Center for Child Protection in Austin to support multidisciplinary team trainings.

Ms. Woods gave an update of the major grant projects. Grantees have achieved measurable results and are making progress towards project objectives. The quarterly report was included as part of the meeting materials.

CPS Update by Dan Capouch, CPS Accountability Division Administrator and Susan Miller, CPS Director of Investigations. As a result of child deaths throughout the state, DFPS began a series of investigations and Family Based Safety Services (FBSS) reviews. The first review was in Dallas/Fort Worth in August and the second review was in Harris County. The reviews made apparent certain trends and patterns in the decision-making process, particularly related to risk-assessment. DFPS has been working with the National Resource Center for Child Protective

Services to help correct these issues. The upcoming, CJA-supported, Investigations and Family Based Safety Services joint intensive staff training is one strategy for addressing immediate concerns related to distinction between risk and safety. The training is scheduled for June.

Fatherhood Roundtable Update by Kenneth Thompson, CPS Fatherhood Program Specialist. The Fatherhood Roundtable will be held at the Texas Center for the Judiciary on March 27th. With input from fathers who have successfully navigated the child protection system, the roundtable will stress the importance of finding and fully engaging fathers to improve outcomes from children in the system. It will include a cross-section of individuals to represent a variety of opinions. Initially, the Task Force set aside \$2,000 to support the event, and CJA staff requests an additional \$4,000.

Motion was made by Cathy Crabtree and seconded by Rolf Habersang to set aside an additional \$4,000 for the Fatherhood Roundtable event.

Courthouse Dog Program by Cathy Crabtree. Ms. Crabtree reported on a program recently presented in Austin on the use of professionally trained assistance dogs in the facilitation of forensic interviews and to assist children through the court experience. This program, as well as programs using therapy dogs in CACs, is gaining interest throughout the state.

Undoing Racism by Sheila Craig, CPS State Disproportionality Manager, and Jon Olsen, CPS State Disproportionality Specialist. Sheila Craig and Jon Olsen gave an overview of the Undoing Racism Training and some of the work DFPS is doing to address the disproportionate representation of African American and American Indian children in the child protection system. Dates of the CJA sponsored training will be June 24-26. It will be held at the Texas Center for the Judiciary. All CJA Task Force members are invited, as well as additional participants to be identified to represent other systems which impact child protection.

New Business: The Task Force did not discuss any items of new business. The next Task Force meeting is scheduled for April 23rd.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at **1:30**.

These minutes were approved at a Texas Children's Justice Act Task Force meeting on April 23, 2010.
