

MINUTES of Texas Children’s Justice Act Task Force
Meeting date: October 23, 2009

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 October 23, 2009. The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m., Fairy Rutland presiding.

Members in attendance:

William Briley
Kriste Burnett
Cozette Bustamante
Cathy Crabtree
Jon Evans
Joe Gagen
Tom Gaylor
Rolf Habersang
Denise Hyde

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

Members not in attendance:

Larry Thorne
Joyce James
Audrey Deckinga
Gerry Williams
Valerie Milholland
De Shaun Ealoms
Roy Block

Staff in attendance:

Colette Bonstead
Heidi Penix
Ginny Woods

Grantees/Guests in attendance:

Carl Reynolds
Cathy Cockerham
Liz Kromrei
Connie Almeida
Melodye Cure
Justin Mazzeo
Courtney Pero
Alison Watros

Welcome and introductions by Fairy Rutland. Ms. Rutland welcomed members and guests. Each member introduced themselves.

Approval of July 24, 2009 minutes:

Minutes from the July 24th Task Force meeting had been emailed to the members following the meeting and posted to the CJA website.

Motion was made by Rolf Habersang and seconded by Denise Hyde to approve the minutes of the July 24, 2009 meeting. Motion carried without opposition.

Grantee Presentations:

1. **Texas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (TADEC), Greater Dallas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse** by Alison Watros, Program Director, TADEC; Justin Mazzeo, Quality Assurance Coordinator, TADEC; and Courtney Pero, Sergeant, Neighborhood Police Officer Unit, Plano Police Department.
2. **Kids in Court, Children’s Advocacy Center of Smith County** by Melodye Cure, Kids in Court Coordinator, CAC of Smith County.
3. **Fort Bend County Court Team for Maltreated Infants and Toddlers, Zero to Three** by Dr. Connie Almeida, Texas Training and Outreach Coordinator, Zero to Three.

4. **Quality CASA Advocacy and Volunteer Recruitment, Texas CASA** by Joe Gagen, Chief Executive Officer & Cathy Cockerham, Program Operations Director, Texas CASA, Inc.

CPS Update by Liz Kromrei, CPS Director of Services. Ms. Kromrei gave an update of ongoing CPS activities. At the next Task Force meeting, Ms. Kromrei will give an overview of the CFSR measures, as well as other performance measures outside the federal review and explain the how much control CPS has over these measures.

Grant Proposal Review Committee Report by Denise Hyde. Ms. Hyde summarized the targeted grant applications submitted by the Department of Family and Protective Services and the Office of Court Administration.

1. Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Application

DFPS is seeking \$100,000 to host an Investigations and Family Based Safety Services (FBSS) Joint Leadership Intensive Staff Training. The training will enhance the ability of FBSS and Investigations supervisors and managers to support family-centered practice without compromising child safety and protection as part of a systemic transformation. DFPS will offer two identical sessions and target all 600 CPS Investigative and FBSS supervisors, program directors, regional directors, and state office leaders statewide. The curriculum will be developed in partnership with the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services. This project addresses the Task Force recommendation to support training opportunities for CPS staff designed to strengthen levels of accountability, enhance staff support, and improve workforce retention.

Motion was made by Rolf Habersang and seconded by Margaret Lalk to approve the grant application submitted by the Department of Family and Protective Services. Motion carried without opposition.

2. Office of Court Administration (OCA) Application

OCA is seeking \$117,614 to enhance its child protection courts. OCA will hire a new, full-time attorney to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of promising practices within the child protection courts (CPCs). Additionally, the staff attorney will assist the child protection courts with legal research, as needed. During the first year of the project, the staff attorney will identify what promising practices are currently employed in the CPCs and develop a baseline for court performance data related to safety, permanence, timeliness, and well being. OCA will convene an advisory committee to review and recommend a set of promising practices to be adopted by all CPCs, as appropriate. This project addresses the Task Force recommendation to encourage the use of specialized courts of highly committed, specialized judges to hear child abuse and neglect cases.

Motion was made by Joe Gagen and seconded by Rolf Habersang to approve the grant application submitted by the Office of Court Administration. Motion carried without opposition.

Legislative Committee Report by Joe Gagen. Mr. Gagen directed Task Force members to the letter submitted to state representatives regarding recommendations for interim session studies included in the meeting notebook behind tab 4. The Legislative Committee will provide an update to the Task Force when the interim charges have been released.

Report on Undoing Racism Workshop by Fairy Rutland. Ms. Rutland discussed the Undoing Racism workshop she attended in August. Task Force members discussed the possibility of hosting a workshop for members and other participants, as appropriate. Participants must be prepared prior to the workshop and provided an opportunity to attend a feedback session following. The Task Force will consider whether to allocated funding in support of an Undoing Racism Workshop during the budget discussion.

CJA Status Report by Heidi Penix and Ginny Woods. Ms. Penix updated the Task force on some of the highlights from the 2008-2009 grant year. Ms. Woods provided a preview of the projects approved for the upcoming grant year. A PowerPoint presentation was included in the notebook materials.

Budget by Colette Bonstead. Ms. Bonstead updated the Task Force on the status of the FY '09 budget. Ms. Bonstead discussed the balance of unexpended funds for CJA Subgrantees. Ginny Woods updated the Task Force on the status of the FY '10 budget. Both budgets were included in the notebook materials.

CJA staff recommended setting aside \$15,000 for the Task Force to host an Undoing Racism Workshop and \$25,000 for additional scholarship opportunities.

Motion was made by Cathy Crabtree and seconded by Randi King to set aside \$15,000 for the Task Force to host an Undoing Racism Workshop and \$25,000 for additional scholarship opportunities.

New Business: The Task Force did not discuss any items of new business.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at **2:04**.

These minutes were approved at a Texas Children's Justice Act Task Force meeting on January 22, 2010.
