



**CALIFORNIA CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT (CJA) TASK FORCE MEETING  
July 24, 2015**

Office of Rural County Representatives,  
1215 K Street, Suite 1650, Sacramento, California 95814

**MEETING MINUTES**

Present: Harry Elias, Kathleen Cady, Tina Garcia, Lee Ann Kelly, Brandi Moore, Candy Pierce, Richard Ruiz, Edwin Weaver, Wendy Wright

(By phone) Catherine Stephenson, Mark Bontrager, Tina (Mavis) Williams

Cal OES: Sonia Banales, Leigh Bills, Roseann St. Clair, Michelle Mahon

Absent: (Leigh) David Casey, Elizabeth DeRouen, Melinda Furfuro, Rachel Gilgoff, Michael Grogan, Garry Ichikawa, Annie Lynn, Cristina Sanchez, Susan Torrence

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order at 10:31 a.m. by Chair Harry Elias.

**II. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM MARCH 13, 2015 MEETING**

Motion to approve the December 12, 2014 meeting minutes as presented:

Motion: Edwin Weaver

Second: Harry Elias

Discussion: None.

Motion passed 11-0-1 (Mark Bontrager not present for vote)

**III. Cal OES UPDATES**

Sonia Banales, Chief of the Cal OES Criminal Justice/Emergency Management and Victim Services Branch, provided the following updates:

- Sonia Banales was promoted to Chief of Criminal Justice/Emergency Management and Victim Services Branch. Former Chief Gwen Durling retired this past spring.
- Leigh Bills was promoted to Chief of the Victim Services Division.
- Cal OES has convened a steering committee regarding the implementation of the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding of \$233 million, the anticipated award amount for the 2015 and 2016 fiscal years. The steering committee consists of representatives various victim service and underserved communities.
- Cal OES was given one-time state funding of \$10 million to fund human trafficking victim services programs.
- All other federal funding allocations for federal fiscal year 2015-2016 are expected to remain the same as the current fiscal year.
- Cal OES is sponsoring the "California Says NO MORE" vehicle license plate to raise revenues for domestic violence and sexual assault prevention and awareness programs. Cal OES must collect at least 7,500 pre-paid applications by April 30, 2016, in order for the DMV to put the license plate into production.

#### **IV. NATIONAL CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT (CJA) STATE LIAISON OFFICERS' MEETING OVERVIEW**

- A. Harry Elias and Michelle Mahon attended the annual State Liaison Officers' meeting for the Children's Justice Act, hosted by the federal Children's Bureau, in Washington, D.C. in June.
- B. The attendance of the state Task Force Chair and state Liaison Officer is required under by the Children's Justice Act grant.
- C. The following information and updates were provided:
  - 1. Chris Newlin, of the National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC) based in Alabama, gave a presentation on Child Advocacy Centers and Sex Trafficking of Children
    - a. NCAC did a study regarding the sex trafficking of children because there wasn't any current or valid data on incidence or severity of this problem or what is being done by Child Advocacy Centers (CACs).
    - b. Study found that incidences or cases of human trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) was lower than expected in contrast of the total number of cases/interviews handled at CACs.
    - c. Still ongoing need for resources, services, and training.
  - 2. The Children's Bureau is focusing efforts on state Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and the connection to programs and grants to support this work.
    - a. CJA program guidance is requiring that the state Task Forces is familiar with, and has reviewed its state's annual CFSR and the five year Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP).
    - b. CJA programs and priorities should align and/or support the priorities outlined in these reports.
    - c. California Department of Social Services (DSS) is responsible for preparing and implementing the state's CFSP and CFSR.
    - d. Michelle Mahon has reached out to DSS and will obtain a copy of the most current CFSR and CFSP available. Will send copies to the Task Force members to review.

#### **V. CJA TASK FORCE BYLAWS & MEMBER EXPECTATIONS**

- A. Development of CJA Task Force Bylaws
  - 1. At the national CJA State Liaison Officers meeting in June, there were discussions and opportunities for sharing of ideas among the state representatives in attendance. The topic of the need for, and benefit of, task force bylaws was addressed.
  - 2. Michelle Mahon brought forth the discussion for the Task Force to develop formal bylaws.
    - a. Sample bylaws from other state Task Forces were shared.
    - b. Task Force has a Member Expectations which were approved in 2006, and modified in 2011.
    - c. Will have follow-up discussion regarding development of bylaws at the September 2015 Task Force Meeting.
- B. Task Force Member Vacancy
  - 1. Law Enforcement representative from North or Central California still needed for the Task Force.
  - 2. Officer should be Sergeant or Detective level, with experience or expertise in working with child abuse cases.
  - 3. Michelle Mahon will provide solicitation letter for Task Force members to share with potential candidates or leads to apply.

## VI. Cal OES CJA-FUNDED PROGRAMS UPDATES

### A. Michelle Mahon provided program updates for current CJA-funded programs

1. The Child Abduction Training Program is in its final year of program funding. Project is on track to meet its objectives in providing statewide trainings and updating the resources and information on the Child Abduction Task Force website. Project also expanded its outreach and training efforts through this program.  
Project is on track to expend its funding by the end of the Grant Award period.
2. The Child Abuse Identification Health Care Provider Training Program has completed the move and transition of the online training course from the Prevent Child Abuse California to its site/server (IMQ). Despite the delay from not being in Grant Award until April 2015, the project has been able to widely market its training to non-pediatrician medical professionals. The online training provides CME of CNCE credits at no cost to the trainee.  
Project has requested the permission to also market the training to the pediatric field. Task Force was in agreement with this request, as long as efforts to diligently market the training to critical medical areas--- including rural areas, physician assistants, family practitioners, emergency room doctors and nurses, and nurse practitioners---was met. Project expects to expend all of its current funding within the Grant Award period.
3. The Child Advocacy Studies and Mock House Program has completed the Mock House and conducted its first training on in San Diego on May 28<sup>th</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup> of this year. Future trainings are scheduled between August and September 2015. Project has experienced a setback with being able to offer the Mock House training to law enforcement due to the delays with getting the training POST-certified. Despite the setback, and delay from not being in grant award until April 2015, the project expects to complete its objectives and expend its funds.
4. The two projects under the Children Exposed to Domestic Violence Program recipients have been meeting their objectives in training officers and community partners, developing protocols, and improving response to children exposed to domestic violence in their respective communities. Projects anticipate expending all grant funds allocated to their projects in the current year. Both projects have submitted a request an extension for grant award funding, to five years.
5. The Criminal Justice Act Evaluator Program is working on meeting its objective to oversee the development of database system for the Cal OES Children Exposed to Domestic Violence (EV) program, and is planning to pilot the database with the EV program projects in late 2016. All other objectives under this program have been met, and project anticipates expending all of its funds in the current the grant year.
6. The Human Trafficking of Minors: Law Enforcement Training Program is on track to meet their training and curriculum development objectives for the Grant Award period. Project is in its final year of funding.
7. The Native American Children Training Forum Program experienced a minor setback to providing the trainings under this program due to changes to guidelines for state courts and agencies in Indian Child Custody proceedings which delayed the curricula development. However, the project was able to modify if curricula development and training schedule and will complete the goals of the current year grant. Project expects to meet all of its objectives for the current grant period, and also anticipates expending all its funding accordingly.

8. Statewide Multidisciplinary Interview Centers Coordinator (MD) Program is in its final year of funding. The project completed an RFP process at the beginning of the year and awarded a subcontract for the MD coordinator to Robin Leppo Kerr of the Madera County Child Abuse Prevention Council. Project continues to coordinate with the state chapter for child advocacy centers (CACC) on curriculum revision and coordination of trainings. Recipient is requesting additional years of funding for this program, to five years.
9. Training on Prosecution of Physical and Sexual Abuse of Children Program has met its training objectives for the grant award period. Project has updated the Child Abuse Reference Guide and it will be posted on their (CDAA) website. Project expects to expend grant funds for the Grant Award period.  
Task Force had questions regarding the program objective of “developing a data collection tool for correlating data to provide information between multidisciplinary child abuse investigations and number of reported allegations of abuse statewide.” Task Force asked Cal OES to determine if this is a duplicative effort of other data collection systems already in place, and to check with the project on how this database would be used.

## **VII. CJA FUNDING STATUS**

- A. Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015 Children’s Justice Act (CJA) funds
  1. The award for 2015 CJA funds has not yet been received. Cal OES submitted the application for 2015 funds in late May.
  2. The amount allocated to California in the 2015 CJA solicitation was \$1.78 million, which is less than the current year 2014 allocation. However, the actual award could be higher if population or other considerations are factored into the final award allocation.
- B. FFY 2014 CJA funds
  1. Cal OES needs recommendations to allocate 2014 CJA funds which have not been allocated to date.
  2. Requests for funding submitted to Cal OES
    - a. Request for funding extension from current CJA-funded programs
      - 1) MD Program, for an additional two years
      - 2) EV Program – two projects – for an additional two years
    - b. Request for new program funding
      - 1) Child Abduction Simulation Training
      - 2) Child Abduction First Responder Video Series
      - 3) Child ID Kit Distribution
      - 4) Child Abduction Regional Summits
      - 5) Advanced Training on the Human Trafficking of Minors
      - 6) Child Advocacy Studies Training
      - 7) Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Reporting System (ESCARS)
  3. Funding recommendations for remaining 2014 CJA funds
    - a. EV Program projects will be extended for two additional years of funding, as they will be the pilot projects for the web-based data collection/sharing system being developed and implemented by the Cal OES CJA Evaluator program in 2016.
    - b. Extension of funding request for MD Program
      - 1) Ongoing concern about the MD subcontractor for the project is a non-accredited center, and about confusion and duplicative efforts for multidisciplinary centers about submitting their reports which are already collected by CACC.
      - 2) Center for Innovation and Resources (CIR) reported that the working relationship with CACC is positive.

- 3) CIR awarded the MD subcontract through a competitive process. CACC submitted a proposal but did not earn the highest score to be granted the subcontract.
  - 4) The request for funding extension is for two additional years, and includes objective to consult with experts to develop or revise trainings to counties.
  - 5) Recommendation on funding request  
 Motion to approve the MD Program for one additional year of funding, at \$100,000  
 Motion: Candy Pierce  
 Second: Edwin Weaver  
 Discussion: None.  
 Motion passed 10-0-2 (Kathleen Cady abstained; Mark Bontrager not present for vote)
- c. New program funding
- 1) Catherine Stephenson pointed out that the program funding concept requests should be awarded on a competitive basis and not automatically granted to the agency or entity submitting the program funding request/proposal. This has always been the process for CJA funding recommendations.
  - 2) Harry Elias raised the issue regarding minor's counsel in family court for children alleged to have been abused
    - a) There are very few or no resources for attorneys to represent children alleged to have been abused in family court.
    - b) No funding available for appointment of minor's counsel in Family Court. Attorneys called to represent children in Family Court are pro bono. Not all counties have resources for pro bono attorneys to represent children alleged to have been abused in Family Court.
    - c) In order to increase or improve upon legal representation for children in Family Court there would also need to be training to attorneys in this area.
    - d) Recommend that Cal OES develop a program to fund an evaluator to survey Family Court Improvement related to minor's counsel and training needs.
    - e) Cal OES requested subject-matter assistance regarding the development of this program.
    - f) Recommended CJA subcommittee to assist Cal OES on development of Family Court Improvement Evaluator program are Harry Elias, Garry Ichikawa, David Casey, and Cristina Sanchez.
  - 3) Review of proposals related to child abduction
    - a) Child Abduction Simulation proposal
      - i. Proposed funding for project is \$35,510
      - ii. Involves multidisciplinary training model simulating "real" child abduction scenarios and situations.
      - iii. This type of training would take place at a venue (e.g., school) to simulate a situation or response.
      - iv. This type of training has not been done before in California. Proposed pilot training would take place in Ventura County.
      - v. Concern was raised about not including Central California. If the training is funded or sustained, the expansion or continuation would make the training widely available throughout California.

- b) The Child Abduction Summits, Child ID Kit, and Child Abduction Video series proposals total nearly \$1,000,000. There are not enough CJA funds to fund these projects.
- c) Question raised about the funding requests/proposals for projects related to child abduction. Is child abduction a major concern or issue in California?
  - i. CJA funds the Child Abduction Task Force. There have been no objections or movement to discontinue funding. Cal OES will continue to fund this Child Abduction Task Force with CJA state operations funds.
  - ii. Current statistics on the Child Abduction Task Force website shows low numbers and doesn't specify what they reflect
  - iii. Last report done by the Child Abduction Task Force was done in 2011. They are currently working on a new report.
  - iv. CJA Task Force requested a report to provide clarification or updated/additional information for child abduction statistics from the Child Abduction Task Force. Presence or formal presentation by the Child Abduction Task Force at the next CJA Task Force Meeting is not necessary.
- d) Advanced Training on the Human Trafficking of Minors proposal
  - i. Current CJA-funded Human Trafficking of Minors: Law Enforcement Training program is in its seventh and final year of funding.
  - ii. Advanced training proposal would include development of multidisciplinary curriculum regarding the identification and handing of human trafficking cases involving minors.
  - iii. Cal OES is administering state funding for direct services for human trafficking.
  - iv. Proposed funding is \$325,000/year, for a three-year period. Not enough 2014 CJA funding to fund this program.
  - v. If this proposal is recommended for funding, it would go competitive through at RFP process by Cal OES.
- e) Child Advocacy Studies Training proposal
  - i. Current CJA-funded Child Advocacy Studies program is funded for one year. Grant award period will end on September 30, 2015.
  - ii. Proposal calls for outreach, marketing and expansion of the child advocacy studies and mock house training to reach a wider field of disciplines in California to participate in the training.
  - iii. Mock house is not a new concept of training regarding identification and response of child abuse cases.
  - iv. Proposed funding is \$564,000 over a three-year period. Not enough 2014 CJA funds to fund this proposed program.
- f) Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Reporting System (ESCARS)
  - i. Program concept proposal developed by Cal OES staff with assistance from the presenters who gave a presentation on ESCARS at the March 2015 CJA Task Force Meeting.

- ii. Program is to integrate the ESCARS systems developed and utilized by Los Angeles County, in other counties throughout the state. ESCARS is a system housed with Los Angeles County Children and Family Services, and is an information sharing tool used by law enforcement, prosecution and DCFS for reported/suspected child abuse cases. Non-Los Angeles counties could apply for funding to implement the ESCARS in their counties.
  - iii. The proposed funding for this program is still unknown
  - iv. CJA Task Force requested Cal OES contact the Los Angeles County DCFS to ensure that they would allow for their program to be shared or given to other counties for integration.
  - v. CJA Task Force subcommittee to identify additional questions and concerns regarding ESCARS are Richard Ruiz and Tina Garcia.
  - vi. Tina Garcia will reach out to the state committee child welfare and/or Department of Social Services to ensure ESCARS complies with child welfare reporting requirements.
- 4) Funding recommendations for remaining unallocated 2014 CJA funds
- a) Motion to fund Family Court Improvement Evaluator program for one year, with the possibility of two years if necessary.  
Motion: Candy Pierce  
Second: Wendy Wright  
Discussion: None.  
Motion passed 11-0-1 (Mark Bontrager not present for vote)
  - b) Motion to fund Child Abduction Simulation training for \$35,000, as an additional component of the Child Abduction Training Program.  
Motion: Candy Pierce  
Second: Kathleen Cady  
Discussion: Proposed funding would extend the Child Abduction Training Program end date to September 30, 2016.  
Motion passed 11-0-1 (Mark Bontrager not present for vote)

### **VIII. CHILDREN'S BUREAU REGIONAL UPDATES AND ACTIVITIES**

Michelle Mahon reported that there have not been any conference calls among the Region IX states.

### **IX. STATEWIDE COLLABORATION**

Michelle Mahon reported on the ongoing efforts to collaborate with other state agencies regarding CJA-related issues

1. Working on scheduling a meeting with the CA Department of Social Services about obtaining the current state Children Family Services Report and most current Child Family Services Plan.
2. Cal OES continues to collaborate with the California Victim's Compensation Program regarding victim services programs in California.
3. Still awaiting response from the California Attorney General's Bureau on Children's Justice. Hoping to identify what the initiatives and activities related to children's justice are being done by this bureau.

### **X. FUTURE MEETINGS**

- Friday, September 18, 2015, in San Diego
- Friday, December 11, 2015, in Sacramento

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to Adjourn

Motion: Harry Elias

Second: Edwin Weaver

Meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m.