

## **Program Performance Annual Report 2010**

### **Statement of Needs**

Needs of the Missouri Task Force on Children's Justice include adequate, stable, and flexible funding, improved and expanded services, staff development, positive work environment, positive image and public support. The Task Force needs assistance and support from many state and local partners to succeed. The Task Force plans to share the Strategic Plan, communicate and build support for its strategic action agenda, and enlist the assistance of its many partners in the months ahead. Working together, the Task Force expects that significant improvements will be achieved.

### **Project Impacts and/or Progress**

During the past year, The Task Force has met quarterly, reviewing and discussing activities to improve the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities and cases involving , a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as intrastate, interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, in a manner which reduces the additional trauma to the child victim and the victim's family and which also ensures procedural fairness to the accused. The following are the activities completed for the 12 month period preceding the date of submission.

The Task Force was presented with information on child abuse and neglect data and policy revisions from the Children's Division. The Description of the Investigation Process, CS-24, was revised to reflect standards outlined in Missouri statute, case law, and the Code of State Regulations as it would relate to the alleged perpetrator's right to notice and due process. The Law Enforcement-Prosecuting Attorney Notification Letter, CS-21F, was developed to provide field personnel with the ability to correspond with law enforcement or prosecuting attorneys in an effort to verify the existence of an open criminal investigation or pending criminal charges.

A presentation on Sexting: Social Media and Danger to Youth in Foster Care was given by Emerson McGuire, member of the State Technical Assistance Team (STAT). This presentation was well received by the task force and allowed the opportunity for information to be shared among each of the partner organizations in their work with children.

Common mental health diagnoses were identified for children in foster care with the suggestion made by the Task Force for Children's Division staff to be trained on best practice in working with youth and children with mental health needs. Coordination occurred with the Department of Mental Health. Information was provided and made available to staff via a link on the Children's Division Internet to be used as a resource to staff and foster parents who are providers to children and youth with mental health diagnoses. The Department of Mental Health also agreed to provide support and guidance to any family member or staff person with questions on care of youth with

mental health diagnoses. Additionally, mental health was addressed in the Child and Family Service Review Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs. The State met its goals for this outcome in the Program Improvement Plan by developing a statewide comprehensive children's mental health plan to increase the level of cooperation between the courts, the Department of Mental Health, the CD, and families.

A letter was sent to the Missouri Legislature by the Task Force in support of the Office of Child Advocate (OCA). The Task Force, through their partnering with the OCA, believes this office is crucial and vitally important to Missouri child advocacy and for these reasons opposed the reduction of funding for this office.

The Task Force recommended that In-Service Training for Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) be available for all foster parents. In response to this recommendation the Children's Division has provided the opportunity to the Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Advisory Board to be involved in identifying beneficial and appropriate training. The Task Force as well as the Division acknowledges that Foster/Adoptive parents can best identify their training needs in response to the youth they are parenting.

The Task Force suggested Children's Division assure that new workers are provided with appropriate supervision and that supervisors are training their workers appropriately on safety standards. The Task Force was presented with new information relating to the Framework for Safety Model which involves safety assessments and safety planning. The Framework for Safety Model and evolution of its tools is to help develop treatment plans that are more efficient in providing safety to children and families. This Model has been introduced and is currently being piloted in the Children's Division. Keeping in mind of child vulnerabilities and parental protective capacities, this new way of thinking has been integrated into all CD trainings.

CJA members participated in a record review which heightened their interest in CD's critical event process. Children's Division protocol was revised regarding the reporting, documentation and review completed in response to the death or critical event involving a child. Revisions were made to identify trends, refine practice and meet the enduring goal of improving safety outcomes for children involved with the Children's Division. Data, information and trends pulled from the critical events will be shared with the Task Force.

Members of CJA are given a Legislative update during meetings. Many have become involved with the Legislative. Support was given to Hope's Law amended to Karra & Jocelyn's Law for stiffer penalties for crimes against children, to include shaken baby or traumatic head trauma. CJA member, Mary Ann Williamson and Representative Riddle's goal was to pre-file with the House and Senate after reviews by prosecutors and judges to ensure it is the best legislation. Member, Rene Howitt, took an interest in this goal and felt a monetary value could be placed on these crimes. Associating the deaths or incidents with the burden of medical expenses may gain attention and be the best way to support legislators.

The Task Force feels that it was important for there to be appropriate ramifications for staff members who fail to follow policy and safety standards. CJA recommended an external review panel that could be comprised to supervise or evaluate “problem” areas. CJA supports House Bill 143-Child Abuse and Neglect Reports, requiring each CD hotline, case worker and circuit manager assigned to the incident county to receive a preliminary evaluation by the division. This evaluation would determine if a performance assessment to assess the worker's or manager's ability to competently perform his or her duties is required. If an assessment is required, it must be completed within three days of the child's death.

### **Funded CJA Grant Projects: 12 months prior to submission**

#### **Child Advocacy Centers**

During FFY10, CJA grant money was provided to the Child Advocacy Centers in Missouri to improve the processes by which Missouri responds to cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse or exploitation. Forensic examinations, victim interviews, referrals to treatment providers, gathering and retention of forensic evidence used for criminal prosecution of the offender were made possible through funding provided by the CJA grant.

There are 15 Child Advocacy Centers located across the State, with some locations having satellite offices and serving children and families in the surrounding counties. The availability of these centers allows for a one-time interview of the victim as well as the opportunity for the physical examination to occur in the same location, preventing unnecessary stress and trauma to the child victim and their family. Child Advocacy Centers often facilitate scheduling the exams and interviews to further assist in the investigation and criminal prosecution process.

SAFE-CARE network providers (physicians and other medical providers who conduct forensic examinations) work in close collaboration with the Child Advocacy Centers. The mission statement of the SAFE-CARE Network continues to be “to improve outcomes for children who are victims of, or at risk for, child maltreatment by enhancing the skills and role of the medical provider in a multidisciplinary context.”

In SFY (10), 2,076 SAFE-CARE exams were conducted, and there were 87 participating SAFE-CARE providers.

While data related to the successful prosecution of perpetrators involved in cases that are served by the Child Advocacy Centers is not available, it is well established that the forensic process provided by the Advocacy Centers, including the handling of evidence and quality of victim interviews, continues to improve the investigation and judicial handling (prosecution) process.

The majority of forensic interviewers who conduct the victim interviews use a model interviewing technique called “Finding Words”. By using this technique, the quality of the victim interview is raised to a standard that prosecutors consider helpful in the prompt and successful resolution of civil, and particularly, the criminal court proceedings.

CJA Support for the Child Advocacy Centers facilitated compliance with RSMo 210.001.1, which designates Child Advocacy Centers in Missouri.

**Total                   \$ 543,493.00**

**Missouri Juvenile Justice Association Spring Conference Scholarships**

MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) Spring Education Conference May 19-21, 2010. Financial Assistance was provided for scholarships for 25 individuals from varying professional disciplines involved in the investigation of child abuse/juvenile justice. Scholarship recipients attended workshops related to child welfare. Goals of the conference were to provide techniques to working with challenging children and youth, give awareness to disproportionate minority contacts and the understanding of childhood trauma, and juvenile sexual offenders for multidisciplinary team members and professionals working with these targeted populations.

**Total                   \$9,425.00**

**Missouri KidsFirst**

Funding was provided to the Missouri Network of Child Advocacy Centers, *DBA Missouri Kids First*, to provide scholarships for 40 participants to attend workshops on Forensic Interviewing and Child Abuse Investigative Team Training in May and August of 2010. The purpose of these trainings was to improve the ability of multidiscipline team members to investigate child sexual abuse cases. The following are just a few of the workshops that were offered:

- Effective Interviewing
- How Children Experience Sexual Abuse
- Process of Disclosure
- Cultural Competency

Meticulous records are maintained of everyone completing the Finding Words course in Missouri and all information is entered into an on-going data base. Pre-course readings are required and pre-tests are given to evaluate the knowledge of each person beginning the course. The final test must be passed successfully in order to get a certificate of successful completion. Every session is evaluated at the end of each presentation to gauge the quality of the presenter and the materials provided. Extensive composite data is compiled, aggregated and submitted to the National Center. Data is maintained on the location and professional affiliation of every person trained in the course. There were 100 participants across the state who attended this training.

**Total                   \$ 7,250.00**

**Missouri Office of Prosecution Services**

This agency is designated by state statute as an autonomous entity within the Attorney General's Office to provide training and technical assistance to Prosecutors and allied professionals. The purpose of their project is to educate and train their audience to

improve the investigation, handling and prosecution surrounding child abuse cases, including sexual and physical abuse. *Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse* training took place in October 2010 in five regional training locations and one webinar. 468 people were trained, 73 different counties were represented during the regional trainings. The following topics were covered:

- Multi Disciplinary Team, Best Practices & Working with Your Team
- The Signs & Symptoms of Coercive Control
- The Search of Proof
- Technology Facilitated Child Sexual Exploitation
- Making the Factual Elements of Sex Crimes & Child Abuse

**Total                    \$ 6,480.28**

**Missouri Juvenile Justice Association Fall Conference Scholarships**

MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) Fall Education Conference October 27-29, 2010. Financial Assistance was provided for scholarships for 19 individuals from varying professional disciplines involved in the investigation of child abuse/juvenile justice. Scholarship recipients attended seminars consisting of over 12 hours of training related to child welfare. Goals of the conference were to provide techniques to strengthen management and supervision, explore youth development, inform professionals of youth aging out of foster care, coach mediation skills and provide up-to-date information on juvenile law for multidisciplinary team members and professionals.

**Total                    \$6,926.84**

**Missouri KidsFirst**

Missouri KidsFirst received funding in December 2010 to cover the cost of partial scholarships for 47 participants to attend an interactive intensive five day ChildFirst Forensic Interviewer Training or three-day Child Abuse Investigative Team training in Missouri. Missouri KidsFirst is contracted with the National Child Protection and Training Center to provide the training for multidisciplinary teams across Missouri. Teams included a combination of law enforcement, Children's Division investigators, prosecutors and juvenile court professionals. Goals of the conference were to improve the ability of multidisciplinary team members to investigate child sexual abuse cases. The following are just a few of the workshops that were offered:

- Child Development
- Corner House Forensic Interview Protocol
- Blocks and Problems; Testifying in Court; Suggestibility
- Anatomical Dolls

**Total                    \$ 7,500.00**

### **C.O.P.E (Changing Our Parenting Experience)**

C.O.P.E....Changing Our Parenting Experience is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization devoted to reducing child abuse and neglect by teaching parenting skills to teenagers before they become parents. The organization requested funding to develop an innovative, DVD-based curriculum for teenagers, which would begin in Missouri and expand to the rest of the nation. This project is in the early stages of development and shall be implemented in the 2010-11 school year.

**Total            \$ 10,000.00**

### **Proposed Activities:**

The Task Force began a media campaign in hopes of heightening public awareness of the Task Force, targeting the Legislature. The Task Force was provided with the CFSR Statewide Assessment report to help with this task. Efforts are continuing to be made in hopes of completing this task within the next few months.

CJA has partnered up with Jason Lamb of Missouri Office of Prosecution Services (MOPS) in order to create a Resource Prosecutor within MOPS who is experienced specifically in the area of child abuse and neglect. The Resource Prosecutor would help research child abuse cases for prosecutors as well as provide training on child abuse prosecution. Members felt that there is a great need for training prosecutors, especially in rural counties. Funding and support would be given to MOPS with the goals of improving the effectiveness of investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases and an increase in the collaboration with other agencies and professional involved in the field of child abuse.

The Task Force is interested in viewing outcome data from CD and offering recommendations for selected areas needing improvement. The results from the 2010 CFSR will be provided at the June meeting. The Task Force was interested in providing funding that would assist the CD in meeting PIP requirements set forth by CFSR.

The Task Force began work to coordinate with the Missouri Child Fatality Review Panel with the intent to join efforts in reviewing cases with suspected child maltreatment related fatalities as well as to share trend information and goals for the task force.

Members of the Task Force would like more involvement, communication and support of state legislators. They are in the process of identifying key members so that they can express priorities to them and report the significant progress identified by CFSR.

A two day retreat is being planned for the members of CJA in order to discuss and review the current Strategic Plan. The Task Force used a nine step strategic planning model to complete its strategic plan in 2005 and is hoping to do the same when updating it. The current Strategic Plan includes the following:

1. Mission of the Task Force;
2. Desired vision of Missouri's Child Protection System;
3. An overview of a trends analysis and system assessment;

4. Long-range strategic issues, goals, objectives, and first-year strategic priorities; and
5. Conclusion.

**Proposed CJA Grant Projects:**

**Task Force on Children's Justice Operating Expenses and Projects**

Funding in the amount of \$10,000.00 is needed to support and maintain the activities, correspondence, teleconferences, quarterly meetings of the Task Force, and attendance for two persons to attend a CJA conference, in addition to funding grant project requests that may arise as appropriate.

**Total \$ 10,000**

**(\* Plus additional activities will be supported with carryover from prior year grants. Total projected expenditure for this activity will be \$60,000).**

**Child Assessment Centers**

Child Assessment Centers in Missouri are utilized for the investigation and prosecution of child abuse, in particular, child sexual abuse. The Children's Division currently funds Child Assessment Centers, of which a portion of the funding for the Child Assessment Centers comes from the CJA Grant.

The entire child population in Missouri has access to one of these centers, as they serve state-wide. The number of children served would be proportional to the number of children reported for child abuse and neglect, especially, sexual abuse. The children served are those children who have been reported as a victim of child abuse, but primarily, child sexual abuse. Child Assessment Centers are one-stop shops, where child victims can be interviewed one time, while allowing observation by witnesses such as the Guardian Ad Litem, Prosecuting Attorney, Law Enforcement and Children's Division Investigators, and recording of the interview for criminal prosecution. The Assessment Centers refer victims and their non-offending caregivers to additional supportive service providers when needed, who can continue to address trauma issues for the child or family. The Centers contribute to the reform of State systems handling of cases of child abuse and neglect by not only increasing the chance of effective prosecution by including multi-disciplinary team members and expert forensic interviewers in the investigation process, but it also further reduces trauma to the victim by reducing the number of interviews.

**Total \$300,000**

**(\* Plus additional activities will be supported with carryover from prior year grants. Total projected expenditure for this activity will be \$320,000).**

**Accidental and Inflicted Mechanisms of Injury in Childhood: Distribution of and Instruction on a Practice Improvement Tool for Investigators**

This Spring/Summer 2011 project will provide instructions on a computer-based educational and practice tool detailing accidental and inflicted mechanisms of injury in children to Missouri Department of Social Services Children’s Division (CD). Implementation of the project will result in improvements in handling, investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases. Designed by pediatricians with expertise in child/abuse and neglect, this advanced technology is easy to use and understand. There will be eight trainings provided to CD investigators, 100 copies of the compact disc will be distributed and will be uploaded to the CD intranet for permanent accessibility to any CD investigator in Missouri.

**Total            \$10,000.00**

**Missouri Juvenile Justice Association Spring Conference Scholarships**

MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) Spring Education Conference May 25-27, 2011. Financial Assistance has been provided for scholarships for 20 individuals from varying professional disciplines involved in the investigation of child abuse/juvenile justice. Scholarship recipients will attend one of the following five workshops: “Strength-Based Practice,” “Savvy Sisters,” School to Prison Pipeline, Leadership or Courtroom Skills. Professionals who work in the field of Juvenile Justice will be provided continuing education to improve their service delivery. The workshops will be evaluated and results will be shared in the final report given to CJA.

**Total            \$7,596.00**

**Missouri KidsFirst**

ChildFirst Training, formerly known as “Finding Words”, will be provided next in May, September and December of 2011. A maximum of 40 participants will be able to attend the 40 hour Forensic Interviewing Training held each session and an unlimited number can attend the three-day 24 hour Child Abuse Investigative Team Training. Missouri KidsFirst is contracted with the National Child Protection and Training Center to provide the training for multidisciplinary teams across Missouri. Teams included a combination of law enforcement, Children's Division investigators, prosecutors and juvenile court professionals. Goals of the conference were to improve the ability of multidisciplinary team members to investigate child sexual abuse cases.

**Total            \$10,000.00**

**Missouri Office of Prosecution Services**

This agency is designated by state statute as an autonomous entity within the Attorney General’s Office to provide training and technical assistance to Prosecutors and allied professionals. The purpose of their project is reduce the trauma and suffering to child victims and their families by educating and training our target audience on emerging concepts in the field of child abuse. Five regional trainings and one webinar on

*Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse* will be scheduled throughout the state and will be completed within 12 months.

**Total            \$9,981.26**

**The Child Center 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Prevention & Intervention Conference**

The Child Center 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Prevention & Intervention Conference April 28-29, 2011. Goals of the conference are to improve the investigative, mental health and medical response, expertise and understanding of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation for multidisciplinary team members and professional working with these targeted populations.

**Total            \$5,000.00**