

# *Missouri Task Force on Children's Justice*

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**State of Missouri**  
Task Force on Children's Justice

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Fiscal Year 2014  
Grant Application

## Missouri Task Force on Children’s Justice Task Force Members

In 2013, the Task Force maintained full membership consisting of a minimum of 21 members at all times (currently 23 members) and met membership requirements as specified by CAPTA in Section 207(c)(1). During this reporting period, the Task Force experienced several resignations and additions to the membership. Resignations included Judge Bennett T. Burkemper, Civil Court Judge, Naomi Hunter, Mental Health Professional, and Wanda Nierman, Children’s Division Representative. To fill these vacancies and to otherwise meet the specified requirements, the Task Force added, Judge Robert Liston, Civil Court Judge, Melissa Smyser, Mental Health Professional, Joey Thompson, Child Protective Service Agency Representative, Linda Miller, Persons Working With Children With Disabilities, Dan Patterson, Prosecuting Attorney, Nathan Ross, Adult Former Victim of Child Abuse or Neglect, and Gaylin Rich-Carver, Defense Attorney. In addition to these resignations and additions, three members were reappointed for additional four year terms. Those members included Judge Rachel Bringer-Shepherd, Criminal Court Judge, MaryAnn Williamson, Child Advocate, and Marjorie Carter, Family Attorney.

Below are the names, titles, designation of discipline and a brief description of relevant experience of each of the Task Force members.

<p>Beth Dessem (Court Appointed Special Advocate Representative)</p>	<p>Ms. Dessem’s work has always involved children. Ms. Dessem taught 5<sup>th</sup> grade in the Knoxville, TN public schools for 6 years, and then became the first director of the new Missouri CASA program in 2002. She became Executive Director of the Missouri CASA Association in January 2003. Ms. Dessem is a graduate of Macalester College in St. Paul, MN.</p>
<p>Lori Ross (Parent Group Representative)</p>	<p>Ms. Ross has a BS in Social Psychology from Park University and has been a foster/adoptive parent since 1985, having cared for more than 300 foster children. Ms. Ross and her husband are the birth parents of five children and the adoptive parents of sixteen children. She has worked with the MO Children’s Division as a teaching foster parent since 1991, providing pre-service and in-service training to hundreds of foster/adoptive parents. Ms. Ross is one of the founding members of the Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association, a non-profit agency providing support and services to Missouri Foster and Adoptive Parents, and currently serves as the Agency’s President and CEO. Ms. Ross volunteers her time with the North American Council on Adoptable Children, and serves as their subsidy representative for the western half of Missouri. Ms. Ross participates in numerous child welfare related boards and task forces, and has received several awards for community service.</p>
<p>Commissioner Harold Bengsch (Health Professional)</p>	<p>Commissioner Bengsch was elected County Commissioner of Greene County in 2004. He is the author of 17 publications on communicable disease and other public health subjects. Mr. Bengsch has over 45 years of continuous professional experience in the field of Public Health, of which over 20 were spent as Director of the Springfield-Greene County Department of Public Health and Welfare. He retired from that</p>

	position in 2004. Mr. Bengsch has served as chair of the Green County Child Death Review Panel since inception of the state laws, and has been a member of the state Child Fatality Review Panel since 2009.
Joey Thompson (Child Protective Service Agency Representative)	Joey Thompson is currently employed as the Northern Regional Field Support Manager for the Children’s Division. Ms. Thompson has a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Missouri Western University and a Masters of Social Work from the University of Missouri. She has been employed by the Children’s Division in various capacities since 2002.
Julie Eaton (Child Advocate)	Julie Eaton is the Marketing Director for the Ozarks Regional YMCA. She received a Bachelor’s degree in Communications and Business from College of the Ozarks in 1998 and her Master’s degree from Missouri State University in 2005. She has over 10 years experience in Marketing and Public Relations and is the Co-founder of the Adoption Series, “For Your Life,” which has assisted in finding adoptive homes for a number of children who needed permanency.
Gaylin Rich Carver (Defense Attorney)	Gaylin Rich Carver is an attorney specializing in family law, juvenile law, probate, estate planning, guardianships and criminal defense. Ms. Rich Carver received her Bachelor’s degree in Anthropology from the University of Missouri, Columbia in 1992, her Master’s Degree in Education from the University of Missouri in 1993, and her Juris Doctorate (J.D.) from Saint Louis University in 2001. Ms. Rich Carver was admitted to the Missouri Bar in 2001 and previously served as Assistant Cole County Prosecuting Attorney.
Carolyn Green (Child Advocate)	Following her retirement from the Missouri Department of Social Services in 2000, Carolyn immediately became the founding Executive Director of Child Safe of Central Missouri, Inc., a child advocacy center serving 11 Missouri counties. Ms. Green’s experience with the State included 10 years with the Department of Mental Health and 20+ years with the Department of Social Services, more than half of which were in supervisory and administrative positions at both the County and State level.
Kim Moeckel (Family Court Representative)	Ms. Moeckel graduated in 1985 with a Master of Social Work Degree from Washington University in St. Louis. Her work experience includes residential care settings, program and community development, foster care and delinquency casework. Ms. Moeckel has been an employee of the Family Court of St. Louis County since April of 1986. Ms. Moeckel currently works as Manager of Community Relations and handles all public relations and media inquiries for the Court. Ms. Moeckel supervises staff responsible for community-based programs, oversees grants, and assists in various other Human Resource functions. Ms. Moeckel was a past Board Member, Executive Committee Member and President of the Missouri Juvenile Justice Association. Ms. Moeckel is currently serving as Ex-Officio member of this Board.

<p>Judge Rachel Bringer-Shepherd (Criminal Judge)</p>	<p>Judge Rachel Bringer-Shepherd is a Circuit Judge in the 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit for the State of Missouri. Prior to becoming a judge, she represented parts of Marion and Ralls counties (District 6) in the Missouri House of Representatives. She was first elected to the House in November 2002. Judge Bringer-Shepherd also served as the assistant prosecutor in Marion County from 2000-02 and was a law clerk for Judge Reinhard with the Missouri Court of Appeals, Eastern District from 1995-97. A 1989 graduate of Palmyra High School, Judge Bringer-Shepherd graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor of arts with honors in English from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1992. She received her Juris Doctorate (J.D.) from the University of Missouri-Columbia Law School in 1995, where she served as a member of the Missouri Law Review. Judge Bringer-Shepherd has been honored for her work in the legislature by the Missouri Judicial Conference, the NAACP—Hannibal branch, the Missouri Bar, the Missouri Farm Bureau, and the Missouri Association of School Administrators.</p>
<p>Nathan Ross (Adult Former Victim)</p>	<p>Nathan is an adult former victim of child abuse and neglect. Nathan has dedicated his adult life to advocating for effective change in the foster care system. Nathan’s personal experience with Missouri’s foster care system provides the opportunity for him to provide insight, ideas and guidance from a perspective that can only be provided by a person who has been in the system. Nathan, on an ongoing basis, speaks to various groups of individuals and organizations about his experience in the foster care system and brings his passion for reform of the foster care system to the task force.</p>
<p>Marjorie K. Carter (Family Attorney)</p>	<p>Marjorie graduated from Webster University with her B.A. in 1987, then attended St. Louis University School of Law and received her J.D. in 1991. Marjorie is one of the founding members of the Collaborative Family Law Association and helped to bring the collaborative process to the St. Louis area. She also served for many years on the Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect review board. Marjorie is a board member for Citizens for Missouri’s Children, and a past-president of the Women Lawyers’ Association of Greater St. Louis.</p>
<p>Maryann Williamson (Child Advocate)</p>	<p>Maryann has a Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration. She is currently in her 25th year of employment with the University of Missouri, serving the last six years as Executive Staff Assistant to the Executive Director and Director of Academic Programs at the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment Disorders in Columbia, Missouri. Ms. Williamson has been raising her two granddaughters for the past 14 years. Her middle granddaughter, Karra, was eleven months old in 1999 when she was shaken and killed by a man who was babysitting her. The man received a seven year sentence and only served four years. Ms. Williamson has worked diligently for the past seven years to pass legislation</p>

	<p>which would increase the penalty when shaking is a cause of injury or death. Representative Jeanie Riddle filed HB1317 in January 2012. The bill was passed in the House and moved to the Senate in May 2012. It was delivered to the Governor on May 30, 2012 and passed into law under SB628 on July 14, 2012.</p>
<p>Rene Howitt (Child Advocate)</p>	<p>Rene is a former relative foster care provider. Based on her experience with the system, Rene authored a book called “Whose Best Interest” that was released in 2007. Rene has been involved in child advocacy since 2007 and in 2009, founded the C.O.P.E. (Changing Our Parenting Experience) organization. The COPE24 organization released the COPE24 Parenting Skill Program in March of 2011. The program is currently being distributed to schools throughout the US. COPE24 is currently working on another video production focusing on families living with children who have survived severe head trauma or SBS.</p>
<p>Dan Patterson (Prosecuting Attorney)</p>	<p>Dan Patterson is the Greene County Prosecuting Attorney, Springfield, Missouri. Dan received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Missouri Columbia School of Law, May 15, 1993. He has achieved many honors, including, but not limited to graduating Cum Laude from the University of Missouri; Layout &amp; Design Editor for the Missouri Law Review in 1992 and 1993; recipient of the West Publishing Award for Best Work in Legal Research &amp; Writing, 1990; and an extensive honorable military service record including his current position as Lieutenant Colonel, Deputy Staff Judge Advocate, 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division of the Missouri National Guard. Dan has 17 years of experience prosecuting child abuse neglect cases, is a POST Certified Instructor with the Springfield Police Academy and is the current Chairman of the Stake Holder Committee and Board Member of the Child Advocacy Center.</p>
<p>Kelly Schultz (Child Advocate)</p>	<p>Kelly Schultz received her undergrad in Political Science and Masters in Public Administration from the University of Missouri. She was appointed the Director of the Office of Child Advocate by Governor Jay Nixon and the Missouri Supreme Court July of 2011 and was confirmed by the Senate in February of 2012. Prior to being the Child Advocate for the State of Missouri, Kelly spent the last twelve years working in the Capitol. She worked for Minority Secretary Sara Lampe – Springfield, Minority Leader Jeff Harris – Columbia, Senator Sidney Johnson – St. Joseph, and Senator John Schneider – Florissant. In addition to her public policy experience, Kelly has served as the President of the Boone County Foster Parent Support Group; was a house parent at the Rainbow House, an emergency shelter for children; and volunteered at the Women’s Shelter. Kelly and her husband are foster/adoptive parents and have helped to raise 16 children throughout the years.</p>

<p>Capt. Bill Carson (Law Enforcement Community)</p>	<p>Captain Bill Carson has thirty-three years of experience as a police officer in the St. Louis metropolitan area, and has served sixteen years in criminal investigation units as a detective, a supervisor and eventually a commander. He is currently a commander with the Maryland Heights (MO) Police Department, serves as a Deputy Commander with the Major Case Squad of Greater St. Louis, and is a member of the Missouri State Child Fatality Review Panel. He has a Masters Degree in Criminology &amp; Criminal Justice from the University of Missouri – St. Louis. Captain Carson has written several articles and taught police officers, prosecutors and social service workers on topics related to understanding and interviewing sex offenders. In 2011 Captain Carson was appointed by Missouri Governor Jay Nixon to serve as a member of the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children.</p>
<p>Donna Cash (Experienced in working with homeless children and youths-as defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a))</p>	<p>Donna Cash is the Coordinator for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Grant program at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. In addition, she supervises Title I programs for Missouri’s Charter Schools. She has been with the Department for over fifteen years and before beginning her tenure with the Discretionary Grants Section, she worked in both Federal Grants Management Section and the Curriculum and Assessment Section of DESE. Donna received her Bachelor’s of Science degree from Columbia College majoring in History with minors in Sociology and Psychology. She is an active member of the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth as well as the Missouri Association for Social Welfare. She also serves on the Special Education Advisory Panel and the State Interagency Coordinating Council.</p>
<p>Lt. Gary Hill (Law Enforcement Community)</p>	<p>Lt. Gary Hill is Patrol Division Commander (Lieutenant) for the Cole County Sheriff’s Department in Jefferson City, MO. Lt. Hill has been with the department since 1998. He is responsible for supervising all functions of the Patrol Division. Lt. Hill also works at the Missouri Sheriff’s Training Academy as a Site Coordinator- Generalist Instructor as well as an Adjunct instructor for the Criminal Justice department at Lincoln University. Before working for the Sheriff’s Department, Lt. Hill worked as a Corrections Officer with the Missouri Department of Corrections. Lt. Hill received his Bachelor’s of Science degree at Lincoln University, majoring in Criminal Justice and his Master’s degree in Criminal Justice from Columbia College. Lt. Hill graduated from the FBI National Academy in 2009. He is a board member of the Disciples of Christ Youth Out-Reach Program a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Inc., Central Missouri Tactical Officer Association and the FBI National Academy Associates.</p>

<p>Melissa Smyser (Mental Health Professional)</p>	<p>Melissa Smyser has a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Criminal Justice and Sociology from Central Missouri State University and received her Masters of Social Work from the University of Missouri. Ms. Smyser is a Licensed Master of Social Work. She is currently employed as the Chief of Children's Community Operations for the Department of Mental Health, Division of Behavioral Health. Ms. Smyser provides consultation, technical assistance and training to the Community Mental Health Centers in the Central Region.</p>
<p>Dr. Jim Anderst (Health Professional)</p>	<p>Dr. Anderst is an Associate Professor and Chief of the Section on Child Abuse and Neglect at Children's Mercy Hospital/University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine in Kansas City, Missouri. Dr. Anderst is a board certified Child Abuse Pediatrician. Dr. Anderst completed medical school at the Medical College of Wisconsin, residency at Cincinnati Children's Hospital, and fellowship and Master's Degree at the University of Texas Health Science Center. Dr. Anderst has created educational tools for medical providers and legal investigators that are in use nationally and internationally. Dr. Anderst has published numerous peer-reviewed studies and book chapters regarding child maltreatment, and provides educational and research lectures nationally.</p>
<p>Jessi Musick (Parent/Child Attorney)</p>	<p>Jessi Musick is a family law attorney and often serves as guardian ad litem in domestic and juvenile cases in Cole County, Missouri. She graduated from Missouri State University with a Bachelor of Social Work in 2007 and received her Juris Doctorate from the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law in 2010. In 2007, Jessi partnered with Relief International and the U.S. State Department to create an educational program for Iraqi refugee children living in Jordan. She also worked for the Mayors Commission on Human Rights in Springfield, Missouri from 2006 to 2007. Most recently Jessi became the Deputy Director of Missouri CASA, but will continue as a guardian ad litem as well.</p>
<p>Judge Robert Liston (Civil Judge)</p>	<p>Judge Robert Liston has been the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial Associate Circuit Judge for the past 10 years. He earned his Juris Doctorate from the Missouri School of Law in 1970. He has been a practicing lawyer for 31 years and has experience as the Attorney for the City of Sedalia, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney and as a Guardian ad litem. In addition, to hearing criminal cases, Judge Liston has served as the Juvenile Judge for the past 10 years.</p>
<p>Linda Miller (Persons Working with Children With Disabilities)</p>	<p>Linda Miller is currently the Coordinator for the Office of Autism Services with the Department of Mental Health, Division of Developmental Disabilities. Linda has a Bachelor of Science in Education from Ohio University and was employed by the Department of Social Services, in various capacities from 1992 to 2012.</p>

# **Missouri Task Force on Children's Justice**

## **2014 Program Performance Annual Report**

### **Introduction**

The Task Force on Children's Justice was established under the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) in 1991. All states receiving CAPTA funding are required to maintain a state, multidisciplinary task force on children's justice. Missouri's Task Force is comprised of 21 members representing most urban and metropolitan jurisdictions, as well as rural locations in the State, and includes law enforcement; judges and attorneys involved in both civil and criminal child abuse and neglect proceedings; child advocates; court appointed special advocates (CASA); health and mental health professionals; individuals representing child protective service agencies; individuals experienced in working with children with disabilities; representatives of parents' groups; adult former victims of child abuse and or neglect; and individuals experienced in working with homeless children and youths (as defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a)).

The mission and responsibility of the Task Force is to assist the State in developing, establishing, and operating programs designed to improve child welfare; in particular, the handling of child abuse and neglect cases, the handling of child abuse related fatalities, the prosecution of child abuse cases—particularly sexual abuse, and the handling of cases involving children with disabilities or serious health related problems. The Task Force is also charged with the oversight and distribution of federal grant money and reformation of policy and State laws related to the improvement of the investigative response to child abuse and neglect and to reduce trauma to child victims. The Missouri Task Force on Children's Justice was created in 1991.

### **Statement of Needs**

Needs of the Missouri Task Force on Children's Justice include adequate, stable, and flexible funding to continue pursuit of improvement of the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect investigations and reduce trauma to child victims. Stable funding will assist the State in its efforts to expand services; provide staff development with positive work environments, promote positive images and public support; the by-product being reduced worker turnover, staff retention and ultimately an improved ability of the State to respond to child abuse and neglect. The Task Force requires assistance and support from many state and local partners to succeed.

In August 2013, the Administration on Children and Families, Children's Bureau, (ACF) informed the Children's Division the Three Year Assessment submitted did not meet the program requirements of CJA. In response, Missouri submitted a request and was approved for an extension to complete a more thorough Three Year Assessment. The extension request included a work plan outlining a series of Task Force activities, including refocusing and re-energizing the Task Force. This extension required the Task Force to submit an addendum to the 3-year assessment by no later than March 1, 2014. The Task Force complied with the requirements of the grant extension, developed and completed a work plan, and submitted an addendum to the 3-year assessment. As a result, ACF deemed the Task Force had come into compliance with the requirements of CJA. The Task Force is now refocused and with the help and guidance of ACF, expects significant improvements in the functioning and accomplishments of the Task Force.



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

During the past year, the Task Force has met quarterly, reviewed and discussed activities to improve the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation; 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 also ensures procedural fairness to the accused. In addition to quarterly meetings of the full task force, the critical event review subcommittee met quarterly to review cases and the finance committee met quarterly to further develop the guidelines for the finance committee and review grant applications. The following are the activities completed by the task force as a whole and by committee, for the 12 month period preceding the date of submission.

### **Activities of the Task Force:**

In 2013, the task force reviewed the "Medically-Based Screening Protocol for the Medical Response to Child Sexual Abuse/Assault," developed by the SAFE-CARE Advisory Council. This protocol was developed to improve the medical response to child sexual abuse allegations and in response to Missouri Revised Statute Section 334.950.4 which states, "The SAFE-CARE network shall develop recommendations concerning medically based screening processes and forensic evidence collection for children who may be in need of an emergency examination following an alleged sexual assault. Such recommendations shall be provided to the SAFE-CARE providers, child advocacy centers, hospitals and licensed practitioners that provide emergency examinations for children suspected of being victims of abuse." The task force is in full support of and promotes the use of these protocols in the investigation of child sexual and physical abuse.

### **First Responder Video – "Child Maltreatment and the First Responder" – Supplemental Training for Missouri Law Enforcement related to Child Abuse/Neglect Investigations**

At the June 2013 Task Force meeting, current Chairperson, Lori Ross, shared a video, "Child Maltreatment and the First Responder", produced by the North Carolina Justice Academy (NCJA), which provided information for first responders and law enforcement with regard to the investigation of child maltreatment and the function of the multi-disciplinary team. The Children's Division reviewed the video and also asked members of the Missouri State Technical Assistance Team (STAT) to review the video and provide some guidance.

After reviewing the video, and receiving positive support from (STAT), the Children's Division contacted the NCJA to request permission to duplicate the video and share it throughout Missouri. The NCJA graciously granted permission for the Task Force in Missouri to reproduce and share the video as deemed appropriate for its use in Missouri.

At the September 12, 2013 meeting of the Task Force each member of the Task Force present was provided a copy of the video. Based upon information provided, the Task Force recommended and unanimously approved a motion to move forward with reproducing the video and sharing with law enforcement officials throughout Missouri.

STAT agreed to put together a lesson plan applicable to the video to meet Missouri Peace Officer Standards Training (POST) requirements so law enforcement officers could obtain POST training credits for viewing the video. STAT made some minor modifications to the video including a brief disclaimer indicating the video was produced by officials in North Carolina and some of the material would not be applicable in Missouri.

On October 18, 2013, STAT Chief, Rodney Jones, presented the video at a meeting of the State Child Fatality Review Panel. After viewing the video, several panel members representing law enforcement and prosecutors expressed the need for such a video in the training curriculum for law enforcement agencies and other multi-disciplinary team members in their respective jurisdictions. Several copies of the video were distributed to the requesting panel members for use in their respective jurisdictions.

On March 11, 2014, STAT received notice from the Missouri Department of Public Safety that the lesson plan had been POST approved for two hours of continuing education training credit for law enforcement in the area of technical studies. STAT will present the training and assist the Task Force in making the training more readily available to include in the curriculum of law enforcement academies throughout Missouri. In addition to the POST certified training, the video is available to law enforcement and other multi-disciplinary team members upon request. The training will provide law enforcement with valuable information for the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect.

### Children's Justice Act Task Force Survey

On September 18, 2013 the Task Force published a survey (linked below) to the child abuse and neglect investigative community to assess the current effectiveness of the multi-disciplinary approach to child abuse and neglect throughout the state of Missouri. The Task Force developed the survey in an effort to identify any service gaps or specific issues Task Force funding may be helpful in improving the investigation of child abuse and neglect. The survey was sent out to community partners, multi-disciplinary team members and other stakeholders via Survey Monkey and posted on Missouri's CJA website. Gathering information from the various professionals who interact with the child welfare system statewide and concerned Missouri citizens in our effort to collect information provides a broad statewide perspective of the effectiveness of our multi-disciplinary approach to the investigation of child abuse and neglect. Results from the survey questions were designed to provide the Task Force information regarding the effectiveness of Missouri's system in the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse in Missouri and will assist the Task Force in developing recommendations for system improvements.

### [Children's Justice Act Task Force Survey](#)

On December 12, 2013, preliminary results from the survey were presented to the Task Force for review. Upon initial review of the results, the Task Force determined the responses, while useful, were not fully representative of all regions of the state. For this reason, the Task Force determined that revisiting and refining the survey, posting it again, doing more outreach to ensure a more statewide response and analyzing the results again would be useful in conducting the next three year assessment. The Task Force reviewed the available results and made the following recommendations for their comprehensive assessment:

The survey identified the most prevailing barriers to the effective handling and prosecution of child abuse neglect investigations to be:

1. Unmanageable case loads and worker turnover

2. Inadequate training, including trauma training
3. Inconsistent statutory investigative time frame requirements between disciplines
4. Insufficient communication between MDT members

The Task Force recommended the Children's Division's continue to work to address worker turnover so adequate staffing can be maintained, caseloads will be more manageable and the investigative response will be improved. The Children's Division has been working directly with the legislature through the budget appropriations process to address a staff retention plan.

In response to this recommendation, the Task Force will support and consider use of CJA funds to assist the Children's Division's current and ongoing efforts to address worker turnover and staff retention issues. Effectively addressing worker turnover will significantly impact the Children's Division's ability to impact and improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect.

The Task Force recommended the Children's Division focus efforts on providing more comprehensive training to staff and other multi-disciplinary team members related to the investigation of child abuse and neglect, including trauma informed training as it relates to reducing trauma to child victims as they endure the investigative process.

In response to this recommendation the Task Force will support and consider CJA grant applications submitted for the purposes of addressing training needs of Children's Division staff and multi-disciplinary team members involved in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect, including trauma training as it relates to the impact/trauma of the investigative process to the child victim.

The Task force recommended the Children's Division continue to make efforts to meet statutory time frames related to the investigation of child abuse and neglect. The survey identified a problem with caseworkers completing investigations in a timely manner. The Children's Division is currently working on this issue from multiple angles, including but not limited to worker turnover, training and evaluation of its investigative process. Presently, the Children's Division's statutory investigative time requirements are under review as the result of two appeals pending before the Missouri Supreme Court. The ruling of the Supreme Court will provide much needed guidance to the Children's Division in policy and practice development related to the investigation of child abuse and neglect.

In response to this recommendation the Task Force will continue to monitor the status of cases currently before the Supreme Court. In addition, the 2014 Missouri legislature filed and is considering legislative changes to address the statutory time requirements facing the Children's Division. The two bills of most interest to the Task Force are as follows:

- House Bill 1092 would extend the time requirement for the Children's Division to complete an investigation from 30 calendar days to 30 business days, unless good cause for not completing the investigation is documented in the Family and Children Electronic System (FACES).
- Senate Bill 802 would change the time requirement for the Children's Division to complete an investigation and to notify the alleged perpetrator of the determination. The requirement for completion would be changed from 30 calendar days to 45 calendar days unless good cause for not completing the investigation is documented in FACES. This bill would also extend the amount of time the Children's Division has to notify the alleged perpetrator of its determination from 90 days to 100 days.

The Task Force will continue to monitor and support legislation which would enhance the Children's Division's ability to investigate child abuse and neglect. The Task Force recommends the Children's

Division focus efforts on securing funding for additional training, most specifically for Children's Division staff, law enforcement, forensic interviewers and others working with children through the investigative process. Additional funding and training in conjunction with guidance from the Missouri Supreme Court and the legislature will be essential to the Children's Division and other multi-disciplinary team members' efforts to improve the investigative response to child abuse/neglect.

The Task Force will make additional recommendations to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect as they become apparent in its ongoing evaluation of future survey results.

Where the Judiciary Prosecutes in Front of Itself: Missouri's  
Unconstitutional Juvenile Court Structure

by Josh Gupta-Kagan Civil Justice Clinic Staff Attorney, Lecturer in Law

On December 12, 2013, the Task Force discussed their review of a research paper published in April 2013 by the Washington University School of Law. As described in the title, this review was specific to Missouri juvenile court's structure related to prosecuting and adjudicating cases of child abuse and neglect and delinquency. The review of this paper, as part of their comprehensive review of state's investigation and prosecution of child abuse/neglect aroused the interest of several members who asked the Task Force to have a more in-depth discussion at a future Task Force meeting.

Office of Child Advocate Annual Report

On December 18, 2013, the Office of Child Advocate (OCA) 2012 Annual report was sent to the full Task Force for review.

[Office of Child Advocate 2012 Annual Report](#)

The Office of Child Advocate was established in 2002. In Missouri, the OCA operates under the Office of Administration and is independent of the Department of Social Services, Children's Division, the Department of Mental Health, and the Juvenile Court. The OCA provides an avenue through which citizens are able to obtain an independent and impartial review of disputed decisions, actions, and inactions regarding any child at risk of abuse, neglect, or other harm. In addition, the OCA provides an additional mechanism for the review of unsubstantiated investigations conducted by the Children's Division.

The Task Force did not make any additional recommendations based upon reviews of the OCA's annual report. However, review of this report provides the Task Force with additional information regarding how the child abuse and neglect investigative system functions in the state of Missouri based upon findings of the OCA. The Children's Division will continue to ensure the Task Force reviews this report each year in its comprehensive review of Missouri's child abuse and neglect investigative system.

Review of State Child Fatality Review Panel Annual Report

On December 12, 2013, the Task Force reviewed a draft of the 2012 State Child Fatality Review Panel Report (CFRP). The draft included only a portion of the full report which was not yet available. The Task Force did not make any additional recommendations based upon the draft report. On January 6, 2014, the final Child Fatality Review Report was sent to the full Task Force for review.

[2012 State Child Fatality Review Program Annual Report](#)

Upon review of the final CFRP report Task Force members, through correspondence with the Children's Division, recommended the Task Force support a recommendation from the CFRP report indicating the need for an increase in training for law enforcement and Children's Division staff related to interviewing children. This recommendation is consistent with preliminary findings from the CJA survey and reviews of critical events. In 2013, Task Force funding supported forensic interview training for law enforcement and Children's Division staff by awarding grants to Missouri KidsFirst and the Missouri Office of Prosecuting Services to provide various trainings of this nature through forensic interview training conferences as well as informational webinars respectively.

**Finance Committee:** The Finance Committee is responsible for monitoring CJA's expenses, budget and grant reviews. The goal of this committee in 2013 was to develop additional guidelines for grant requests including more comprehensive evaluation and reporting from grantees. During 2013 the Finance Committee revisited and reviewed the grant funding application/scoring rubric. The application, which includes a scoring rubric, is posted on the Missouri CJA website.

In addition to approving grant applications, the Task Force voted to post a list of approved projects to the CJA website. The list posted on the website includes projects funded for the past 4 years, listed by year of award. This information was added to give potential grantees a sense of the type of projects and trainings funded in the past, as well as the amounts requested.

In 2013, the Task Force voted to fund the following projects:

- Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association – ONE Conference: All Together Now project - \$15,000.00
- MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) 2013 Spring Educational Conference Scholarships - \$9,975.00
- MO KidsFirst – MDT Facilitator Training - \$17,000.00
- MO KidsFirst – Multi-Session Forensic Interview Training - \$17,800.00
- MO KidsFirst – Advanced Victim Advocate Training - \$16,500.00
- Child's Center 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Prevention and Interventions Conference - \$22,591.25
- MO KidsFirst – Child First Sexual Abuse Investigative Team Training – (Four sessions) - \$66,400.00
- MO KidsFirst – Child Sexual Abuse Trial School - \$17,500.00
- State Technical Assistance Team – Investigative Equipment – Operation CyberSafe - \$9,083.00
- MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) - Fall Educational Conference Scholarships - \$7,972.80
- The Child Center, Inc. 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Child Abuse and Neglect Interventions Conference - \$22,401.11 – Conference will be held in Spring 2014
- MO Office of Prosecution Services (MOPS) - Child Abuse Legal Assistant- \$21,346.99
- Missouri Juvenile Justice Association 2014 Spring Educational Conference - \$8,060.00
- MO KidsFirst – Forensic Interviewer Protocol Training - \$18,200.00
- MO KidsFirst – Peer Review Training - \$12,000.00

In 2013, the Finance Committee further outlined the subcommittee's responsibilities, consistent with the By-laws, by developing a working document titled, "Finance Committee Responsibilities and Guidelines." The result of this work was consistent use of the scoring rubric for grant reviews, teamwork in the evaluation of grant applications, and a renewed focus on CJA's mission to improve the

investigative response to allegations of child abuse and neglect when recommending grant funding to the full task force. At the December 12, 2013 meeting of the full Task Force voted unanimously to approve and adopt the guidelines as written. A copy of the Finance Committee Responsibilities and Guidelines is attached.

**Legislative/Policy Committee:** The Legislative Committee is responsible for monitoring legislative actions and reviewing policy changes to develop recommendations. The Task Force, in its ongoing effort to strengthen the impact of the task force, reviewed and revised its By-laws in accordance with federal guidelines and Missouri state law. The legislative committee reviewed laws and policies of the state related to the investigation of child abuse and neglect. The following legislation filed during the 2013 legislative session became law in August 2013:

- House Bill 505 - This bill modifies several provisions of law related to the response to reports of child abuse and neglect in Missouri, including:
  - Authorizes the Office of Child Advocate to provide mediation services in instances involving allegations of sexual misconduct and a charter school when allegations arose in a school setting and when requested by both parties.
  - Requires school employees and the superintendent of a school district to report directly to the Children's Division when a student reports sexual misconduct on the part of a teacher or school employee.
  - Requires, By January 1, 2014, for all school districts and charter schools to adopt and implement guidelines for child abuse and neglect mandated reporter training for all school employees and that such training be conducted annually.
  - Requires by July 1, 2014, every school district and charter school include, in its teacher and employee training, up-to-date and reliable information on identifying signs of sexual abuse in children and danger signals of potentially abusive relationships between children and adults.
  - Requires mandated reporters to immediately report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Children's Division. This bill also prohibits any internal investigation into a report of child abuse or neglect until the mandatory report to the Division has been made. (These provisions effectively remove language in the statute which made it permissible to pass the responsibility for reporting to a designated person in the school or institution.)
  - Adds a provision stating when two or more members of a medical institution mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect, jointly have knowledge of suspected abuse or neglect, a single report may be made by a designated member of a medical team. Any member who has knowledge that the member designated to report failed to do so, he or she is required to immediately report.
  - Prohibits any supervisor or administrator from impeding or inhibiting an employee, who is a mandated reporter, from reporting suspected child abuse or neglect. Additionally, this bill provides no person making a report can be subject to any sanction, including any adverse employment action, for making a report. Every employer must ensure any employee required to report has immediate and unrestricted access to communications technology necessary to make an immediate report and is temporarily relieved of other work duties for the time as is required to make the report.

- Specifies the offense of abuse or neglect of a child is a class A felony if the child dies as a result of injuries sustained from chargeable conduct. This provision included an emergency clause, therefore became effective on July 9th, 2013, when the bill was approved by the Governor.
  - Requires the Department of Public Safety to establish rules regarding the reimbursement of the costs of forensic examinations for children younger than 14 years of age. This must include the establishment of conditions and definitions for emergency and non-emergency forensic exams and may include additional qualifications for appropriate medical providers performing non-emergency forensic exams. Public safety must also provide reimbursement regardless of whether or not the findings indicate the child was abused.
  - Provides the Department of Public Safety with authority to add qualifications for a medical provider to perform non-emergency forensic evaluations for child(ren) younger than 14 years of age.
- Senate Bill 256 – This bill changed the laws regarding child abuse and neglect as follows:
    - Presently, Missouri has a statutorily mandated Task Force called the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children. This bill removed the January 1, 2013 expiration date of the Task Force and beginning January 1, 2014 required the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), in collaboration with the Task Force, to submit an annual report to the general assembly on the Department’s progress in prevention child sexual abuse.
    - This bill also amended the Safe Place for Newborns Act of 2002 by changing the time allowed for a parent to give up custody of his/her child for up to 5 days from birth to 45 days to birth without being prosecuted for abandonment as long as there are no signs of abuse. The parent’s relinquishment of the child has to be to a medical facility staff member, provider or volunteer, a firefighter or emergency medical technician or a law enforcement officer.

The legislative committee reviewed legislation related to the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect during the 2014 legislative session as well. The bills of most interest to the Task Force are as follows:

- House Bill 1092 would extend the time requirement for the Children’s Division to complete an investigation from 30 calendar days to 30 business days, unless good cause for not completing the investigation is documented in the Family and Children Electronic System (FACES).
- Senate Bill 802 would change the time requirement for the Children’s Division to complete an investigation and to notify the alleged perpetrator of the determination. The requirement for completion would be changed from 30 calendar days to 45 calendar days unless good cause for not completing the investigation is documented in FACES. This bill would also extend the amount of time the Children’s Division has to notify the alleged perpetrator of its determination from 90 days to 100 days.

- House Bill 1857 - Currently, if the court finds that significant emotional or psychological trauma to a child victim will result in his or her testifying in the presence of the defendant, the court may order an in-camera video-taped deposition of the child victim's testimony be made for use at preliminary hearings and trial. This bill would allow the court to order that an alleged child victim may testify in court proceedings via live, closed-circuit video from a different location than the defendant if there is any possibility that any level of trauma would result from the child testifying in the presence of the defendant.

In 2013, the Legislative committee, with the input of the full Task Force, revised the CJA By-laws. The Task Force unanimously voted to approve and adopt the revised By-laws. Consistent with the By-laws, the by-laws will be reviewed for final approval by the Department Director and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Goals for the Legislative Committee for 2014 include finalization of the CJA By-laws continued monitoring of the progress of the two cases currently awaiting a ruling by the Supreme Court, and keeping a close watch on House Bill 1092, House Bill 1857 and Senate Bill 804. The outcome of the Supreme Court ruling and the status of these bills at the end of the 2014 legislative session will help guide the legislative committee priorities for 2014.

**Critical Event Review Committee:** The purpose of conducting critical event reviews is to determine, based on individual cases and more global trends, where concerns exist related to the handling of child abuse and neglect investigations. The members of this committee hope to gain insight through the review of cases, into laws, policies, or practices which might need to be addressed to improve handling and prosecution of these cases, and reduce trauma to the child victims. These insights will serve to inform recommendations made by the committee to the Children's Division and the Courts, as per the charge of the Children's Justice Act.

The Children's Division presented the Children's Division's Critical Event Protocol to the Task Force as a means of guidance to the Task Force in their development of a formalized process. The Children's Division's Critical Event Protocol is a process for the reporting, reviewing and documenting of the Children's Divisions responses to significant events involving a child, such as child deaths, suicides or serious physical injury as well as other circumstances requiring critical event response. Critical events are classified by category, which determines the Children's Division's response. A collection of tools called, the *Critical Event Tool Kit*, is used to guide a critical event reviewer through the case review process. The Critical Event Committee used these tools as a guide in conducting the reviews of Children's Division cases.

In 2013, the Critical Event Review Committee met quarterly and conducted comprehensive reviews of randomly selected cases. The Critical Event Review Committee made case specific recommendations as well as more systemic recommendations as the result of their reviews.

In August and September, 2013, the Critical Event Review Committee conducted a comprehensive review of the fatality of a child in the custody of the Children's Division. As a result of the review the Committee made several recommendations related to the investigation of child abuse/neglect and presented those recommendations to the full Task Force on September 12, 2013. The recommendations were as follows:

- Hotline investigation visits should be unannounced.
- Children with physical evidence as reported by the caller should be seen within 24 hours of the call in order to collect and document evidence.



- When young (semi-verbal or non-verbal) children are the subject of the abuse allegation, investigators should be required to make collateral contacts with at minimum: a close neighbor, a child care provider (if there is one), a minimum of two close relatives who don't live in the same home, a health care practitioner who treats the child.
- When a child asks an investigator to come see them at school because of their fear of sharing information at home, this should be viewed as a very clear red flag indicator of possible abuse/neglect in the home.
- Investigate the use of standardized interview protocols in child abuse investigations nation-wide.
- Observation of indicators of drug use/abuse should be a factor when considering the safety and well-being of children. Policy and/or training may need to be adjusted to reflect a priority on consideration of this issue during abuse/neglect investigations.
- Evidence of previous child sexual abuse or exploitation, or exposure to inappropriate sexual material, should be a consideration in determining whether or not a parent is an appropriate placement resource.
- Policy should be reviewed to determine whether or not an exception should be made in the hotline process and other processes which may exist, to assure accountability for the care provided to youth who remain in the state's custody beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

On November 7, 2013, seven members of the Critical Event Subcommittee attended a training and tour of the Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline. The training involved a one-hour presentation on the structured-decision making process, explanation of how the calls are handled, recorded, etc. and a question and answer session for the Task Force members. The tour consisted of a walk-through of the hotline facilities and observation of a real-time call to the child abuse/neglect hotline, followed by the opportunity to debrief and ask further questions. The tour was an excellent educational opportunity for the members and provided them with valuable information necessary to better understand the process by which information is gathered and decisions are made at the hotline regarding the classification and investigative response to calls received at the hotline.

On November 7<sup>th</sup> and November 18<sup>th</sup>, members of the Critical Event Subcommittee convened again and conducted a comprehensive review of three critical event cases including one fatality case, and two serious injury physical abuse cases. The subcommittee's review resulted in the following recommendations:

- Missouri law currently prohibits a child in the custody of the court from being placed into the home of someone who has been convicted of specific child abuse crimes. However, it does not prohibit citizens from allowing their children to be placed at imminent risk of harm when they 'knowingly' place (or reside with) a child in the home of someone who has been convicted of the crime of child abuse. Research should be done to investigate whether or not other states have laws which address the risks parents place children in when they knowingly allow a convicted child abuser to have unfettered access to their child.
- Investigators, children's service workers and prosecutors should take all the necessary investigative steps to ensure the non-offending parent, is actually "non-offending". This recommendation is made based upon concerns non-offending parents often seemingly chose to place their child/children in imminent risk of harm by residing with a person who has previously been convicted of the crime of abuse of a child.
- Safety/risk assessment tools must be utilized in a manner which consistently and accurately reflects the actual safety and/ or risks otherwise identified in interviews, case narratives and prior history. Additional training for staff on how to properly utilize the risk/assessment tools is recommended.
- Consideration should be made to ensure any child found to have been sexually abused receives or has the opportunity to receive therapy. This would assist the child in gaining mental/emotional

recovery and stability not only to heal individually, but to successfully cope as investigation and/or prosecution of the case moves forward.

Goals for the Critical Event Review Committee for 2014 include continuing to review cases, identifying trends and training needs and providing recommendations to the Children's Division for improvements in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect.

**Recruitment Committee:** The Recruitment committee is responsible for monitoring CJA's membership, to ensure it consist of a minimum of 21 members and represents the required disciplines as specified in Section 207(c)(1) of the Act. The current membership includes at least one member from the following categories: law enforcement community, criminal court judge, civil court judge, prosecuting attorney, defense attorney, child advocates, attorneys for children, health professionals, mental health professionals, Children's Division staff, parents and representatives of parents' groups, adult former victims of child abuse and or neglect, individuals experienced with working with homeless children and youth and individuals experienced in working with children with disabilities. The membership application is posted on the Task Force's state website. Applications for membership will be accepted and reviewed on an ongoing basis. Those interested may attend all open meetings in advance of selection to the Task Force.

Goals for the Recruitment Committee for 2014 include monitoring member's term limits, and seeking to fill any vacancies as set forth by CAPTA. In 2013, the Task Force maintained full membership consisting of a minimum of 21 members and meeting membership requirements as specified in Section 207(c)(1). However, the Recruitment Committee was very busy during this reporting period maintaining membership. The Task Force experienced several resignations, including Judge Bennett T. Burkemper, Civil Court Judge, Naomi Hunter, Mental Health Professional, and Wanda Nierman, Children's Division Representative. To fill these vacancies and to otherwise meet the specified requirements, the Task Force added, Judge Robert Liston, Civil Court Judge, Melissa Smyser, Mental Health Professional, Joey Thompson, Child Protective Service Agency, Linda Miller, Persons Working With Children With Disabilities, Dan Patterson, Prosecuting Attorney, Nathan Ross, Adult Former Victim of Child Abuse or Neglect, and Gaylin Rich-Carver, Defense Attorney. In addition to these resignations and additions, three members were reappointed for additional four year terms respectively. Those members included Judge Rachel Bringer-Shepherd, Criminal Court Judge, MaryAnn Williamson, Child Advocate, and Marjorie Carter, Family Attorney. While the Task Force presently enjoys a full membership, the recruitment committee will continue to be active in seeking interested and qualified individuals to fill any future vacancies on the Task Force.

**Training Committee:** Duties include monitoring and improving access to training opportunities for professionals and other community partners involved in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect. The training committee plans to gain information specific to training needs across the State from the survey being sent to CJA community partners and stakeholders to accomplish the goals of CJA.

The Training Committee developed the Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect-Educational Opportunities listing which endorses the practice of collaborative multidisciplinary training as an opportunity for parents and professionals to improve the handling of child abuse and neglect cases. The Missouri organizations listed on the CJA website offer opportunities for training on topics pertinent to child abuse and neglect.

Goals for the Training Committee for 2014 include continuing to identify areas of focus consistent with the purpose of CJA assessing the Survey results to help determine the training needs across the State.

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

The following are projects funded by CJA. The amounts are actual expenditures on each project.

#### **Child Advocacy Centers**

Child Advocacy Centers in Missouri 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 historically funded in part by the CJA grant. In FFY13, these centers received ongoing support from grants that would have otherwise expired in lieu of the CJA grant funding.

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.

The Sexual Assault Forensic Examination – Child Abuse Resource and Education SAFE-CARE program is administered by the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). 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.” This collaboration prevents multiple interviews and minimizes trauma to the child and family.

In SFY13 the number of SAFE-CARE providers declined from 54 to 31. This was due to attrition and changes in training requirements. According to the Department of Public Safety’s SAFE payment program, there were 2,032 child SAFE exams in SFY13. This data is from a different source than the SFY12 data reported to DHSS (1,391 exams). Providers are no longer required to report exam numbers to DHSS, and very few reported in SFY13. Therefore, the Department of Public Safety data is the most accurate available at this time.

While data related to the successful prosecution of perpetrators involved in cases 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 “ChildFirst.” By using this technique, the quality of the victim interview is raised to a standard prosecutors consider helpful in the prompt and successful resolution of civil and particularly, the criminal court proceedings.

**Total                    \$150,872.00**

#### **Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Assoc. “One Conference: All Together Now”**

The Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association was approved for the *ONE Conference: All Together Now* project. This conference was a statewide collaborative training designed to unite all of Missouri’s foster/adoptive and kinship parent groups and professionals who work with these groups to encourage the development of mutual understanding, networks for effective practice, and collaborative support

opportunities. The conference included sessions which were advocacy focused on innovative strategies and best practice related to the reducing trauma to victims in child abuse and neglect cases. The conference was held June 27-29, 2013. Funding from CJA supported scholarships for 104 participants.

**Total                    \$14,617.12**

The Missouri Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) Spring Education Conference May 29-31, 2013.

During this conference, financial assistance was provided through scholarships for 25 individuals from varying professional disciplines involved in the investigation of child abuse and neglect and juvenile justice. Scholarship recipients were required to attend workshops related to child abuse and neglect. The conference provided participants with techniques for working with challenging children and youth and continued education for professionals working child abuse and neglect cases in their various capacities within the juvenile justice system.

Sessions offered were:

- *Power of Personalities in the Workplace*
- *Race: the Power of Illusion*
- *Strengthening Families*
- *Forensic Investigation of Child Abuse and Neglect*
- *Responding to Crisis in Detention*

**Total                    \$9,769.56**

MO KidsFirst – MDT Facilitator Training

Missouri KidsFirst provided three-day training to individuals participating as members of multidisciplinary teams investigating child abuse and neglect. The specific target audience for the project was individuals involved in investigations responsible for leading, facilitating and coordinating multidisciplinary team meetings and case reviews. The training was held in Jefferson City, Missouri December 9-12, 2013. CJA funding supported the conference and specifically funded 19 full scholarships for individuals from various disciplines to attend the training.

**Total                    \$15,960.00**

MO KidsFirst – Multi-Session™ Forensic Interviews Training

Missouri KidsFirst coordinated and facilitated three-day Multi-Session™ Forensic Interview training for forensic interviewers, child protection workers, law enforcement, and prosecutors who already had completed basic forensic interviewing training using the CornerHouse method, the ChildFirst/Finding Words method or First Witness method. Missouri KidsFirst negotiated with the CornerHouse™ Interagency Child Abuse Evaluation and Training Center to conduct the training on October 2 - 4, 2013. CJA funding supported the training providing scholarships for 20 participants/trained forensic interviewers involved in the investigation of child abuse/neglect who met the qualifications for the advanced training. Course topics included:

- *Beyond a Single Session Model*
- *Young and Multi-Lingual Children*
- *Children Who Have Developmental Disabilities*

**Total                    \$17,800.00**

MO KidsFirst- Advanced Victim Advocate Training

Missouri KidsFirst coordinated and held Advanced Victim Advocate training September 17-18, 2013 in Jefferson City, Missouri. Missouri KidsFirst contracted with the National Children’s Advocacy Center (NCAC) Training Center to provide an expert trainer to deliver the advanced advocate training curriculum developed by the NCAC Training Center. Each attendee was provided a participant notebook with reference materials. The target audiences for this project were those individuals who provide child/family advocacy to children and families involved in child sexual abuse cases with the goal of reducing trauma to child abuse victims and their families enduring the investigative process. CJA funding supported 30 scholarships for this two-day training.

**Total                    \$14,969.10**

The Child Center’s 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Prevention and Interventions Conference

The Child Center’s 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Prevention & Intervention Conference: *New Challenges, New Solutions* was held April 24-26, 2013. The first goal of the conference was to improve the investigative response, expertise, and understanding of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation for multidisciplinary team members and professionals working with these targeted populations. The second goal was to improve the mental health and medical response, expertise and understanding of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation for mental health and medical professionals. Approximately 215 state-wide multi-disciplinary professionals attended the conference.

Programs presented included:

- *Child Physical Abuse*
- *Through the Eyes of a Victim*
- *Sexual Assault Forensic Exams*
- *Allies in Safety – Domestic Violence*
- *Suggestibility of Children*
- *Corroborative Evidence*
- *Perpetrators in Positions of Power*
- *Recantation – How Children Deny Abuse*
- *Self-Produced Sexual Images*
- *How the Missouri Hotline Works*

**Total                    \$22, 172.62**

### Missouri KidsFirst –ChildFirst Sexual Abuse Investigative Team Training

Missouri KidsFirst received funding from August 2013-May 2014 to cover the cost of partial scholarships for 80 participants to attend an interactive intensive five-day ChildFirst Forensic Interviewer Training and 160 participants to attend three-day ChildFirst Observation training in Missouri. The five-day training is intended for professionals conducting forensic interview training. The three-day training is intended for multi-disciplinary team members to gain an understanding of the interview process when they are part of the investigation, but not the one interviewing the children. Four separate training sessions would be provided in all. Missouri KidsFirst contracted with the National Child Protection and Training Center to provide the training for multidisciplinary teams across Missouri. Trainings were held in Springfield, MO (August 5-9, 2013) and St. Louis, MO (November 18-22, 2013). The remaining two sessions will be held in Kansas City and a location to be determined in Central Missouri in the spring of 2014. Teams included a combination of law enforcement, Children's Division investigators, prosecutors and juvenile court professionals. The trainings are designed to improve the ability of multidisciplinary team members to investigate child sexual abuse cases. CJA funding provided scholarships for the first two sessions for the attendance of 101 participants. The workshops included:

- *Effective Interviewing*
- *How Children Experience Sexual Abuse*
- *Process of Disclosure*
- *Culture and the Forensic Interview*
- *Suggestibility*
- *Child Development*
- *Questioning Children*
- *CornerHouse Forensic Interview Protocol*
- *Blocks and Block Removal*
- *Hearsay*
- *Medical*
- *Testifying In Court*
- *Working as a Multi-Disciplinary Team to Obtain Corroborating Evidence in Cases of Child Abuse*
- *Anatomical Dolls*
- *Preparing the Child Witness for Court*

**Total Invoiced for two sessions - \$18,855.77**

### MO KidsFirst – Child Sexual Abuse Trial School

Missouri KidsFirst received funding to provide Child Sexual Abuse Trial School and cover the cost of partial scholarships for 50 prosecutors, forensic interviewers, medical providers and mental health to attend the training. This training was held October 16-18, 2013 in Columbia, MO. Consistent with the goals of CJA, this training was designed to improve the investigative and prosecutorial response to child sexual abuse by increasing the expertise of professionals in the preparation and execution of child sexual abuse trials. MO KidsFirst partnered with the Missouri Office of Prosecution Services (MOPS) to develop the training evaluation for each participant to complete at the conclusion of the training. CJA funding provided supported for 49 multi-disciplinary professionals to attend this training. The training covered the following topics:

- *The dynamics of abuse*
- *Multi-disciplinary best practice*
- *Corroboration – “No Child Testifies Alone”*

- *Charging Decisions*
- *491 Hearings, Pretrial Motions, Crawford, and Hearsay*
- *Voir Dire*
- *Opening Statements lectures and labs*
- *Howe to be an Effective Witness and Witness Preparation*
- *Issues in Forensic Interviews and Testifying*
- *Case Preparation and Trial Strategies*
- *Presenting Medical Evidence in Court*
- *Direct Examination lectures and labs*
- *Defense Cross Examination lectures and labs*
- *Closing Arguments lectures and labs*

**Total                    \$17,150**

Missouri State Technical Assistance Team (STAT) – Operation Cybersafe- Forensic Equipment

The Missouri State Technical Assistance Team (STAT) conducts criminal investigations related to crimes against children. STAT has a high technology crime unit staffed with law enforcement officers specifically trained and experienced in the investigation of technology facilitated crimes against children. This unit conducts forensic examinations of computers, cell phones and other electronic media in the course of its investigative work. The Children’s Justice Task Force approved funding for STAT’s purchase of a Universal Forensic Evidence Device to assist them in their efforts to conduct forensic examinations of cell phones and other handheld devices. By funding STAT’s purchase of this equipment the Task Force has provided STAT with the means to more thoroughly, effectively, and proactively investigate and pursue prosecution of technology facilitated crimes of abuse, neglect and exploitation of children in Missouri consistent with the goals of CJA. In 2013, since obtaining this equipment, STAT has been able to conduct approximately 75 forensic examinations of cell phones, tablets, notebooks, I pads, etc. in the investigation of child abuse/neglect cases and in multiple cases obtained valuable evidence needed to successfully prosecute cases that otherwise may not have been prosecuted. STAT anticipates using this equipment for the forensic examination of approximately 150 or more of these types of devices again in 2014.

**Total                    \$9,083.00**

MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) Fall Educational Conference Scholarships

MO Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) Fall Educational Conference October 23-25, 2013. During this conference, financial assistance was provided for scholarships for 20 individuals from varying disciplines involved in and juvenile justice and the investigation of child abuse/neglect. Scholarship recipients were required to attend workshops related to child abuse and neglect. Goals of the conference as it relates to CJA were to provide professionals who work in the field of juvenile justice and child abuse/neglect investigation with increased knowledge of human trafficking and drug endangered children with the ultimate outcome being more thorough and successful investigations. Programs presented included:

- *Change is Hard. Sustaining Change is Harder*
- *Juvenile Law Update*
- *Human Trafficking*
- *Trauma Informed Care: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*
- *Drug Endangered Children*

**Total**                    **\$7,359.94**

Missouri Office of Prosecution Services (MOPS) - Child Abuse Legal Assistant-Salary Position

The Missouri Office of Prosecution Services (MOPS) was approved for grant funding in September 2012 and again in 2013 pursuant to the Children's Justice Act to fund a part-time Legal Staff Assistant to assist the Family Violence Resource Prosecutor in providing training and technical assistance to prosecutors and their allied professionals, and to conduct a series of monthly webinars. The Family Violence Program provides resources for professionals working in or with our local multi-disciplinary teams. The Legal Staff Assistant is currently working on projects funded by the grant (upcoming webinars, various regional trainings and an upcoming conference). Since receiving the grant in September 2012, a total of thirteen webinars, four regional trainings and one statewide conference have been completed. During that time period, 2,109 people (including law enforcement, prosecutors, victim advocates, Children's Division staff, juvenile officers, department of corrections staff, attorneys, forensic interviewers, school officials, medical personnel, guardians ad litem, counselors, therapists and legal staff) attended the trainings, and provided positive reviews. The trainings were designed to assist professionals in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect, exploitation and domestic violence. In addition, the Family Violence Resource Prosecutor provided day-to-day technical assistance to prosecutors and other allied professionals. The following training was provided to multi-disciplinary team members statewide to enhance their ability to investigate and prosecute child abuse and neglect:

Webinars completed in 2013 included:

- *From Smartphones to Facebook: Digital Evidence and the Electronic Communications Privacy Act* – 142 multi-disciplinary attendees
- *Behind Closed Doors: Providing a Support System to Youth Experiencing Trauma as a result of violence* – 134 multi-disciplinary attendees
- *The Neurobiology of Sexual Assault Trauma* – 164 multi-disciplinary attendees
- *Achieving Corroboration* – 116 multi-disciplinary attendees
- *Process of Disclosure & the MDT Response* – 84 multi-disciplinary attendees
- *Working with Child Witnesses* – 81 multidisciplinary attendees
- *Breaking Down Barriers, Working with Children's Division* – 91 multi-disciplinary attendees
- *Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview: Gathering Information vi the Interview Process* – 136 multi-disciplinary attendees
- *Pretrial Motions in Child Abuse Cases* – 104 multi-disciplinary attendees
- *Nuts & Bolts of Child Interviews* – 127 multi-disciplinary attendees

Regional Trainings completed:

- *Making the Multi-Disciplinary Team Work* – 70 multi-disciplinary attendees
- *The Investigation & Prosecution of Domestic Violence Cases* – 46 multidisciplinary attendees
- *Child Abuse Investigations from Start to Finish* – 56 multi-disciplinary attendees

Other projects produced:

- Preparation for MOPS 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Family and Sexual Violence Conference.
- A sample motion to Prohibit Defense Counsel from Invasive Questioning was distributed to the MOPS' contact lists.



- A Forensics Resource List was compiled using information on agencies across the State of Missouri and nationwide that assist law enforcement and prosecutors with forensic and technology matters.
- Case summaries, such as State v. Jackson or State v. Jones, were distributed with the assistance of funding from the grant.
- Training examples & resource postings; a photo essay published by *Time* magazine documented a domestic violence case. The Legal Staff Assistant prepared a summary of the piece and distributed it to a diverse contact list. The summary discussed the essay as well as how domestic violence impacts children. The summary also contained tips on how to interview children involved in an incidence of domestic violence as well as literature about the impact of traumatic events on a child's brain and social development.
- Teacher Misconduct (Surrender Teaching Certificate) – Originally created by the Attorney General's Office, the Resource Prosecutor distributed an email to statewide contact lists containing information on how to have a teacher in a teacher misconduct case surrender his/her teaching certificate.
- Safe ShepherdLink & Resource Posting – Safe ShephardLink is a free service available to victims of stalking that will search the internet for public information and erase it. The Legal Staff Assistant prepared a short write-up and compiled resources to send out to the Yahoo Group, and also included the link to the service as well as an explanation of the importance of using safety plans and risk assessments in stalking and domestic violence cases. The write-up also mentioned the importance of using safety plans for the children as well. Resources for safety planning with children and using language children will understand were provided, too.
- Legal Research: Child Sex Abuse Case - MOPS received a request for research assistance on a child sex abuse case. The Legal Staff Assistant conducted legal research in order to pull relevant case law to support the prosecutor's case. The Legal Staff Assistant compiled the case law, drafted brief summaries of each case, provided a brief description about how the case law could be used as support, and sent the cases to the prosecutor.

**Total                    \$21,346.99**

### **Proposed Activities for FFY14**

In 2014, the Task Force will continue to conduct critical event reviews of cases of child abuse and neglect, focusing primarily on child fatalities, near fatalities and serious physical injury cases. The Critical Event Review Committee will meet quarterly to review cases and to make recommendations to the full task force related to concerns found in specific cases as well as systemic concerns. Recommendations from the Critical Event Review Committee will be focused on and generate discussion of the Task Force designed to address issues and barriers to the effective handling and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases.

The Task Force, via the Finance Committee, will support the improvement of the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect by funding grants designed to improve the investigative response and the prosecution of child abuse and neglect. The Task Force will be focusing on funding projects that will enhance training for those multi-disciplinary team members investigating child abuse and neglect and any innovative pilot projects designed to focus on attempts to improve that process and/or reduce trauma to child victims during the investigative process.

In 2014, the Legislative Committee will continue to review Children's Division policy and follow the progress of currently proposed legislation related to the improvement of the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect. In response to the recommendations of the Task Force, the Legislative Committee will specifically monitor the progress of House Bill 1092 related to investigative time frames for the Children's Division, Senate Bill 802 related to investigative time frames for the Children's Division. In addition, the Legislative Committee will be monitoring and awaiting the outcome of the Supreme Court ruling on two cases before the court on appeal related to investigative time frames for the Children's Division. The progress of House Bill 1857 related to child victim testimony via closed-circuit video will also be of interest to the Legislative Committee. The conclusion of the 2014 legislative session and a final ruling of the Supreme Court will be significant in the Task Force's action plan to address issues related to time requirements for the completion of child abuse and neglect investigations and reducing trauma to child victims.

In 2014, the Recruitment Committee will continue to ensure the Task Force is at full membership and remains in compliance with Section 207(c)(1) of CAPTA. The Recruitment committee will also continue to work on ways to promote the work of the Task Force in a way that would attract the interests of qualified persons to fill future vacancies.

In 2014, the Task Force will continue to work to evaluate the CJA survey posted and sent out in 2013. The Task Force will further evaluate the effectiveness of the survey, the quality of the questions, the meaningfulness of the responses and the means of distribution. Working on the survey in a more comprehensive manner in 2014 will help the Task Force determine how to use the survey and any information obtained in the future.

The Task Force will monitor the outcomes of the Children's Division's Child Abuse and Neglect Report Annual Report, the Missouri State Child Fatality Review Program Annual Report, and the Office of the Child Advocate Annual Report. The Task Force will discuss and make recommendations for improvement based on their information gathering in collaboration with these reports and findings.

On March 13, 2014 at the quarterly meeting, the Task Force further reviewed the recommendations included in the Addendum to the Three Year Assessment and prioritized the work of the Task Force moving forward. The priorities of the Task Force consistent with the requirements of section 107(e)(1)(A),(B), and (C) respectively are as follows:

- (A) The Task Force will assist the Children's Division and multi-disciplinary team members involved in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect by focusing efforts on developing, supporting and funding more comprehensive training, including but not limited to: specifically identifying drug, alcohol, and other substance abuse identification related to safety of children, trauma informed training for investigators, multi-disciplinary team training, forensic interview training, identification of child abuse and neglect, mechanisms of injury, identification of appropriate collateral contacts and witnesses and use of safety and risk assessment tools in the investigative process.
- (B) The Task Force will assist the Children's Division in promoting the use of the Peace Officer Standards Training (POST) certified training developed for law enforcement and first responders, "Child Maltreatment and the First Responder" through networking with other professionals and stakeholders involved in the child protection community, most specifically those involved in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect.
- (C) The Task Force will review Children's Division policy and law related to the investigation of child abuse and neglect.

- 1) The Task Force will continue to monitor the status of the Supreme Court with regard to the appeals before the Court related to time requirements in the investigation of child abuse and neglect. In addition, the Task Force will monitor and support current legislation related to time requirements for child abuse and neglect investigations and the reduction of trauma to child victims including HB1092, SB802 and HB1857.
- 2) The Task Force will further investigate the potential need to address reporting processes through the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline as it relates to youth age 18 to 21 remaining in state custody.
- 3) The Task Force will investigate the use of standard interviewing protocols.
- 4) The Task Force will research the Child Endangerment statutes throughout the country to determine consistency of the laws and whether or not current laws adequately protect children from placement or exposure to persons known to be convicted of crimes against children.

**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 a minimum of two persons to attend a CJA annual conference, in addition to funding grant project requests that may arise as appropriate.

**Total                    \$ 10,000**

**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 are available state-wide. The number of children served would be proportionate to the number of children reported for child abuse and neglect, especially, sexual abuse. The children served are those children reported as a victim of child abuse, but primarily, child sexual abuse. Child Assessment Centers are one-stop shops, where child victims may 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, who can continue to address trauma issues for the child or family as necessary. The Centers contribute to the reform of the State child welfare system’s handling of cases of child abuse and neglect by not only increasing the likelihood of effective prosecution by including multi-disciplinary team members and expert forensic interviewers in the investigation process, but by also further reducing trauma to the victim by a reduction in the number of interviews.

**Total                    \$300,000**

**Missouri Juvenile Justice Association Spring Educational Conference, May 28-30, 2014.** During this conference, financial assistance will be provided for scholarships for 20 individuals from varying disciplines involved in and juvenile justice and the investigation of child abuse/neglect. Scholarship

recipients will be required to attend workshops related to child abuse and neglect, specifically, “Forensic Investigation of Child Abuse and Neglect” and “Ethics in Juvenile Justice”. Goals of the conference as it relates to CJA were to provide professionals who work in the field of juvenile justice and child abuse/neglect investigation with increased knowledge to achieve more thorough and successful investigations. Programs presented included:

- *Forensic Investigation of Child Abuse and Neglect*
- *Ethics in Juvenile Justice*
- *Tackling the School-to-Prison Pipeline*
- *Who are These Kids and How Can We Help Them?*
- *Girl Matters*

**Total                    \$8,060**

MO KidsFirst – Forensic Interviewer Protocol Training. Missouri KidsFirst will coordinate and facilitate two-day Forensic Interview protocol training for forensic interviewers, child protection workers, law enforcement, and prosecutors using the CornerHouse Model of forensic interviewing. Missouri KidsFirst will coordinate and facilitate the training by no later than December 31, 2014, but plans to conduct the training in April, May or June 2014. CJA funding will support the training providing scholarships for 40 participants involved in the investigation of child abuse/neglect. Course topics will include:

- *Questioning Children*
- *Communication*
- *Principles of Linguistics*
- *Simple Sentences*
- *Concrete Sentences*
- *Confusing Questions*
- *Be Cautious*
- *Guidelines for Age-Appropriate Questions*
- *Process for Questioning Children*
- *Suggestions*
- *Purpose of Forensic Interview*
- *Interview Instructions*
- *Interview Instructions Recommendations*
- *Intentional Discussion*
- *Truth-Lie Discussions and Promise to Tell the Truth*
- *Competency Assessment*
- *What is Narrative Practice*
- *How to do Narrative Practice*
- *Interviewer Preparation and Role of the MDT*
- *Foundation of ChildFirst*
- *Interview Phases*
- *Rapport*
- *Transition to Topic of Concern*
- *Explore Details*
- *Closure*

**Total                    \$18,200.00**

