

Missouri Task Force on Children's Justice Minutes

May 9, 2024

Virtual Meeting

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Next CJA Meeting: August 8, 2024, GOB

Welcome & Attendance: Chris Jensen and Lisa Mizell (Chairs)

Approval of Minutes from February 2024 (Will approve at August meeting due to no quorum)

Updates from Task Force Members:

- Greg is unsure if he will be able to continue coordinating the "Show Me a Helping Hand" conference due to potentially moving to New Zealand.
- The committee needs to decide if they are willing to cover the expenses of flying Greg back for the project. Also, someone would need to take the lead in planning as Greg can't be a member of the TF if he does not live in Missouri.

Jessica Seitz—MO NACA and the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Program and the Statewide MDT Program. Also she gave a legislative update

- Jessica Seitz introduces herself as the executive director of the Missouri Network Against Child Abuse (MO NACA) and discussed their name change and new initiatives, including a focus on commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC Project). They are currently redesigning the website and it should be done by June.
- There was a legislative session in 2022 focused on child sex trafficking, but the implementation of existing laws was lacking.
- The Missouri Statewide Council on sex trafficking and sexual exploitation was formed to address the issue.
- Four child advocacy centers were selected to expand the specialized response program in different parts of the state.
- Hope to continue training and expanding the staff at selected CACs as well as establish mentorship relationships between established sites and neighboring sites.
- The organization has been light on funding for human trafficking and is open to providing assistance or funding for complementary services.
- The local site has noticed cases of child trafficking involving parents trading their children for basic necessities and is working to coordinate with the FBI on these cases.
- The meeting discussed the need for a chapter in the report to address myths about child sexual abuse and trafficking.

- The MDT initiative, overseen by Jessica Seitz, is halfway through its first year and has selected pilot sites to address specific county problems.
- There is a focus on team building and technical assistance to provide solutions and collaboration for addressing child sexual abuse and trafficking.
- The legislative session in Missouri has been unproductive and there is concern about the budget not being passed.
- The reauthorization of the victims of crime act (VOCA) is a major concern as federal funding for victim service providers has been decreasing.
- Missouri has been using reserves and general revenue to bridge the funding gap for victim services, but a long-term solution is needed.
- There have been several bills supported by the group, but very few have passed and time is running out in the session.
- One bill that has made progress is about raising the age of marriage, but it is not expected to pass this year.
- The group has been working on improving the admissibility law for forensic interviews, but it may not pass either.

CJA Recommendations for the CAPTA Report:

- There was mention of the Child Protector app and the need for awareness and education about its use in investigating child abuse and neglect cases.
- The group discussed promoting a training program on the Child Protector Ap through social media and reaching out to Children's Mercy for additional promotion.
- They also discussed the idea of creating a professional development program related to the training, potentially offering continuing education units.
- After the meeting Lisa Mizell reached out to Dr. Anderst and Dr. Frazier regarding promoting the AP. Their team promotes the AP across the state, nation, and world at different trainings and conferences. Discussed when updates are complete, partnering to bring training with AP plus scenario type situations using the AP to our MDTs across Missouri.
- The meeting discussed the positive reception of a program and the need for more information and resources to address substance use disorder and increase visitation for parents in child welfare cases.
- Group also continues to support strengthening the MDTs across the state.
- CJA Annual Conference is virtual this year. Cari will send out the link to attend.

CLOSED SESSION

Task Force Business:

- Critical Events—Cari—Scope of Work for the Critical Events Tool is almost complete and we will hopefully get it bid out soon.
- New Member Updates—Welcome Jan Zimmerman and Dr. Adrienne Atzemis! The recommendations are in and just waiting for approval from the Supreme Court.
- Finance Committee:
- The Finance Committee only received one request for funding this quarter. **Missouri Network Against Child Abuse -MNAC (formerly Missouri KidsFirst)** requested \$28,677.70 for their training entitled Empowering Missouri's Mandated Reporters. This training will be a "train the trainer" workshop and presented in person and virtually to be completed by March 31, 2025. Four of the five Finance Committee members scored the request with an average score of 98.75/100. **The recommendation is to fully fund the request at \$28,677.70. APPROVED by Virtual Vote**

We currently have \$153,876.55 remaining dollars between the 22 and 23 Grant