

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE/CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT
PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

July 26, 2024

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children's Justice Act programs was held virtually on July 26, 2024.

Members Present

Judge Eugene Butler
Shamika Byars
Morgan Cox
Lana Mullins
Jeannine Panzera
Giselle Pelaez
Eric Reynolds
Lora Smith (for Shannon Hartung)
Judge Thomas Sotelo, Chair

Members Not Present

Randy Bonds
Jackie Robinson Brock
Davy Fearon
Katharine Hunter
Sandy Karison
Pat Popp, Vice-Chair
Ashley Thompson

Guests

Kirby Baughn (VDSS)
Denise Johnson (VDSS)
Rachel Miller (VDSS)

Staff Present

Jenna Foster
Melissa O'Neill

- I. **Call to Order:** Judge Thomas Sotelo, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM. Members introduced themselves.
- II. **Approval of Minutes:** The committee received and reviewed the draft minutes of the April 26, 2024, meeting. Giselle Pelaez noted her name was misspelled and needed to be corrected. Giselle Pelaez made a motion to approve the minutes with corrections. Eric Reynolds provided a second. The motion was approved.
- III. **Set Meeting Dates for Upcoming Year:** The committee discussed the following meeting dates for the upcoming year.

Friday October 25, 2024
Friday January 24, 2025 – Virtual
Friday April 25, 2025
Friday July 25, 2025 – Virtual

Shamika Byars made a motion to accept the dates as presented and Eric Reynolds provided the second. The motion was approved.

- IV. CASA Program Update:** The committee was previously provided a written update regarding the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program. The following additional updates were discussed.

Draft Proposed Regulations Review: The draft proposed regulations were approved by the Criminal Justice Services Board at their meeting held on June 13, 2024. DCJS will continue to keep the Advisory Committee informed regarding the regulatory process.

CASA Expansion Legislative Study: Committee members were briefed on the CASA Expansion Legislative Study work group meeting held on July 10, 2024. The work group was directed to complete a study to determine the feasibility of requiring a local CASA program in every jurisdiction throughout the Commonwealth and to identify any obstacles regarding the establishment of programs. The report is due to the Governor and the General Assembly by November 1, 2024.

V. CJA Program Update

The CASA/CJA Advisory Committee was provided with a written report detailing significant activities of the CJA program this quarter. The following additional updates were provided.

Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence (DVS) Children's Programming

Workgroup: This workgroup, comprised of 17 participants from local DVS housing programs, VDSS, and DCJS, meet monthly to identify and address areas of need for DVS children's programming and services. Each quarter, the group meets in-person to tour a local program. The group is currently planning a breakout session at the upcoming DCJS Domestic Violence Conference that focuses on multidisciplinary teams and the importance of including DVS child advocates in case review and continuing services for victims and families.

DCJS Domestic Violence Conference: Members were updated about the conference entitled *Building Bridges: Collaborative Approaches to Prevent Domestic Violence and Support Survivors*. that the DCJS Division of Programs and Services is planning. This conference, scheduled for October 7-9, 2024, at the Hampton Roads Convention Center, will have a child-focused track in addition to specific sessions for program leadership. Limited scholarships were made available.

VI. Citizen Review Panel

The committee received presentations and information on two Virginia Department of Social Services projects.

Kirby Baughn, Prevention and In-Home Program Manager with the Virginia Department of Social Services, provided an overview on the implementation of the Parental Child Safety Placement Program that went into effect as of July 1, 2024.

Denise Johnson, IT Portfolio Program Manager, Division of Family Services, with the Virginia Department of Social Services, provided an update on the implementation of the replacement data system for OASIS. The new system is CCWIS (Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System). VDSS has been working on this project since 2019 and plans to contract with a vendor in 2025.

VII. New Business: Members provided updates, information and news from their respective agencies and disciplines.

VIII. Adjourn: Eric Reynolds made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Giselle Pelaez provided the second. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 11:49 PM.

Next meeting dates:

Friday October 25, 2024
Friday January 24, 2025 - Virtual
Friday April 25, 2025
Friday July 25, 2025 – Virtual