

## CJA Task Force Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Sept. 15, 12:00-12:20 pm

**Summary Statement:** The CJA Task Force is a federally mandated, multidisciplinary advisory board that reviews and evaluates statewide front-end child welfare policies and practices and makes recommendations to DHS and others for systemic, equitable improvements to promote children's justice and well-being.

### Attendance:

Role ( <a href="#">42 U.S.C. §5106c (c)(1)</a> ) (voting members)	Name	Present	Absent	Notes
1. Law enforcement	Barrett Chrissis	X		
2. Law enforcement	Wade Rasch	X		
3. Civil court judge	Judge Anderson	x		
4. Civil court judge	Judge Doll	x		
5. Prosecuting attorney	Adam Hinz			
6. Defense attorney	Emmalie Brudzinski			
7. Defense attorney	Thomas Godfrey			
8. Attorney for children	Anne Gueinzius	x		
9. Guardian ad litem	Erika Randall	x		
10. Guardian ad litem	Sheri Johnson			
11. Health professional	Dr. Mark Hudson	x		
12. Mental health professional	Saprina Matheny	x		
13. Mental health professional	Anna Clavin	x		
14. Child protection services	Kari Hohn	x		
15. Child protection services	Jessica Iwen	x		
16. Parent representative	Joanne Hodgeman	x		
17. Parent representative	Tatiana Bergum			
18. Foster care survivor	Dawn Hyland	x		
19. Foster care survivor	Marlena Jasch			
20. Individual experienced working with children with disabilities	Kate Rickord			
21. Individual experienced working with children with disabilities	Tascha Just	x		
22. Individual experienced working with homeless children/youth	Dr. Mara Borges-Gatewood			

23. Individual experienced working with homeless children/youth	Lolita Davis-Carter	x		
24. Survivor of child abuse or neglect	Brent Genereux	x		
25. Survivor of child abuse or neglect	DeClara Tripp	x		
<b>Role (non-voting members)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Ad hoc – Corner House CAC	Jane Straub (CAC)	x		
Ad hoc -Minnesota Children’s Alliance	Marcia Milliken (CAC)	x		
Ad hoc -First Witness CAC	Tracie Clanaugh (CAC)			
Ad hoc -Ombudsperson	Jill Esch (OAIF)	x		
Ad hoc -CJI Representative	Judy Peterson (Courts CJI)	x		Becca V.H,
Ad hoc-Ombudsperson	Muriel Gubasta (OBFF)	x		
Ad hoc-Ombudsperson	Misty Coonce	x		
Ad hoc-Ombudsperson	Manuel Zuniga (OBFF)			
Ad hoc-Ombudsperson	Ann Hill (OBFF)			
CYF American Indian Well-Being Unit   CSP Division	Crystal Hedemann	x		Rep:Nigel Perrote
Ad hoc-DV Expert	Scott Miller			
Ad hoc-Lived experience/subject matter expert	Marvalyne Tripp			
Ad hoc-Lived experience/subject matter expert	Mel Alvar (PAVSA-Safe Harbor)	x		
Ad hoc-Subject matter expert	Katie Erickson			
DCYF CJA Task Force Coordinator	Laura Gapske	X		
DCYF CS&P Dept. Manager	Rebecca Wilcox			
DCYF CS&P Family Supp & Place Svcs Attorney/ CJI	Baudry, Jennifer L	x		

## I. Welcome and group chat icebreaker

- Thank you for attending the retreat.
- Summary of feedback and planning for next year’s retreat
  - Location concerns
  - Request for more time to network
  - Need name tags/table tents to identify each other’s roles
  - Presentation feedback was very position and informative

## II. Task force membership updates:

- Janaya's resignation from the task force-vacant medical position
- Applicant for prosecutor scheduled interview-second seat
- Potential applicant for former defense attorney, Fred Friedman, as an ad hoc or consultant on Workgroup C
- **ACTION ITEM:** Judy Peterson's ad hoc direct appointment resignation (retirement) and appointment recommendation for Becca Vanden Handen to replace from Children's Justice Initiative (CJI) **PASSED.**

### III. Announcements

- MDT trainings sponsored by CJA task force (workgroup A):

#### **Multidisciplinary Team Training Opportunity**

The Minnesota Child Welfare Training Academy and the Dept. of Children, Youth, and Families Children's Justice Act is working with state and local partners to offer a training ideal for Minnesota and tribal-based professionals actively working with child protection multidisciplinary teams, child protection collaborations, or those that are interested in starting multidisciplinary work. Applicable disciplines include child protection workers, law enforcement, prosecution, medical, mental health, advocacy, community-based liaisons/supports including cultural or spiritual leaders, policy partners, and others. Locations and dates include:

~~October 29 | 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Staples~~

~~November 3 | 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Mankato~~

November 5 | 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Bemidji

[Registration and additional details are located here!](#) Please share with colleagues.

- Keeping Families Together MN event from Joanna Woolman on Oct. 2, 2025

### IV. Requests for presentations or information members would like at future CJA task force meetings

- Share OOFY Annual Report and update on Foster Youth Bill of Rights advocacy and extended foster care report coming out soon
- More topics covering cultural information and initiatives
- Interest in foster care provided by grandparents and limited resources available

### V. Workgroup A, B, and C updates shared with full task force

- Workgroup A:
  - Sponsoring and supporting the MDT Aligned for Impact trainings this Fall. Spring will host virtual MDT sessions but will look different. There are about 250 participants. We are still hoping to fill 40 more seats in the Bemidji location.
  - Discussion will continue for the Fall 2026 MDT Conference-request to have some type of motivational speak present.
  - FI scholarships are still in the RFP attorney review cue and will be announced once posted

for applicants to apply.

- Workgroup B:
  - Labor trafficking child protection response went into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Flow chart and identification tools have been published.
  - Subject Matter Expert (SME) contracts have been secured with some use of the CJA funds and support.
  - SME's, the trafficking leadership group, and task force members will be involved in advisory and creating of the identification trainings and how to use the tool.
  - Labor trafficking response resources are being identified and funding provided.
  - Future projects include working with Bobbi Jo at the BCA to updated the LE trafficking in response protocol to updated the child protection response section, support counties in the protocol development, and a specialized potential rapid consult team.
- Workgroup C:
  - **Parent Rep Group:**
    - Parent rep survey had 20 responses
    - Reviewing the themes from the survey
    - A noticeable them includes no specific training is provided
    - Most reps are in the field because of their passion for children and families
    - Group is exploring meeting with parents that have lived experience as well as attorneys for additional conversation
  - **Children's Rep Group:**
    - Survey conducted but didn't have a good initial response. Kate is going to assist with creating the survey on another platform that will allow for more accurate responses from attorneys
    - This will modify and collect more information with Kate
    - Group is reviewing national models that are best practice-nine states do county representation like Minnesota
    - Waiver review-looking into if this is revocable and more explanation

**VI.** Workgroup A, B, and C breakout work time

**VII.** Public Comment(s): None.

Next CJA Task Force Meeting: Monday, November 17, 2025, noon-2 pm Virtual Link