

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 2015
Grant Application

Missouri Task Force on Children’s Justice Task Force Members

In 2014, the Task Force maintained full membership consisting of a minimum of 21 members at all times and met membership requirements as specified by CAPTA in Section 207(c)(1). Below are the names, titles, designations of disciplines, and brief descriptions of the 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 5th grade in the Knoxville, TN public schools for 6 years, and then became the first director of the 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 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.</p>
<p>Danielle Corley (Child Protective Service Agency Representative)</p>	<p>Ms. Corley is currently employed as the Northern Regional Field Support Manager for the Children’s Division. Ms. Corley has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Central Methodist College, Fayette, Missouri and a Masters of Business Administration from Missouri Baptist University, St. Louis Missouri. Ms. Corley was a Circuit Manager in St. Charles County for the Children’s Division from 1997 to 2010. Ms. Corley also served as the Executive Director of the Child Advocacy Center of East Central Missouri from 2010 to 2013.</p>

<p>Gaylin Rich Carver (Defense Attorney)</p>	<p>Gaylin Rich Carver is an attorney specializing in family law, juvenile law, probate, estate planning, guardianship 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.</p>
<p>Carolyn Green (Child Advocate)</p>	<p>Following her retirement from the Missouri Department of Social Services in 2000, Carolyn 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 which were county and state level supervisory or administrative positions.</p>
<p>Kim Moeckel (Family Court Representative)</p>	<p>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>
<p>Judge Rachel Bringer Shepherd (Criminal Judge)</p>	<p>Judge Rachel Bringer Shepherd is a Circuit Judge in the 10th 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>Taylor Johnson (Adult Former Victim)</p>	<p>Taylor is an adult former victim of child abuse and neglect. Taylor’s personal experience with Missouri’s foster care system provides the opportunity for her to provide insight, ideas and guidance from a perspective that can only be provided by a person who has been in the system. Taylor is currently pursuing her college education at Saint Louis Community College in St. Louis, Missouri and has employment experience as an outreach worker for youth.</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 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</p>

	<p>limited to graduating Cum Laude from the University of Missouri; Layout & Design Editor for the Missouri Law Review in 1992 and 1993; recipient of the West Publishing Award for Best Work in Legal Research & Writing, 1990; and an extensive honorable military service record including his current position as Lieutenant Colonel, Deputy Staff Judge Advocate, 35th 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 degree 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>Chief Bill Carson (Law Enforcement Community)</p>	<p>Chief 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 & Criminal Justice from the University of Missouri – St. Louis. Chief 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 Chief 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</p>

	<p>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>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.</p>
<p>Judge Robert Liston (Civil Judge)</p>	<p>Judge Robert Liston has been the 18th 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>

Linda Miller (Persons Working with Children With Disabilities)	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.
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Missouri Task Force on Children’s Justice

2015 Program Performance Annual Report

Establishment and Maintenance of a Task Force (Sections 107(b)(2) and 107(c)(1) of the Act

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, multi-disciplinary 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.

Statement of Needs

The Task Force on Children’s Justice needs stable, flexible, and ongoing funding to support efforts to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect and reduce trauma to child victims. This will assist the State in its efforts to expand training; expand services; provide better staff development opportunities and positive work environments; and promote positive images and public support with the end goal being improved ability to recruit, train, and retain staff, and ultimately enhance the State’s ability to respond to child abuse and neglect in the most timely and effective manner. The Task Force requires assistance and support from many state and local partners to succeed in these efforts.

Project Impacts and/or Progress

In 2014, the Task Force made great strides from years past. Members were very active in the work of the Task Force. 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 additional trauma to the child victim and the victim's family and also ensures procedural fairness to the accused.

In addition to quarterly meetings, the Task Force held conference calls, conducted case reviews, followed legislation and appellate cases, reviewed reports, and engaged in meaningful discussion and healthy debate about the many dynamics involved in investigating and prosecuting child abuse and neglect and its impact on the children served by the process. The critical event review subcommittee met quarterly to review cases, the finance committee met quarterly to review grant applications, and the training committee met via conference call to discuss the training goals of the committee.

The following are the activities completed by the Task Force and its subcommittees for the 12 month period preceding the date of submission.

Activities of the Task Force:

Children's Justice Act Task Force Survey

As reported in 2014, the Task Force published a survey to assess the 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 assess the investigative response as a whole and to identify any service gaps or specific issues Task Force funding may be helpful in addressing related to the investigation and prosecution 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. The survey was designed to gather information from the various professionals who interact with the child welfare system, as well as concerned Missouri citizens, to gain a statewide perspective of the effectiveness of our multi-disciplinary approach to the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect. Results from the survey assisted the Task Force in evaluating the effectiveness of Missouri's system in the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse and making recommendations for system improvements.

As a result of the survey, the Task Force recommended the Children's Division take steps to address the following barriers identified as impacting the effective handling and prosecution of child abuse and neglect investigations:

1. Unmanageable caseloads and worker turnover

Children's Division's response: In 2014, through the state budget process, the Children's Division initiated conversations and made proposals to the state legislature for assistance in addressing issues related to unmanageable case loads and worker turnover and retention, particularly with regard to front line investigative workers. This response is consistent with recommendations made by the Task Force and one of the objectives in the Children's Division's Five-Year Plan 2015-2019 to create a more skilled workforce and a stronger organizational structure. As a result, the state legislature approved a budget which included funding for the Children's Division to hire twenty-three (23) additional Children's Service Workers. In addition, Children's Division worked directly with the Office of Administration, Division of Personnel, to develop and begin implementation of a "career ladder" to address staff retention allowing the opportunity for well-trained, competent, and successful investigators to remain in front line investigative positions, while also providing advancement opportunities through the development of newly classified positions of Children's Service Worker III and Children's Service Worker IV. As part of this initiative, the Children's Division also created a Management Analyst Specialist II position specifically charged with researching, evaluating, and overseeing staff recruitment, retention and development practices. Additional benefits of the career ladder include: keeping the most effective staff

on the front line working with children, youth, and families; strengthening the team concept and shared responsibility of workers, supervisors, and specialists; and creating a system of ongoing leadership development tied to proven professional competencies. Maintaining well-trained front line staff also provides stability to less experienced workers and improves the likelihood of thorough and timely investigations. By maintaining and methodically increasing the number of experienced, well-trained investigators, caseloads will become more manageable, retention of staff will be more likely and, ultimately, the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect will be improved.

2. Inadequate training, including trauma training

Children's Division response: In 2014, the Children's Division initiated conversations and made proposals to the state legislature to provide funding for the Children's Division to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect through comprehensive investigative training for staff. This response is consistent with recommendations made by the Task Force and is one of the objectives of the Children's Division's Five-Year Plan 2015-2019. The legislature responded by including funding in the Children's Division budget for training Children's Division front line workers focused on enhancing interviewing skills, collection of evidence, and stronger collaboration with team members such as law enforcement and prosecuting attorneys. Improved training is intended to enhance workers skills, increase the likelihood of more thorough investigations, and better ensure safety for children. Upon approval of the state budget, the Children's Division negotiated a contract with Missouri KidsFirst to provide Gunderson National Child Protection and Training Center *ChildFirst* curriculum to all investigative and supervisory staff. Children's Division staff will receive this training in CY15. In addition to funding provided through the state budget process, the Task Force approved use of CJA funding to support *ChildFirst* training for other multi-disciplinary team members responsible for the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect, including law enforcement, prosecutors and forensic interviewers.

In 2014 and continuing through 2015, in addition to investigative training, Children's Service Workers will receive Secondary Traumatic Stress Training and trauma informed training. This training is specifically designed to help front line workers identify and understand trauma children may be experiencing as the investigative process unfolds as well as trauma staff may experience due to their involvement in the investigative work. The Children's Division intends to continue efforts to secure ongoing funding for staff training with the hope of including *ChildFirst* and trauma training as part of the ongoing curriculum. Becoming a trauma-informed agency is another objective identified in the Children's Division's Five-Year Plan 2015-2019. This training is a significant step towards meeting that objective.

3. Inconsistent statutory investigative time frame requirements between disciplines

Children's Division response: In 2013, the Children's Division's statutory investigative time requirements came under review as the result of two appellate cases pending before the Missouri Supreme Court. The challenges questioned the Children's Division's statutory obligation to complete child abuse and neglect investigations within 30 days and notify the alleged perpetrator within 90 days. In 2014, as a result of these court challenges and in lieu of rulings by the Missouri Supreme Court, the Children's Division, with the support of the Task Force, initiated a proposal with the state legislature to address statutory time frame requirements for investigations. Several bills were proposed and progressed through the legislative process. The end result was passage of House Bill (HB) 1092 which was signed by the Governor on July 8, 2014, became law on August 28, 2014, and included the essential provisions necessary to address concerns the Task Force identified. HB 1092 changed the investigative time frame for the Children's Division to complete an investigation from 30 days to 45 days, included defined provisions for "good cause" to continue investigations for up to 90 days from the report of abuse or

neglect, up to 120 days for a report of abuse or neglect involving sexual abuse, and until the investigation is complete for a report of abuse or neglect involving a child fatality or near fatality. In addition, HB 1092 changed the time requirements for notification of the alleged perpetrator to coincide with the 90 days, 120 days and until complete time requirements for completion of investigations. Also on July 8, 2014, the Missouri Supreme Court ruled on the two appellate cases affirming the Children's Division's obligation to meet statutory time frames, but refuting the challenge to the Children's Division's authority to continue investigating if the time frames were not met.

The passage of HB 1092 and the Missouri Supreme Court rulings provided much needed guidance to the Children's Division. Having more reasonable time frames and provisions to extend investigative time frames when good cause exists, will enhance the Children's Division ability to complete more thorough investigations in a manner better aligned with the needs of other multi-disciplinary team members involved in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect.

4. Insufficient communication between MDT members

Children's Division response: In 2014, the Children's Division, with the support of the Task Force, continued to work with members of all disciplines to improve communications in the multi-disciplinary team response to child abuse and neglect allegations. This occurred not only in the normal course of business through the investigative process, case reviews, development of multi-disciplinary team protocols, and multi-disciplinary team meetings, but also through multi-disciplinary team trainings funded by the Task Force. In addition, the Children's Division and the Missouri Office of Prosecution Services presented a series of trainings statewide to multi-disciplinary teams, "Beyond Protocols", with an emphasis on the multi-disciplinary team response to child abuse and neglect investigation and prosecution. Another intervention objective in the Children's Division Five-Year Plan 2015-2019 is to strengthen Child Advocacy Centers and multi-disciplinary team partnerships through training. The Task Force will continue to support and consider CJA grant applications submitted for the purposes of addressing training needs of Children's Division staff, Child Advocacy Centers and multi-disciplinary team members to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect and strengthen partnerships amongst team members.

At the December 11, 2014 meeting, the Task Force worked on improving the CJA survey in preparation for the three-year assessment, due in 2016. The Task Force reviewed the survey and compared it with CJA surveys from other states. Several suggested revisions were made, a follow up conference call with a smaller subgroup of the Task Force was held, and a revised survey was sent to the Task Force for final review. On January 26, 2015, the survey was finalized, posted on the Task Force website, and sent to Task Force members and other stakeholders in the child welfare professional community. Task Force members agreed to share the survey with others associated with their respective disciplines. The Children's Division, with the assistance of the Office of State Courts Administrator and the Missouri Juvenile Justice Association, ensured Children's Division workers, juvenile officers, other court staff and judges were afforded the opportunity to participate in the survey as well. In 2015, the Task Force intends to gather and evaluate the results from the survey and make additional meaningful recommendations for the multi-disciplinary response to child abuse neglect allegations moving forward. Results and recommendations from the survey will be included in Missouri's three-year assessment due in 2016.

Review of the Child Abuse/Neglect Definitions Rule

On October 23, 2014, the Task Force was sent a draft of the proposed Child Abuse/Neglect Definitions Rule for review and comment. The rule is currently being promulgated. The rule will provide regulatory guidance and definitions for terms used by the Children's Division pertaining to child abuse and neglect investigations and assessments. The Task Force did not express any concerns as a result of their review of the proposed rule.

Review of the 2013 State Child Fatality Review Panel Annual Report (CFRP)

On January 7, 2015, the 2013 State Child Fatality Review Panel Report was sent to the Task Force for review. This report provides statewide statistical data about how children in Missouri die each year and offers systemic and prevention recommendations from the many child fatality review panels responsible for reviewing those deaths. Much of the focus of the CFRP report is prevention, however, Task Force members were able to review this report and gain a more comprehensive view of the overall system charged with protecting children and investigating and prosecuting child abuse and neglect cases. The Task Force discussed their review of this report at the March 12, 2015 meeting. The Task Force ultimately supported three recommendations made in this report: 1) enact and enforce laws that punish those who harm children; 2) expand training on recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect; and 3) support development and training for multi-disciplinary teams to investigate child abuse. These three recommendations are consistent with CJA's mission and purpose and consistent with past recommendations made by the Task Force.

Review of Investigations Involving a Conflict of Interest Rule

On March 13, 2015, the Task Force was sent a draft of the proposed "Investigations Involving a Conflict of Interest Rule" for review and comment. The administrative definitions provided in the rule are intended to complement and be consistent with statutory definitions contained in Section 210.110 RSMo (Supp. 2005). The Task Force supported the Children's Division moving forward with the rule as drafted.

Mobility Project

This project is a significant step towards improving the ability of Children's Division workers to be more efficient and accurate when documenting information gathered during child abuse and neglect investigations. The Task Force did not initiate this project, but is in full support of it as it addresses concerns identified as a result of Task Force critical event case reviews. In May 2014, the Children's Division received the funding and spending authority to purchase 1,500 tablets (iPads) for front line staff. The Children's Division is developing applications for the tablets for the Family and Children Electronic System (FACES) which will allow front line staff to conduct prior history searches, document essential investigative information, and conduct research while in the field. Additional applications will continue to be developed. These capabilities will enable staff to locate and enter information more timely and expeditiously, thus reducing the amount of office time needed and creating more opportunity to work directly with the children and families being served. As of March 2015, over 550 iPads have been deployed to Children's Division front line staff. An additional 850 are planned to be purchased in the spring of 2015.

Legislative/Policy Committee

The Legislative Committee is responsible for monitoring legislative actions and reviewing policy changes to develop recommendations. In 2014, the Legislative committee reviewed laws and policies of the state related to the investigation of child abuse and neglect and with the guidance of the Task Force, revised and voted unanimously to approve the CJA By-laws. In 2014, the Missouri Legislature was very active with child welfare issues. Consistent with the purpose of the Task Force, the Legislative Committee followed bills related to the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect. As a result of legislation proposed during the 2014 legislative session, two nearly identical omnibus bills, House Bill 1092 and Senate Bill 869 became law. The main provisions of these bills were as follows:

- Investigative time frames for the Children's Division to complete an investigation were extended from 30 days to 45 days, unless "good cause" to delay is documented in the Family and Children Electronic System (FACES). Provisions for "good cause" were defined in the bills and allowed for the investigation to continue for up to 90 days from the report of abuse or neglect, up to 120 days for a report of abuse or neglect involving sexual abuse, and until the investigation is

complete for a report of abuse or neglect involving a child fatality or near fatality. The bills changed time requirements for notification of the alleged perpetrator to coincide with the 90 days, 120 days and until complete investigative requirements.

- Provisions were made in these bills requiring the Department of Public Safety to establish rules and make payments to Sexual Assault Forensic Exams Child Abuse and Resource Education (SAFE CARE) providers who provide forensic examinations of individuals under eighteen (18) years of age, who are alleged victims of physical abuse.

Since the commencement of the 2015 legislative session in January, the Legislative committee has tracked the progress of the session weekly by reviewing a legislative bill tracking document and forwarding the updates to the Task Force for review.

Goals for the Legislative committee for 2015 are:

- Continue to review the By-laws on a regular basis and make recommendations for further revisions as necessary.
- Continue to follow legislation pertaining to procedures for investigating and prosecuting child abuse and neglect.
- Propose legislation, if appropriate, intended to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse/neglect and reduce trauma to children as they endure the investigative process.
- Report on the final status of bills proposed during the 2015 legislative session.

Critical Event Review Committee

The Critical Event Review Committee is responsible for conducting reviews of critical events, most specifically, cases involving child fatality, near fatality and serious physical injury. The purpose of these reviews is to provide an independent perspective regarding the multi-disciplinary handling of child abuse and neglect investigation and prosecution and make recommendations for improvements. The committee members expect the process of reviewing cases to help them gain insight into laws, policies, or practices which might need to be addressed to improve future handling and prosecution of cases, and reduce trauma to the child victims.

In 2014, the Critical Event Review Committee met quarterly and conducted comprehensive reviews of randomly selected cases representing various regions of the state. The committee made many case specific recommendations as a result of their reviews. The Critical Event Review Committee will continue to meet quarterly to review cases and make recommendations in 2015. Recommendations made by this committee will be further evaluated to determine whether or not the concerns identified may be more systemic rather than case specific. The Children's Division, with the assistance of the Task Force, will prioritize the recommendations for inclusion in the 2016 three-year assessment. The following paragraphs provide a chronology of the work and recommendations of the Critical Event Review Committee from February 2014 through April 2015:

On February 26, 2014, the Critical Event Review Committee conducted a comprehensive review of two fatality cases and one near fatality case. All three cases involved children under the age of two. The cases represented various regions of the state. As a result of the reviews the committee made several recommendations related to the investigation of child abuse and neglect and presented those recommendations to the Task Force on March 13, 2014 as follows:

- Three collateral contacts should be required when a family has been the subject of multiple hotline calls within the past two years and the alleged victim child is under the age of six (6).

Two of the three collateral contacts should be with persons unrelated to the family with firsthand knowledge of the condition of the child or the family functioning (teachers, medical professionals, in-home service providers, etc.)

- Children's Division investigators should receive more training specific to assessing risk and safety and completing the assessment tools.
- Communications with other agencies, specifically the Department of Corrections (DOC), should be improved and include the requirement for DOC to notify the Children's Division when any offender previously convicted of a crime against a child is pregnant with another child.
- Improvements should be made to FACES to allow easier and more expeditious means for investigative workers to review prior history of families under investigation.

On May 29, 2014, the Critical Event Review Committee convened and conducted a comprehensive review of two critical event cases including two fatality cases. The cases represented various regions of the state. One involved a two month old and the other a thirteen year old. On June 12, 2014, the committee presented the following recommendations to the Task Force:

- Children's Division investigators should receive additional training in report writing.
- Children's Division investigators should receive additional training on risk and safety assessment, particularly at the beginning of an investigation.
- Children's Division investigators should receive additional training on crime scene preservation.
- Hospitals should consider developing Emergency Room (ER) protocols for conducting more comprehensive evaluations of infants who present at the ER with congestion/breathing problems to better ensure the presenting child's symptoms are not related to child abuse.

On August 19, 2014, the Critical Event Review Committee convened and conducted a comprehensive review of two fatality cases and one near fatality. The cases represented various regions of the state. All three cases involved children under the age of 18 months. On September 11, 2014, the committee presented the following recommendations to the Task Force:

- Policy surrounding the use of collateral contacts, documentation of the information gathered as a result of those contacts, and sharing of the information with multi-disciplinary team members should be revisited.
- Training with regard to risk and safety assessment continues to be an area needing to be addressed. Safety and risk assessment tools do not accurately reflect other information and documentation in the records.
- Training for juvenile officers and law enforcement officers is needed to address inconsistencies in the multi-disciplinary response and decision making process at the front end of investigations, particularly, pertaining to protective custody decisions.
- Efforts should be made to improve collaboration between multi-disciplinary team members, most specifically, the relationship and communication between Children's Division, juvenile officers and prosecutors. Quality communications between multi-disciplinary team members is essential to achieving better investigative and prosecutorial outcomes.

On September 11, 2014, at the quarterly meeting of the Task Force, the Critical Event Review Committee asked and was granted permission by the Task Force to close the meeting for several hours to allow the opportunity for the Task Force to review a critical incident. Conducting this review with the Task Force served several purposes: 1) The opportunity for all members of the Task Force to review a case; 2) The opportunity for all members to obtain a better understanding and some firsthand experience of the work the Critical Event Review Committee had been doing when conducting reviews; and 3) The opportunity for all members to make recommendations.

During the closed session, the Task Force reviewed one fatality case involving an infant in a co-sleeping situation. This was the second fatality of an infant in the same household under similar circumstances within a twelve month period. The case presented the opportunity for the Task Force members to have significant discussion and hear a variety of views not only on co-sleeping, but the issues that arise while investigating and considering prosecuting such a case. The case also presented the group with the challenge of focusing on issues related to the improvement of the investigation and prosecution rather than prevention. The Task Force made the following recommendations as the result of the review of this case:

- Children's Division investigators need training on interviewing caregivers in difficult situations which pose the distinct possibility the caregiver is the perpetrator.
- Children's Division investigators need training on how and what information needs to be gathered in an investigation to ensure all evidence is considered. This particular investigation may have been improved had information from emergency personnel/first responders been gathered.
- All multi-disciplinary team members involved in the investigation need training on evidence collection procedures, crime scene preservation, scene reconstruction and creating an investigative timeline.
- Multi-disciplinary team members responsible for protective custody decisions and ensuring the safety of surviving siblings in a child fatality investigation need training on the federal and state statutory reasonable efforts requirements as it relates to placing children in relative placements, kinship placements or foster care to ensure decisions consistently result in the least amount of trauma to the surviving children.

On November 18, 2014, the Critical Event Review Committee convened and conducted a comprehensive review of one fatality case involving an eight year old and three serious physical injury cases involving children ages two and under. The cases represented various regions of the state. On December 11, 2014, the committee presented the following recommendations to the Task Force:

- Additional training for mandated reporters may be needed as it relates to children receiving medical care in the school setting when a parent has failed to respond or provide necessary medications for the school nurse or personnel to administer to a child with a known medical need.
- Children's Division investigators should be trained to request additional medical reviews from physicians specifically trained in child abuse and neglect screening when the investigator suspects abuse or neglect.
- Children's Division investigators need training on crime scene investigation and preservation.
- Children's Division investigators need more training on elements to consider when determining the family's ability to put more enforceable safety plans in place.
- The Children's Division should review the format of Out-of-Home investigative reports, develop a better way to ensure the documentation provided in the reports reflects the information gathered by the investigator, and consider creating a more uniform reporting format for all investigations.

On February 17, 2015, the Critical Event Review Committee convened and conducted a comprehensive review of one infant fatality case, one teenage suicide, one serious physical injury of a toddler, and one fatality of a toddler. The cases represented various regions of the state. On March 12, 2015 the committee presented the following recommendations to the Task Force:

- Suspicious deaths of infants should be thoroughly co-investigated by the Children's Division and law enforcement from beginning to end, particularly when co-sleeping and drug use by the caregivers are believed to be factors in the death.

- Children’s Division should consider revisiting policy related to making referrals to the juvenile office, particularly when the investigative conclusion indicates the need for essential services to ensure child safety and the family is uncooperative.
- Children’s Division should request toxicology screens on caregivers in suspicious deaths of infants, particularly when co-sleeping is believed to be a factor or cause in the death.
- Children’s Division workers could benefit from easier access to the FACES system remotely or via other electronic means while in the field to search prior history in a manner timely enough to assist them in their initial response to a report of child abuse and neglect.
- Children’s Division workers and law enforcement officers could benefit from additional training on mechanisms of injury and scene reconstruction.
- Children’s Division investigators could benefit from training on elements necessary to make a preponderance of evidence finding on the caregiver not directly responsible for the abuse of the child, but rather passively failing to protect.

On March 12, 2015, at the quarterly meeting of the Task Force, the Critical Event Review Committee asked and was granted permission by the Task Force to close the meeting for a portion of the meeting to allow the opportunity for the Task Force to review a critical incident. This was the second time during this reporting period the Task Force utilized a portion of the quarterly meeting to review a specific critical incident. The Task Force made the following recommendation as a result of this review:

- Children’s Division investigators, alternative care workers, and licensing workers should be provided more training on the signs and symptoms of physical child abuse.

Goals for the Critical Event Review Committee for 2015 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 consists 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 judges, civil court judges, prosecuting attorneys, 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.

In 2014, 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 filled membership vacancies in 2014 as follows: Judge Robert Liston, Civil Court Judge, Melissa Smyser, Mental Health Professional, Danielle Corley, Child Protective Service Agency Representative, Linda Miller, Persons Working with Children with Disabilities, Dan Patterson, Prosecuting Attorney, and Taylor Johnson, Adult Former Victim. In addition, three members were reappointed for additional four year terms respectively. Those members included Judge Rachel Bringer Shepherd, Criminal Court Judge, MaryAnn Williamson, Child Advocate, Marjorie Carter, Family Attorney, and Carolyn Green, Child Advocate. Co-chairs Lori Ross and Beth Dessem were also reappointed to serve their second two-year terms as Co-chairs. 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.

Goals for the Recruitment Committee for 2015 include continuing to monitor member's term limits and seeking to fill any vacancies as set forth by CAPTA.

Training Committee

The Training Committee strives to monitor and improve access to training opportunities for professionals and other community partners involved in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect. The Training Committee intends to continue its efforts to inform multi-disciplinary professionals of current or upcoming training opportunities through the Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Educational Opportunities listing posted on the CJA website. The Missouri organizations listed on the CJA website offer opportunities for training on topics pertinent to child abuse and neglect.

In 2015, the training committee plans to utilize information gained from the survey being sent to CJA community partners and stakeholders to identify areas of focus consistent with the purpose of CJA and determine the training needs of the multi-disciplinary team members investigating child abuse and neglect statewide.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is responsible for monitoring and reviewing CJA's expenses, budget and grant requests. In 2014, the committee implemented the "Finance Committee Responsibilities and Guidelines" developed in the previous year and met quarterly via conference call to discuss business of the Finance Committee and review grant applications submitted for consideration. The Finance Committee provided the Task Force a summary, score, and recommendation for each grant application reviewed for the Task Force to consider for approval at each quarterly meeting. A list of the projects funded in the past 12 months is posted on the CJA website to provide potential grantees a sense of the type of projects and trainings funded in the past, as well as the amounts requested.

In 2014, the Task Force voted to fund the following projects:

- 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
- MO KidsFirst – MDT Facilitator Training - \$18,613.97 (Grantee Unable to Deliver Training)
- Missouri Juvenile Justice Association 2014 Fall Educational Conference - \$8,060.00
- MO KidsFirst – *ChildFirst* Sexual Abuse Investigative Team Training - \$13,050.00 (November 2014 – 1 session)
- The Child's Center – 2015 Crimes Against Children Conference - \$28,610.50
- MO KidsFirst – *ChildFirst* Training - \$22,500.00 (12 sessions)
- MO KidsFirst – *ChildFirst* Child Abuse Investigation Training - \$77,200.00 (4 sessions)
- Missouri Juvenile Justice Association - 2015 Spring Educational Conference - \$8,700.00
- State Technical Assistance Team - 2015 Investigating Child Fatalities Training – (Five sessions - \$4,220.00)

CJA Funded 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 SFY14, 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. Satellite offices are also located in Union, Nevada, Pierce City, Butler, St. Robert, Farmington, and Hannibal. In total, CAC services are provided in 22 fully accredited locations around the state. 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 multi-disciplinary context.” This collaboration prevents multiple interviews and minimizes trauma to the child and family.

In SFY14, the SAFE-CARE program continued to utilize state funding to enhance the medical response to child maltreatment. Monthly online training was initiated for current SAFE-CARE providers, in addition to in-person classroom training. The mentoring program was extended to current providers, so that all providers had access to a mentor who was board certified in Child Abuse Pediatrics. In SFY14, the number of SAFE-CARE providers increased from 31 to 44. According to the Department of Public Safety’s SAFE payment program, there were 2,032 child SAFE exams in SFY13 and 2,095 child SAFE exams in SFY14.

While data related to the successful prosecution of perpetrators involved in cases served by the Child Advocacy Centers is not readily available, it is well established that the forensic interview process provided by the Advocacy Centers, including the handling of evidence and quality of victim and witness interviews, continues to improve the investigation and judicial handling of both civil and criminal cases of child abuse neglect.

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. In addition, use of this model clearly provides the opportunity to reduce trauma to children alleged to be victims or witnesses to child abuse and neglect.

Total \$150,000.00

The Missouri Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) Spring Educational Conference May 28-30, 2014.

The Task Force provided financial assistance for this conference by granting CJA funding for 17 scholarships to 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, 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. The conference also provided participants with techniques for working with challenging children and youth and continuing education for professionals working child abuse and neglect cases in their various capacities within the juvenile justice system. Sessions offered were:

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

Total \$6,851.00

MO KidsFirst – Forensic Interviewer Protocol Training (September and October 2014)

Missouri KidsFirst coordinated and facilitated two (2) two-day Forensic Interview protocol trainings for forensic interviewers, child protection workers, law enforcement officials, and prosecutors using the CornerHouse Model of forensic interviewing. Missouri KidsFirst facilitated the training on September 11th and 12th, 2014, and October 2nd and 3rd, 2014. CJA funding supported the training by providing scholarships for 40 participants involved in the investigation of child abuse/neglect. Course topics included:

- *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 \$16,645.21

MO KidsFirst – Peer Review Training (December 2014 – January 2015)

Missouri KidsFirst provided four training sessions of Peer Review Training to forensic interviewers in various locations throughout the state between December 1, 2014 and January 31, 2015. The purpose of this training was to provide forensic interviewers with the opportunity to critique their individual skills, observe the skills of other forensic interviewers, and give and receive constructive feedback to one another as well as from the trainers. The training reached a total of 37 forensic interviewers and offered the opportunity for participants to learn how to improve their skills, with the ultimate goal of improving the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect and reducing trauma to child victims.

Total \$11,100.00

The Missouri Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) Fall Educational Conference October 29-31, 2014

Financial assistance for this conference was provided through CJA funded scholarships for 20 individuals from varying professional disciplines involved in the investigation of child abuse and neglect and juvenile justice. Scholarship recipients were required to attend workshops designed to improve individuals understanding and identifying signs of child abuse and neglect, recognizing and responding to trauma, and/or improving the multi-disciplinary response to child abuse and neglect. The conference provided participants with techniques for working with challenging children and youth and continuing education for professionals working child abuse and neglect cases in their various capacities within the juvenile justice system.

Sessions offered were:

- *Identifying and Responding to Youth with Sexual Behavior Problems*
- *A Multi-disciplinary Team Approach to Responding to Youth with Sexual Behavior Problems*
- *Trauma in Children: How to Recognize It and What You Can Do About It*
- *Cursory Interviewing and How to Utilize the Multi-disciplinary Team*
- *The Missouri Crossover Youth Initiative: Integrating Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems to Better Meet the Needs of Youth*

Total \$8,060.00

The Child Center's 10th Child Abuse and Neglect Annual Interventions Conference (April 2-4, 2014)

The Child Center's 10th Annual Interventions Conference: *Restoring the Balance of Justice* was held April 2-4, 2014. The primary goal of the conference was to improve the investigative response, expertise, and understanding of child abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation and domestic violence for multi-disciplinary 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 186 statewide multi-disciplinary professionals attended the conference.

Programs presented included:

- *How Offenders Groom the Child, Caregiver, and the Community and How We Can use This to Identify Evidence of the Whole Story*
- *Mandated Reporting and Handling of Disclosures*
- *Sexual Behavior Problems in Children and Youth*

- *Assessing Allegations in Pre and Non-Verbal Children*
- *Investigation of Child Deaths*
- *Taking the High Road: Ethical Challenges and the Multi-disciplinary Team*
- *Juvenile Sex Offenders*
- *What They Can Tell Us and What We Need: The Intersection of Children's Abilities to Disclose and the MDTs Information*
- *Depression and Suicide: It's Time to Talk About It*
- *Child Sexual Abuse: Offenders and Technology*
- *It's Not Easy Being Green, or Do THIS Job for a living: Wellness/Survival and the MDT Approach to Child Sexual Abuse*
- *Working with Difficult Families*
- *Sex Offenders: What Judges, Lawyers, Investigators and Child Advocates Should Know*
- *Child Sex Trafficking*
- *Abuse and Its Effects on Relationships*
- *Who is BACA (Bikers Against Child Abuse) and How Can They Help?*
- *The Best Kept Secret: Mother-Daughter Sexual Abuse*
- *Deescalating Crisis Situations Involving Someone That is Mentally Ill or Suicidal*
- *Resiliency 101: From Victim to Survivor*
- *Questions and Answers from a Multi-disciplinary Team*
- *Randy and Me: A Prosecutor's Story of Childhood Sexual Abuse*

Total \$22, 401.00

Missouri KidsFirst –ChildFirst Sexual Abuse Investigative Team Training (November 17-21, 2014)

Missouri KidsFirst received CJA funding to cover the cost of partial scholarships for participants to attend an interactive intensive five-day *ChildFirst* Forensic Interviewer Training and participants to attend three-day *ChildFirst* Observation training in Missouri. The five-day training was intended for professionals conducting forensic interview training. The three-day training was 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. Missouri KidsFirst contracted with the National Child Protection and Training Center to provide the training for multi-disciplinary teams in Missouri. The training was held in St. Louis, Missouri (November 17-21, 2014). Teams included a combination of law enforcement, Children's Division investigators, prosecutors and juvenile court professionals. The trainings were designed to improve the ability of multi-disciplinary team members to investigate child sexual abuse cases. CJA funding provided scholarships for attendance of 82 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 \$13,050.00

Application for Proposed Activities for FY15

In 2015, the Task Force will continue to meet quarterly to conduct critical event reviews and make recommendations on cases of child abuse and neglect, focusing primarily on child fatalities, near fatalities and serious physical injury cases. Case specific recommendations will be compiled, evaluated and prioritized as it relates to more systemic concerns to address issues and barriers to the effective handling and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases.

In 2015, 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 the improving that process and/or reducing trauma to child victims during the investigative process.

In 2015, 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 2015, 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 2015, the Task Force will continue in its charge to work towards improvement of the investigation and prosecution of child abuse neglect. This work will be a compilation of all information gathered by the Task Force and the work of its subcommittees throughout 2015 as well as the results of the CJA survey posted and sent out to multi-disciplinary team members, stakeholders, and citizens in January 2015. The Task Force intends to thoroughly evaluate all the information gathered and make recommendations designed to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse. Recommendations made by the Task Force will be included in the three-year assessment, due in 2016.

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

While the Task Force has been focused specifically, as charged, on improving the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect and reducing trauma to children, the Task Force has continued to make efforts to connect its work to other child welfare program areas and objectives. At the December 13, 2013, meeting of the Task Force, in an effort to give the Task Force a broader view of the entire child welfare system and the goals of the Children’s Division, while remaining focused on investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect, Children’s Division Director Tim Decker shared information with the Task Force regarding the Children’s Division’s Five-Year Plan 2015 -2019 and the Child and Family

Services Review. The 2014 – 2015 activities and recommendations included in this report provide further evidence of the Task Force’s awareness of these plans and programs.

The 2015 priorities of the Task Force are a continuation of 2014. Consistent with the requirements of section 107(e)(1)(A),(B), and (C) respectively the priorities are as follows:

(A) The Task Force will continue to 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: trauma informed training for investigators, multi-disciplinary team training, forensic interview training, child fatality investigative 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. The Task Force and Children’s Division have made great strides to address identified areas of need and begun to implement training (as described throughout this report) to improve the Children’s Division and the multi-disciplinary team’s ability to respond to reports of child abuse and neglect. The Task Force will need to continue to support the Children’s Division in these efforts.

(B) The Task Force will continue to 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. During this reporting period, the State Technical Assistance Team (STAT) delivered this training in eight locations throughout the state and was able to reach approximately 150 multi-disciplinary team members involved in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect. STAT plans to continue to offer this training moving forward in an effort to strengthen the multi-disciplinary response to child abuse and neglect statewide. In addition, the Task Force will continue to support the Children’s Division’s efforts to implement the mobility project which will allow Children’s Division workers to have at their fingertips essential information and the tools necessary to investigate child abuse and neglect allegations through the use of iPads with the capacity to interface with the FACES system.

(C) The Task Force will continue to review Children’s Division policy and law related to the investigation of child abuse and neglect.

- 1) In 2014, the Task Force monitored the status of the Supreme Court with regard to the appeals before the Court related to the Children’s Division’s time requirements in the investigation of child abuse and neglect and supported legislation related to addressing time requirements for child abuse and neglect investigations and the reduction of trauma to child victims including HB 1092, SB 869. The Supreme Court’s rulings resulted in a favorable outcome for the Children’s Division. HB 1092 and SB 869 became law and resulted in an outcome consistent with Task Force recommendations. In 2015, the Task Force will continue to review Children’s Division policy and laws related to the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect. The 2015 legislative session has generated many bills related to child welfare issues. The Task Force will continue to monitor progress of those bills and support bills intended to improve outcomes for children who have been subjected to abuse and neglect.
- 2) In 2015, the Task Force will continue to investigate the use of standardized interviewing protocols. During this reporting period the Children’s Division has taken steps towards a more standardized cursory interviewing model for front line Children’s Division workers

and multi-disciplinary team members through the *ChildFirst* training (described on pages 8 and 25 of this report). Through case reviews and training evaluations, the Task Force plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the training to determine whether or not Children’s Division should consider revising policy to require the training for all investigative staff moving forward.

- 3) The Task Force will continue to research statutes related to child abuse and neglect in other States throughout the country to determine consistency of the laws and whether or not current Missouri laws adequately protect children.

Proposed CJA Grant Projects:

Task Force on Children’s Justice Operating Expenses and Projects

Funding is needed to support and maintain the activities, correspondence, teleconferences, quarterly meetings of the Task Force, meetings of Task Force subcommittees, 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 with state and federal funds. A portion of the funding for the Child Assessment Centers comes from the CJA Grant.

Child Assessment Centers in Missouri are accessible to all children, as one of these centers is available in every region of the state. 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 victims of various forms 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 Child 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 and providing victim advocate services.

Total \$150,000.00

Missouri KidsFirst –ChildFirst Sexual Abuse Investigative Team Training (January – December 2015)

In 2015, in support of Task Force recommendations and the Children’s Division’s and other multi-disciplinary team members need for training, the Task Force approved funding Missouri KidsFirst to cover the cost of multi-disciplinary team members statewide to attend an interactive intensive five-day ChildFirst Forensic Interviewer Training and participants to attend three-day ChildFirst Observation training. The five-day training was intended for professionals conducting forensic interview training. The three-day training was intended for multi-disciplinary team members to gain an understanding of the interview process when they are part of the investigation and to gain skills in conducting cursory interviews of children. The Task Force approved funding twelve (12) sessions of the three-day training

and four (4) sessions of the five-day training. Missouri KidsFirst is contracted with the National Child Protection and Training Center to provide the Gunderson National Child Protection and Training Center *ChildFirst* curriculum training for multi-disciplinary teams in Missouri. The three-day trainings will be held monthly and the five-day trainings will be held quarterly throughout the State of Missouri, to ensure the training has a statewide impact. 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 multi-disciplinary team members to investigate all types of child abuse cases, but most specifically sexual abuse cases. CJA funding, in conjunction with other Children's Division funding is expected to provide scholarships for more than 500 participants. The workshops included are as follows:

- *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 \$99,700.00

The Child Center Inc. and the St. Charles County Prosecuting Attorney's Office 2015 Crimes Against Children Conference (April 1-3, 2015)

The Crimes Against Children Conference was held April 1-3, 2015. The Task Force approved funding for this conference, including 75 scholarships for multi-disciplinary team members to attend. The primary goal of the conference is to improve the investigative response, expertise, and understanding of child abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation and domestic violence for multi-disciplinary team members and professionals working with these targeted populations. The conference will offer a variety of training sessions all designed to enhance the skills of multi-disciplinary team members involved in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect. Approximately 200 statewide multi-disciplinary professionals are expected to attend the conference.

Programs presented will include:

- Sex Offenders 101: Rapists, Child Molesters and Other Sex Offenders
- Child Abuse Investigations – Enhancing our Verbal and Non-Verbal Elicitation Techniques
- The State of Science and Practice in the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
- Professional Ethics
- Differences Between Department of Social Services Investigations and Criminal Prosecution
- What Every Witness Should Know: A Prosecutor's Perspective
- Courthouse Dogs and Their Benefit to Child Victims of Sexual Abuse
- Real Crimes in Virtual Worlds
- Successful Use of Online Social Networking for Criminal Investigations and Intelligence

- Recognizing and Responding to Child Maltreatment: Screening for Physical Abuse in the Emergency Setting
- Recognizing and Understanding Psychopaths
- Maternal Incest
- Designer Sex Trafficking

Total \$28,610.50

State Technical Assistance Team – 2015 Investigating Child Fatalities Training (May – July 2015)

In 2015, the Missouri State Technical Assistance Team (STAT) submitted a grant request for CJA funding to support training designed to assist multi-disciplinary teams in the investigation of child abuse and neglect cases, most specifically, child fatalities. Consistent with recommendations of the Task Force and with the Children’s Division Five-Year Plan 2015-2019, to improve training for Children’s Division staff and multi-disciplinary team members responsible for investigating child abuse and neglect and child fatalities, the Task Force approved funding for this training. A total of five trainings will be held regionally to provide the best opportunity for statewide participation. STAT expects to be able to accommodate at least 60 multi-disciplinary participants at each location. CJA funding will allow participants to attend these trainings at no cost.

Total \$4,220.00

The Missouri Juvenile Justice Association (MJJA) Spring Educational Conference (May 27-29, 2015)

In 2015, the Missouri Juvenile Justice Association submitted a grant request for CJA funding to support training for multi-disciplinary team members to attend the spring conference. The Task Force voted to approve funding scholarships for 20 individuals from varying professional disciplines involved in the investigation of child abuse and neglect and juvenile justice. Scholarship recipients will be required to attend workshops related to child abuse and neglect, specifically, “Questions and Answers from a Multi-disciplinary Team” and “Prosecution of 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 to achieve more thorough and successful investigations. The conference is also designed to bring multi-disciplinary team members together to strengthen and foster better multi-disciplinary relations and creating the opportunity to improve the coordinated effort to investigate and prosecute child abuse and neglect.

Sessions offered will be:

- *Questions and Answers from a Multi-disciplinary Team*
- *Prosecution of Child Abuse and Neglect*
- *An Introduction to Using the Five Domains of Wellbeing in Assessment*
- *Creating a Trauma Informed Culture*
- *2015 Legislative Review*
- *Viewing Behavior from a Trauma Informed Lense*

Total \$8,700.00

2015 Projected Grant Expenditures - \$301,230.50 before receiving any additional grant requests