

# State Advisory Council Meeting

April 22, 2022 – Hybrid Meeting (Zoom and In-person)

In-person location: 111 No. Jackson, (Arcade Building) - Fifth Floor Conference Room

**Members Present In-person:** Edith Clark, Dana Toole, April Sommers, Rochelle Beley, Brenda Schye

**Members Present Through Zoom:** Marci Buckles, Greg Daly, Caitlyn, Stewart, Kaci Gaub, Megan Bailey, Serena Wright, Christy Hendricks, Julie Fleck, Valerie Winfield

**CFSD Representatives Present:** Laura McCullough, Effie Benoit, Mick Leary, Lynne Johnston, Theresa Becker, Jennifer Hoerauf,

**Absent:** Eric Barnosky, Jennifer Blodgett, Courtney Callaghan, Deb Cole, Nikki Grossberg, Sahrita Jones-Jesse, Carrie Krepps, Julie Burk, Ken Holmlund, Lisa Evers, Mercedes Oxford Kemp, Randall Spaulding, Sean Schoenfelder, Trudi Schmidt

**Guest:** Ben Davis, Friends of the Children

## **8:30 – 8:50am**      **Welcome, Introductions and Approve Minutes**

Everyone introduced themselves. Rochelle Beley will take over as chairman.

## **8:50 – 9:10am**      **Budget by Effie Benoit**

- Over the last quarter the number of children in care has dropped by 150 to 2,942 children. This is a 4.85% decrease since December of 2021.
- When comparing the annual average number of children in care through March of 2021 to March of 2022, we are averaging 268 fewer children in care which is a decrease of 7.98%.
- The IV-E Saturation Rate has increased .88% in the last quarter from 29.35% to 30.23%.
- We are projecting the cost to fund Foster Care to be about \$30.5 Million this year and we are appropriated about \$24.7 Million. The foster care projection increased by \$1.8 Million since we were together in December primarily due to an increased projection in General funds.
- To fund the adoption program, there is about \$24 Million in appropriations for fiscal year 2022 and projecting to spend about \$22.3 Million. There is a slight increase in adoption projection by \$100,000 since last December.
- This fiscal year the Guardianship program has appropriated about \$8 million and are projecting to spend about \$7.3 million. This is a decreased projection of \$37,000 since December, primarily from Federal Funds.
- For CFSD positions, there is currently 68 vacant positions. Of the 68, 40 of those are CPS workers, 5 CPS Supervisor, 7 Central Intake Workers and all of our Central Intake Supervisor positions are filled.
- Looking at CFSD as a whole, this fiscal year, we are appropriated at \$116 million dollars and are projecting to spend right around \$107 million.
- We are projecting to spend just a little under our appropriations in each funding source with the state general fund at 52% and our federal dollars at 47% of our total funding sources.
- We have the Cares Act under the COVID Relief funding that expired September 30, 2021.

- For the Consolidated Appropriations Act, we have distributed all but \$128,000 of the Chafee Education and Training Voucher funds and not quite half of the Chafee Transition to Adulthood funds. We have until September of 2022 to identify eligible youth and offer financial assistance to them.
- The Domestic Violence program has received three distributions from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) which we are just starting to allocate.
- CAPTA also received \$310,000 in ARPA funding that we have not started spending yet.
- We have until 2025 to spend all of the ARPA funds.

Mick reported that the reason why there are less children in care is:

- Kids are going out to adoption sooner
- Getting kids to permanency

Effie was asked to send out the power point presentation and the one page condensed version to everyone. Effie will have Lynne Johnston send these out.

**9:10-9:30am CAPTA and CJA Budget by Mick Leary**

Mick said there are two grant budgets that need to be approved – CAPTA and CJA. The one change is in the **Basic State Child Abuse and Neglect Grant, CAPTA Title 1 2021 Budget Proposal Summary/Narrative**

<b>FFY 2021 CAPTA/Basic State Grant Budget</b>	<b>FFY 2021 Projected Grant Award = \$317,137</b>
Cultural Awareness Conference	\$30,000
Supervisory Training and Development	\$45,000
Montana Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect Conference (CAN)	\$80,000
Print Materials	\$6,137
Citizen Review Meetings	\$6,000
University of Montana Supervisor Training/Leadership Academy	\$136,000
Indirect (estimate)	\$14,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$317,137</b>

**Application for Proposed Activities for 2022-2023**

**B. Proposed Line-Item Budget**

**1. Proposed Line-Item Budget for 2022-2023 (Activities funded July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023)**

<b>Administrative Indirect Expenses (i.e. Grant Manager travel and per diem expenses)</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>
<b>CJA Task Force Meeting Costs</b>	<b>\$4,200.00</b>
<b>Montana Child Abuse and Neglect Conference</b>	<b>\$15,200.00</b>
<b>Forensic Interviewing Training</b>	<b>\$20,000.00</b>
<b>Qualified Expert Witness Training</b>	<b>\$4,000.00</b>
<b>Public Disclosure on Child Fatalities</b>	<b>\$7,482.00</b>
<b>Children’s Alliance of Montana</b>	<b>\$25,500.00</b>
<b>Mini-Grants</b>	<b>\$15,000.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$94,382.00</b>

Question:

Megan Bailey would like a list of what trainings are offered so it could be submitted to the tribes so they can be linked back to those opportunities. Therapists across the state would love these trainings.

Answer:

Mick will get with Ike Jessee, training officer. There used to be a six month calendar that the State would create and would list the trainings coming up which would be shared. Mick will check on getting this system back into operation.

Edith Clark moved that the CAPTA and CJA budgets be approved and that the people on zoom be contacted with their results for a unanimous approval. All were in favor. None opposed. Lynne will send out emails to all SAC members requesting their votes

The following people from in person and zoom officially approved the CAPTA and CJA budgets as presented: April Sommers, Brenda Schye, Dana Toole, Edith Clark, Julie Burk, Julie Fleck, Ken Holmlund, Megan Bailey, Rochelle Beley, Trudi Schmidt. This makes ten SAC members which is a quorum on approving the CAPTA and CJA budgets.

**9:30-10:00am**

**Friends of the Children by Ben Davis, Executive Director**

The Friends of the Children's vision is that one day, every child in Montana who is at highest risk of serious childhood adversity, such as foster care or homelessness, will have a Friend - a long term, professional mentor who stays with them from pre-school through high school graduation, 12+ years - no matter what.

Friends of the Children is breaking generational cycles of poverty in 25 locations across the US and in the UK. Our model uses trauma-informed strategies to bolster the health and well-being of children. Our two-generation ("2Gen") approach improves family stability and strengthens outcomes for both children and caregivers.

The COVID-19 pandemic and steps taken to address it have created stressful conditions for families. Most systems - child welfare, education, behavioral health - are struggling to meet the economic, educational and behavioral health needs of children and caregivers. Though Montanans are strong and self-sufficient people, depression, anxiety, suicide and substance use are significant issues that impact a disproportionate number of children and families in our state. Montana children are victims of abuse or neglect at a rate of nearly twice the national average. We rank among the bottom 10 states in childhood adversity. One out of every six children in Montana don't know where their next meal will come from.

Friends of the Children has a proven track record of mitigating trauma and improving access to needed supports for youth and caregivers. When families can safely heal together, the long-term effects of trauma on children are reduced.

The Friends of the Children model is increasingly being sought out by communities, foster care and behavioral health systems across the country as a prevention and intervention strategy. For over 28 years, our model has been getting results for youth who have experienced complex trauma, like foster care.

- 92% of youth go on to enroll in post-secondary education, serve our country or enter the workforce.
- 83% of youth with a Friend graduate high school, while only 55% without a Friend graduate high school.
- 93% of youth with a Friend avoid the juvenile justice system, compared to 63% avoiding juvenile justice without a Friend.

- 98% of youth with a Friend avoid early parenting.
- 88% of Caregivers say their Friend helps their child's behavior improve.
- making their home a more positive place.
- 92% say their Friend connects them to concrete supports that enrich and stabilize their family.

Friends of the Children is a voluntary service. We commit to each child and their caregivers for 12+ years - no matter what. Once enrolled, children receive 1:1 support from a Friend. Each Friend works with 8 children, spending 3-4 hours each week with them in school, at home and in the community. Friends individualize their supports to each child, listening to their hopes and dreams and supporting them to create personal road map goals focused on intermediate outcomes such as school success, healthy choices, and plans and skills for the future.

Friends of the Children partners with local community leaders to leverage the expertise of leading practitioners and understand the work already happening, learn from their experiences, and support collaborative efforts to address the community's distinct needs. Friends in Montana has developed working relationships with leaders in education, social services, business, and government, focusing first in the Western Region.

Friends of the Children are:

- Building positive parent/child relationships by supporting parents to understand their child’s needs and strengths.
- Strengthening parenting skills by equipping parents with social and emotional learning skills
- Empowering youth and family voice by promoting self-advocacy through understanding of an advocacy within complex systems such as education and child welfare.
- Improving family stability by connecting families to concrete supports, like housing and education/employment pathways.
- Building social capital by creating opportunities for culturally-responsive community and peer-to-peer connections.

The Outcomes for Foster-Involved Children reduced time in care by 6 months on the average. The rates of return to care are greatly decreased. Long-term outcomes are similar to youths not in care.

Ben Davis concluded his Friends of the Children presentation.

**9:40-10:10am**

**Review of Bylaws, CAPTA and CJA – Mick Leary**

<b>Task Force Membership Designation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>	
Prosecuting Attorney				Currently Vacant?
Attorney for Children				Currently Vacant?
Adult Former Victim of Child				Currently Vacant?

Abuse and Neglect				
?Montana Children's Trust	Josh Kendrich	CTF Manager	DPHHS	Need to appoint. Newly hired.
Law Enforcement	Officer Brandon Wootan	Law Enforcement	Helena Police Dept.	
Law Enforcement	Dana Toole	Bureau Chief	Department of Justice	
Criminal Court Judge	E. Wayne Phillips	Retired Judge	Retired Criminal Court Judge	Resigned from SAC?
Civil Court Judge	Randall Spaulding	Retired District 13 Judge	Retired District 13 Judge	
Defense Attorney	Randy Schwickert	Attorney	Attorney from Whitefish, Montana	
Court Appointed Special Advocate	April Sommers	Executive Director	Montana CASA/GAL Assoc.	
Health Professional	Greg Daly	Health Professional	Pure View Public Health	
Mental Health Professional	Rochelle Beley	Mental Health Therapist	Therapist	
Mental Health Professional	Julie Fleck	Executive Director	Sunburst Mental Health Clinics, Family Concepts	
Child Protective Services	Nikki Grossberg	Acting Division Administrator	CFSD	
Individual Experienced in Working with Children with Disabilities	Brenda Schye	Chairperson	Eastern Region, Hi-Line Advisory Council/Chairperson	
Parents and Representatives of Parents Groups	Carrie Krepps	Executive Director	Florence Crittenton	
Court Improvement Coordinator	Julie Burk	Court Improvement Coordinator	Court Administrator	
State Legislator	Ken Holmund	Legislator	Montana Legislature	
Former Legislator	Trudi Schmidt	Former Legislator, Child Advocate	Montana Legislature	
Individual Experienced in Working with Homeless Children	Christy Hendricks	Title 1 Coordinator	OPI	

Mick Leary presented the Montana Task Force Membership list and will email the updated version out to everyone. Mick wants everyone to take a look at this list to make sure it is current and we can move forward. Wayne Phillips and Randy Schwickert have resigned from the SAC. If anyone sees something that should be changed let Nikki know so it can be updated. There was general discussion among the members about this list. We have a new program in the Chafee program we are trying to get to the advisory board. As we start to look at establishing the local advisory councils, our goal is that if you are on this council, you will also participate in your local council. Mick asked everyone to also look over the Local Advisory Council meeting schedule that Nikki sent out. Members can work with the Regional Administrators and Nikki on any ideas.

Question: Megan Bailey was recently talking with Leonard Smith of Native American Corporation. They are working with ICWA courts in Billings. There are a number of Native children in care in urban areas. She would like to connect Leonard or some other representative with Mick to see if we can get more Native American representation because so many of the Native American kids are in care. Mick would love to get started on this type of project. The MT Task Force list is for the CJA.

### **10:10-11:15am**      **Discussion All**

Rochelle Beley, Brenda Schye and Nikki met to figure out a way to make this council have a better purpose in order to meet federal guidelines. Rochelle asked Brenda Schye to summarize what she found out and how we could come up with more ideas so we can fulfill SAC's purpose.

- Zoom is a great concept so people do not have to travel but at some level there has to be some face-to-face contact in order to connect.
- One thing that came up was orientation for council members.
- Are we satisfied with accomplishing our objectives and goals?
- Orientation, information sharing and training kept coming up again and again.
- We need to review the makeup of a council and who they represent.
- There needs to be continuity and have issues continuously updated.
- Having a shared drive to reduce paper flow.
- How can the council help the State in order to advocate.

Mick said the board can decide how it can work to be more productive. Brenda asked where the legislative piece is right now. She understood that it is the council's role. However, is there going to be someone who will do that. Mick said we are trying to figure out what is going to be proposed from the executive branch such as legislative changes and EPP Process. We need to figure some of these issues. Brenda thought the advisory council could have a subcommittee on legislative issues in order to track and advocate issues.

Ideas:

- Send an email so members can choose which subcommittee they would like to be assigned to
- Mick suggested that a calendar be set up so issues are handled in a timely manner
- Create an Orientation/Ongoing manual
- Who should send out emails?
- Mick suggested that there should be five people assigned to a subcommittee
- Not all input has to come from council members
- What is the strategic plan for the council?

- Greg Daly asked, In terms of advocating for the department workers and understanding what they do, didn't Marti Vining have an initiative of traveling the state with an education outreach to make people aware of what was going on day to day with department. Mick said yes there was. If there are remnants left can this be started up again for an education model and an internal support. It was called Core Training.
- Regional and CASA reports

Subcommittees needed:

- Strategic Planning
- Orientation and Recruitment (What is the purpose of this board)
- Legislative issues

Mick will meet with Nikki to figure out the subcommittee details and get back to the council. The MT Task list needs to be updated and distributed to council members. A column will be added for their location. The State Advisory Council used to be held around the state and not limited to Helena and would draw in more people. Can something be figured out what options would be available for them to have a meeting.

**11:15-11:25am**      **Public Comment**  
none

**11:25-11:30am**      **Wrap Up/Next Meeting: Chair-Elect Rochelle Beley**  
Rochelle Beley ended the meeting at 11:10am. The next meeting date will be announced which should be July 21 or 22, 2022 and should be in-person. The next meeting will include longevity recognition. Can the parking arrangement issue for attending the next meeting be resolved. Mick said he will remind Nikki about this. All travel expense vouchers should be given to Lynne on the first floor.