

Washington State
Department of Children, Youth & Families
CHILDREN'S JUSTICE TASK FORCE

-- OPERATING PRINCIPLES --

I. Introduction

The Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) developed these operating principles to guide the role, function, and actions of Children's *Justice Task Force* to carry out its mission as defined below. This document will be maintained and updated by the Grant Manager (an employee of DCYF), who is responsible for administering the *Children's Justice Act Grant* funds allocated to the State of Washington. The CJTF members are welcome to make recommendations for changes to the document that will go to the Grant Manager for consideration via the co-chairs.

II. Mission, Roles & Responsibilities

This section outlines the mission of the CJTF along with the roles and responsibilities of each party involved in fulfilling the mission.

A. Mission

The purpose of the CJTF is, (1) to serve as an advisory group to help improve and promote the safety and protection of children through a comprehensive review and evaluation of law and policy every three years, and, (2) to make training and policy recommendations to DCYF in the categories governed by Children's Justice Act.

This mission requires a spirit of collaboration and a positive working relationship between DCYF and the CJTF. As such, each party in the collaboration has a specific role to play to fulfill the mission. The CJTF and DCYF respective roles are:

B. Roles

1. To fulfill the CJTF mission:

a. At three-year intervals:

i. Comprehensively review and evaluate State investigative, administrative and both civil and criminal judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal.

ii. Make policy, training and funding recommendations with regard to the following areas:

(a) Investigative, administrative and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities and cases involving potential combination of jurisdictions, such as interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, in a manner which reduces the additional trauma to the child victim and the victim's family and also ensures procedural fairness to the accused;

(b) Experimental, model, and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques which may improve the prompt and successful resolution of civil and criminal court proceedings, or enhance the effectiveness of judicial and administrative action in child abuse and exploitation cases, including the enhancement of performance of court-appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem for children, and also ensure procedural fairness to the accused; and

(c) Reform of State laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children from abuse, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring fairness to all affected persons.

iii. Make comments and recommendations relevant to its advisory role, as requested by DCYF.

b. Serve in an advisory capacity to assist DCYF with regard to the implementation of the recommendations in the areas outlined in section II.B.1.a.

2. To fulfill the CJTF mission, the role of DCYF is to:

a. Administer the CJAG and assign the function of Grant Manager to a position within the DCYF staff.

b. Make the final determination of grant funding allocation, based on recommendations it receives from the CJTF.

C. Responsibilities

1. **Task Force members:**

a. Act with regard for the well-being and welfare of children and youth.

b. Contribute to the review and evaluation process in his/her specific area of expertise.

c. Understand and accept all terms and conditions specified in the appointment letter issued to each member upon his/her appointment to the task force.

d. Adhere to state confidentiality requirements of RCW 74.04.060.

e. Regularly attend and fully participate in all scheduled meetings and the assigned committee.

2. Grant Manager:

a. Administer the CJAG funds.

b. Serve as contract administrator on CJAG funded projects.

c. Provide advice, guidance, technical assistance, and information regarding the expected role and function of the CJTF as mandated by the requirements of the CJAG.

d. Attend all CJTF and Standing Committee meetings.

e. Keep CJTF members apprised of the meeting schedules and distribute minutes and other pertinent mailings necessary for Task Force members to fulfill their responsibilities.

f. Act as liaison between CJTF and the Assistant Secretary of DCYF to facilitate communication.

g. Present annual report to task force members regarding the status of CJAG funds available for allocation to future projects.

III. Membership

This section addresses how membership of the CJTF is established and maintained. It defines the process for appointment and resignation of members to the Task Force as well as the composition and term of CJTF membership.

A. Appointment

1. The Assistant Secretary of DCYF, or his/her designee, appoints new members to the CJTF from relevant federal, state and county associations, coalitions, or professional organizations.

2. The new member shall receive a copy of these Operating Principles, the latest review and evaluation, and an appointment letter outlining expectations upon acceptance of his/her appointment. New members should be responsive to assigned roles and responsibilities.

B. Term

CJTF members shall serve a three-year term. The DCYF assistant secretary, or his/her designee, can consider additional terms on a case-by-case basis, as determined by the composition and needs of the Task Force at that time. If an appointment fills a vacancy where a term of office has not expired, time served pursuant to the uncompleted term shall not apply toward the newly appointed task force member's term.

C. Resignation

Members should submit resignations in writing via the Grant Manager, to the Assistant Secretary of DCYF, or his/her designee. When possible, resignations should allow at least thirty days prior to the effective date of the resignation.

D. Composition

1. The CJTF shall be composed of representatives of the disciplines specified in Section 109 (c)(1) of the CJAG, and consist of at least 14, but not more than 30 members, including chairpersons and advisory members.

2. Membership shall be reflective of the state's geographic and cultural/ethnic diversity. The CJTF Nominations/Membership Committee will review the composition of the membership on at least an annual basis. The membership committee will be responsible for soliciting nominations for Task Force vacancies, and shall facilitate the applicant's nomination and evaluation of qualifications.

E. Advisory Members

The Task Force may include advisory members, whose purpose would be to provide guidance and expertise to the Task Force. The advisory members' terms will have no expiration and meeting attendance is not required. An advisory member may serve as the representative of a discipline specified in Section 109 (c) (1) of the CJAG, if approved by the Membership committee and the full Task Force.

IV. Leadership and Standing Committees

The CJTF will perform business under the leadership of the Grant Manager and the Executive Committee. Three standing committees plus a committee of the whole comprises membership. This section outlines the selection process and membership, duties, term and any special guidelines for each leadership role and all standing committees.

A. Grant Manager

1. Selection Process – The Assistant Secretary of DCYF designates the Grant Manager as an assigned duty of the position of Program Manager.

2. Duties – The Grant Manager guides and oversees activities of the Task Force pursuant to the requirements of the CJAG, and acts as liaison between the Task Force leadership and the Assistant Secretary of DCYF, and submits all recommendations from the Task Force in its capacity as an advisory body to DCYF, and informs the Task Force of final decisions made by the Department regarding its recommendations.

3. Term – The term of the Grant Manager is at the discretion of the Assistant Secretary of DCYF.

B. CJTF Co-chairs

1. Selection Process – The CJTF nominates candidates from its membership each year to serve as one of the co-chairs. There is one experienced member remaining when a new co-chair begins his/her term. Individuals selected represent the diversity of the state, therefore selecting an individual from East and West. Nominations for co-chair will take place at the commencement of the June business meeting each calendar year and the Administrative Assistant will conduct by e-mail.

2. Duties – The co-chairs act as a liaison between the Grant Manager and the Task Force members. The co-chairs work with the chairs of the standing committees and members to consolidate input of members into a single set of recommendations from the Task Force to DCYF. The co-chairs shall preside at the CJTF meetings and perform duties as appropriate to the mission of the CJTF.

3. Term – The co-chairs term of office shall commence at the September CJTF business meeting of the calendar year and continue for two years. Co-chairs may not serve consecutive terms, but are eligible for future terms.

4. Other Considerations

a. Office Vacancy – In the event a co-chair vacancy occurs, nominations for candidates will take place at the next regularly scheduled CJTF meeting, then submitted to the Task Force for the selection of the co-chair replacement.

b. Substitutions – In the absence of both co-chairs, the executive committee shall designate one of its members present to chair the CJTF meeting.

C. Executive Committee

1. Membership – The Executive Committee shall consist of the Grant Manager, the CJTF Co-chairs, the immediate past CJTF Co-chairs (if still CJTF member), and Standing Committee chairs as described in the Standing Committee section of this document below.

2. Duties – The Executive Committee represents the interests of the Task Force and acts as the key communication channel for CJTF recommendations to DCYF.

3. Term – Length of membership on the Executive Committee corresponds to one's position in any of the designated roles assigned to the Executive Committee.

D. Standing Committees

1. Shall include:
 - a. Review and Evaluation Committee
 - b. Grants and Projects Committee
 - c. Nomination/Membership Committee
 - d. Conference Planning Committee

2. Membership – The Executive Committee shall make committee appointments after requesting volunteers and soliciting recommendations. The Review & Evaluation Committee must be composed of Task Force members representing the federally mandated disciplines. Standing Committee member terms shall be for two years, beginning at the June meeting of the CJTF.

3. Leadership – The co-chairs' shall appoint the chairs' and assistant chairs' of all standing committees and their term shall be for two years.

4. Duties

a. Review & Evaluation Committee – Will draw from the expertise of members representing the federally mandated disciplines to comprehensively review and evaluate State investigative, administrative, and both civil and criminal judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities, and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as interstate, Federal-State and State-Tribal.

Also addressed by the committee will be the handling of cases involving children with disabilities or serious health issues, who are the victims of child abuse and neglect, and legal and ethical issues as they relate to the grant purpose, and to the work of the Task Force. This review and evaluation shall be an on-going focus of the committee's work, and documentation of recommended priority areas for training and policy improvement shall occur every three years. The Grant Manager will present these recommendations to the assistant secretary for action. The review and evaluation committee will assist the Grants and Projects Committee in insuring that grant proposals comply with the CAPTA grant requirements.

The Review and Evaluation committee will be responsible for drafting and proposing changes to the operating principles, pursuant to the procedure defined at section V, C (1) and (2) of these Operating Principles.

b. Grants & Projects Committee – Summarizes project selection for the full task force to consider for projects to be funded by the CJAG consistent with the grant purpose. Ensures that the full task force is consulted and fully participating in the project selection process.

c. Nomination/Membership Committee – Assists DCYF to ensure that the CJTF representation is reflective of the state's diversity and has adequate representation of the federally mandated categories, in order to fulfill the grant requirements. The membership committee monitors meeting attendance and participation of the members. The committee will facilitate the nomination of new members, including reviewing the applicant's qualifications.

d. Conference Planning Committee – assists with planning and decision making with regard to the annual Children's Justice Conference. This committee approves speakers, topics, the venue, and assists DCYF and the event planner. The committee will ensure the Conference Planning and spending encompasses the direction of the task force and is in alignment with the Federal Grant requirements.

V. Task Force Business

The CJTF will conduct business through convening meetings and voting to reach decisions on recommendations or other business actions. This section outlines the principles for these methods of carrying out the assigned role of the Task Force.

A. Meetings

1. CJTF meetings will occur on a quarterly basis during the months of January, April, June, and September.
2. The Grant Manager, in consultation with the Executive Committee, may schedule special meetings.
3. The Executive Committee sets the agenda for the regular and special meetings.
4. The Grant Manager shall document in minutes all quarterly and special CJTF meetings, including any major decisions, action items, recommendations from the CJTF to DCYF, and responses from DCYF regarding recommendations previously submitted.
5. Upon their approval by a majority of a quorum vote at the next quarterly CJTF meetings, the CJTF minutes will be made a permanent record and maintained by the Grant Manager.
6. Standing committees shall present meeting notes and reports at the quarterly CJTF meetings. The reports shall provide sufficient detail to inform members of the committee's activities, discussions and decisions, and recorded by the Grant Manager in the CJTF meeting minutes.

B. Voting

1. Each member of the CJTF shall have one vote and must be present to cast his/her vote except the election of the co-chairs and these Operating Principles may be conducted by e-mail as provided in section IV B 1 and V C 1 of these Operating Principles. No proxies accepted.
2. The Task Force will use Robert's Rules of Order, New Edition for decisions requiring a vote of the Task Force, unless such rules are suspended, or provided for by these Operating Principles.
3. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of no less than one-third of the appointed CJTF members. The members in attendance at a meeting where a quorum is not present, may elect (by majority vote), to proceed with the business of the meeting subject to ratification when a quorum is present at the next meeting.
4. Pursuant to chapter 42.52 RCW, any member who directly or individually may benefit from a contract application before the CJTF, shall abstain from discussion and voting on the matter.

5. Any member with a conflict of interest in an issue being considered by the CJTF, shall make a declaration to that effect and abstain from further discussion and voting on that issue.
6. The co-chairs shall have the same voting rights as other members of the CJTF.
7. Any item voted on by the Task Force and submitted as a recommendation to DCYF is subject to acceptance or rejection by the Assistant Secretary or his/her designee.
8. Advisory members are not eligible to vote.

C. Operating Principles

1. The Review and Evaluation Committee will prepare proposed changes to the Operating Principles and distribute to the full Task Force no later than 30 days prior to the next regularly scheduled quarterly meeting. A quorum for voting on the principles shall consist of no less than one third of the appointed CJTF members. Members may vote in advance of the meeting, by e-mail, if unable to attend. If a quorum is not present (including the e-mailed votes), the Task Force may elect, by majority vote of those present, to proceed with consideration and voting on the proposed changes, subject to ratification by a quorum at a future meeting or by e-mailed votes.
2. The Task Force will review the Operating Principles every three years on the same schedule as the review and evaluation to ensure they are effective and up to date. The CJTF will allow changes before this time if deemed necessary.