Bylaws of the

South Carolina
Children's Justice Act Task Force

Article I
Name

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the South Carolina Children's Justice Act Task Force, hereinafter referred to as the Task Force.

Article II
Statutory Basis

Section 1. The Task Force is established in accordance with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (codified at 42 USC 5106c) which authorizes grants to states to develop, establish, and operate programs designed to improve: (A) the handling of child abuse and neglect cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner which limits additional trauma to the child victim; (B) the handling of cases of suspected child abuse or neglect related fatalities; (C) the investigation and prosecution of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation; and (D) the handling of cases of children with disabilities and/or serious health problems who also are victims of abuse and neglect.

Section 2. Children's Justice Act grants shall be used to implement Task Force recommendations in the following three categories: (A) Assessment and Investigation of cases of child abuse and neglect: 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 a 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 which also ensures procedural fairness to the accused; (B) Innovative approaches: 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 neglect cases, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation cases, including the enhancement of performance of court-appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem for children, and which also ensure procedural fairness to the accused; and (C) Process improvement: reform of state laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children from abuse, particularly sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring fairness to all affected persons.

Article III
Purpose and Activities

Section 1. At three-year intervals, the Task Force shall conduct an assessment of the state's systems responding to abused and neglected children. In this process, the Task Force may consider information obtained through a variety of sources, such as formal assessments, questionnaires, opinions of experts, reports and recommendations from other organizations, and the professional experiences and judgment of Task Force members.

Section 2. Based on its three-year assessment, the Task Force shall adopt recommendations in each of the categories described in Article II, Section 2, and shall work towards their implementation.

Section 3. The Task Force shall recommend to the state's grantee (the South Carolina Department of Social Services) projects to be supported by Children's Justice Act grant funds.

Section 4. The Task Force may support legislation consistent with its mission or recommendations or take positions on other state policy issues. In order to take an advocacy position on a legislative or policy issue, the matter must be presented to and approved by the Task Force as a whole. Individual committees cannot establish positions on behalf of the Task Force.

Section 5. Notwithstanding Section 4, the officers and committee chairpersons can function as an executive committee to establish a position on legislative issues when timely action is necessary, provided that all Task Force members have been notified of the possible action by electronic or other means and afforded an opportunity to comment.

Article IV
Membership

Section 1. General election of members and officers shall be held every three years, in the last quarter of the final calendar year prior to a three-year assessment. Membership shall commence on the first day of the following calendar year, prior to the start of the CJA three-year cycle which begins in May.

Section 2. Current members may present proposed new members to the Nominating Committee for consideration. The Nominating Committee will prepare a slate to reflect the appropriate composition of the Task Force, obtain the commitment of nominees, and provide biographical summaries. Nominations must be distributed to members at least ten (10) days in advance. Members are elected by majority vote of Task Force members present and voting at a duly announced meeting.

Section 3. Membership must be multi-disciplinary, in accordance with federal statutory requirements. General membership must comprise at least one slot for each of the following

disciplines: law enforcement community, criminal court judge, family court judge, prosecuting attorney, defense attorney, child advocate (attorney for children), Court Appointed Special Advocate/volunteer guardian ad litem (including a representative of the state guardian ad litem program), health professional, mental health professional, child protective service agency, individual experienced in working with children with disabilities, parent and representative of parent group, adult former victim of child abuse and/or neglect, and individuals experienced in working with homeless children and youths. Up to six at-large members may be added to maintain appropriate diversity on the Task Force. Designated agency members shall include the Director or Director's designee of Court Administration, the Director or Director's designee of the S.C. Network of Children's Advocacy Centers, the Director or Director's designee of the S.C. Department of Social Services, and the Director or Director's designee of the S.C. Department of Children's Advocacy.

Section 4. Members are elected for a period of three years and may be re-elected. Members must attend at least fifty percent of regularly scheduled meetings each calendar year to retain their membership. This requirement may be waived by the Chair for members who notify the Chair that they cannot attend due to extenuating circumstances but are otherwise participating.

Section 5. Membership on the Task Force lies with the individual, provided the individual remains in a capacity to represent the designated discipline.

Section 6. Total membership shall not exceed forty (40).

Article V
Resignations and Filling Unexpired Terms

Section 1. Noncompliance with attendance requirements constitutes a vacancy.

Section 2. Vacancies which occur between general elections shall be filled if necessary to maintain representation on the Task Force by appointment of the Chair with approval by majority vote of members present and voting. Members appointed to fill a vacancy shall fill the remainder of the term, at which time they may be elected to a full term if eligible.

Article VI
Officers

Section 1. Officers of the Task Force shall consist of a Chair and Vice-Chair.

Section 2. The Chair of the Task Force shall perform the duties ordinarily ascribed to such office and shall preside at all meetings of the Task Force, approve the written agenda for meetings, appoint new members to fill vacancies as needed, and, along with the Vice-Chair, determine the focus of standing committees.

Section 3. The Vice-Chair of the Task Force shall preside at meetings in the absence of the Chair and perform other duties as may be assigned by the Chair or be necessary in the event

of a temporary absence of the Chair. The Vice –Chair shall assist the Chair in determining the focus of standing committees.

Section 4. Officers are elected for a three-year calendar period upon majority vote of Task Force members present and voting and may be elected for a second three-year term to the same office, but not consecutively.

Article VII
Committees

Section 1. Standing committees shall be formed at three-year intervals to coincide with adoption of Task Force recommendations. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall determine the number of committees needed and the focus of each with advice/input from a duly appointed advisory committee.

Section 2. Each standing committee shall elect its own chairperson, and all Task Force members are expected to serve on committees as needed.

Section 3. Committee Chairpersons shall preside over the committee meetings and report on the committee's work to the Task Force.

Section 4. Standing committees will work to operationalize designated Task Force recommendations, undertaking the specific tasks necessary and making contacts with other organizations as needed to accomplish recommendations.

Section 5. Standing committees may make recommendations regarding legislative positions or other policy considerations for vote of the Task Force as a whole.

Section 6. Standing committees shall meet in person at least quarterly, or more frequently if necessary and are encouraged to communicate via electronic or other means in between.

Section 7. Committee chairpersons and two at-large members appointed by the chair shall serve as a nominating committee to propose a slate of officers and new members for election.

Article VIII
Meetings

Section 1. The Task Force shall meet quarterly, with additional meetings called by the Chair if necessary.

Section 2. The Task Force may adopt a position, plan action, or amend a recommendation upon a majority vote of members present at a duly announced meeting, provided that a written agenda has been distributed to all members at least a week in advance. Although additional items may arise for discussion at a meeting, no final action shall be taken without written notice to all members.

Section 3. A majority of Task Force members must be present at a meeting to constitute a quorum.

Section 4. Members must be present to vote on matters under consideration by the Task Force. At the discretion of the Task Force Chair, matters may be voted upon by e-mail/electronic ballot when necessary. Only duly elected Task Force members are permitted to vote.

Section 5. Task Force meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order unless otherwise specified by these bylaws. Non-task force members are not entitled to attend regularly scheduled CJA meetings. This applies to in person and internet-based meetings. In consultation with the Chair, exceptions may be made by the Task Force Coordinator for guest speakers.

Article IX
Staff Support

Section 1. A recipient of Children's Justice Act grant funds shall be designated to provide staff support necessary to the work of the Task Force. The CJA Coordinator shall coordinate all information received and distributed by the Task Force and will administer and implement activities evolving from the recommendations of the Task Force. Additionally, Children's Law Center staff will be assigned to each of the three committees to join quarterly meetings and act as a liaison between the task force and the CJA Coordinator.

Article X
Amendments

Section 1. These bylaws may be amended upon majority vote of the membership at a duly announced meeting, provided that proposed amendments are distributed to members at least ten days in advance.

Adopted October 30, 1998
Revised September 13, 2002
Revised December 2, 2005
Revised January 19, 2007
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