

Governor's Task Force on Justice For Abused Children

BYLAWS (Revised September 2018)

Article 1

Name

Section 1. Name

The name of this organization shall be the Governor's Task Force on Justice For Abused Children, to be referred to as GTFJAC.

Section 2. Chairpersons

The chairpersons of the GTFJAC shall be the Commissioner of the Department of Children, Families, the Chief State's Attorney and the Chapter Director of the Connecticut Children's Alliance, or their designee.

Article II

Purpose

The Governor's Task Force on Justice For Abused Children is established in accordance with the Children's Justice Act to advise the Governor and the Department of Children and Families concerning the prevention, identification, investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse and neglect in Connecticut and the improvement of Connecticut's civil and criminal justice systems in their handling of child abuse and neglect. The specific goals of the Children's Justice Act are:

- (1) To improve the handling of child abuse cases, particularly child sexual abuse cases in a manner which limits additional trauma to the child victim;
- (2) To improve the handling of cases of suspected child abuse or neglect related fatalities; and
- (3) To improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Article III

Functions

The functions of the GTFJAC are as follows:

1. Develop, approve, and disseminate Connecticut's annual plan to improve service regarding child abuse and neglect. At three year intervals, to comprehensively review and evaluate 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 child maltreatment related fatalities and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as interstate, federal-state-and tribal-state, and make policy and training recommendations in each of 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 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) 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 experimental, model, and demonstration program n1S 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 court-appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem for children, and which also ensures procedural fairness to the accused; and

(C) Reform of state laws, ordinances, regulations, and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children from abuse, particularly sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring fairness to all affected persons,

2. Submit annually to the Governor and the legislature and every three years to the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, in accordance with Children's Justice Act requirements, recommendations with respect to matters related to its purpose.

3. Make final funding decisions on all grant applications for federal monies under the Children's Justice Act submitted to the Department of Children and Families.

4. Complete such other duties related to its purpose as initiated by the GTFJAC or as requested by the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families.

Article IV

Membership

Section 1. - Representation

The members of the GTFJAC shall be appointed and serve in accordance with the Children's Justice Act. Membership shall be composed of professionals with knowledge and experience relating to the criminal justice system and issues of child physical abuse, child neglect, child sexual abuse and exploitation, and child maltreatment related fatalities. The task force shall include but not be limited to:

- (A) individuals representing the law enforcement community;
- (B) judges and attorneys involved in both civil and criminal court proceedings related to child abuse and neglect (including individuals involved with the defense as well as the prosecution of such cases);
- (C) child advocates, including both attorneys for children and, where such programs are in operation, court appointed special advocates;
- (D) health and mental health professionals;
- (E) individuals representing child protective service agencies;
- (F) individuals experienced in working with children with disabilities;
- (G) parents;
- (H) representatives of parents' groups;
- (I) adult former victims of child abuse or neglect;
- (J) individuals experienced in working with homeless children and youths (as defined in section 11434a of this title) and;
- (K) Director of the Connecticut Children's Alliance

Section 2. Designee

Members of the GTFJAC may designate another individual to be a representative at the meetings. Written documentation of the name of the regular representative, signature of the member represented and the date of the signatures must be presented to the chairperson(s) or the staff of the GTFJAC. Written documentation can be in the form of a letter or an email from the member. If the above requirements are met, the designee shall be afforded all powers and privileges of a GTFJAC member.

Any future reference to member in these by-laws shall be understood to include designee, as outlined above.

Section 3. Duties

The members of the GTFJAC shall review materials and attend meetings to complete the business of the GTFJAC. Members are expected to serve on at least one subcommittee or workgroup, based on their background, interest and time commitment. Members are encouraged to resign if their schedules do not permit active participation on the GTFJAC, its subcommittees or workgroups. Members are expected to attend a minimum of two-thirds of the full task force meetings.

Section 4. Conflict of Interest

A) Members of the GTFJAC, or any committee, subcommittee or workgroup thereof, shall reveal their interest in and shall abstain from voting upon any proposal or project involving grant funds where, to their knowledge, they or a related person directly or indirectly may derive a monetary benefit from such proposal or project.

B) Where a proposal is on the agenda that would grant money or confer benefits upon an organization or department, public or voluntary, that employs a member or is a member of the GTFJAC, that member may participate fully in the general discussion thereon, but shall not be present for the vote on the motion to approve or disapprove any such proposal.

C) Where a proposal is on the agenda that would grant money or confer benefits upon an organization or department, public or voluntary, that has as a member, an officer, or a director of its governing board, or as one of its advisory committee members, a member of the GTFJAC, that member may participate fully in the general discussion thereon, but shall not be present for the vote on the motion to approve or disapprove any such proposal.

Article V

Meetings

Section 1. - Meetings

A) The chairpersons shall call meetings of the GTFJAC, at least four times annually. Notice of the time, place, and agenda shall be made available to members of the GTFJAC and to other interested persons not less than three days prior to the meeting. The chairpersons, or their designee, shall preside over the meetings. The GTFJAC may designate one meeting per year as the Annual Meeting.

Section 2. -Quorum

A majority of the members of the GTFJAC, or ten members of the GTFJAC, whichever is less, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at meetings. A quorum must be present in order to bring an issue to vote.

Section 3.- Voting

Each member of the task force shall be entitled to one vote. In the instance that a regular member and a designee are at a meeting, they shall only have one vote between them. In the case of a quorum, a majority of those with voting privileges in attendance will determine an issue.

Electronic voting will be allowed, in between full task force meetings, as authorized by the Chairs of the GTFJAC, their designees or the task force. When there is authorization of an electronic vote, at least 10 members must vote on the issue thus constituting a quorum. (as outlined in section 2)

Section 4. Parliamentary Rule

All matters of procedure not covered by the Bylaws shall be governed by parliamentary rules, as contained in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*. Only GTFJAC members, designees, and staff of the GTFJAC shall speak at meetings, although members may yield to guests for limited discussion of issues before the GTFJAC. Any individual, members or otherwise, must be acknowledged by the presiding officer before speaking.

Section 5. Agenda

The agenda of the GTFJAC shall be compiled from members' suggestions to the staff of the GTFJAC. The final agenda will be at the discretion of the chairs who will confer in advance. Items not on the agenda for a particular meeting shall be acted upon at that discretion of the chairs.

Agenda shall be distributed at least three days prior to the meeting.

Article VI Committees

Section 1. Committee Structure

The GTFJAC may create any number of committees, or workgroups as are necessary to carry out the purpose and functions of the GTFJAC. The chairpersons of all committees shall be appointed by the chairpersons of the GTFJAC with the consent of the members. Committee assignments, with the exception of the multidisciplinary committee (hereafter referred to as the MDT Evaluation Committee) shall be voluntary and based on the backgrounds of members, their interests and time commitments. Members of the MDT Evaluation Committee shall be appointed by the GTFJAC in accordance with C.G.S. 17a-106a (c). Members shall serve three-year terms at which point recommendations for re-appointment will be forwarded to GTFJAC. Individuals who are not members of the GTFJAC may serve as committee, subcommittee and workgroup members.

All committees shall have such powers and duties as delegated to them by the GTFJAC. All

committees shall be responsible for developing procedural guidelines for the functioning as well as for the interaction with the full task force. Committee reports and recommendations shall be advisory to the GTFJAC. Any person who is a chair of a standing committee is automatically a voting member on the Task Force.

Section 2. Committees and workgroups

A) The GTFJAC shall have two standing committees. These standing committees will include: MDT evaluation and Training. Any committee can create sub committees based upon the needs of the committee. The chairs of all sub committees shall be appointed by the committee chairs with the consent of the committee members.

Article VII Amendments to the Bylaws

These bylaws may be amended at any meeting by a majority vote of the members present, provided that any proposed amendment shall have been distributed to GTFJAC members not less than five days prior to the vote. The by-laws shall be reviewed at least every three years.