



## **Application**

**FFY 2019 - 2020**

**Children's Justice Act Grant to States**

**Under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act**

**Submitted by**

**State of Connecticut**

**Department of Children and Families**

**505 Hudson Street**

**Hartford, CT 06106**

**Vannessa L. Dorantes, Commissioner**

**Application**  
**FFY 2019 - 2020 Children's Justice Grant**  
**State of Connecticut**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Governor's Letter**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Contact Person/Agency/Address</b>	3
<b>Section I</b> Historical Context: Connecticut's Task Force Development	3
<b>Section II</b> Maintenance of a Task Force (Sections 107(b) (2) and 107 (c) (1))	3
<b>Section III</b> Program Performance Reporting: FFY 2018-2019 Three Year Assessment Recommendations Governor's Task Force Committees Other Governor's Task Force and Related Activities	17 18 25
<b>Section IV</b> Use of CJA Funds: FFY 2018-2019	39
<b>Section V</b> Areas of Continued Focus of the Governor's Task Force: FFY 2019-2020	40
<b>Section VI</b> Proposed Budget for CJA Funds: FFY 2019-2020	43

## **APPLICATION FOR FFY 2019-2020 CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT GRANT**

APPLICANT AGENCY: State of Connecticut  
Department of Children and Families (DCF)  
505 Hudson Street  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

CFDA # 93.643

CONTACT PERSON: Tammy Sneed, Director of Gender  
Responsive Adolescent Services

Department of Children and Families  
505 Hudson Street  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106  
(860) 550-6471 (office phone)  
(860) 462-4314 (cell phone)

[tammy.sneed@ct.gov](mailto:tammy.sneed@ct.gov)

EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 06-1438676

### **Section I: Historical Context: Connecticut's Task Force Development**

The Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children (GTFJAC, GTF, Task Force, or Governor's Task Force), first established in 1988, identified the need for greater coordination of agencies involved in the investigation, intervention, and prosecution of child sexual abuse and serious physical abuse cases. The development of multidisciplinary teams (MDTs), that provide critical coordination at the beginning stages of an investigation, has provided a means of maximizing community resources that strengthen and improve interagency responses and interventions. The guiding principles and values that were established initially continue to guide the direction and focus of the Task Force.

### **Section II: Maintenance of a Task Force (Sections 107(b) (2) and 107 (c) (1))**

Since the development of the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children in 1988, there have been many changes in membership. The State Task Force continues to include members who represent the specified disciplines as required in Section 107 (c) (1), including the addition of two new members representing 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)). Over the past year, the task force has worked on ensuring that required members are seated on the task force. The full Task Force meets bimonthly in January, March, April, May, July, September and November. The priorities and

proposed budget were presented at the March meeting and voted on during the May meeting. Committees and workgroups convene as scheduled focusing on the program needs while responding to evolving statewide needs.

The following individuals serve on the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children. Members have the option of designating a designee for their position on the task force: (See the Task Force Membership Listing at end of biographies.)

### **Children's Protective Services**

Member: Vannessa L. Dorantes, LMSW has worked for the State of CT's Department of Children and Families (DCF) since 1992 after receiving a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Teikyo Post University. She later earned a Master's degree in Social Work from the UCONN School of Social Work where she majored in Casework and Community Organization.

Since 2004, she has been an adjunct faculty member at Central CT State University where she has taught several elective and core competency Social Work courses including: Human Behavior in the Social Environment I & II, Social Welfare Policy & Services II, Communities, Child Welfare I & II as well as a cultural competency course. She serves on the SW Advisory Boards of Central and western CT State Universities.

She is certified in Social Work field instruction from Southern CT State University and has supervised countless undergraduate and graduate level interns in Social Work and related fields from various universities in CT and neighboring states.

Within DCF, she has held just about every position in the Social Work job class series. In 2014, she was appointed as Regional Administrator to CT DCF's Region 5. Region 5, is the state's northwest corner encompasses 43 diverse cities and towns. Dorantes also served as a tri-chair of DCF's Statewide Racial Justice Workgroup and has chronicled the Department's journey in two national webinar series.

Most recently, Dorantes proudly accepted Governor Ned Lamont's nomination and was confirmed as the state of CT DCF Commissioner where she oversees the Department's 3,200 staff members. It is her mission to reinforce the expectation that the Department's staff **Practice with Pride, Passion and Purpose** together with **People and Partners** as a part of the larger child welfare service delivery system.

Designee: Tammy M. Sneed is the Director of Gender Responsive Adolescent Services for the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Division of Adolescent and Juvenile Services. As a national expert with over 28-years of experience on Female-Responsive Programming for adolescent girls, she specializes in programming for youth in the legal system. She has developed and implemented a training model educating local and state police departments on how to work with adolescent girls with a focus on trauma; resulting in significant arrest reductions. As the lead of the Girls' Provider Network, she has lead DCF in the development of a set of female-responsive program guidelines to guide providers in working with adolescent girls. Also a foster/ adoptive mother she has developed specialized training for mentors, foster and adoptive parents and served as a mentor for forever families parenting adolescent girls. Over the last few years, Tammy has focused her efforts on a national crisis; Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST). Tammy co-leads HART (Human Anti-trafficking Response Team) with a focus on the service system for this vulnerable population. Tammy tri-leads the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children; with oversight of the 17 Multidisciplinary Teams and 8 Children's Advocacy Centers across Connecticut charged with investigating and responding to cases of severe physical and sexual abuse of children.

## **Division of Criminal Justice**

Member: Kevin T. Kane, B.A., J.D., Chief State's Attorney, Office of the Chief State's Attorney. Attorney Kane is a Tri-chairperson of the Task Force. His appointment as Chief State's Attorney was effective September 5, 2006. As Chief State's Attorney, Mr. Kane is the administrative head of the Division of Criminal Justice, the independent agency of the executive branch of state government that is responsible for the investigation and prosecution of all criminal matters in the State of Connecticut. The Division includes the offices of the State's Attorney for each of the thirteen Judicial Districts in the State of Connecticut and the Office of the Chief State's Attorney in Rocky Hill, Connecticut. Attorney Kane joined the Division of Criminal Justice in August 1972 and rose through the ranks to become the State's Attorney for the Judicial District of New London, where he served prior to becoming Chief State's Attorney. He is an enthusiastic supporter of the GTF and its mission.

Designee: Kevin D. Lawlor is the Deputy Chief State's Attorney for the Connecticut Division of Criminal Justice. Prior to his appointment as Deputy Chief, Attorney Lawlor was the Ansonia-Milford State's Attorney for twelve years. A prosecutor since 1995, he distinguished himself early in his career by working with the Milford Multi-Jurisdictional Team for the Investigation of Child Sexual Abuse and successfully convicted many of this District's most serious sex offenders. He also helped to create and supervise the Neighborhood Prosecution Program in the City of West Haven. The Neighborhood Prosecution Program was a federally funded initiative in West Haven which was designed to reduce teen crime and improve the quality of life for the citizens of West Haven. He is a Tri-Chair of the Governor's Task Force Justice for Abused Children, a founding member of the Division of the Criminal Justice Diversity Committee, Past President of the Division of Criminal Justice State's Attorney's Advisory Board, a former member of the Governing Council for the South Central Child Advocacy Center and he is the former President of the Board of Directors of Guardian Ad Litem Services, a Naugatuck Valley non-profit agency that attempts to improve the quality of life for the chronically mentally ill. In addition, he also volunteers to speak to area youth in coordination with the Milford Bar Association, the North Haven Board of Education and other community organizations about criminal justice issues and the legal profession.

State's Attorney Lawlor is a graduate of East Haven High School, the University of Connecticut and Quinnipiac University School of Law. He teaches several criminal justice courses in the Legal Studies Department at Quinnipiac University and has also taught graduate-level seminars in Evidence and Legal Aspects of Arson Investigation at the University of New Haven. He also serves as an MPTC certified instructor for the West Haven Police Department, the South Central Criminal Justice Administration, and the Milford Police Academy.

Attorney Lawlor is the 2006 recipient of the Connecticut Children's Alliance Certificate of Appreciation for his commitment to advocate through prosecution for the victims of child sexual abuse, the 2006 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Greater Bridgeport N.A.A.C.P., a 2009 inductee of the East Haven High School Hall of Fame, the recipient of the 2013 New Haven Knights of St. Patrick Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award, the 2013 District Attorney Award from the University of New Haven, Henry C. Lee Institute of Forensic Science and the 2014 Irish Echo Law and Order 50 Award.

## **Connecticut Children's Alliance**

### **Child Advocacy Centers/Multidisciplinary Teams**

Member: Krystal Rich is the Director of the Connecticut Children's Alliance (CCA), a statewide membership organization founded to provide support to Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) and Multidisciplinary Teams

(MDTs) across Connecticut through education, training, and resources. The State Director of CCA serves as a Tri-Chair of the GTF. CCA's mission is to avail comprehensive statewide services to all child victims and their families through collaboration, systemic change, public awareness, and legislative advocacy. Currently, Ms. Rich chairs the NCAtrak Subcommittee and co-chairs the MDT Evaluation and the Finding Words Committees of GTF. Prior to coming to CCA, Krystal worked for the Sexual Assault Crisis Service in New Britain, one of CONNSACS nine-member centers, where she provided crisis counseling and advocacy to survivors of sexual assault. Krystal holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Central Connecticut State University and a Master of Social Work from the University of Connecticut School of Social Work.

### **Judicial Branch, Superior Court for Juvenile Matters**

**Civil/Criminal Court Judge** (Connecticut does not delineate between civil and criminal)

Member: The Honorable Patrick L. Carroll III practiced law in Fairfield, CT for seventeen years prior to his appointment as a Judge of the Superior Court in 1996. Since his appointment, Judge Carroll has served in Norwalk, Danbury, Waterbury, Milford, Derby and Bridgeport handling civil, family, housing and criminal matters. He served for five years as Administrative Judge for the Judicial District of Danbury and his most recent assignment on the bench was as the Presiding Judge for Criminal Matters in the Bridgeport GA. Judge Carroll served as Deputy Chief Court Administrator of the Judicial Branch from September 1, 2007 through September 30, 2013. Chief Justice Rogers appointed Judge Carroll as Chief Court Administrator effective October 1, 2013.

Designee: Tasha Hunt is the Deputy Director of Juvenile Probation for the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division. She started her career with the Judicial Branch more than 20 years ago as a Juvenile Probation Officer and has held several positions including Juvenile Probation Supervisor and Regional Manager. In her current role as Deputy Director, Ms. Hunt manages the staff and operations of the twelve Juvenile Probation offices across Connecticut. She is committed to the integration of effective practices in probation field offices to ensure positive outcomes for court-involved youth and has played an integral role in the state's efforts to reform the juvenile justice system. She also serves as the Commissioner of the Connecticut Interstate Compact on Juveniles in her official capacity.

Ms. Hunt represents the agency on several statewide committees including the Connecticut Judicial Branch Human Capital Implementation Committee, Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Incarceration Workgroup, and Youth Homelessness Systems Task Force. Ms. Hunt earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Sociology with a concentration in Criminology and Criminal Justice, and a Master of Science Degree in Education from Southern Connecticut State University. She is also an adjunct professor at the University of New Haven in the Criminal Justice Department.

Member: The Honorable Bernadette Conway was appointed the Chief Administrative Judge for Juvenile Matters in September of 2013. Judge Conway has been a judge of the Superior Court since April of 1999. From 1999 to 2013, Judge Conway presided over criminal, juvenile and family cases, primarily in New Haven. Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge Conway was an assistant state's attorney in the Middlesex Judicial District.

Designee: Cynthia L. Cunningham, Esq. - Chief Clerk for Juvenile Matters in the Court Operations Division of the Judicial Branch since 2000; previously served as Clerk of the Juvenile Court in New Haven from June 1996

through December 1999. Currently acts as the primary liaison between the Juvenile Court and the Department and Children and Families.

## **Child Advocates/Attorneys for Children**

### **Office of the Child Advocate**

Member: Sarah Healy Eagan, JD was appointed by Governor Dannel Malloy to serve as Connecticut's Child Advocate on August 1, 2013. As Child Advocate, Sarah sets priority reviews for the OCA, manages office operations, and publishes vital information regarding the well-being of children and recommendations for system reform. Prior to this appointment, Sarah served for several years as the Director of the Child Abuse Project at the Center for Children's Advocacy in Hartford, Connecticut. During her years at the Center, Sarah worked to ensure that abused, neglected or special-needs children receive the safety, emotional support, services and education that they need and deserve. Sarah has represented numerous clients in trials, mediations, administrative matters, and appeals. Sarah worked to improve service systems for children and their families through participation in various task forces and working groups, addressing issues such as public access to juvenile proceedings and improving educational outcomes for children in state custody. Sarah has developed training curricula and conducted multiple seminars on education and child welfare law. Sarah has actively participated in drafting and seeking passage of legal reforms to improve outcomes for at-risk children and their families. Prior to working at the Center for Children's Advocacy, Sarah worked as a litigation associate at Shipman & Goodwin in Hartford, Connecticut. Sarah earned a degree in American Studies from Trinity College in Hartford and went on to graduate with honors from the University Of Connecticut School Of Law.

Designee: Faith Vos Winkel, MSW joined the Office of the Child Advocate in July 2001. Faith serves as the lead for the OCA on matters relating to child fatality review and prevention. She convenes the Connecticut Child Fatality Review Panel (CFRP) each month, which reviews all unexpected and unexplained child deaths. Faith is the Child Advocate's principal investigator on any in-depth child fatality investigation requested by the CFRP, the Governor, and the General Assembly or conducted at the Child Advocate's discretion. Child fatality reviews focus on the examination of systems and opportunities to improve policies and practices to prevent additional tragedies from occurring. Faith's focus on prevention includes providing training as well as participating in many statewide groups including the Statewide Suicide Advisory Board, the Domestic Fatality Review Board, the Teen Safe Driving Partnership, Maternal Child Health Coalition, the Trafficking in Persons Council, the Department of Motor Vehicles Commissioners Teen Driving Advisory Committee, Prevent Child Abuse American-CT Chapter. Faith has also been involved in numerous child death review initiatives on a national level, including serving on the Advisory Committee to the National Center for the Prevention of Child Death Review. Prior to working at OCA, Faith worked at the State Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities for 15 years, advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities. Faith holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Connecticut and a Master of Social Work from the University Of Connecticut School Of Social Work.

### **Office of the Chief Public Defender**

Member: Christine Perra Rapillo, Esq. is the Chief Public Defender for the State of Connecticut. Prior to assuming this position, Attorney Rapillo served as the Director of Juvenile Delinquency Defense and Child Protection and also supervised the Hartford Juvenile Court Public Defender's Office for 11 years. In addition, Attorney Rapillo spent several years as a public defender in adult court, trying cases at all levels. Attorney Rapillo has also

previously served on the GTF Executive Committee and the Committee on Child Representation along with numerous other state boards and councils in the area of juvenile justice and child protection.

Designee: Susan I. Hamilton, MSW, JD is the Director of Juvenile Delinquency Defense and Child Protection. She administers the Juvenile Unit of the Office of Chief Public Defender, which provides attorneys for all children in child protection matters, indigent children in delinquency, and certain child custody cases, indigent parents in child protection matters and counsel for parents in certain paternity and support enforcement actions. Prior to joining the Division of Public Defender Services, Attorney Hamilton served in various positions at the Department of Children and Families, including Commissioner from 2007-2011, and also represented parents and children in child protection and family cases while in private practice.

### **Office of the Attorney General**

Member: William Tong is the 25th Attorney General to serve Connecticut since the office was established in 1897. He took office on January 9, 2019, as the first Asian American elected at the statewide level, in Connecticut.

Before his election as Attorney General, Tong served for 12 years in Connecticut's General Assembly representing the 147th District, which includes North Stamford and Darien. Most recently, Tong served as House Chairman of the Judiciary Committee. In this position, Tong was responsible for all legislation related to constitutional law, criminal law, civil rights, consumer protection, probate, judicial nominations and the Judicial branch, and major areas of substantive law. During his service in the legislature, Tong led to the passage of landmark legislation, including the Connecticut Second Chance Act, Domestic Violence Restraining Order Act, Lost and Stolen Firearms Act, the Act Protecting Homeowner Rights, and the Act Protecting Schoolchildren.

A Connecticut native, Tong grew up in the Hartford area and attended schools in West Hartford. He graduated from Phillips Academy Andover, Brown University and the University of Chicago Law School. He has practiced law for the last 18 years as a litigator in both state and federal courts, first at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, in New York City and for the past 15 years at Finn Dixon & Herling LLP, in Stamford. Tong is the oldest of five children and grew up working side-by-side with his immigrant parents in their family's Chinese restaurant. He and his wife, Elizabeth, live in Stamford with their three children and too many pets to count.

Designee: Carolyn Signorelli is currently with the Child Protection Department of the Attorney General's Office where she has prosecuted child abuse and neglect cases for a total of 18 years. Currently, Attorney Signorelli handles a varied caseload of child protection trials, defense work in state and federal court and administrative and appellate matters. Attorney Signorelli was appointed in 2006 as Connecticut's first Chief Child Protection Attorney where she spent 5 years creating a new agency devoted to improving legal representation for children and parents in child protection proceedings. Attorney Signorelli served on the ABA's National Committee to Improve Parent Representation from 2009 to 2011; the Executive Committee of the Children's Trust Fund from 2004 until 2013, the Chief Justice's Public Service & Trust Commission as Co-Chair of the Demographics Committee; the Families With Service Needs Advisory Board convened by the Legislature in July of 2006; the Judicial Department's Court Improvement Project Strategic Planning Task Force and Training Grant Workgroup. Attorney Signorelli is a member of the National Association of Counsel for Children and the Juvenile Law Society and teaches for the National Institute of Trial Advocacy. Attorney Signorelli received her B.A. from Vassar College in 1986 with General and Departmental Honors and was a Mary Siegreest Hinz Fellow at William & Mary School of Law where she graduated in 1991.



## **Office of Victim Services**

Member: Linda Cimino has served as the Director of the Office of Victim Services (OVS) since January 2000. During her tenure, all of the written publications have been redesigned for consistency in look and text. Ms. Cimino serves on several statewide committees and task forces. Ms. Cimino served as an adjunct lecturer at the University of New Haven during the fall semesters of 2002-2005. Currently, Ms. Cimino teaches an undergraduate class at Capital Community College. For both institutions, she taught sections of Victimology. Prior to her tenure at OVS, Ms. Cimino was the Executive Director of the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence for five years and served as the Executive Director of Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis from 1988 - 1995. Ms. Cimino's early career was spent at the New Haven YWCA in the capacities of Public Relations Coordinator and Associate Executive Director and as the Executive Director of the Suzuki Music School.

Designee: Koren Butler-Kurth has worked for the Office of Victim Services since 2002, and currently holds the position of Victim Services Supervisor. Ms. Butler-Kurth and her co-supervisor, supervise thirty-four victim services advocates, who provide services to victims in Connecticut's criminal and civil courts, the Board of Pardons and Paroles, and OVS' central office. Prior to her work for the State of Connecticut, Koren worked as a victim services coordinator and bereavement counselor in Massachusetts, counseling victims, and survivors and guiding them through criminal and civil court procedures. Koren holds a Master of Science in Management and Leadership from Western Governors University.

## **Office of the Victim Advocate**

Member: Natasha Pierre serves at the State Victim Advocate and acts as the ombudsman for victims of crime within the criminal justice system and evaluates the delivery of state services to victims. Responsibilities also include recommending system-wide improvements to the General Assembly, working with private and public agencies to enforce the constitutional rights of victims, and filing appearances in court to advocate for victims.

Before being appointed as the State Victim Advocate, Natasha was the Policy & Legislative Director for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, and an attorney at Connecticut Legal Services, Inc. and Western Massachusetts Legal Services, Inc., where she practiced family and housing law. She earned a B.A. from the University of Connecticut with a major in Women's Studies and a dual-degree in law and social work from the University of Connecticut's Schools of Law and Social Work. She was awarded the Connecticut Law Tribune's New Leaders of the Law Award and has had articles written about her in the *Hartford Courant* and the *Connecticut Law Tribune*. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc., a public service sorority.

Designee: Hakima Bey-Coon received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Rutgers University and a Juris Doctor degree from Seton Hall Law School. After earning her law degree, Attorney Bey-Coon served a judicial clerkship under the Honorable Kevin G. Callahan, J.S.C., in the New Jersey Superior Court-Criminal Division. Over the next several years Attorney Bey-Coon served as a staff attorney at Hudson County Legal Services in Jersey City, New Jersey where she represented indigent clients in housing matters and as a Deputy Attorney General in the New Jersey Attorney General's Office where she prosecuted professional licensing cases. After serving several years in the New Jersey Attorney General's Office, Attorney Bey-Coon began practicing law at Maya & Associates, P.C. in Westport, Connecticut. Thereafter, Attorney Bey-Coon joined the Office of the Victim Advocate in March 2006. Attorney Bey-Coon is a member of the Victim Services/Victim Advocacy

Workgroup of the Task Force and serves on the Systems, Gaps and Barriers and Training Committees. Attorney Bey-Coon is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, an international service organization.

### **Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)**

Member: Lauren Gibbons Messner is Executive Director of Connecticut CASA Association; a State-level nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting and expanding CASA's nationally recognized volunteer advocacy programs in service to abused and neglected children in Connecticut. Lauren developed her passion for the CASA mission while serving as a CASA volunteer for Voices for Children in San Diego, CA, in 2011-2012. She was most recently affiliated with Essex County CASA in New Jersey, supporting fundraising and community outreach efforts for a program that served children in Newark and Irvington, New Jersey. Lauren's previous professional experiences include management best-practice consulting, corporate facilitation, and teaching. She is a skilled trainer and client advisor with over 15 years of experience in both the corporate and nonprofit sectors. She is also a Navy Reserves Spouse, and mother of three young children. Lauren earned her MSc in Social Anthropology from The London School of Economics in the UK, and her BA in Political Science from Catholic University in Washington, DC.

### **Advocate for Children with Disabilities**

Member: Katie Hanley, LMSW, is the Senior Director of Oak Hill Centers at Oak Hill, the largest disability services agency in Connecticut. Katie is responsible for the administration, supervision, and development of Oak Hill's innovative arm, Oak Hill Centers, which includes several community-based programs that support people with disabilities across the lifespan, improving health and quality of life for thousands of individuals. Katie has been working with youth and adults with disabilities for 20 years and has developed and led disability-focused programs and initiatives at a variety of organizations. Oak Hill's Center for Relationship and Sexuality Education leads the effort in Connecticut to raise awareness about the hidden sexual assault epidemic for people with intellectual disabilities. Katie travels throughout the country training educators and professionals on the topic and offers them an overview of resource materials to address the concern in their settings. Katie earned a Master of Social Work from UCONN, as well as a Graduate Certificate in Public and Nonprofit Management.

### **Adult Survivor/Former Victim of Child Abuse and/or Neglect**

Member: Alison Johnson is a consultant to nonprofit coalitions in the areas of public policy, state budget analysis, and coalition building. Alison has been in private practice since 1997. She is experienced working with networks of leaders to help them move an agenda forward, including serving as the Chair of the National Council of Nonprofit Associations (NCNA). From 1990-1997 she was the Director of the Nonprofit Human Services Cabinet, a collaborative of twenty of Connecticut's leading associations, coalitions, and statewide human service providers. She is a graduate of Wesleyan University. Alison is based in Middletown, Connecticut where she served as a head Moderator for primary and general elections in the city.

Alison is a survivor of long-term child sexual abuse. She has served on the Victim/Survivor Advisory Council (VSAC) for the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence since its inception in 1995. In 2013, she worked with the Alliance as a consultant to design a curriculum for the training of law enforcement officers on sexual assault. Alison was also the Project Manager for a federal US Department of Justice project on confidentiality for the Alliance from 2001- 2005. Alison has served on the Advisory Board of the Aetna Foundation Children's Center at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center. She has also participated in conferences for Safety Net: The National Safe and Strategic Technology Project at the National Network to End Domestic Violence, and presented on health literacy.

## **Parent Representative**

Member: Nancy Scirocco Nesbitt is a Vice President in the Government and Not-For-Profit Banking Group. She joined Webster in 2004, starting the commercial bank's specialty focus on serving not-for-profit organizations with tailored banking and investment services, and now handles the banking relationships for a large portfolio of not-for-profit and government entities. Prior to Webster, Nancy worked in non-profit management for over 6 years, with a strong focus in working with various communities and state agencies promoting economic and community development. Previously, Nancy spent over 15 years developing commercial real estate on behalf of developers and major retailers, covering territories in New England and Northern California.

Ms. Scirocco holds an MBA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and a BGS, magna cum laude, from the University of Connecticut. She was an adjunct professor for over six years at Central Connecticut State University, teaching marketing courses. Nancy currently serves on: the WALKS Foundation Advisory Board and the New England's Knowledge Corridor Advisory Board. She previously served on: the Connecticut Women's Council (Past President); the Advisory Board for the University of Connecticut's Program on Nonprofit Leadership and Strategic Networks; the UConn Health Center White Coat Gala Committee (four years); InternHere.com (Board President, 12 years); Board of Directors of Special Olympics Connecticut (was Chair of the Development Committee in 2006 and 2007); the Capital Workforce Partners Board of Directors, the Design Team for the Hartford Public School's Montessori Erdkinder School and was a Loaned Executive for the Hartford area 1999 United Way Campaign, which raised over \$27MM for the greater Hartford region. Nancy is the mother of three children who are survivors of sexual assault and exposure.

Member: Margaret M. Doherty, Executive Director of Connecticut Alliance of Foster and Adoptive Families (CAFAP). Ms. Doherty earned a Bachelor's degree in Social Work, a Master's degree in Non-Profit Business Administration and a Juris Doctorate. Ms. Doherty was appointed Executive Director of the Connecticut Alliance of Foster & Adoptive Families in December 2012. As a foster and adoptive parent as well as in her professional capacity, Ms. Doherty and her staff provide education, training, support, and advocacy for foster, adoptive and relative caregivers throughout Connecticut. Ms. Doherty and her staff work collaboratively with the Department of Children and Families, child welfare professionals and the community regarding issues of importance for the families who serve Connecticut's most vulnerable children. Foster, adoptive and kinship parents require specialized training and support while they strive to nurture and care for the traumatized children entrusted to their care. As a member of the Governor's Task Force, she brings the needs of parents and children to other members of the task force. Ms. Doherty currently serves as Chair of the task force's Training Committee.

## **Mental Health Professionals**

### **State of Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)**

Member: Dr. Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon currently serves as Commissioner of the Connecticut State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, where she also previously held the titles of Deputy Commissioner, Senior Policy Advisor and Director of the department's Office of Multicultural Healthcare Equity.

In May 2014, Dr. Delphin-Rittmon completed a two-year White House appointment working as a Senior Advisor to the Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. While at SAMHSA, she worked on a range of policy initiatives addressing behavioral health equity, workforce development, and healthcare reform. Dr. Delphin-Rittmon has

served as an Assistant Professor and Director of Health Disparities Research and Consultation with the Program for Recovery and Community Health in the Yale Department of Psychiatry. In this role, her professional and research interests have included system-level strategic planning and policy development geared towards eliminating health disparities and promoting recovery-oriented care; and individual, organizational, and system level cultural competence including training, program design, and evaluation. She received her B.A. in Social Science from Hofstra University, her M.S. and Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Purdue University, and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in clinical-community psychology at Yale University.

Designee: Stephanie Zanker-Rivera, M.S., L.P.C., is a Behavioral Health Clinical Manager with the Office of the Commissioner, Young Adult Services (YAS), Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). In this role, Ms. Zanker-Rivera is responsible for administrative and clinical oversight of several YAS programs across the state and also manages transitions of youth from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to Young Adult Services. Ms. Zanker-Rivera participates in several statewide committees including the Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team (HART), Opening Doors: Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Workgroup and Coordinated Access Subgroup, and the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children as well as the Child Fatality Response Ad Hoc Work Group. Ms. Zanker-Rivera is a Certified Trainer in Introduction to Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking for the Department of Children and Families. In 2016, Ms. Zanker-Rivera completed the Yale School of Medicine Leadership Program in Behavioral Health, Women in Leadership. Prior to joining DMHAS, Ms. Zanker-Rivera worked for DCF as a Social Work Supervisor and then Program Manager.

### **Private Practice Clinicians**

Member: Eliza L. Borecka, M.A, M.S.W, L.C.S.W., is the clinical director of Specialized Treatment Services at The Sterling Center for Counseling, a private practice with offices in Cromwell and Shelton, Connecticut. As clinical director, she provides evaluations and treatment for families and individuals addressing issues related to trauma, sexual abuse, and sexual perpetration. She also provides supervision to a staff of professionals providing treatment to children and adults.

Eliza volunteers for a number of State - and - community based initiatives: She is a member of three Multidisciplinary Investigative Teams: Greater New Haven - Milford CAC, Middlesex County and The Child Advocacy Center at the Center for Family Justice in Bridgeport serving the families of Lower Fairfield County; Eliza is a clinical member of the Association for Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA), and The Connecticut Association for Treatment of Sex Offenders where she is serving as treasurer and a member of The Board of Directors;

In 2015 Eliza participated in the collaborative Planning Team creating a Child Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program Framework at The Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Center (CONNSAC); Eliza is a trainer for the Center for Family Justice (formerly Center for Women and Families of Eastern Fairfield County, Inc.) on the topic: "Sexual Abuse and Sexual Abusers"; She is a member of the NCA National Collaborative Work Group on Youth with problematic Sexual Behaviors.

Eliza is utilizing her extensive training in the area of forensic interviewing to provide psychosexual evaluations and risk assessments in cases of sexual abuse, and she has been called upon as an expert witness in cases related to trauma and sexual perpetration. She offers consultations and training on topics related to assessments and

treatment of sexually inappropriate behaviors. In 2015 and 2016 Eliza was invited as a guest lecturer to present on assessments of sexual abuse at the Teacher's College at the Columbia University in NYC, NY. Eliza holds a Master's Degree from The University of Warsaw, in Poland and an MSW from The University of Connecticut.

### **Health Professionals**

Member: Dr. John M. Leventhal is a Professor of Pediatrics at Yale University School of Medicine and Medical Director of the Child Abuse Programs and Child Abuse Prevention Programs at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital. Dr. Leventhal has over 35 years of experience providing care to abused, neglected and sexually abused children and has extensive experience collaborating with professionals in the community, such as DCF workers and police, and teaching professionals in the community. Dr. Leventhal chairs the Gaps and Barriers Workgroup and directs the quarterly peer review meetings of the medical clinicians who provide forensic medical exams in the state. He also serves on other important state committees related to child maltreatment.

### **Law Enforcement Representatives**

Member: Lieutenant Seth Mancini has been a member of the Connecticut State Police since 2000. During that time he has been assigned to patrol at Troop C – Tolland, Troop W – Bradley International Airport, and Troop H – Hartford, and then to the Legal Affairs Unit in the Office of the Commissioner. In 2008, he was promoted to Sergeant, and worked as a supervisor in the Legal Affairs Unit, at Troop H – Hartford, and the Central District Major Crime Squad out of Troop I – Bethany. In 2015, he was promoted to Lieutenant and has served as the Commanding Officer of the Special Licensing and Firearms Unit, the Chief of Staff to the Colonel of the State Police, the Commanding Officer of the DESPP Labor Relations Unit, and the Legislative Liaison for the agency to the Connecticut State Legislature. He is currently the Commanding Officer of Troop B – North Canaan. He has served as the DESPP Commissioner's designee on the Child Fatality Review Board since 2008 and served on the New Haven MDT while assigned to CDMC. He is also a licensed attorney, having received his J.D. from the University of Connecticut School of Law.

Member: Officer Christopher Robak has been a member of the Shelton Police Department since 2012. He has received numerous commendations for his work on cases and was awarded the MADD award in 2014. He was appointed as the Department's Youth Officer in October of 2016. During this time, he has investigated numerous sexual and physical abuse of children. He has also been active within the schools as well as the Boys and Girls Club in Shelton. He has been a member of the Shelton Youth Service Bureau since 2016 and serves on the Shelton Juvenile Review Board. He graduated from Fairfield University in 2003.

### **Individual Experienced in Work with Homeless Children and Youth:**

Member: Stacy Schleif is a senior staff attorney with the Child Abuse Project at the Center for Children's Advocacy. She represents children in the areas of abuse and neglect and is involved with systemic and legislative advocacy on child welfare issues. Stacy teaches and supervises law school students as part of the Center's child advocacy clinic; provides pre-service training to attorneys new to juvenile court practice, and participates in the Center's training programs. Prior to her work at CCA, Stacy spent 14 years representing children and families in varying capacities. She was a supervising staff attorney for the Children and Family Law division of the public defender's office in Springfield, MA, where she represented children and parents in child welfare cases, and supervised newer attorneys in their representation. She also worked as a trial attorney in the public defender's office in Salem, MA. Stacy holds a J.D. from Northeastern University School of Law, and a B.A. in Philosophy from Haverford College.

## **Court Improvement Project**

Member: Steven Marhefsky

### **Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence**

Member: Since April 2011, Karen Jarmoc has served as the Executive Director for Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) where she is chiefly responsible for guiding this state-wide organization which serves as the leading voice for victims of domestic violence and those who assist them. During four years in the Connecticut General Assembly, Karen was tapped to lead various initiatives including the improvement of workplace safety for correctional employees. In 2008, Karen led the Correctional Staff Health and Safety Taskforce as its chair resulting in the creation of a permanent Correctional Staff Health and Safety Subcommittee of the Executive Branch. In 2009, Karen was selected to co-chair Connecticut's Children in the Recession Task Force to assess the impact of the current recession on children. The committee led the General Assembly to pass legislation to create a comprehensive emergency response to assist children and families in tough economic recessionary periods. In 2009 and 2010, Karen was honored as a "Children's Champion" by the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance for her work in the area of early care and education. Presently Karen serves as co-chair of Connecticut's Family Violence Model Policy Governing Council which evaluates policies and procedures used by law enforcement when responding to incidents of family violence, including violations of civil restraining orders and criminal protective orders. The Governing Council is responsible for annual reviews and updates of Connecticut's Statewide Model Policy on the Police Response to Crimes of Family Violence. Karen was also appointed to represent CCADV on the Connecticut Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission. She is also a member of the National Network Against Domestic Violence Policy Committee, the National Lethality Assessment Advisory Council and the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence Prevention Council. Karen holds a bachelor's degree in communications and political science from Simmons College and a master's degree in public policy from Trinity College.

Designee: Kelly Anelli is the Director of Member Organization Services at Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. For fifteen years, Kelly worked in the field of Early Childhood Education. Before coming to CCADV in 2015, Kelly was the director of a child development center where she was responsible for program oversight, NAEYC accreditation, state licensing, and operational policies related to standards outlined by the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood and NAEYC. Kelly has her bachelor's degree in Child Development and Family Studies and a master's degree in Human Services with focus Non-Profit Management.

### **CT Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS)**

Member: Beth Hamilton is the Associate Director of the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence (formerly CONNSACS), the statewide coalition of nine community-based sexual assault crisis services programs. Beth has over 15 years of experience working to end violence throughout the state of Connecticut including sexual violence, domestic violence, and violence against LGBTQ people and people with disabilities. Beth has been a leader in the development and implementation of statewide policies addressing and preventing sexual violence in Connecticut's K-12 schools, on our college campuses, and within Connecticut's correctional system. Beth is responsible for the oversight of The Alliance's programmatic, communications, and training divisions, as well as manages The Alliance's Legal Services Team and Post-Conviction Victim Services program which houses 14 specialized victim advocates who work with the state's Sex Offender Supervision Units in parole and probation. Beth previously worked at the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV), Connecticut Women's Education & Legal Fund (CWEALF), and directly serving victims of sexual and domestic

violence. Beth is dedicated to the prevention of violence, creating opportunities for survivor-led advocacy, and building anti-oppression movements.

### **State of Connecticut Department of Education**

**Member:** Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell has been an educator in Connecticut for over 25 years. She was appointed Interim Commissioner of Education in January 2015. Dr. Wentzell began her career in education teaching social studies and directing programs for gifted students. Before her appointment as Interim Commissioner of Education, she served as the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) chief academic officer. Before joining the Department, Dr. Wentzell served as assistant superintendent of schools in Hartford. Prior to that role, she served in district leadership positions with a focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment in both South Windsor and in the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) magnet schools.

Dr. Wentzell has a bachelor's degree in Russian studies from Mount Holyoke College, a master's degree in educational leadership from the University of Massachusetts–Amherst, and a doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Hartford.

### **Northeast Regional Children's Advocacy Center**

**Member:** Anthony DeVincenzo, MA, Training Specialist for the Northeast Regional Children's Advocacy Center, is responsible for providing training, technical support and assistance to MDT/CACs and supporting the development of MDT/CACs in underdeveloped areas in the Northeast region of the United States (from PA to ME). NRCAC is a proud supporter of the CT Children's Alliance and partners regularly with CCA in their efforts to improve and expand the Child Advocacy Centers of Connecticut. Mr. DeVincenzo has worked in the field of child abuse and neglect for more than 16 years, in a variety of roles (e.g. detective/forensic interviewer, trainer, CAC Program Director, MDT coordinator), and brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to his work.

### **Co-Chairs: MDT Evaluation Committee**

**Krystal Rich** is the Director of the Connecticut Children's Alliance (CCA). Biography listed above.

**Paula Schaefer** is the program coordinator of Yale Child Abuse Programs. She earned her master's degree in psychology from Southern Connecticut State University. She has been in this position for 10 years. The Yale Child Abuse Programs provide services for children in the Fairfield, New Haven, Middlesex, Waterbury and Stamford communities. Paula is also a member of the South Central Child Advocacy Center management team. Paula co-chairs the Governor's Task Force MDT Evaluation Committee.

### **Co-Chairs: Training Committee**

Elizabeth C. Leaming, BA, JD is a Senior Assistant State's Attorney for the Judicial District of Tolland at Rockville. She is responsible for the prosecution of child physical abuse and child sexual abuse cases that occur in that jurisdiction. She started her legal career in 1992 as a prosecutor in Ft. Myers, Florida where she first began prosecuting crimes against children. Her interest in this area continued once she moved back to her home state of CT where she has spent the last 23 years pursuing justice for abused children in Tolland County. Ms. Leaming co-chairs the Tolland County Multi-Disciplinary Team and the Training Committee of the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children. Attorney Leaming lectures statewide on topics related to child abuse investigation and the criminal justice system to DCF, law enforcement, medical providers and school administrators and staff.

Kristen M. Clark, Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children Coordinator. Biography listed below.

### **Connecticut's Human Antitrafficking Response Team (HART) Project Director**

Tammy M. Sneed, Director of Gender Responsive Adolescent Services (DCF). Biography listed above.

### **Connecticut's Human Antitrafficking Response Team (HART) Project Coordinator**

Yvette Young is a Licensed Professional Counselor. She obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Trinity College and her Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology from Cambridge College. Yvette has sixteen years of experience working for non-profit organizations. She worked for the YWCA of the Hartford Region's Sexual Assault Crisis Service Program for five years, as a Training Coordinator and then as the Program Director. She worked for Catholic Family Services' Black Family Enrichment Program as an outpatient therapist for two years. She worked as the Senior Program Director for a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility for children and was recently the Senior Director of Permanency Services at the Village for Families and Children, Inc. She is currently working as the Project Director/HART Coordinator for DCF and the Village for Families and Children Inc. She provides leadership oversight for the HART and GTFJAC grants.

### **Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children Coordinator**

Kristen M. Clark became the coordinator of the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children in June 2008. She graduated from Watkinson Day School and Howard University, with a B.S. in Sociology, before going on to pursue a Master in Social Work at the University of Connecticut. Ms. Clark has been employed with the Village for Families and Children, Inc. for twenty-five years where she previously coordinated the agency's emergency preparedness, public policy, and advocacy efforts. At The Village, she has been responsible for connecting with key community and corporate organizations, developing key legislative relationships, coordinating volunteers, promoting Village programs, and cultivating media and fund-raising prospects. Previously she worked as the interim Director of RAMBUH Family Center, Community Ambassador, supervisor, therapist and case manager in the Village's foster care program. Ms. Clark is also active in the Greater Hartford community through her current and past public service activities including serving on the Boards of Watkinson Day School and Community Health Services; being an adult achiever mentor in the YMCA Minority Achiever Program; a mentor in the Delta Academy; and actively participating as a member of the National Association of Black Social Workers, the Greater Hartford Alliance of Black Social Workers, and the NAACP. She serves as President of the Howard University Alumni Club of Greater Hartford and is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. where she is a past Assistant Secretary of the Eastern Region. In May 2010, Kristen was elected Region I Chair of the Howard University Alumni Association and covers all Howard University alumni in Africa, Europe, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. On a statewide level, Kristen is a commissioner for the African American Affairs Commission of the state of Connecticut's General Assembly. In March 2017, Kristen was to be selected as a 100 Women of Color 2017 honoree. The 100 Women of Color Gala and Awards recognize 100 women of color from Springfield, Massachusetts to Stamford, Connecticut; for their leadership, entrepreneurial success and community service. Kristen received the additional honor of being selected as the 2017 Valedictorian for the 100 Women of Color.

Ms. Clark coordinates the administrative duties for the Task Force, Finding Words training and chairs the Training Committee, the Membership Committee as well as the By-Laws and Website workgroups. She participates on several of the committees and workgroups for the Task Force. Ms. Clark also represents the Governor's Task Force on *Connecticut's Human Antitrafficking Response Team (HART) Project* and has participated in HART efforts since Spring of 2014.



<b>Task Force Membership Designation</b>	<b>Name</b>
Law Enforcement	Seth Mancini Chris Robak
Criminal Court Judge	Judge Patrick Carroll Judge Bernadette Conway
Civil Court Judge	Judge Patrick Carroll Judge Bernadette Conway
Prosecuting Attorney	Kevin Kane Kevin Lawlor Elizabeth Leaming
Defense Attorney	Chris Rapillo Sue Hamilton
Attorney for Children	Sarah Eagan Natasha Pierre Hakima Bey-Coon William Tong Carolyn Signorelli
Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)*	Lauren Messner
Health Professional	John Leventhal
Mental Health Professional	Dr. Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon Stephanie Zanker-Rivera Eliza Borecka
Child Protective Services	Vannessa Dorantes Tammy Sneed
Individual Experienced in Working with Children with Disabilities	Katie Hanley
Parent/ Representative of Parent Group	Margaret Doherty Nancy Nesbitt
Adult Former Victim of Child Abuse and Neglect	Alison Johnson
Individual Experienced in Working with Homeless Children and Youth	Stacy Schleif

### **Section III: Program Performance Reporting: FFY 2018-2019**

#### **A. Three Year Assessment Recommendations**

The following are the recommendations from Connecticut's 2018 Three Year Assessment.

**Recommendation #1: Use the next six months to develop a framework and plans for the next federal grant application which is (was) due May 2018. Four ad-hoc groups replaced all the existing workgroups and committees as follows:**

Based on the 2017 retreat outcomes, the four ad hoc groups established at that time have been incorporated in the on-going priority areas of the Task Force. During this reporting period, the MDT/CAC Evaluation and Quality Assurance workgroup has been incorporated into the MDT Evaluation committee, the training workgroup has evolved into a larger Training Committee. Both the Systems Gaps and Barriers and Child Fatality Response workgroup provided topic area presentations for the task force during this fiscal year. (The areas addressed in the section of 107 e (1) (A), (B) and (C) are identified next to the topic area)

**1. MDT/CAC Evaluation & Quality Assurance** -- Section 107 e (1)(A) and (B):

**2. Training** -- Section 107 e (1)(A), (B) and (C).

**3. System Gaps & Barriers** - Section 107 e (1)(A), (B) and (C).

**4. Child Fatality Response** – Section 107e (1) (A) and (C)

**Recommendation #2: Discuss possible restructuring of the GTF meeting schedule and agenda.**

The Connecticut task force has been in existence for several years. The task force needed to refocus and ensure that we were meeting the tenets of the CJA legislation and adopt national best practice standards. Education around the legislation, review of the bylaws, discussions around the model as well as a review of best practices culminated in the restructuring of the task force, voted on in March 2018 and implemented as of July 2018. We spent three task force meetings updating our by-laws to reflect the changes to the task force as our guiding document. It is our hope that the new structure will allow the task force to work more efficiently for our children and families in the state and meet the requirements outlined in the Children's Justice Act. The task force also made a conscious decision to hold off on several vacant seats on the task force until this restructuring process was nearly completed. All of our vacancies were filled during this reporting year. The GTF Coordinator has spent time orienting new members to the task force and looking for ways to engage the new members, and their topic areas, into the work. During this reporting period, the task force has dedicated time on each agenda for presentations to the membership in order to increase member knowledge in a variety of areas. These topic areas are suggested and selected at the task force meeting and presented at a subsequent meeting.

**Recommendation #3: GTFJAC and CCA continue to work together to support MDT/CAC development.**

It is recommended that the GTFJAC and CCA (Connecticut Children's Alliance) continue to work together to support the on-going needs of Connecticut's Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) who are legislatively mandated to investigate these cases while ensuring that all Connecticut children and their families have access to high quality, comprehensive, specialized and culturally competent services. The task force is committed to ensuring MDTs receive evidence-based training, peer review support for forensic interviewers and resources to serve Connecticut's families. The task force is currently looking at ways that Connecticut can fully implement Public Act No. 17-190 which spelled out, in statute, Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs), ensured accreditation of our CACs, included key members of the MDTs and the role of the Connecticut Children's Alliance to provide annual reports to the GTF and our Connecticut General Assembly. This legislation was signed in to law in June 2017 and went into effect on July 1, 2018. The task force is committed to assisting all of our Child Advocacy Centers reach full accreditation. We feel that this comprehensive support will address Section 107 e (1)(A), (B) and (C).

**Additional recommendations since 2018 Three Year Assessment Submission:**

**Recommendation # 4: The task force will review the goals of the next Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP).** The Department of Children and Families is responsible for developing and implementing the Child and Family Service Plan, which is due on June 30, 2019. The 2014 CFSP was shared with the members of the task force over the last several years. Members of the state CFSP strategic planning and implementation team presented at the May 2019 Governor's Task Force meeting. Additionally, the GTFJAC members reviewed the approved Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and summary, which outlined strategic actions for the department to meet the goals and outcomes found in the CFSR. One of the task force chairs participates in the APSR process and provides updates regarding the MDT/CAC model. Two members of the task force will participate in the CFSP process through stakeholder meetings and contribute to the final report due June 30, 2019. It is the intention of our members to ensure that purposeful connections are made between the work of the task force and the goals of the CFSP.

**Recommendation # 5: The task force will review statewide data.** The Chapter Director of the Connecticut Children's Alliance (CCA) continues to provide the task force data collected from the statewide Outcome Measurement System (OMS), surveys are distributed to caregivers, multi-disciplinary team members, and other key stakeholders. The 2019 surveys will collect data regarding the Minimal Facts training allowing for the GTF to evaluate a variety of factors related to the training. In addition, the Results Based Accountability (RBA) report cards are reviewed annually by the GTF and shared with key stakeholder statewide. The data collected during the evaluations of our MDTs are reviewed to ascertain if there are trends, issues or gaps in services statewide. These universal issues enable the GTF to solicit and develop trainings or recommend policies to address the need.

**B. Governor's Task Force Committees**

The Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children (GTFJAC, GTF, Task Force, and Governor's Task Force) meets on a bimonthly basis for planning, decision making, and information sharing. Its membership is large, diverse, and active. Consequently, the GTF has established several committees and workgroups to focus on key issues as identified by the GTF. It is in these committees that much of the work of the GTF is done. All of the activities of the GTF fall in line with the expectations as outlined in the annual Program Instruction.

Members of the task force are expected to be present at meetings, receive minutes and meeting packets electronically and are able to share relevant GTF information and recommendations with the state and local agencies they represent. This is vital for on-going system changes that are recommended by the GTF. Outlined below are the 2017-2018 activities of the Governor's Task Force.

### **The Multidisciplinary Team Evaluation Committee**

In 2002, in accordance with Connecticut General Statute Sec. 17a-106a(c), a permanent Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Evaluation Committee was established to review protocols, monitor and evaluate the performance of multidisciplinary teams. The MDT Evaluation Committee is a permanent GTF committee and is charged with reviewing the protocols of all multidisciplinary teams, monitoring, and evaluating teams, and making recommendations for modifications to the system of multidisciplinary teams. This committee is elected by the Governor's Task Force membership. It is co-chaired by Krystal Rich, Director of the Connecticut Children's Alliance and Paula Schaeffer, Program Coordinator for Yale-New Haven Hospital, Child Sexual Abuse Clinic. The committee's composition is diverse geographically, culturally and by discipline. Current membership includes representatives from child protection, forensic medical providers and interviewers, States Attorney's Office (prosecutors), mental health, victim services, the Attorney General's office, law enforcement, and MDT coordinators.

Since 2002, the Village for Children and Families has been contracted to conduct the evaluations in collaboration with the GTF's MDT Evaluation Committee. The MDT Evaluation Committee redesigned the evaluation process in 2013 and completed an additional refresh of the design and functionality of the tools in 2018. The updated evaluation tools will be implemented in the next evaluation cycle. The tools and methodology for the review include:

- A biennial standardized team functioning survey to all team members;
- Self-assessment surveys in six topic areas (Team Functioning, Investigations, Forensic Interviews, Medical Evaluations, Advocacy, Mental Health Services);
- Quantitative case data analysis;
- Qualitative case review;
- Observation of team meetings (by committee members and the evaluators); and,
- Review of records and protocols maintained by each team.

The state is looking to move towards uniform Standards and Team Protocols. During this reporting period, the committee finalized both of these documents that were later forwarded to each of the teams to update with their team information. This was done to ensure all team protocols are updated in advance of the next evaluation cycle and allow the teams an opportunity to ask questions and fully implement the protocols. Each team used the template, updated the team protocol with their local information and submitted them to the MDT Evaluation committee. The committee reviewed each of the protocols and provided written feedback to each of the teams. The committee plans to conduct training with each of Connecticut's Multidisciplinary teams to ensure the evaluation process and self-evaluation tools are clear prior to the next evaluation round.

Activities: The team has worked on the following during the 2018-2019 reporting period:

1. The MDT Evaluation Committee finalized the Connecticut Standards.
2. The MDT Evaluation Committee revised the evaluation and reporting tools and processes for efficiencies and to ensure they reflect the latest NCA Standards.
3. The MDT Evaluation Committee revised the state Team Protocol.
4. The committee reviewed each team's protocol and provided feedback.
5. The MDT Evaluation Committee implemented a new standardized follow up with teams regarding their evaluations.
6. The MDT Evaluation Committee revised the Evaluation Report.

7. Once the statewide rollout of the new MDT evaluation tools, State Protocol and State Standard is completed, the MDT reviews will continue the 3<sup>rd</sup> round. The schedule is as follows:

#	MDT	Round	Period Under Review	Site Review	Completed
1	Norwalk	<i>1st Round</i>	December 2014 - December 2015	May-16	X
2	Torrington	<i>1st Round</i>	January 2015 – January 2016	Jun-16	X
3	New Britain	<i>1st Round</i>	March 2015 - March 2016	Aug-16	X
4	Manchester	<i>1st Round</i>	May 2015 – May 2016	Oct-16	X
5	Danbury	<i>1st Round</i>	July 2015 – July 2016	Dec-16	X
6	Middlesex	<i>2nd Round</i>	August 2015 – August 2016	Jan-17	X
7	Ansonia/Milford	<i>2nd Round</i>	October 2015 – October 2016	Mar-17	X
8	New Haven	<i>2nd Round</i>	December 2016 - December 2017	May-17	X
9	Waterbury	<i>2nd Round</i>	January 2016 – January 2017	Jun-17	X
10	Windham	<i>2nd Round</i>	March 2016 –March 2017	Jul-17	X
			April 2016 – April 2017		
11	Bridgeport	<i>3rd Round</i>		Sep-17	X
12	Stamford	<i>3rd Round</i>	July 2015 – July 2016	Dec-17	X
13	New London	<i>3rd Round</i>			
14	Tolland	<i>3rd Round</i>			
15	Hartford	<i>3rd Round</i>			
16	Hartford West	<i>3rd Round</i>			
17	Enfield	<i>3rd Round</i>			

### Training Committee

The MDT Training Committee has been very active this year. The committee is chaired by Elizabeth Leaming, BS, JD Senior Assistant State’s Attorney Judicial District of Tolland and Kristen M. Clark, GTF Coordinator. The committee looks to meet the training needs of the multiple disciplines involved in Connecticut teams and throughout the system, and to award financial reimbursement for those wishing to attend training. The training committee works with an established annual budget and during this fiscal year, the committee added Finding Words and Minimal Facts as sub-committees. The Training Committee supported the 4th Annual Conference entitled “Response to Recovery” to be held in May 2019. The project is an on-going collaboration between CCA and the Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team (HART) in an effort to highlight the work being done in the state to address child abuse inclusive of domestic minor sex trafficking. With over 500 attendees scheduled to participate, the conference will be able to accommodate an additional 50 participants due to funds received from the Training Committee. The annual conference offers a diverse selection of session topics and is an opportunity for law enforcement, child protective services staff, lawyers, social workers, therapists, teachers, forensic interviewers, medical professionals and child advocacy center staff to come together and learn how to strengthen their response to child abuse and exploitation cases across Connecticut. Workshops will include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- The Intersection of Disparities, Equity and the Multi-Dimensions of Engagement in Child Welfare
- Putting Language Access into Practice
- Building and Sustaining Effective MDT Collaboration
- Sex Offenders: What Judges, Lawyers, Investigators, and Child Advocates should know
- The Forensic Interview: Being an Active and Informed Observer

Best Practices in Serving Victims of Sex Trafficking  
Reaching the "unreachable": Non-Traditional Therapies for Survivors  
DMST: Underlying Factors in Popular Culture  
Demystifying the Sexually Abused Child  
Emotion Regulation (coping w/ VT / DV/ Emotions)

### ***Finding Words Connecticut – A ChildFirst State Sub-committee***

Connecticut, through the Governor's Task Force, was certified as a *Finding Words* state in 2007. *Finding Words (ChildFirst), Interviewing Children and Preparing for Court* is the nationally recognized 40-hour child-interviewing program that has been adopted by 19 states and two countries as of May 2019. The National District Attorney's Association's (NDAA), American Prosecutors Research Institute, in cooperation with CornerHouse of Minnesota, originally instituted this program under the Finding Words name. After the NDAA ceased to sponsor the course in 2008, the national course name was changed to *ChildFirst*.

From 2008 to 2012, the National Child Protection Training Center (NCPTC) in Winona, MN, and CornerHouse in Minneapolis, MN supported the state courses on the national level. Connecticut continually renewed its contract with the NCPTC and CornerHouse. As mentioned, the national program's name is *ChildFirst* and some of the certified states have chosen to adopt the *ChildFirst* name in lieu of *Finding Words*. Connecticut has chosen to retain the *Finding Words* name. Originally part of the NDAA, the NCPTC has gone through a number of changes; most recently leaving the Gundersen Health System and acquired by the Zero Abuse Project. The national program link is:

<https://www.zeroabuseproject.org/education-training/childfirst-forensic-interviewing-protocol/>

As of 2013, CornerHouse stopped participating in the *ChildFirst* program, though they did allow their RATAAC protocol materials were used until December 2014. In 2013 – 2014 the *Finding Words / ChildFirst* states, together with the NCPTC developed a new forensically sound protocol for use by the states. Now known as the *ChildFirst* Protocol, Connecticut's faculty participated in the development of this new protocol and introduced it in the October 2014 course.

With its June 2019 course, Connecticut started its thirteenth program year. Each course trains 37 child abuse professionals free of charge. The course is held at the Police Officers Standards and Training Council (POSTC) at the Connecticut Police Academy in Meriden, Connecticut; training facilities are donated. The GTF Coordinator continues to administer the *Finding Words* program. During the reporting period, courses were held in June and November 2018. The next course is scheduled for June 2019.

In total there have been over 810 child abuse professionals trained with the Connecticut *Finding Words* course, including law enforcement, social workers, prosecutors, forensic interviewers, and other MDT members. Every county in Connecticut has been trained. Starting with the April 2010 course, the non-state employee faculty had received a \$100 per day honorarium during the course week and mileage reimbursement. With the April 2017 course, this honorarium increased to \$175.00 per day. If their time is donated by an agency, the money goes to that agency.

Every student completes a pre-test on the first day of the course. This allows for a baseline regarding student knowledge prior to the course. On the last day, the course culminates with a post-test. Both tests

include fill in the blank and narrative questions. Finding Words faculty correct tests and students receive one on one feedback on their answers prior to receiving their course certificates. The test is also available orally to accommodate students with testing limitations. Students receive evaluations after each workshop topic area and are allowed time to complete them before the next workshop begins. On the last day, students are given an evaluation for the student exercises and the overall course. Feedback from student evaluations of the course remains extremely positive. At the end of the course, faculty receive scanned copies of the evaluations for the sections, which they taught. This allows the faculty time to read student comments, suggestions, concerns and make changes to or highlight key pieces of their presentation in future courses.

Periodically, the Connecticut faculty makes changes to the *Finding Words* and if needed incorporates those changes into both the course itself and the participant binder. This can include research-based updates. During a faculty retreat in summer 2014, it was decided to substitute a new exercise called Behind the Mirror for the child exercise. This exercise replaced the child exercise. Behind the Mirror has been used in courses since October 2014. In this exercise, the students are sent to two breakout rooms. A faculty member treats the breakout group as an MDT and using a mock child abuse case runs a case investigation discussion and then interviewer's one of the child actors using the *ChildFirst* Protocol. After the interview, the information received from the child (actor) is discussed in terms of what further steps should be taken on the investigation, including corroboration for what the child (actor) has said. Student evaluations continue to be positive and the segment will remain with the course.

Krystal Rich and Attorney Michelle Manning, co-chairs of the *Finding Words* sub-committee and Kristen M. Clark, GTF coordinator continue to participate in quarterly national calls held with the NCPTC and the other certified states. Connecticut continues to belong to the *ChildFirst* Alliance, which is an affiliation of the 19 states adhering to the original intents and purposes of the *Finding Words* program as published by the NDAA in June 2003.

The co-chairs and coordinator have traveled yearly to the national conference that supports the *Finding Words* / *ChildFirst* states administered by the NCPTC. Formerly known as the When Words Matter conference, covering mostly forensic interviewing, it includes the annual meeting of all *Finding Words* / *ChildFirst* states. The conference, now called Violence Intervention and Prevention Summit, features advanced courses in forensic interviewing, prevention, addressing the spiritual needs of maltreated children and reforming undergraduate training of future child protection professionals. While funding for out of state faculty training is available only on a limited basis, Connecticut attended the February 2019 conference in Orlando, Florida.

At the annual meeting, Connecticut joined several workgroups. The GTF Coordinator sits on the Research and *ChildFirst* Protocol Update committees. The Research committee is looking at collecting data regarding the *ChildFirst* protocol. The committee is developing an observational rating form for coding forensic interviews and developing the variables of interest (examining transition types used, in what order, to include use of drawings and touch inquiry as a transition type). The committee is also interested in coding question types to assist in developing a document that responds to research in this area. The Protocol Update Committee is compiling topic area research to ensure that the *ChildFirst* protocol remains current with best practices in forensic interviewing.

## **Peer Review**

Falling under the Finding Words' sub-committee, Connecticut forensic interviewers, who serve the 17 MDT's in the state, have participated in statewide peer review since 2002. Currently, the GTF Coordinator coordinates the quarterly peer review. The coordinator created the first Statewide Forensic Interviewer Database that includes demographic information for all of the Forensic Interviewers within the state. It tracks their initial training, participation in Peer Review and dates that they submit their videos for peer review. In addition to Statewide Peer review, forensic interviewers are expected to participate in more localized peer review. Depending on the area of the state, this occurs anywhere from weekly to monthly.

In 2014 a Forensic Interviewer Mentoring program was piloted with one new forensic interviewer being formally mentored. This program was the result of the Finding Words' faculty's belief that new interviewers, having just completed the *Finding Words* course, without more could not be considered ready to interview independently for the multidisciplinary teams. This program expanded upon a recommendation list for new interviewers that was available after they completed the *Finding Words* course. The recommendations sought to spell out what is needed to bring a new interviewer to the point when they could consider themselves independent interviewers. It became obvious to the committee that our recommendations could be implemented at locations that employ several interviewers and where seasoned interviewers were already employed. However, at the other sites, this was not the case. Some interviewers began interviewing without proper oversight possibly resulting in inadequate information gathering, discouraged interviewers, and disappointed team members. The Forensic Interviewer Mentoring program looked to support new forensic interviewers from around the state who are sent by their multidisciplinary teams to *Finding Words*. A formal protocol booklet has been produced and the program passed through the Executive Committee in the winter of 2017.

## **Minimal Facts Sub-Committee**

Best practice indicates that, to minimize trauma, a child who has disclosed child sexual abuse should be interviewed once by the person conducting a forensic interview. However, there is also recognition that, to ensure a child's safety, some information may need to be obtained directly from the child in the immediate. In these instances, the goal is to gather minimal facts in a manner that will not jeopardize the integrity of the forensic interview and investigation, or cause further trauma to the child. In response to this, the Governor's Task Force has partnered with the Connecticut Children's Alliance, the DCF Training Academy, DCF Careline, State's Attorney's Office, the CT State Police, the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POSTC - the state police academy), CT Children's Alliance, local police departments, multidisciplinary teams, forensic interviewers and other stakeholders across Connecticut to develop comprehensive minimal facts trainings.

This workgroup prepared two training curricula: one for first responders (targeting law enforcement and DCF) and one for other mandated reporters (targeting educators, daycare, etc.). This second group has been recognized as the "Discoverers" group. There have been several Train the Trainers (TOT) sessions for both groups and these will continue as needed. The Minimal Facts Stewardship Committee (and later the Minimal Facts Advisory Board whose responsibility was to maintain and disseminate the curricula,

materials and to support and further TOTs as needed) now falls under the jurisdiction of the Training Committee.

Since the initial training of DCF staff and members of law enforcement, trainers have reached out to their communities and multiple trainings have been provided throughout the state. Adopted in policy, the Connecticut State Police Academy has continued to teach the First Responder curriculum to new recruits. The curriculum is also being taught by one of our law enforcement trainers at Spector, another law enforcement training site. The Connecticut State Police have vetted First Responders Minimal Facts PowerPoint presentation in its entirety and have created an online version; purposes of ensuring that every sworn member of CSP participates in the online version as part of their required training mandates. The DCF training academy has also incorporated the First Responders training into the intake training as well as into the training for all new social work trainees. The Department of Children and Family, initially aimed to make Minimal Facts policy but following administrative review, it will now be part of the best practice guide for the department regarding child sexual abuse investigations.

The Discoverers curriculum continues to be offered. MDT coordinators are the conduit for these trainings and have reached out to their communities and facilitate training. Feedback from student evaluations, distributed at each training, have been positive and there has continued to be a large and eager interest in this training by community members.

The Minimal Facts curricula were updated during this reporting period and the new presentations will be fully implemented during summer 2019. In addition, the Outcome Measurement System (OMS) for the team providers was updated to include questions regarding Minimal Facts. These questions will look to see if the course is reaching Connecticut professionals if tenets of the curriculum are practiced in the field and assess gaps in training delivery.

In an effort to ensure that high-quality legal representation is provided to all parties in all stages of child welfare proceedings, including the front-end stages, the committee will provide Minimal Facts training for the lawyers of Connecticut's Attorney General's office in June of 2019. This training will look to ensure that all Assistant Attorney Generals are aware of the tenets of the Minimal Facts training and the objectives that first responders will learn in the course. The goal is for the AAGs to understand the proper methods for first responders to interact with children when they become aware of an abuse allegation or disclosure. The AAGs will learn what first responders/mandated reporters are expected to document the nature and circumstances of the disclosure. The AAGs need to be able to assess whether or not disclosures obtained by police, social workers, teachers, daycare providers are spontaneous and not the result of suggestion or leading questions. This training, allows AAGs to understand what to look for as they prepare witnesses to testify about the disclosure, the circumstances under which it was made and how the witness responded. This training can serve as a means of improving the handling of cases of child abuse and neglect and reducing family and child trauma. Similar training has been requested by Connecticut's juvenile public defenders.



## **C. Other Governor's Task Force and Related Activities**

### **Governor's Task Force Coordinator**

The Village for Families and Children continues to serve as the contractor for the GTF Coordinator, Finding Words training, MDT evaluation, and education and training funds allocated by the Governor's Task Force. Supervision, over-all direction and evaluation of the GTF Coordinator is supervised by the Department of Children and Families (contract holder) including the Tri-Chairs of the Governor's Task Force in collaboration with the Village for Families and Children.

During this reporting period, the GTF Coordinator provided coordination and staff assistance to all of GTF's committees, workgroups, and the Governor's Task Force as reported throughout this report. The GTF coordinator participated in workgroups related to contracts for the MDTs across the state. The GTF Coordinator organized and managed the work related to *Finding Words* including the training that occurred in November 2018 and the upcoming course in June 2019 (e.g. registrations, all course logistics, and all fiduciary responsibilities). In addition, the coordinator handled the logistics and fiduciary responsibilities for the *Finding Words* faculty to attend the "*Violence Intervention and Prevention Summit*" conference in February 2019. As detailed in the report above, the GTF Coordinator participates in two National Child Protection Training Center workgroups (Research and *ChildFirst* Protocol update) and coordinates the quarterly statewide peer review.

In addition, the GTF Coordinator has participated with the development of the Children's Advocacy Centers Women of Color Caucus (CAC-WOCC) during this reporting period. The CAC WOCC stemmed from a conversation about the lack of diversity in the CAC movement and how that directly impacts service provision to children from non-dominant cultures. CACs are for all children with an expectation of equitable outcomes but there are large groups of children who are not being fully served or served in an equitable manner. Research shows that when there is diversity in leadership, there are innovations in strategic thinking and a wider impact. The Steering Committee is developing mission and vision statements as well as guiding principles for the group. The organizational development will also include a needs assessment to assess ways the CACWOCC can initiate systemic change towards diversity, equity, and inclusion in the CAC movement. The GTF Coordinator serves on the Steering Committee and the Regional/National Meeting Committee.

In the summer of 2018, Connecticut was asked to present our state's work on the development and support of MDTs/CAC. The GTF Coordinator took the lead developing the presentation for the annual Children's Justice Act meeting in Washington, DC. The presentation included information regarding work that task force has completed through the MDT Evaluation Committee, the on-going development and support of MDTs, and ability to collect data statewide through NCATrak, RBA and the implementation of the Outcomes Measurement Survey.

In September 2014, DCF received Grants to Address Trafficking within the Child Welfare Population, Connecticut's Human Antitrafficking Response Team (HART) Project providing the first trafficking-related funds to support these efforts. The coordinator for the GTF is a member of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team (HART) as well as the HART Leadership Team. The HART Coordinator funded through the HHS ACF grant directly supervises the GTF Coordinator allowing for continuous collaboration to ensure the best outcomes for both grants.

### **Membership Committee**

The Membership Committee was formed in 2003 to address membership issues, particularly regarding clarifying the role and function of Task Force members and maintaining and recruiting members. This remains a standing committee. This year, the committee completed the work of identifying members for

areas that have not had consistent attendance at the task force meetings and ensured a full task force. The GTF coordinator ensured that all new members were oriented to the task force prior to their first meeting and has met or will meet with each new member to discuss collaborative initiatives. During this reporting period, the task force has dedicated time on each agenda for presentations to the membership in order to increase member knowledge in a variety of areas. The addition of these presentations has increased member engagement in the work of the task force. The task force has received presentations regarding Evaluation of Children for Suspected Sexual Abuse (John Leventhal); Treatment Resources for Youth with Problem Sexual Behavior (Eliza Borecka); Child Fatalities in Connecticut (Faith Vos Winkel); CASA in Connecticut (Lauren Messner); and Child and Family Service Plan (Ken Cabral). These training opportunities have allowed members to gain knowledge in key areas, discuss gaps in service areas, discuss potential task force activities as well as contemplate opportunities for interagency collaborations.

### **Website**

The GTF has a website that provides information regarding the Task Force including its meeting minutes/agendas, membership, roles/responsibilities, current activities, and resources. The State of CT Department of Children and Families maintains this site at no cost. The GTF coordinator and DCF Manager serves as the content manager and works with the DCF Webmaster continually updating to ensure the site is user-friendly and current; additional updates will occur over the next reporting period. The GTFJAC website is: <https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/GTF-CJA/Home#2019>

### **By-Laws**

The by-laws of the GTF were last amended in March 2010. In the May 17, 2018 GTF meeting, several amendments were presented to the task force based upon outcomes from the 2017 GTF retreat workgroup recommendations. During the reporting period, the by-laws were updated to correlate with the various changes resulting from the retreat and ad hoc group recommendations. The by-laws were approved by the GTF in January 2019 and will be reviewed every three years in concert with the Three Year Assessment.

### **Connecticut Children's Alliance, Inc.**

#### **Child Advocacy Center and Multidisciplinary Team Coordinators**

For more than 16 years, the Connecticut Children's Alliance, Inc. (CCA) has provided a forum for education and support to the state's MDTs and CACs via monthly meetings and regular training opportunities. Originally formed as a grassroots alliance of the MDT coordinators, the CCA is now a federally recognized non-profit organization (established in May 2009) as well as a National Children's Alliance (NCA) State Accredited Chapter as of June 2011. CCA's purpose is to support Child Advocacy Centers and Multidisciplinary Teams across Connecticut by providing education, training, and resources. The CCA's mission is to avail comprehensive statewide services to all child victims and their families through collaboration, systemic change, public awareness, and legislative advocacy. It is CCA's vision that all child victims and their families have equal access to system-wide, high quality, culturally competent services of a Child Advocacy Center/Multidisciplinary Team to ensure that all children receive a comprehensive response to child abuse investigations.

All recognized state MDTs/CACs are represented in the CCA and play an integral role in the development of goals for statewide improvement of services to child victims of abuse. CCA, Inc. is a mandated standing member of GTF and CCA members participate in almost every committee, sub-committee or ad hoc task group of the GTF, often taking a leadership role. During the reporting period, CCA focused efforts on Connecticut meeting

the new NCA standards, development of standards for MDT coordinators and the development of a Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework with reports comparing statewide outcome measures.

## **Connecticut Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Statistics January through December 2018**

Total number of children served at the MDTs in Connecticut: 1783

Gender of children:

Male 536

Female 1243

Undisclosed 4

Age of children at first contact with center:

0-6 years 455

7-12 years 663

13-18 years 695

Undisclosed 0

Relationship of the alleged offender to the child:

Parent 378

Stepparent 276

Other Relative 243

Parent's boyfriend/girlfriend 97

Other known person 350

Unknown 50

Types of abuse reported:

Sexual Abuse 7131

Physical Abuse 253

Neglect 67

Witness to Violence 13

Drug Endangerment 0

Trafficking 76

Race or ethnicity of total children seen at CAC:

White 738

Black/African American 298

Hispanic/Latino 391

American Indian/Alaska Native 3

Asian/Pacific Islander 10

Other 33

Undisclosed 46

Number of the children receiving services:

Medical Exam/Treatment 591

Counseling Therapy 102

Referral to Counseling Therapy 92

Onsite Forensic Interviewing 916

Offsite Forensic Interviewing 10

During the past year, highlights of CCA and its members included:

***Outcome Measurement System:*** In 2015, Connecticut partnered with NCA to bring the Outcomes Measurement System (OMS) to the state. OMS is a nationally recognized satisfaction survey system in which caregivers and multidisciplinary team members are given the opportunity to express how satisfied they are with the services being provided. Although nationally, it is optional for Child Advocacy Centers and Multidisciplinary Teams to sign on, Connecticut has decided that each of the ten CACs will take part in this new initiative to collect satisfaction data. Recognizing that although each professional is doing their best to provide effective services, it is crucial we continue to collect data from families to better understand their needs and views on the services provided. This was fully implemented by the end of 2016 with all of Connecticut's Child Advocacy Centers beginning to take part in OMS. In 2017, all CACs in Connecticut began administering an additional follow-up survey to caregivers in order to gather more outcome-based information on services provision. CCA presents an analysis of the annual data to GTF and this continues to be a framework towards improving the state's joint response to these cases and support the victim and their families.

## **Outcome Measurement Survey Highlights**

### **What is OMS?**

The purpose of OMS is to help CACs evaluate their programs to 1) increase the quality of services provided to children and families, and 2) improve the collaborative efforts of multidisciplinary team (MDT) members. There are three primary surveys in OMS: two Caregiver Surveys and one MDT Survey. Each survey takes about five minutes to complete and can be done on a computer/tablet at the center, by smartphone, by email invitation, over the phone, and on paper. Centers can also request to add extra items to their surveys for their own research or funding requirements. Connecticut's Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) and Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) have been utilizing OMS as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

### **Connecticut Results Jan 2017-December 2018**

#### **Satisfaction Survey Results- Caregivers**

**(This survey captures a caregiver and child's satisfaction with services provided at the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) during their first visit.)**

- **86%** of parents felt their child's questions were answered to their satisfaction.
- **17%** of parents felt they would have liked additional services available for their child.
- **95.2%** of parents felt the CAC staff made sure they understood the reason for their visit to the CAC.
- **92%** of caregivers felt the CAC staff provided them with resources to support their child and respond to his or her needs in the days and weeks ahead.

#### **Satisfaction Survey Results- MDT Partners**

**(This survey is meant to capture the satisfaction of multidisciplinary team members with the process).**

- **83.5%** of multidisciplinary partners strongly or somewhat agree during the multidisciplinary team process they have the opportunity to provide input into the forensic interview process, thereby securing the level of information needed to fulfill their area of responsibility.
- **68.5%** of team members believe case review team meetings are useful in the development of cases.
- **93.4%** of team members strongly or somewhat agree the clients served through the center benefit from the collaborative approach of our multidisciplinary team.

## Satisfaction Surveys-Northeast Comparison

(The below results capture both caregiver and multidisciplinary team member satisfaction in CT as it compares to results from the surrounding northeastern states).

- Clients served by CACs in Connecticut were **2%** more satisfied overall with the information provided to them on additional services following the interview.
- Clients served by CACs in Connecticut were approximately **1%** more satisfied with the information they received to prepare them for possible behaviors they might expect from their child after leaving the center.
- Non-offending caregivers served by CACs in CT were **4%** more likely to want additional services for themselves that were not provided by the CAC.

### Connecticut MDT Partner Narrative Response Trends

- A lack of understanding regarding the MDT/CAC model and its purpose (33 responses)
- Standardized response protocols (32 responses)
- More training on what other disciplines are responsible for and what they can and cannot do (29 responses)
- More training on how to respond to physical abuse cases (11 responses)
- Child fatality cases and the MDT's role (9 responses)
- Witness to violence/exposure to violence and the MDT/CAC response (10 responses)
- Standardized referral process (19 responses)
- Policies that better align with the MDT model across different disciplines (8 responses)
- Policies in the state that mandate MDT referrals for certain cases (13 responses)
- Minimal Facts (14 responses)
  - 9 referenced minimal facts as an interview
  - 5 acknowledged that minimal facts is not an interview

### Connecticut Caregiver Narrative Response Trends

- More information and resources for caregiver support (10 responses)
- More consistent follow-up from advocacy services throughout the life of the case (12 responses)
- More services for siblings (6 responses)
- More information on other services outside medical and mental health- basic needs (9 responses)
- More mental health services for the family without having to go far or go through another intake process (7 responses)

**Results Based Accountability (RBA):** Additionally, information gathered from OMS will be used as part of the Result Based Accountability report card each center will produce as part of their contract with the Department of Children and Families. Results Based Accountability (RBA) is used by organizations to improve the performance of their programs or services. Each program and organization that have a contract with the Department of Children and Families are required to participate in RBA by developing performance measures that focus on whether clients are better off as a result of the services being provided. These performance measures also look at the quality and efficiency of the CAC services. (See 2018 results on the next pages).

**Data:** In 2018, CCA began collaborating with the National Children's Alliance to create a more comprehensive data report that will allow the state to track more outcome data. This report will roll out in the summer of 2019.

**Chapter Branding:** The Connecticut Children's Alliance re-did the logo and look of the organization back in 2008. At that point, a clear mission and vision were not yet established and it was difficult to convey to the community that CCA is a membership of CACs. In 2015, the chapter recognized the need to rebrand and contract with a design company for a new look. With the input of the membership and the board of directors, a new logo was chosen to convey that our mission is linked back to the children. In 2016, CCA finished the redesign of their

logo, marketing materials, and website. The website now has a members-only log-in section allowing MDT and CAC partners access to helpful materials, templates, and resources located in one place. In 2018, CCA took on a prevention program and updated the website to include more information about prevention services in the state.

### ***National Children's Alliance's Leadership Conference***

CCA facilitates the attendance of Connecticut MDT/CAC coordinators and MDT members to the National Children's Alliance's annual Leadership Conference held in Washington, DC in June of each year. This conference is one of the premier conferences in the nation for MDT/CAC leaders. At the event, Connecticut participants visit their representative and/or their senator to provide education about the multidisciplinary response to child abuse in Connecticut. CCA offers scholarships to all new MDT/CAC coordinators to attend this event during their first year of employment.

### ***Training and other Awareness Events***

The 17 MDTs hosted or sponsored numerous training relating to response and intervention in child abuse cases. Hundreds of professionals across the state received training on various topics. Titles of presentations include Forensic Interviewing, Profiling and Interviewing the Sexual Abuse Perpetrator, Technology-Facilitated Crimes against Children, Enhancing Skills in Child Abuse Investigations, Minimal Facts for First Responders and Discoverers, Vicarious Trauma, Child Trafficking and more. Numerous CACs held local events during Child Abuse Prevention Month to raise awareness of both the problem of child abuse and the MDT/CAC response in our communities. Some of these events included a "Walk in her Shoes" out in Milford CT, a motorcycle ride in Bridgeport, CT, and a Prevention Pinwheels Event in downtown New Haven.

The CCA also hosted the 3rd Annual Conference entitled "Response to Recovery" in May 2018. The project is an on-going collaboration between the Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team (HART) in an effort to highlight the work being done in the state to address child abuse inclusive of child trafficking. Over 500 partners attended this event last year. In May 2019, we will be hosting our 4th Annual Conference with over 500 partners scheduled to participate. The annual conference offers a diverse selection of session topics and is an opportunity for law enforcement, child protective services staff, lawyers, social workers, therapists, teachers, forensic interviewers, medical professionals and child advocacy center staff to come together and learn how to strengthen their response to child abuse and exploitation cases across Connecticut.

***MDT Team Academy:*** CCA collaborated with NRCAC to host a 2-day team academy for four of CT's MDTs. The purpose of the academy was to strengthen the team's communication and identify areas of strengths and weaknesses. Following the training, each team is paired with a facilitator for the next year to work through an action plan developed during the course.

***New Coordinator Orientation/ Mentoring Program:*** In November of 2014, CCA instituted a New Coordinator Orientation/Mentoring Program for all new MDT coordinators. This program provides each new coordinator with a manual containing the necessary information including, but not limited to, meeting dates (CCA and GTF), descriptions of all subcommittees, information on NCA accreditation, state standards and helpful resources. In 2016, this program was updated to include a multi-session orientation. Feedback from new coordinators indicated a need for more than just a few hour orientation. The new orientation included shadowing and attendance at a minimum of two other case reviews across the state. In 2018, this orientation was updated to add new legislation and policy requirements. This orientation continues to be utilized as two new MDT coordinators were hired and orientated during this reporting period.

### ***MDT-Specific Accomplishments:***

**Windham:** Windham received a grant from the National Children's Alliance in 2017 to increase access to medical exams for children in their area. In 2017, the Sexual Assault Crisis Services of Eastern CT became the umbrella agency for the CACs located in Windham and New London. This merger expects to provide better



outcomes for children and families in that area through increased communication and resources sharing. In July of 2019, the New London CAC will go through the accreditation site visit from the National Children’s Alliance in hopes of reaching accreditation status.

**Hartford:** A new NCA associate CAC opened in the fall of 2017 to ensure the children and families in Hartford County have access to an accredited CAC providing best practice services. The development of this new CAC grew out of a collaboration between six of CT’s MDTs. Over the last year, the CAC has received additional funding to hire five full-time advocates, an MDT coordinator, a clinician, and a full-time forensic interviewer. In addition, by 2020, the CAC is building out space to provide specialized medical services onsite.

**DCF Program Report Card: CT Multidisciplinary Teams  
Q4 FY16- Q4 FY18**

**Results Statement:** All Connecticut children grow up in a stable environment, safe, healthy, and ready to succeed.

**Contribution to the Result:** The Multidisciplinary Team provides a holistic, coordinated and trauma-informed response to victims of child abuse and their families. Services are designed to enhance the safety and emotional and physical well-being of each child and family served.

Program Expenditures	State Funding	Federal Funding	Other Funding	Total Funding
Actual SFY 17	\$899,986.00	\$185,000	\$72,000	\$1,156,986
Estimated SFY 18	\$899,986.00	\$185,000	\$72,000	\$1,156,986
Annual Capacity	\$899,986.00	\$185,000	\$72,000	\$1,156,986

**Partners:** Family Members, DCF Staff, Congregate Care Providers, Victim Advocates, Mental Health providers, Medical providers, Forensic Interviewers, Family Relations, Prosecutors, Probation, Law Enforcement (local, state and federal), Educational Organizations, Youth Services Bureaus, Religious Organizations, Other Interested Community-based Organizations.

**How Much Did We Do?**

Race and Ethnicity of Children Served



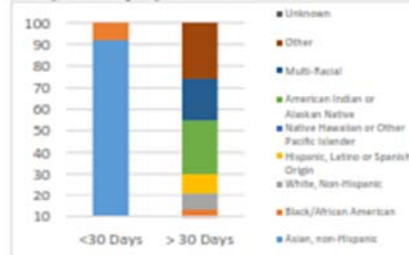
**Story behind the baseline:**

While the numbers of child abuse victims serve by MDTs, when broken out by ethnicity, are representative of the CT make-up, there are still several areas of the state where additional information around certain ethnic groups needs to be provided in order to better serve those population. With regards to the number of cases identified during the second quarter it is typical to see a drop-in cases as we start to get into the end of the spring semester and begin the summer. If broken down further there would be a significant spike in cases during the first half of the second quarter and a decrease in the second half. Additionally, the NCATrak data system went through a significant update during the first three quarters of 2018 causing some glitches.

Trend: ◀▶

**How Well Did We Do It?**

Percent of cases accepted for full team review within 30 days of receipt by coordinator



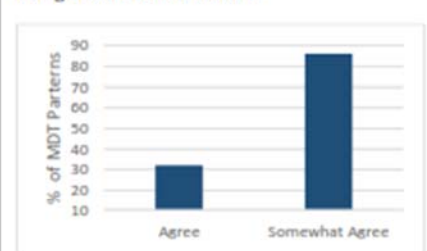
**Story behind the baseline:**

Early collaboration during the investigation minimizes the possible re-victimization of children often caused by duplication of services such as multiple interviews. A statewide workgroup is currently developing standardized response protocols for MDTs to ensure the referral system for each area is streamlined which should in turn increase the number of cases seen within the appropriate timeframe. Additional factors may include misclassification of cases, misunderstanding of the referral process and case acceptance criteria by new team members. Overall, there is a common percentage of cases reviewed within 30 days across racial groups.

Trend: ◀▶

**How Well Did We Do It?**

Percent of MDT partners reporting a moderate to high level of collaboration



**Story behind the baseline:**

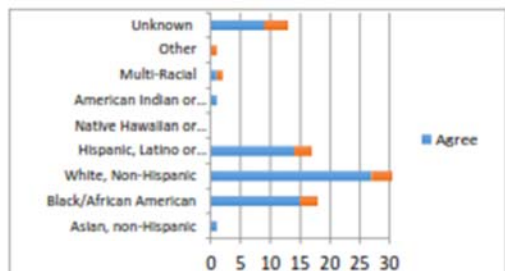
As more effort is put into team development, clarification around case acceptance criteria and education on the dynamics of child abuse, overall team members are reporting a higher satisfaction with the multidisciplinary response. Research from the National Children’s Advocacy Center explains that as team members begin seeing the benefit of the system to the child as well as their individual job they begin to show higher signs of satisfaction and are more likely to engage in the process long-term. Additionally, members that report a higher rate of satisfaction with the team are more likely to refer children and their families to additional services provided by other team members (i.e., advocacy, medical and mental health). These additional services may help children and families in the immediate as well prevent possible long term negative effects.

Trend: ▲

**DCF Program Report Card: CT Multidisciplinary Teams  
Q4 FY16- Q4 FY18**

**Is Anyone Better Off?**

Percent of caregivers reporting an increased level of knowledge on how to respond to their child's needs following services.



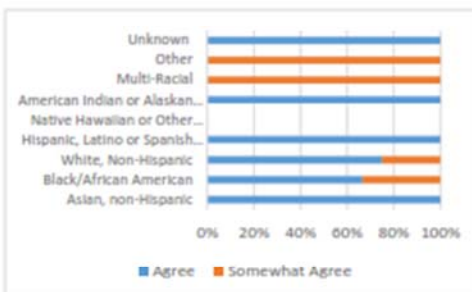
**Story behind the baseline:**

According to national research, caregivers who feel they have been provided with sufficient information and support are more likely to respond better to their child's needs following a traumatic event thus leading to better outcomes for the child. As staff members begin feeling more comfortable with administering the survey and barriers for clients taking the survey are identified, a higher participation rate is anticipated. The Outcome Measure System (OMS) that holds all caregiver satisfaction data has been redesigned to be more client friendly resulting in a higher rate of participation. The update was completed in the middle of the second quarter and it is anticipated that participation rates will continue to increase. Overall, there is a common percentage of caregivers who strongly agree they have been provided with adequate support across racial groups.

Trend: ◀▶

**Is Anyone Better Off?**

Number of caregivers reporting satisfaction with service provision or referrals for basic needs.



**Story behind the baseline:**

During the first quarter of administering the follow-up satisfaction surveys several barriers were identified including a reluctance from community partners to provide the survey information to caregivers. Coming from a place of concern, many community partners expressed fear that introducing the survey may seem like an invasion of privacy, be overwhelming for families or add to the current crisis. On the contrary research shows us that many families, when provided the option of giving their opinion, feel a sense of ownership over the process and are willing to provide feedback. The Outcome Measure System (OMS) that holds all caregiver satisfaction data has been redesigned to be more client friendly resulting in a higher rate of participation. The update was completed in the middle of the second quarter and it is anticipated that participation rates will continue to increase. The increase of 3% could be due to the restructuring of the survey itself.

Trend: ◀▶

**Proposed Actions to Turn the Curve:**

The update of OMS is expected to translate into more caregiver feedback that can inform our system ultimately leading to changes in the curve. The revised system offers an opportunity to develop satisfaction surveys geared towards children. These surveys can be developed based on the developmental level of certain age groups and will allow the MDT/CAC system to gather data on perceptions, needs and additional services directly from the child victims. This new system allows for surveys to be taken through email on applications on smartphones and tablets which research shows children are more likely to engage with.

To address the ongoing need for clarification around case acceptance criteria, how to work with specialized populations and continued team development, the MDTs will work with the Connecticut Children's Alliance and other stakeholders to develop a two-day training that will provide a standardized message on response protocols, referrals and the intent behind the MDT/CAC system. CCA received additional funding to provide this training in four regions of that state as well as online.

**Data Development Agenda:**

The Connecticut Children's Alliance (CCA), the state coalition of MDTs and CACs, has created a new statewide data report that encompasses more outcome measures.

**NCAtrak: A Data System for Multidisciplinary Teams**

Since 2010, all of Connecticut's CACs and MDTs have been using NCAtrak, a computerized, secure web-based care review and tracking system that was developed by the National Children's Alliance and Science Application International Corporation (SAIC). This is an intuitive, user-friendly system geared specifically toward the work that MDTs/CACs do on a daily basis. The ongoing challenge has been the system's ability to aggregate data at a statewide level, which limits our effectiveness as it relates to utilization, outcome monitoring, contract compliance, and general ongoing QI. The teams will continue to use NCAtrak and look for funding to support the implementation of the PIE data system or another system that will meet the needs of Connecticut. The Connecticut Children's Alliance continues to aggregate the data that is submitted to DCF. In 2018 CCA participated, along with three other states, in a pilot project to create a statewide interface in the NCAtrak system allowing the state to run aggregated reports.

**Northeast Regional Children's Advocacy Center**

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) established the Regional Children's Advocacy Centers (RCACs) in 1995 to provide technical assistance and training resources for communities establishing or strengthening CACs. The Northeast Regional CAC provides such services to the nine northeast



states inclusive of Connecticut. The four Regional CACs work collaboratively to further the development of CACs across the country. The primary goal of the collaborative partners is to make sure that every child has access to a Children's Advocacy Center. The Northeast Regional Children's Advocacy Center (NRCAC) promotes the use of Child Advocacy Centers and a multi-disciplinary approach to child abuse investigation, intervention, response, and prevention. NRCAC supports Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) and Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) through training, technical assistance, support, and outreach.

During the past year, NRCAC has been an active member of Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children. It has provided technical assistance, training, consultation, and support to the GTF, the CT state chapter (CT Children's Alliance) of National Children's Alliance and the MDT teams of Connecticut. NRCAC worked with the Klingberg CAC Leadership Team on two occasions in August 2018 and January 2019. The NRCAC came to Connecticut and conducted a Team Academy in March 2019. One of NRCAC's signature offerings, the team academy was conducted for five teams each comprised of 6-7 MDT members representing each discipline. This two-day training covered an array of topics aimed at improving team functioning, increased understanding of MDT model and skill building for MDT members.

### **Human Trafficking**

The Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children has focused efforts on the critical issues of Child Trafficking beginning in 2013. As of January 20, 2015, all MDT teams have been trained in the Introduction to Child Trafficking in CT curriculum. The HART Leadership Team continues to include all the DCF HART Liaisons, three MDT Coordinators, the GTF Coordinator and the Director of the Connecticut Children's Alliance with specialty membership based on current team efforts. The HART Team continues to have a tri-chaired structure including the HART Director, one DCF HART Liaison and one MDT Coordinator/CCA Chapter Director. DCF's regional HART liaisons are continuing to utilize the resources of their local Multidisciplinary Teams. HART has worked tirelessly to eradicate and spread awareness about human trafficking in Connecticut. This is demonstrated through the development and increase in training conducted among various stakeholders. In 2018, there were **236** trainings conducted that educated **4,866** participants. Our efforts to train law enforcement professionals, medical personnel, teachers, EMS, and other service workers is helping bring increased awareness about human trafficking to Connecticut residents.

The curriculums offered are:

### **Curricula in the Training of Child Trafficking in CT**

- Introduction to Child Trafficking in CT
- Introduction to Human Trafficking in CT for Law Enforcement (POST Certified)
- Introduction to Child Trafficking in CT for Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Child Trafficking of Boys & Male-Bodied Youth
- Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking – Day 1 & 2
- Fostering in the Best & Hardest of Times: Helping Foster Parents Care for High-Risk Kids and Child Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation

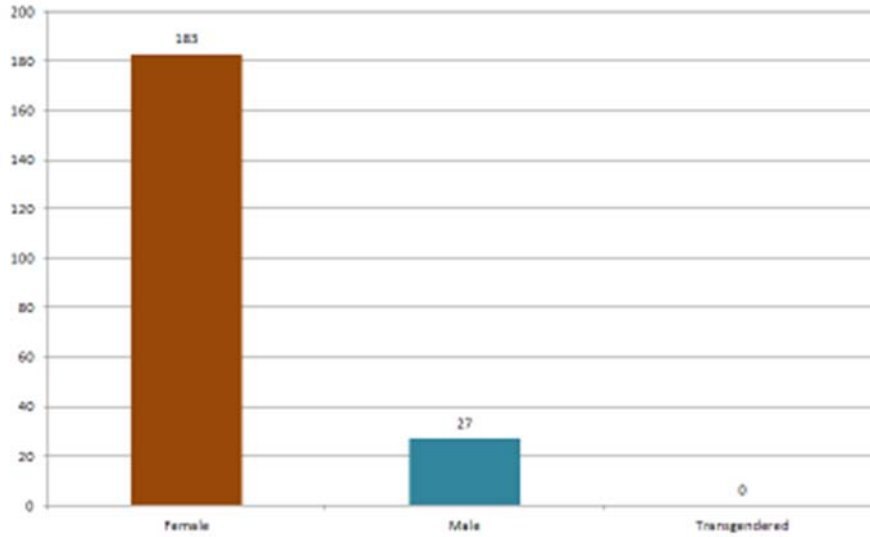
### **Youth-Specific Curricula**

- Youth Awareness on Child Trafficking
- Youth Prevention: Not a #Number

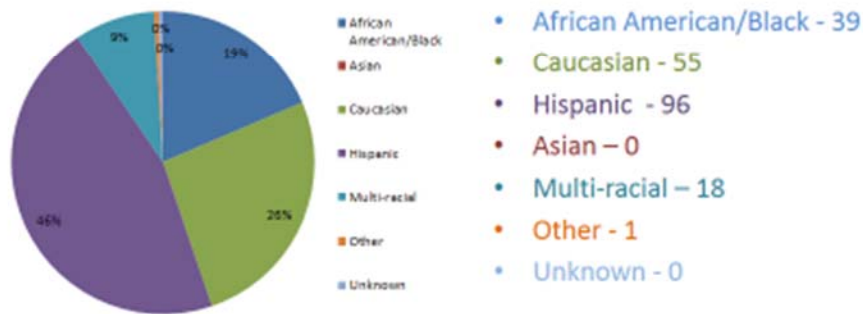
In 2018, DCF received **210 referrals** for high-risk or confirmed trafficking victims. Connecticut data indicates that girls and youth of color tend to be disproportionately affected by sexual exploitation. In addition, the highest number for referrals each quarter were for youth living at home. This data highlights the importance of awareness and education about human trafficking for parents as well as for our youth.



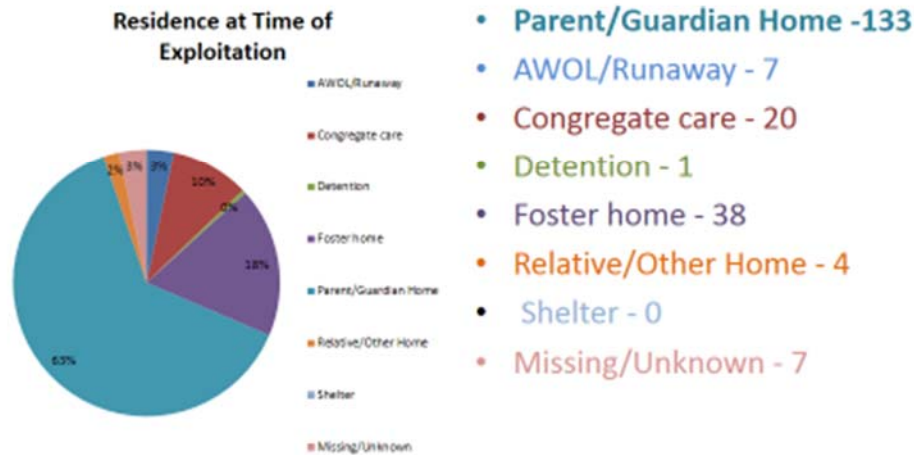
## 2018 Gender



## 2018 Race/Ethnicity



## 2018 Residence at Time of Exploitation



### Statutorily Mandated Statewide Child Fatality Review Panel

The State of Connecticut has established a Child Fatality Review Panel (CFRP), which is charged with reviewing the circumstances of the death of a child placed in out-of-home care or whose death was due to unexpected or unexplained causes. Although the Panel is a separate entity, its day-to-day operations are coordinated through the Office of the Child Advocate who is a member of the Governor's Task Force. The Child Advocate serves as a Co-Chair of the Panel.

#### State Statutes:

Sec. 46a-131. Child Advocate's duties. Child fatality review panel. Reports to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Sec. 46a-131 (b) There is established a child fatality review panel composed of thirteen permanent members as follows: The Child Advocate, or a designee; the Commissioners of Children and Families, Public Health and Public Safety, or their designees; the Chief Medical Examiner, or a designee; the Chief State's Attorney, or a designee; a pediatrician, appointed by the Governor; a representative of law enforcement, appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate; an attorney, appointed by the majority leader of the Senate; a social work professional, appointed by the minority leader of the Senate; a representative of a community service group appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives; a psychologist, appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives; and an injury prevention representative, appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives. A majority of the panel may select not more than three additional temporary members with particular expertise or interest to serve on the panel. Such temporary members shall have the same duties and powers as the permanent members of the panel. The chairperson shall be elected from among the panel's permanent members. The panel shall, to the greatest extent possible, reflect the ethnic, cultural and geographic diversity of the state.

Sec. 46a-131 (c) The panel shall review the circumstances of the death of a child placed in out-of-home care or whose death was due to unexpected or unexplained causes to facilitate the development of prevention strategies to address identified trends and patterns of risk and to improve coordination of services for children and families

in the state. Members of the panel shall not be compensated for their services, but may be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

Sec. 46a-131 (d) On or before January 1, 2000, and annually thereafter, the panel shall issue an annual report which shall include its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly on its review of child fatalities for the preceding year.

Sec. 46a-131 (e) Upon request of two-thirds of the members of the panel and within available appropriations, the Governor, the General Assembly or at the Child Advocate's discretion, the Child Advocate shall conduct an in-depth investigation and review and issue a report with recommendations on the death or critical incident of a child. The report shall be submitted to the Governor, the General Assembly and the commissioner of any state agency cited in the report and shall be made available to the general public.

Sec. 46a-131 (f) The Chief Medical Examiner shall provide timely notice to the Child Advocate and to the chairperson of the child fatality review panel of the death of any child that is to be investigated pursuant to section 19a-406.

Sec. 46a-131 (g) Any agency having responsibility for the custody or care of children shall provide timely notice to the Child Advocate and the chairperson of the child fatality review panel of the death of a child or a critical incident involving a child in its custody or care.

**CFRP Membership: \*\*\* Denotes members who also sit on GTF**

<b>Office of the Child Advocate</b>	Sarah Healy Eagan, JD Co-Chair***
<b>Office of the Chief State's Attorney:</b>	Anne Mahoney, JD/Bret Salafia, JD.
<b>Office of the Chief Medical Examiner:</b>	Susan Williams, M.D. and Gregory Vincent, M.D.
<b>Emergency Services and Public Protection:</b>	Lt. Seth Mancini, Esq.***
<b>Department of Children and Families:</b>	Ken Mysogland, MSW.
<b>Department of Public Health:</b>	Margie Hudson, R.N., MPH
<b>Pediatrician:</b>	Kirsten Bechtel, M.D. (Co-Chair)
<b>Community Service Representative:</b>	Pina Violano, Ph.D
<b>Neonatal-Perinatal Practitioner:</b>	Ted Rosenkrantz, M.D.
<b>Domestic Violence Representative:</b>	Tonya Johnson
<b>Injury Prevention:</b>	Steven Rogers, M.D.
<b>Psychologist:</b>	Regina Wilson, Ph.D
<b>Child Abuse Physician:</b>	Michael Soltis, M.D.
<b>Attorney</b>	Andrea Barton Reeves, J.D.
<b>Social Work Professional</b>	Thomas C. Michalski, Jr. LCSW
<b>Law Enforcement</b>	Vacant

The OCA in consultation with the CFRP released the following public reports during this reporting period:

[Incarcerated/Detained Youth - An Examination of Conditions of Confinement, January 16](#)

[Fatality Review Investigative Report: The Deaths of Nine Children in Unlicensed and Licensed Day Care Settings 2016-2017 \(Report Date: December 18, 2018\)](#)

[Legislative Hearing Report: Albert J. Solnit Center South and OCA's Review of the Circumstances Leading to the Death of Destiny G., September 26, 2018](#)

[2017-2018 Annual Report](#)

**Connecticut's Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP)**

Per the CJA Program Instruction, Connecticut's Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) was disseminated to the members of the GTF. During the past year, the Annual Progress and Service Report (APSR) for 2016 and the current CFSP was disseminated to the GTF in April 2017 and May 2019. The Department of Children and Families designee has connected with the members of the Department responsible for oversight of the CFSP who have agreed to attend future GTF meetings to present the plan, answer questions and review goals that may align with those in Connecticut's Children's Justice Act application. The first official presentation to the GTF was in May of this year.

In April 2017, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) released the results from the federal Child and Family Service Review (CFSR). The CFSR is aimed at continuously improving child welfare services throughout the nation. The U.S. Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducts the CFSR of each state's child welfare system to analyze data related to safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes of children and families served. Under the CFSR, states are measured against their own standards, which in Connecticut's case, are among the most rigorous in the nation.

The 2016 review process was the first of the CFSR rounds that permitted qualified states to conduct their own self-led case reviews. States needed to have a demonstrated strong quality assurance infrastructure. Connecticut was one of a limited number of states that evidenced the capacity to conduct its own CFSR case reviews. DCF constantly strives to achieve better outcomes for the children and families served. Using data to identify areas for improvement is a strength of the Department. The CFSR results noted that quality assurance and responsiveness to the community were strong systemic factors for Connecticut. Thus the CFSR process, consonant with the Department various internal mechanisms, offers a great opportunity to build upon and even enhance the DCF's commitment to child safety, permanency, and well-being.

An informational forum about the CFSR results and report was held in April 2017, at the Connecticut Legislative Office Building. Federal officials from ACF, as well as staff from DCF, provided an overview of the 2016 Report, discussed findings and outlined the next steps. Several members of the GTF, including the GTF Coordinator, attended this informational forum.

The CFSR results seem to underscore some of the same issues around staffing that were highlighted in a 2017 time study conducted by the *Juan F.* Court Monitor. This time study involved an analysis of the social worker's case related activities. That report demonstrated that caseloads are too high for staff to meet all their required tasks. The Department began hiring additional staff to reduce caseloads to 75 percent of the maximum.

Last, all states, heretofore, have been required to submit a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) in response to their CFSR. Connecticut's last PIP was implemented successfully in 2013 as a result of a collaboration between all three branches of government. In June 2017, as required, the Department submitted its' planned PIP in

response to the 2016 CFSR. Connecticut's PIP was approved in January 2019 and a copy was provided to the Governor's Task Force in May 2019.

### **Court Improvement Plan (CIP)**

GTF was able to use the CIP Coordinator list offered by the Children's Bureau to assist CJA programs and CIP programs with collaboration in the area of improving the handling of Child Welfare proceedings. The state of Connecticut's CIP Coordinators, Cynthia Cunningham and Steven Marhefsky, are members of the Governor's Task Force and will provide information to keep the GTF informed of efforts in this area. A copy of the most current CIP Strategic Plan, submitted to ACF in November 2016, has been provided to the GTF. The GTF coordinator will work with Mr. Marhefsky during the process of updating the CIP Strategic Plan which is due June 30th. Stakeholder information will be solicited from GTF members as needed for the completion of the upcoming strategic plan. A final copy provided to GTF following completion and submission to ACF.

### **Legislative Updates**

Although no formal legislative committee exists, GTF members will continue to monitor legislation concerning children and families. As appropriate, the GTF will engage community partners, review legislative agendas of stakeholders and provide members with updates during the session. Legislative and policy issues will be raised at GTF committee meetings and full GTF bimonthly meetings.

## **Section IV: Use of CJA Funds: FFY 2018 - 2019**

The information provided is to clarify how each activity funded over the last year was associated with one or more GTF recommendations that resulted from the 2018 Three Year Assessment.

### **Multidisciplinary Teams - \$10,000 Allocated**

The Children's Justice Act Grant continued to support one multidisciplinary team. This meets recommendations #1, 3 and 5 through MDT evaluation, training, support to MDTs and MDT data collection.

### **MDT Evaluations - \$25,000 Allocated**

The GTF continues to evaluate the Multi-Disciplinary teams in the state. Based upon these evaluations, training and technical support is suggested or provided to teams. This meets recommendation #1, 3, and 5.

### **Training - \$40,000 Allocated**

The GTF restructured our Training Committee resulting in Finding Words and Minimal Facts falling under this area. These trainings along with others meet the recommendations of #1, 3 and 5.

### **GTF Coordinator – \$94,237 Allocated**

This position is responsible for support to most of the GTF and meets recommendations #1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The coordinator convenes the GTF meetings and provides support the committees and workgroups as well as has worked to ensure that there are no vacancies on the GTF and orients new members. The coordinator co-chairs the Training Committee and has connected with the current CFSP strategic planning committee.

### **Travel - \$2,500 Allocated**

Funds supported the attendance of the GTF Coordinator and the GTF Executive Committee Co-chair to the 2019 annual, federal CJA technical assistance meeting in Washington DC, as required.

### **Connecticut Children's Alliance (CCA) State Chapter Director - \$19,950 Allocated**

CCA's State Chapter Director meets the recommendation # 1, 2, 3 and 5. The state director chairs the MDT Evaluation Committee and the Finding Words workgroup. She provides ongoing support and development to MDT/CACs by providing education, training, and resources. Additionally, the state chapter director compiles the survey results from Outcome Measurement Surveys. As the GTF has undergone a year of restructuring, the new legislation requires the Connecticut Children's Alliance participation on the GTF, where they serve as Tri-Chair for the task force.

## **Section V: Areas of Continued Focus of the Governor's Task Force: FFY 2019-2020**

### **A. Development and Support of MDTs**

The development of teams across Connecticut has strengthened the joint DCF/law enforcement investigations of child sexual abuse, serious physical abuse, child sex trafficking and child witness to violence cases. It has also promoted the use of trained forensic interviewers. The creation of additional teams has allowed prosecutors to have access to at least one multidisciplinary team in every judicial district in CT.

Looking back, legislative activity in Connecticut has supported the role and value of multidisciplinary teams. In 1996, PA # 96-246 (now C.G.S. 17a-101j) required that substantiated cases of serious abuse and child sexual abuse be reported to the state prosecutor. It also mandated that efforts be made to reduce the number of interviews of child abuse victims in the investigation process by coordinating the response of multiple agencies. The statute recognized multidisciplinary teams and permitted greater flexibility in sharing information, requiring greater collaboration among the multiple disciplines. In 1998, C.G.S. 17a-106a established the purpose of teams and provided for the establishment of a team in each of the 13 judicial districts. This legislation stipulates that responding agencies must advance and coordinate their activities and interventions to ensure the protection and treatment of child victims. It further required the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children to establish standards for teams (an activity accomplished in 2002 and updated in 2008, 2016 and 2018) and to review protocols developed by the teams on an on-going basis to ensure compliance and practice standards are maintained.

The GTF will continue to support MDTs and CACs. Statewide, the Department of Children and Families provides managerial and administrative oversight of MDT contracts and addresses issues or concerns related to service provision. The Department of Children and Families designee to the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children (GTF) currently functions in this capacity. Additionally, the GTF also continues to support on-going training for the teams throughout the state.

### **B. MDT Evaluation**

The GTF will continue to fund and implement the evaluation of multidisciplinary teams in partnership with The Village for Families and Children. The MDT Evaluation Committee will provide technical assistance to improve team functioning and oversight to ensure that recommendations and/or corrective action is pursued and followed.

In 2019-2020, the committee will focus on accomplishing the following:

1. Implement the updated standards for Connecticut's multidisciplinary teams and best practices for multidisciplinary investigations and assessments. Disseminate and orient team coordinators and members to the new standards/best practices.
2. Implement the new evaluation tools.
3. Implement a comprehensive follow up to teams around their team evaluations.
4. Evaluate five Multi-Disciplinary Teams.

### **C. Training, Resources and Technical Assistance**

The committee will explore strategies to increase the use of in-state training and the development of statewide training to maximize training funds. The GTF and MDTs will continue to sponsor multidisciplinary training programs annually to bring state of the art knowledge and skills to front line staff. MDT coordinators, team members and individuals from related disciplines will continue to have access to training funds through the GTF



on a limited basis. Finding Words and Minimal Facts committees are now subcommittees under this committee. The next Finding Words courses are currently scheduled for June and November 2019. Two GTF members will attend the When Words Matters Conference in February 2020. The GTF Coordinator is ensuring that statewide Peer Review for Forensic Interviewers occurs quarterly. Minimal Facts will continue to be offered throughout Connecticut. First Responder's training is offered statewide to DCF investigations staff and law enforcement personnel and Discoverer's training is offered to all other mandated reporters. In addition, training materials continue to be distributed statewide. The training committee will complete additional Training of Trainers to update current trainers and prepare new trainers to provide statewide training to the various stakeholders. The translation of training materials and informational materials is being explored as a priority for the GTF.

#### **D. MDT Data Collection**

The GTF and CCA will continue to refine data collection systems for optimal use and efficiency. NCATrak will continue to be used by Connecticut's teams. CCA will continue to produce statewide quarterly Results Based Accountability Report Cards and Outcomes Measurement data that is shared statewide.

#### **E. Statewide Assessment of the Services and System Pertaining to the Sexual Abuse and Serious Physical Abuse of Children and 2017 Retreat Ad Hoc groups**

Three workgroups were developed as a result of the 2009 needs assessment and have directed the work of the previous three-year assessments. (Forensic Interview and Forensic Medical Workgroup, MDT/CAC Workgroup, and Victim Services/ Victim Advocacy Workgroup) During the 2017 GTF Strategic Planning Retreat, four ad hoc workgroups were developed. (MDT/CAC Evaluation & Quality Assurance, Training, System Gaps & Barriers, and Child Fatalities). Recommendations and draft documents from the three previous workgroups were forwarded to these new ad hoc workgroups for use moving forward.

#### **F. GTF Membership**

The Membership Committee will continue to ensure that all positions on the GTF remain full and provide members the tools and resources needed to assist their work on the GTF.

#### **G. GTF Website**

The committee will continue its work to update the website for GTF to ensure pertinent content and useful resources to the membership and greater communities.

#### **H. By-Laws**

The GTF By-Laws committee will continue to monitor for compliance and long-term revisions.

#### **I. Legislation**

Although no formal legislative committee exists, GTF members will continue to monitor legislation concerning children and families. As appropriate, the GTF will engage community partners, review legislative agendas of stakeholders and provide members with updates during the session. Legislative and policy issues will be raised at GTF committee meetings and full GTF bimonthly meetings.

#### **J. Human Trafficking**

The Governor's Task Force will continue to support the state's response to child victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. The MDT's will receive referrals from DCF as well as other key stakeholders. Additional training and consultation will be provided to the MDT's to ensure competencies in addressing such cases.

## **K. Children with Disabilities**

The GTF recognizes the importance of addressing the issues facing children with disabilities. To this end, the GTF has decided to pursue ways to incorporate this area into all aspects of the GTF efforts. These issues are addressed during the Finding Words training, Minimal Facts training, and will be prominent in legislation tracked throughout the year. Specialized training has been developed by DCF and will be provided over the next year.

## **L. Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)**

The GTF will have annual updates in this area at a GTF meeting regarding the state's progress in this area.

## **M. Court Improvement Plan**

The GTF will have annual updates in this area at a GTF meeting regarding the state's progress in this area. Both of the state of Connecticut's CIP Monitor are members of the Governor's Task Force and will provide information to keep the GTF informed of efforts in this area.

## **N. Child Fatalities**

The GTF will monitor child fatalities through our partner member agency the Office of the Child Advocate. Two members of the statewide task force on child fatalities are members of the Governor's Task Force.

The majority of the 2019-2020 proposed activities reflect the on-going needs of Connecticut and has driven much of the GTF's work over the years. The 2018-2020 Three Year Assessment Recommendations align with the ongoing work of the GTF and Connecticut will look to continue to implement each priority area identified during the 19-20 year. At the start of the three-year assessment process, the GTF completed a deep dive into each of the priority areas and used that as an additional framework for the retreat, subsequent workgroups, and re-organization.

2019-2020 Priority Area	2018-2020 – 3 Year assessment Priorities and Recommendations
Development and Support of MDTs and CACs	Recommendation 1 and Ad Hoc Workgroups 1, 2 and 3 Recommendation 3 Recommendation 5
MDT Evaluation	Recommendation 1 and Ad Hoc Workgroups 1 Recommendation 3 Recommendation 5
Training	Recommendation 1 and Ad Hoc Workgroups 2 and 3 Recommendation 3 Recommendation 5
MDT Data Collection	Recommendation 1 and Ad Hoc Workgroups 1, 2 and 3 Recommendation 3 Recommendation 5
Statewide Assessment of the Services and System Pertaining to the Sexual Abuse and Serious Physical Abuse of Children	Recommendation 1 and Ad Hoc Workgroups 1, 2 and 3 Recommendation 3 Recommendation 5
GTF Membership	It is our on-going priority to not only have a full GTF to continue the work of GTF statewide but to provide to our members training opportunities that will assist them in their work.
GTF Website	Recommendation 3 - The website will be used as a resource for the teams.
By-Laws	Recommendation 2 – These were recently updated.
Legislation	Recommendation 1 and Ad Hoc Workgroup 3
Human Trafficking	Recommendation 1 and Ad Hoc Workgroup 2 Recommendation 3 as our teams receive the referrals for all our HT cases
Children with Disabilities	Recommendation 1 and Ad Hoc Workgroup 2

2019-2020 Priority Area	2018-2020 – 3 Year assessment Priorities and Recommendations
	Recommendation 3 Recommendation 5
Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)	This is a requirement in our CJA program instructions. The documents have been provided to the GTF members for review and the chair participates in the APSR process. Additionally, our CJA grant application is provided to the CFSR professionals at our Child Welfare agency each year. Members of the GTF are participating in the stakeholder meetings for the current CFSP. This meets recommendation #4.
Court Improvement Plan	This is strongly encouraged at our CJA grantee meeting. The documents have been provided to the GTF members for review. Both of Connecticut's CIP monitors sit on the GTF.
Child Fatalities	Recommendation 1 and Ad Hoc Workgroup 4 Recommendation 3 Recommendation 5

### Section VI: Proposed Budget for CJA Funds: FFY 2019-2020

	2019-2020 CJA Allocation
<b>A. Multidisciplinary Investigation Teams</b> To continue to support one multidisciplinary team at \$10,000 annually	\$10,000
<b>B. MDT Evaluation Committee</b> To continue to contract with the Village for Families & Children, Inc. to update MDT standards and best practices, as well as the MDT evaluation methodology and tools as described and complete evaluations of Connecticut's Multi-Disciplinary teams.	\$25,000
<b>C. Training, Resources and Technical Assistance</b> To focus on the development and implementation of statewide training opportunities and resources associated with the investigation, assessment, intervention, and prosecution of child sexual abuse and serious physical abuse statewide. Will also continue to offer to fund individuals on a limited basis.	\$40,000
<b>D. GTF Coordinator</b> To support the full-time GTF coordinator through a contract with The Village for Families & Children.	\$94,237
<b>E. Travel</b> As required, to permit travel for the GTF Coordinator and GTF Co-chairperson to attend the annual national CJA grantee meeting.	\$2,500
<b>F. Connecticut Children's Alliance (CCA) State Chapter Director</b> To support the CCA State Chapter Director who has oversight and direction for the planning, development, and management of the Connecticut Children's Alliance.	\$19,950
<b>Total</b>	\$ 192,223

\*Note: The CJA allocation for this budget period is \$196,622. The difference of \$1,975 will be carried over to cover provider payments as CTDCF waits on federal funds.