

**2024  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT TASK FORCE  
REPORT & APPLICATION**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER**



**Children's Law Center**

Joseph F. Rice School of Law

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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**South Carolina  
Children’s Justice Act Task Force  
Report and Application  
June 2024**

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## I. Grantee Identifying Information

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## II. CJA Task Force Membership and Function

South Carolina has maintained an active Children's Justice Act Task Force since 1994. The purpose and activities of the Task Force, as defined by its bylaws and federal statute, are as follows:

- To conduct an assessment of the state's systems responding to abused and neglected children at three-year intervals;
- To adopt recommendations in each of the CJA categories;
- To work towards implementation of these recommendations;
- To recommend to the state's grantee (S.C. Department of Social Services) projects to be supported by the CJA grant funds; and
- To express positions on legislation or state policy issues, consistent with its mission and recommendations.

The Task Force is governed by bylaws which were adopted in 1998. They were most recently formally reviewed on February 22, 2023 by the CJA Operations Committee. No modifications were recommended. In accordance with the bylaws, the Task Force meets at least quarterly. Standing committees are formed every three years to coincide with adoption of recommendations. Each committee meets as needed to follow through with implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Task Force. All members are assigned to a committee. Four Task Force meetings were held

virtually during this reporting period and an additional workday for recommendation formulation was held in-person.

The Task Force began its review and assessment of the state's systems that respond to abused and neglected children in October 2023, leading to the formulation of recommendations for the 2024-2027 CJA cycle. As a result of priority topics identified through information gathered prior to the assessment workday, three corresponding committees for the 2024-2027 period were confirmed:

- A. Training and Judicial Improvement Committee
- B. Model Programming Committee
- C. Child Protection Reform Committee

The Task Force is self-perpetuating through an election process held every three years. The membership period is three calendar years so that it overlaps accordingly with the CJA three-year cycle. This allows new members to be involved in the three-year assessment process and formulation of recommendations. Current members propose new members when necessary and prepare a slate of nominees, ensuring multidisciplinary and diverse membership. New members are elected for three-year terms by a majority vote of the Task Force. The chairperson appoints members to fill vacancies that occur between general elections. Officers include the chair and vice-chair who are also elected by the Task Force. Officers are limited to serving one three-year term. It is possible to elect someone to serve a second term in the same position, but not consecutively. This bylaw was instituted to allow fresh leadership for every three-year cycle. Members for the 2024-2027 period were elected in October 2023 for the three-year term that began in January 2024. The Task Force currently has 25 members, reflecting all required disciplines. A new member was also added in November of 2023 who represents the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Use Services for South Carolina. The elected chair for this upcoming term is Trista Baird, Captain of the SC State Law Enforcement Division. The vice chair is Tena Hardee, General Counsel for the South Carolina guardian ad litem program.

The Children's Law Center provides staff support to the Task Force, including logistical arrangements for meetings and research activities. In addition to the CJA Coordinator who assists with implementation of recommendations, an additional staff person is assigned to each committee to facilitate the meetings and act as a liaison between the Task Force groups and the CJA Coordinator. The Children's Law Center also carries out training recommendations of the Task Force.

Attachment 1 includes a list of Task Force members with their titles, professional categories, and brief profiles. Attachment 2 contains minutes of the five meetings held during the past year. Current recommendations are in Attachment 3, Task Force bylaws are in Attachment 4, and Training Evaluations are in Attachments 5-9.

### **III. Annual Performance Report: May 2023 – May 2024**

The South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) is the state's designated

grantee for Children’s Justice Act funds. In accordance with one of the Task Force’s recommendations, DSS contracted with the University of South Carolina’s Children’s Law Center to provide staff support for meetings and assist the Task Force in implementing its recommendations. This performance report covers Task Force activities from May 2023–May 2024.

**Task Force Membership:** In response to the Children’s Bureau feedback last year, we recruited and added an individual with a background as a substance use disorder treatment provider, as we understand DSS involvement with families often includes substance use or misuse. In addition, the Children’s Law Center provided a workshop at our annual conference “Emerging Substance Use Trends and the Impact on Family Regarding Safety and Risk to Children and Parents.”

**Targeted Engagement with Mental Health Agencies:** In response to the Children’s Bureau feedback last year, the CJATF Coordinator requested an invitation to join the South Carolina Mental Health Commission’s monthly meetings to explore ways to expand our partnership. Meetings are conducted quarterly in a virtual setting. In addition, a CJA Task Force member is newly co-chairing a Mental Health Workforce Committee that has been put together by The National Children’s Alliance to address the current mental health crisis in our country.

**Evaluation Methods: Activities & impact evaluation plan:** In response to the Children’s Bureau guidance during the 2023 annual grantees meeting, we expanded our evaluation approach for one of the CJA funded trainings (Child Death Investigation Reenactment Simulation Training) from a single post-training onsite survey to include a six-month follow-up survey and interview. The onsite survey asked participants questions about their mastery of training objectives and asked for feedback on the relevance and engagement of the training and trainers, as well as on training visuals and handouts. The focus of the follow-up survey was to assess the participants’ application of the knowledge and skills learned during the simulation training to their job in the six-month period after the training. The follow-up survey was distributed to all 38 participants who attended the same training that was conducted on nine different training dates. Of the 38 participants, four responded, with two indicating they had conducted an actual child death reenactment on the job following the training. No participants were willing to be interviewed to further to elaborate on their survey responses.

For more context, the Child Death Investigation Reenactment Simulation Training is a one-day, in-person training focusing on conducting reenactments with caregivers in child death investigations, and it incorporates hands-on practice in a mock crime scene apartment. This training begins with a review of the fundamentals of reenactments. Additional topics include identifying the placer and finder; adapting reenactment techniques to a variety of scenarios; and identifying documentation techniques and challenges. Participants are each assigned a scenario involving an unexpected child death. Using a demonstration doll, participants walk through the reenactment process with an actor, or actors, portraying the child’s caregiver(s). Simulation trainings aim to mimic the conditions and content of the tasks that an investigator will confront in real-life situations and allow individuals to practice their skills and receive feedback without real-world consequences.

In addition, every training provided has an evaluation component which collects prior knowledge and post knowledge of the learning objectives, ratings of presenter dynamics and engagement, ratings of visuals and handouts, and solicited recommendations for improvement. The evaluation process includes the assessment of impact on the knowledge, skills, and practices of training participants. Trainers review their evaluation outcomes soon after delivery and take feedback into consideration, implementing modifications as needed.

**Linkage with Child and Family Services Review:** The CJA Coordinator continues to meet with the SCDSS Office and Safety Management Director (who also serves as a Task Force member) to review current Task Force recommendations and strengthen and explore linkages. There have been preliminary discussions regarding CJA Task Force member(s) observing the CFSR Round 4 process (training and/or actual review). This will be further explored in the coming year.

**CB Priority Areas:** Equity in Action: Prioritizing and Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities. The CJATF recognizes the importance of racial equity and has ensured member representation on our state's DSS Racial Justice Action Team. Quarterly updates will be provided during each meeting so we can support and reinforce improvement in this area.

***Category A. Activities undertaken to improve the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect:***

- **Provide multidisciplinary trainings regarding the unique aspects involved in the recognition, investigation, and prosecution of maltreatment of children with disabilities, to include recognition within virtual settings.**  
(Recommendation 1.A)

The training was delivered on June 6, 2023 and focused on recognizing, investigating, and documenting abuse and neglect among children with special needs. Experts in the field described the system of care for children with special needs and their families and how the role of each professional can aid an investigation. Medical indicators of abuse among the special needs population was addressed as well as differentiating between accidental and non-accidental injury. Emphasis was placed on the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach and resources that are available. Participants included DSS investigators and attorneys, law enforcement, volunteer guardians ad litem, Children's Advocacy Center staff, prosecutors, child abuse medical providers, district/school administrators, and guidance counselors. Thirty-five individuals attended.

- **Continue to build upon trainings regarding multidisciplinary child death investigations, including the identification of barriers to effectively implementing the Child Death Investigation Task Forces (CDITF).** (Recommendation 2.A)

Medicolegal Infant Death Investigations training was developed and offered in September 2023 to coroners, law enforcement, and prosecutors to focus on the responsibilities of investigating infant death cases. The three-day training included statistics, causes, and risk factors of unexpected infant deaths; the multi-disciplinary response and protocol; child maltreatment red flags and indicators; burns; abusive head trauma; blunt trauma fatalities; SUID, overlay, and homicidal asphyxiation; infant death scene documentation and processing; forensic toxicology; conducting parent interviews; anatomical dolls and scene reenactment; courtroom testimony; and case studies. Presenters included experts from coroners' offices, SLED, and the SC Children's Advocacy Medical Response System. Thirty-five professionals attended.

- **Provide multidisciplinary training events, to include the faith community, on family violence, utilizing leading experts on research in this area.** (Recommendation 3.A)

A CJA workgroup piloted our first "Spare the Child" documentary screening on April 25, 2024. The event was hosted by the South Carolina Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault. A panel of six area experts, including faith-based leaders, forensic interviewers, and mental health professionals, facilitated a discussion. Thirty-six community members attended.

- **Provide multidisciplinary training to include volunteer guardians ad litem and community stakeholders (providers, school counselors, DSS, etc.) on working with cases involving crossover youth with DSS and DJJ).** (Recommendation 4.A.)

The Children's Law Center Juvenile Justice Team provided training February 16, 2024 related to available services and referral processes for children dually involved in the child protection and juvenile justice systems (87 attendees). In addition, our Juvenile Justice Program Manager presented at the annual CASA Youth Volunteer Conference March 6, 2024 to the guardian programs and Department of Juvenile Justice Arbitrators (19 attendees).

- **Continue to provide, and expand upon, trainings focused on reducing stress and trauma to children who must testify in either, or both, family court and general sessions court. This includes coordination with SC Court Administration to provide training opportunities to the judiciary regarding developmentally appropriate, and legally defensible, courtrooms for child victims and/or witnesses appearing in court.** (Recommendation 5.A)

The Children's Law Center Law Enforcement Trainer provided *FIRST Response*

*to Allegations of Child Maltreatment* on July 21, 2023 to the Sheriff's Office, Major Crimes Division Patrol Officers and Investigators (45 attendees).

In addition, the Children's Law Center's Senior Resource Attorney provided *The Criminal Justice System Process and Children* training to Victim Service Providers with SCNCAC (30 attendees).

In another effort to help reduce trauma for children who must testify, the Children's Law Center continues to distribute family court and general sessions children's court coloring notebooks to attorneys, DSS staff, guardians ad litem, and CACs throughout the state.

- **Support the Court Improvement Program to improve the quality of child abuse and neglect hearings by ensuring all necessary parties are served with notice of the hearing and that they are engaged and participate meaningfully in the proceedings; and by looking at causes for continuances and ways to alleviate those that are unavoidable.** (Recommendation 6.A).

The process continues to be monitored. The CJA Coordinator has attended quarterly CIP meetings along with the DSS general counsel, family court representatives, and others for updates and possible linkages with CJA Task Force activities. In addition, the Children's Law Center partnered with DSS to provide the Annual Paralegal Training (97 attendees).

***Category B. Steps taken to establish experimental, model, or demonstration programs:***

- **Develop and deliver a training curriculum for local multidisciplinary teams on the SC Child Abuse Response Protocol, modify the trainings for each county, and include schools in the MDTs.** (Recommendation 7.B)

The SC Child Abuse Response Protocol training continues to be a resource for multidisciplinary providers and stakeholders across the state. Since the initial launch, 1,523 professionals have registered for the pre-recorded, self-paced training, and received the practice manual.

As a reminder, the purpose of the Protocol is to ensure a multidisciplinary response to child abuse and neglect that utilizes Children's Advocacy Centers and multidisciplinary teams. State law requires the use of the Protocol as developed by the SCNCAC and the Task Force.

- **Collaborate with the statewide Forensic Nurse Examiner Task Force to develop and implement tools that will expand and improve resources to handle the preliminary investigation of child sexual abuse.** (Recommendation 8.B).

This recommendation was completed in May of 2022.



- **Collaborate with the statewide Human Trafficking Task Force to identify and address gaps in resources that are needed to support suspected victims of sex trafficking along the process from identification to court.** (Recommendation 9.B).

The CJATF is represented on the statewide Human Trafficking Task Force as a member serves and attends all meetings to inform our efforts. In addition, the CJA Coordinator communicates with the local county task force monthly.

- **Support the expansion of the CAC involvement in the Safe Babies Court initiative in South Carolina and monitor the project to determine additional ways to support growth and success of Safe Babies Courts.** Recommendation 10.B).

The state advisory committee recently met for Safe Babies Court April 3, 2024. The CJA past Chair serves on this committee, and they are working to complete a case mapping process that recommends a protocol for oncoming counties to know how to successfully implement Safe Babies Court. The Safe Babies Courts initiative continues in four counties.

- **Obtain and/or enhance protections in SC for recordings of forensic interviews of child abuse victims.** (Recommendation 11.B).

A forensic interview evidence management system was implemented by CACs with DSS to eliminate hard copies of recordings. The SC Network of Children's Advocacy Centers (SCNCAC) and DSS continue their efforts to educate judges, defense attorneys, MDT partners, and all others who may require access to forensic interview recordings now that DVDs are no longer produced. Although education is progressing, SCNCAC could file proposed legislation next year to protect these interview recordings if necessary. The CJA Task Force will continue to monitor during the new three-year cycle.

- **Continue to support the SC Network of Children's Advocacy Centers including organizational capacity and infrastructural resources.** (Recommendation 12.B)

The Task Force promotes growth of Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) in South Carolina by supporting the South Carolina Network of Children's Advocacy Centers (SCNCAC). CJA funds are used in part to provide office space, equipment, supplies, and limited administrative support to the Network's staff. The Network's Executive Director is appointed by the Network's Board of Directors and serves on the CJATF. CACs are identified in South Carolina law (S.C. Code § 63-11-310).

There are 17 primary CACs in South Carolina, and many are regional CACs that cover multiple counties. There are also 12 satellite CACs operated by regional CACs in the state. Together, these 29 CACs offer an array of child-focused

services and provided support to 13,413 children in 2023.

The 1st Annual Joint South Carolina and North Carolina Symposium on Child Abuse & Neglect was co-hosted by the SCNCAC on April 29-May 2, 2024. Over 420 professionals participated. In addition, two of the CJA Task Force members presented (*Child Death Investigations and the MDT* and *Introduction to Recognizing Sexual Abuse* for non-medical providers).

**Forensic Interview Peer Review Program:** The South Carolina Network of Children's Advocacy Center's (SCNCAC) statewide forensic interview peer review program is designed to provide forensic interviewers with an opportunity to review forensic interviews, discuss specific interview techniques, provide feedback regarding the quality of the interview, ensure consistent documentation, and review relevant research. SCNCAC facilitates quarterly sessions each year across South Carolina and one statewide session with training in Columbia, which was provided November 2023.

**Victim Advocate Training Program:** The South Carolina Network of Children's Advocacy Center's (SCNCAC) statewide victim & family advocate training program is designed for victim and family advocates who are working with children and families within a South Carolina Children's Advocacy Center. The program has been approved for core Victim Service Provider (VSP) certification in SC and meets training requirements for victim advocates in the National Children's Alliance CAC accreditation standards. There were five sessions conducted this period.

- **Continue to support the operation of the Children's Law Center which is a training and information resource center for professionals involved in child maltreatment proceedings. Operations include implementing the training recommendations in collaboration with the Task Force and providing research and logistical support to the Task Force.** (Recommendation 13.B)

The mission and functions of the Children's Law Center reflect the CJA goals of improving investigative and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect cases and enhancing the effectiveness of court-appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem. The Children's Law Center is able to access other funding sources to complement CJA funds, thus providing a comprehensive array of services. The Children's Law Center offers a variety of training programs on child maltreatment to child protection caseworkers, family court staff, guardians ad litem, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and other child-serving professionals to include professionals who are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

**Website and resource materials:** The Children’s Law Center maintains a website containing online publications, training information, additional resources, and links to related organizations. Staff develop and distribute resource materials on child protection and prosecution of child abuse and neglect. Most recently, the Juvenile Justice Hearings Benchbook was posted. This is an electronic resource guide designed primarily for family court judges, but it can also be used by other family court practitioners to assist with clarifying legal requirements and expectations of all parties. It provides general information on state and federal law, court proceedings, and court order requirements. It is divided into eight sections which contain information in a condensed form for readability that can be expanded for a more detailed explanation.

**The below training topics are offered multiple times a year:**

- ChildFirst (not CJA funded)
- Child Physical Abuse and Neglect Investigations
- Interviewing in Child Maltreatment Cases
- Conducting Reenactments in Child Death Investigations
- Medical Aspects of Sexual Abuse (not CJA funded)
- Medical Aspects of Physical Abuse
- Understanding Medical Aspects of Abusive Head Trauma (not CJA funded)
- Recognizing Medical Neglect and Failure to Thrive (not CJA funded)
- Recognizing and Responding to Problematic Sexual Behaviors in Youth

**Category C: Activities undertaken to reform state laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, or procedures:**

- **Provide support for any child abuse legislation that the Children’s Justice Act Task Force deems will improve the state’s response to abused and neglected children, including the commercial sex trafficking of children.** (Recommendation 14.C)

The Task Force tracked the following bills during the course of the year that were related to CJA topics. Members provided input about such legislation when appropriate.

The following bills have passed:

**S.612 – Creating a Tiered Response System for DSS investigation timeframes**

The agency must respond within 24 hours if: a child is at imminent and substantial risk of physical or mental injury, the family may flee, the child is unavailable for the investigation, DSS has taken custody of the child, or the child is in emergency protective custody. Also, allows DSS up to two business days to investigate a report alleging child abuse or neglect outside of the above scenarios.

**S.343 – Youth Access to Crisis Stabilization Units (CSUs)**

CSUs provide short term stabilization services (24 to 72 hours) for children and youth experiencing mental and behavioral health crises. The statutory minimum age was reduced from 18 to 5 years old. This also opens CSU ownership and operation to private entities as well as the Department of Mental Health.

- **Investigate the feasibility of integrating data systems that would allow for a comprehensive collaborative database that would track child abuse cases from initial referral through closure of services. In addition, investigate data sets that are already available in order to measure positive outcomes into adulthood.** (Recommendation 15.C).

Following statewide and national research of this issue by Task Force members and multiple in-depth meetings of the work group, it was determined that the integration of database systems across the state to track child abuse cases was not feasible at this time.

- **Encourage child serving agency examination of racial disparities of children involved with the child welfare system.** (Recommendation 16.C).

On September 13, 2023, over 175 Children's Advocacy Center and multidisciplinary team professionals (to include CJATF members) came together to learn about safeguarding equity for children and families in South Carolina. Dr. Percy Johnson, Jr. from Georgia presented a day long workshop titled "Safeguarding Equity: Finding Common Ground in a Changing Landscape."

In addition, one CJATF member has been invited to serve on the SC DSS Racial Justice Action Team, which meets quarterly. Updates will be provided to inform the work of our Task Force and organizations.

## **IV. Prior Year Budget Expenditure**

***Development, implementation, and support of CJA Recommendations - \$8,034  
Collaboration, trainer and facility fees, curriculum updates, evaluation, research, printing,  
training supplies, and outreach***

*Children with disabilities training*

*Child death investigations training*

*Training/educational events on family violence*

*Training on crossover youth*

*Child testimony training*

*Court improvement training*

*Statewide protocol training*  
*Collaboration with the Forensic Nurse Examiner Task Force*  
*Collaboration with the SC Human Trafficking Task Force*  
*Monitor the Safe Babies Court project*  
*Monitor efforts to obtain protections for forensic interview recordings*  
*Convene data system advisory group*  
*Confer with other agencies re: examination of racial disparities*

**Completion of the Three-Year Assessment – Utilized Microsoft Forms - \$0**  
*Survey instrument (Microsoft Forms) development and application, stakeholder outreach*

**Support of the South Carolina Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers/ Peer review program for forensic interviewers - \$33,127**  
*Office space, telephone, computer, office supplies, use of general office equipment, administrative support, printing, staff time for collaborative events, speaker fees, training costs*

**Operation of the Children’s Law Center - \$94,000**  
*Personnel, project supplies, training, information, and assistance related to CJA; training and information for law enforcement officers and prosecutors, supplemental funding for trainings related to CJA topics*

**Direct Task Force support- \$77,535**  
*Staff time for logistical support of the Task Force, support for committee meetings, refreshments, mileage, other collaborations*

**CJA grantees meeting - \$0 (this was virtual rather than in-person)**  
*Travel for two/three CJA Task Force representatives to attend the federal grantees meeting in D.C.*

**USC facilities & administrative cost - \$50,764**  
*Facilities, utilities, administrative overhead; Federal negotiated rate of 26% of modified total direct costs*

**Total Tentative: \$263,460**

## **V. Application for Proposed Activities**

*During the grant period, the Task Force will work toward accomplishing the recommendations developed in 2024. The Children’s Law Center will assist the Task Force in its efforts. All of these objectives relate directly to specific recommendations of the Task Force. Below are the Recommendations and initial action steps.*

**Category A: Recommendations for investigative, administrative and judicial improvements, including training:**

**1.A** Support the development of an exploratory committee to investigate attorney

representation of children in abuse and neglect cases.

- The SC Bench-Bar Committee is supported by the Children’s Law Center and will form a workgroup to lead this investigation. The workgroup should look at other states (such as Ohio) which may have an attorney-child representation and GAL model. Amanda Whittle can serve as the liaison between Bench-Bar and CJA Task Force.

**2.A** Support the Attorney General’s Office Education Coordinator related to training on technology related offenses, including but not limited to sexting and sextortion.

- CLC liaison will contact the SC Human Trafficking Task Force Education Coordinator to find out what the Attorney General’s Office is doing related to this training and gather new legislation and pending legislation concerning technology-related offenses against children.

**3.A** Continue to provide education on the Truth-Lie Task Tool to DSS attorneys, prosecutors, GALs, and the judiciary, and promote its use by these groups.

- CLC liaison will reach out to court leadership about training for prosecutors and create an online, self-paced training for judges.
- CLC liaison will explore adapting the judicial training for attorneys and GALs and will provide the tool to all judges at their next convening.
- CLC liaison and CJA task force member are working to create an online, self-paced training for judges.

**4.A** Provide training to child welfare professionals related to substance use disorders and state law related to the possession and use of illegal and controlled substances and the Drug-Endangered Child Protocol regarding safety concerns for families.

- CJA Task Force member will contact DSS to obtain a copy of the most recent Drug Endangered Child Protocol. This committee will review the protocol to determine if updates should be recommended.
- CJA Task Force member with the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services will join this workgroup to assist.

**5.A** Improve the response to children with special needs, especially children with autism, related to abuse or neglect. Trainings developed would focus on forensic interviewers, law enforcement, judges, and GALs.

- CJA Task Force member will review guidance currently provided for judges and will talk to the two member judges about what types of content they would find beneficial.
- These same questions will be asked of two CJATF member attorneys serving GALs and CASA.
- The subcommittee will review the Communications Training previously provided by the CJATF to determine if modifications are needed for that.
- The subcommittee will consider when and how to repeat the training and how to make the training available on-demand.

**6.A** Continue to build upon trainings regarding multidisciplinary child death

investigations, including identifying and addressing barriers to effectively implementing the Child Death Investigation Task Force's (CDITF) rapid response.

- The Children's Law Center and SLED's Special Victims Unit will continue to conduct these trainings for dispatchers, law enforcement, DSS, emergency medical services, and CACs.
- The Children's Law Center will provide a 3-day medicolegal infant death investigation training with experts on an annual basis in different parts of the state.
- The subcommittee will review the trainings to determine if updates are needed based on child death trends and survey local law enforcement, coroners, and DSS about collaboration, communication and coordination successes and opportunities.

**7.A** Provide education to parents about the family court and DSS process.

- The subcommittee will reach out to DSS leadership about the process and resources currently available for distribution to build upon this recommendation.

**Category B: Recommendations for experimental, demonstration and model programs:**

**8.B** Support the training of professionals on the co-occurrence, or nexus, of child maltreatment and domestic violence.

- Pull data on the number of cases from CAC that include domestic violence
- Collaborate the SC Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault on developing training series related to this topic.

**9.B** Support the improvement of the multidisciplinary team response to human trafficking cases through training. Continue Team response via CAC services, with modifications when necessary to meet child trafficking victim's needs.

- Reach out to the SC Human Trafficking Task Force about ideas and partnering.
- Pull data for the number of children at CACs with human trafficking components.
- Find out how many CAC programs have human trafficking multidisciplinary teams.

**10.B** Support the assessment and reduction of overreporting by medical and child professionals with education and training.

- Pull data for analysis and training development.
- Communicate with the Children's Law Center representative serving on the DSS overreporting workgroup.

**11.B** Support quality improvements across SCNCACs by forming a joint SCNCAC/CJA work group to provide input on potential SC accreditation standards.

- CAC Committee member is researching grants for this effort.

**12.B** Support SCNCAC in continuing efforts to secure protections for forensic interview recordings in South Carolina through education, forensic interview evidence management system improvements, and legislation, if needed.

- Meet with CAC legal counsel to get update on where this is for legislation.
- Reach out to chapters to see if any states have come up with statewide timeframe for keeping forensic interviews.

**13.B** Continue to provide support in the outreach and distribution of the virtual training of the SC Child Abuse Response Protocol Act.

- Analyze data for how many responders have completed training.
- Reach out to the governor’s office about timeframe process for appointing a protocol task force oversight committee.

**Category C: Recommendations for reform of state laws, ordinances, regulations, procedures, or protocols:**

**14.C** Develop a multi-disciplinary protocol for improved access to services or enhanced response to youth (status offenders and trafficking victims) with co-involvement in child protective services (DSS) and DJJ or other agencies, with a focus on appropriate placements.

- Form a workgroup to include representatives from SCNCAC, DSS, DJJ, DMH, SC HTTF, family court.
- Review Office of the SC Attorney General’s SC Human Trafficking Task Force’s 2023 Annual Report and determine if this recommendation is being addressed as far as sex trafficking victims, and if so, assess whether the focus of the multidisciplinary protocol should be on children charged with status offending behaviors.

**15.C** Encourage and support child serving agency examination of racial disparities of children involved with the child welfare system through representation on the state’s Racial Justice Action Team and other forums.

- Request quarterly reports (at the scheduled CJATF meetings) from CJA Task Force member who serves on the RJA Team to inform how the Task Force can support.

**16.C** Explore the CAC and DSS tracking system’s ability/functionality to include interventions with pre-post assessments.

- Seek clarification on this recommendation from CJA Task Force members with the Department of Mental Health and SCNCAC.

**17.C** Review the following state statutes for possible reform and provide education in an impartial, objective manner.

- Review the statutes and identify problematic language and unintended consequences of statutes as currently written.
- Identify discrepancies with other SC statutes.
- Research similar laws in other states.



S.C. Code Ann. § 19-1-180. Out-of-court statements by certain children.  
(Hearsay Exceptions for abuse and neglect cases)

Amend language; Add an exception for statements alleging abuse or neglect made to child forensic interviewers and mental health professionals

S.C. Code Ann. § 63-11-550. Confidentiality of records and information.  
(GAL Confidentiality Statute)

Amend for clarity and to alleviate conflict with more recently enacted legislation

S.C. Code Ann. § 63-7-310. Persons required to report.

(Mandated Reporter Statutes (§ 63-7-310 through -440))

General statutory review for consistency across the children's code

### **Standard Carryover Recommendations**

- ❖ Continue to support the SC Network of Children's Advocacy Centers including organizational capacity and infrastructural resources.
- ❖ Continue to support the operation of the Children's Law Center, a training and information resource center for professionals involved in child maltreatment proceedings. Operations include implementing the training recommendations in collaboration with the Task Force and providing research and logistical support.

## **VI. Proposed Budget**

### **Projected Budget Summary 2024-2025:**

#### ***Development, implementation, and support of CJA Recommendations - \$8,017***

*Collaboration, trainer and facility fees, curriculum updates, evaluation, research, printing, training supplies, and outreach*

- *Children with disabilities training (specific to autism)*
- *Child death investigations training (medicolegal, reenactments, and CDI task force)*
- *Develop multi-disciplinary protocol for enhanced response to DSS/DJJ youth*
- *Training/educational events on substance use disorders; and Drug Endangered Children*
- *Training events with the Attorney General's Office on technology related offenses*
- *Training on co-occurrence, or nexus, of child maltreatment and domestic violence*
- *Collaborate with the SC Human Trafficking Task Force*
- *Monitor efforts to secure protections for forensic interview recordings*
- *Collaborate with DSS and other agencies re: examination of racial disparities*
- *Monitor the Statewide Child Abuse Response Protocol training*

#### ***Support of the South Carolina Network of Children's Advocacy Centers/ Peer review program for forensic interviewers - \$33,127***

*Office space, telephone, computer, office supplies, use of general office equipment, administrative support, printing, staff time for collaborative events, speaker fees, training costs*

#### ***Operation of the Children's Law Center - \$94,000***

*Personnel, project supplies, training, information, and assistance related to CJA; training and information for law enforcement officers and prosecutors, supplemental funding for trainings related to CJA topics*

***Direct Task Force support- \$77,535***

*Staff time for logistical support of the Task Force, support for committee meetings, refreshments, mileage, other collaborations*

***CJA grantees meeting - \$3,500***

*Travel for two/three CJA representatives to attend the federal grantees meeting in D.C.*

***USC facilities & administrative cost - \$50,764***

*Facilities, utilities, administrative overhead; Federal negotiated rate of 26% of modified total direct costs*

***Total Tentative: \$267,033***