

IOWA CHILD ADVOCACY BOARD
STATE BOARD MEETING
Conference Room 320
Lucas State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa
Friday, June 16, 2023
12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

State Board Members Present:

Mark Elcock
Rick McIntosh
Nichole Nicholson
Judge Owens, Chair
Wayne Schellhammer, Vice Chair

Staff Present:

Amy Carpenter
Lesia Christianson
Cara Galloway - Virtual
Sherri Ripperger
Steffani Simbric

Guests Present:

Amy Bentley
Sarah Reisetter
Joe Wernau

Call Meeting to Order; Roll Call of Board Members

Judge Owens calls the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m. Attendance is taken and the Judge welcomes new board member, Nichole Nicholson.

Approval of Minutes for Previous Meetings

Handout 1. Schellhammer moves and McIntosh seconds a motion to approve the March 10, 2023 Iowa Child Advocacy Board meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

CASA Program Report, Amy Carpenter

Handout 2. Carpenter gives an overview of the data on the report. We are continuing to see a small decrease in cases assigned and number of advocates assigned, however caseload expectations are increasing slightly each month in alignment with the number of FTE assigned to a CASA program. We are working on an amendment in our data system to capture volunteer time spent on continuing education and adding categories of contribution so we can capture more of their hours.

April 2023 was the first time this fiscal year that assigned cases dropped below the expectation. Although we are increasing caseloads, we do get to the point that we are limited by the NCASA forty-five case standard. We have seen a significant drop in referrals. We are trying to remedy this by talking to Judges about assigning their cases.

Coordinators are fielding a lot of questions about the HHS merger. They are passing along that the work at the volunteer level is not going to change. It's our job to be sure that it's as seamless as possible. McIntosh asks if CASA's from one county can serve another county nearby. Simbric states that we serve less than 20% of kids that have been removed from their home statewide. The areas that we are in, we are only serving 40% of the kids. If we do get a case assignment from a county we normally do not serve in, we try to find an advocate to assign to that case. Nationwide there is a drop in the number of children served, cases before the court and the number of new volunteers being activated.

Recently we revised the Coach model to allow the coordinators to use the pieces of the model that work for them. The pre-service training for Coaches has also been updated and piloted.

Simbric successfully wrote a grant for VOCA funding. We were awarded \$300,000; \$100,000 per year, for three years. And while funding can help CASA of Iowa serve more children, the reporting and requirements might outweigh the funds. The contract would start October 1, 2023.

We hired a ¾ time Coordinator, Peggy Sellnau, in the Dubuque area. We just posted the Polk County Coordinator - Volunteer Manager position. We will be starting a CASA case audit for FY24, we launched a Judicial Survey, CASA Volunteer Survey and also a Staff Satisfaction Survey.

Moving forward NCASA would like all children, across the nation, served by 2030.

HHS, Director Garcia

Director Garcia introduces herself to the board. She shares and explains the new HHS agency organizational

structure. She feels like the Compliance Division will be a good fit for ICAB. Judge Owens asks if any of our staff will change duties. Garcia states that with time and intention adjustments may be made with collaboration. Schellhammer states that the merger has an opportunity to be very effective if we're willing to be transparent. Garcia states that it is very important to her that HHS, on all levels, is an agency of continuous improvement and embracing critical feedback.

Child Well-Being Assessment Surveys - Joe Wernau

Handout 6 & 6.2. The pilot was launched at the end of April. This one of the six assessments that we created is more qualitative, it's very subjective. Two coordinators volunteered to participate in this pilot program. A total of 38 volunteers were given the survey and we had a 68% completion rate. Wernau gave an overview of the data in his report. The data highlighted the most commonly experienced barriers across four areas of child/family well-being. The data also showed there is a lack of communication between the CASA volunteers who participated in the survey and specific parties involved in the case, particularly the child's father, stated interest attorney, and guardian ad litem. Wernau and ICAB staff will continue to work on the surveys.

The board congratulated and thanked Joe for this great work.

FCRB Report, [Steffani Simbric](#)

Handout 3. Simbric reviews the data with the board. We are on track to do more reviews than we have in previous fiscal years. We are trying to partner with HHS on developing better outcome reporting. There will be meetings planned to remedy this in the future.

Carmen Cameron is retiring as of June 30, 2023. She does board support. Current staff will be taking over those boards.

All FCRB case management is now in CAMS. We are currently training FCRB members on the system. Last meeting the board authorized ICAB to go into some surrounding counties to expand FCRB. We went to Polk County to deliver an expansion plan and they agreed to give us \$20,000 toward the expansion. They asked us to update the language in the contract. The issue is that we can't do a lot with \$20,000. Simbric and Hoefler have been brainstorming what they can pull together as far as resources.

Budget Report, [Steffani Simbric](#)

Handout 4. Simbric states that the budget we received from DIA is incorrect. We will send out an updated budget to the board.

Strategic Goal 1 Report, Steffani Simbric

Simbric states that over the years our revenue is relatively consistent. While that is good, we have had some major changes. We have had a huge decrease in our IV-E revenue. We've been able to absorb that loss by reduction of force and not filling positions. We have had an increase in the number of grants we are getting and the amounts of the external revenue sources. External funding is usually limited to one-time projects and not for staffing.

Simbric would like to talk to HHS about tapping into the TANF funds. There are CASA programs in other states that do receive these funds.

HHS Realignment

Reisetter and Bentley shared their background with the board. They both are excited to learn about the work that ICAB does and to begin sharing resources with us. Bentley has started thinking about the internal controls and accountability arm. Their goal is to work together as a leadership team to create connections.

Simbric asks what changes they see in our branding. Riesetter states that there are certain units within the organization that need to remain on the outside of the HHS brand. There will be more discussion about this in the future.

The board expressed gratitude for HHS joining today's meeting. The board also feels like there is potential in this alignment.

Background Check Policy

Handout 7. The focus of the background check policy was on paragraphs 6, 7 and 10.

There was a discussion about the new policy. Elcock is suggesting an amendment to paragraph 3 to include sub P which would include conspiracy to commit any of the above-mentioned offenses. The background policy amendments to 3, adding sub paragraph P and with the modifications to five. Changing the time frames under school paragraph A and then adding in language under C and D those time frames start with the Disposition in the case. Owens motions and Schellhammer seconds to modify paragraph 5A, to change three to one year after completing all court requirements. Motion passed unanimously.

2023 Code Updates

Simbric states that in the 2022 legislative session, CASA as GAL was taken out of the code. This resulted in language loss that is important to CASA program operations. Rep. Bergan was interested in this legislative

session in helping ICAB fix this, but it didn't go anywhere. She will talk with HHS about getting the language in the code fixed.

Administrative Rules

Handout 8. Reissetter went over the proposed administrative rules amendments. Public records requests for ICAB would go through HHS. Schellhammer motions and Nicholson seconds adoption of Administrative Rules amendments. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business

28E Agreement between Friends of Iowa CASA and ICFCRB and ICAB has been signed. ICAB staff located in the Lucas Building will be working from home starting September 1, 2023 until the building is remodeled.

Future Meeting Dates

Next meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2023 from 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. at Iowa Utilities Board, Conference Room 1. Upcoming dates: December 8, 2023

McIntosh motions and Nicholson seconds the meeting adjourns. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourns 2:53 p.m.

ICAB Minutes Prepared By: *Sherri Ripperger*
Sherri Ripperger

ICAB Minutes Approved On: 09/08/23

CAB Minutes Approved by Child Advocacy Board Vote

Approved By:


William Owens (Sep 11, 2023 07:24 CDT)

Judge William S. Owens, ICAB State Board Chair

Steffani Simbric, ICAB Administrator

Handout 1: March 2023 Draft Board Minutes

Handout 2: CASA Program Report

Handout 3: FCRB Program Report

Handout 4: ICAB Budget Report

Handout 5: Strategic Goal Funding

Handout 6: CASA Child Assessment

Handout 6.2: Child Well-Being Assessments - Volunteer Instruction Manual

Handout 7: Proposed CASA of Iowa, Background Check Policy 2023










SB Minutes - 06.16.23

Final Audit Report

2023-09-11

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