

IOWA CHILD ADVOCACY BOARD  
STATE BOARD MEETING  
Conference Room 319  
Lucas State Office Building  
Des Moines, Iowa  
Friday, March 10, 2023  
12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

State Board Members Present:

Ashley Baker - Virtual  
Courtney Clarke - Virtual  
Mark Elcock - Virtual  
Rick McIntosh - Virtual  
Judge Owens, Chair  
Wayne Schellhammer, Vice Chair

Staff Present:

Amy Carpenter  
Shirley Hoefler - Virtual  
Sherri Ripperger  
Steffani Simbric

Guests Present:

Joe Wernau

Call Meeting to Order; Roll Call of Board Members

Judge Owens calls the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes for Previous Meetings

Handouts 1 and 2. Schellhammer moves and Clarke seconds a motion to approve the December 9, 2022 and January 20, 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 do have pockets across the state where we are not getting case referrals. She will be working with local coordinators on identifying these pockets and the problems related to the lack of case referrals.

We are just finishing up the coach model revisions and how we really changed the way that our coaches are serving on cases. We've changed the way we are training coaches. The pre-service training has gone from 16 hours to 6-7 hours. The new, shorter training is very task based. The pilot training was held in Sioux City last week. There will be a meeting in a couple of weeks to review the pilot.

Simbric applied for a VOCA grant. The funds would be used to hire more staff and expand the areas we serve. We asked for \$700,000. Simbric states that if we get the money we will most likely have to begin fingerprinting all staff and volunteers. This is based on a conversation with the grant administrators at the AG's office. We will hear about the funding in May. At that time, we will look at the amount awarded, the number of additional children served, etc and determine next steps.

Dubuque Coordinator Dawn Goerdts is no longer with us. She took another employment opportunity. Hofer is covering her caseload at this time. One of our Polk County coordinators is on a leave of absence. We were looking at having a temporary coordinator position in Polk County, but that is on hold for now. The Dubuque position will also not be filled at this time. The positions may need to be posted after we know more about the realignment with HHS.

National CASA Updates. Simbric applied for a position on the National CASA State Leadership Council and was appointed. We are currently working on the calendar year 2022 CASA annual surveys. They will be submitted on March 31st. The National CASA Conference is in St. Louis this year. We have several staff and volunteers planning to attend. Cara Galloway, Ottumwa Coordinator, decided to use the \$20,000 she received from Judge Owens receiving the Judge of the Year Award, for a full-day summit in Ottumwa.

The child assessment in its current form that's housed within CAMS is really complex and doesn't generate a lot of usable data for us. We changed policy in December to stop conducting these child assessments. Wernau has been working on another tool for assessments. Wernau states that the programs he talked to track education/development, health, permanency/safety, and connections/opportunities. He states we want to focus the assessments and work on areas of need and well-being rather than on individuals. The assessments are in rough draft stages right now. Once they are finished they will be sent out to coordinators and volunteers for feedback. We are hoping by early April to start a pilot program with one or two program areas. Once we have a version that we are happy with, we will look at putting that into CAMS. Judge Owens states that this would be a good time to look at our report format. Owens states that we might want to think about including a Judge in the focus group of the assessments.

FCRB Report, Shirley Hoefer

Handout 4. Correction in the data; FY23 quarter 2 the first number should be 427.

CAMS is being used by FCRB staff and our contract facilitators right now. Five Points is working on upgrading some of the different screens and places where FCRB members (volunteers) would be able to access information. Once the upgrade is done we will reassess whether the timing is right to bring in our FCRB volunteers or not. Either way the upgrades will help our staff.

All of our facilitators now have the equipment to run hybrid meetings. March will be the first month that many will start using the new equipment. It has opened an avenue for some who have previously not been able to participate in foster care review meetings.

The FCRB program committee was scheduled to focus on the pre-service training curriculum the second half of the fiscal year. They have done the preliminary updates to the curriculum to reflect any admin rules and legislative changes that occurred in 2022. They are also paying attention and reviewing HHS manual updates and making sure that the training that we are providing board members coincides with what the language is in their manuals. The state office staff was also to work on data and outcome reporting with HHS, but this has been on hold since a preliminary meeting in November 2022 despite Simbric's request to resume conversations with HHS.

The FCRB Policy Manual was approved in December 2022 and released to volunteers and staff in January. We still have one remaining issue about the background screening that will be discussed later in the meeting.

Hoefer mentions that we do have the coordinator position open in Dubuque. Things are going well with her covering the caseload. The Dubuque office has the advantage of having a master level field practicum student who has been with us since August. She's been a tremendous asset.

The MOU that we are under for the current fiscal year puts a priority emphasis on reviewing kids zero to five as well as the APPLA youth. If there's room on the boards we can continue to review other cases. One of the issues that we are going to run into is that Polk County, Jana Rhoads Service Area Manager, was hoping by FY24 we could start reviewing zero to five and APPLA cases only in Polk County. We only have one board in Polk County and that will not be enough to cover those two priority populations. Hoefer is estimating that we will need three boards. We need to do something moving forward to establish more boards if we are going to provide this service requested by Rhoads. Simbric did request funding from Polk County (DECAT) for this purpose.

Schellhammer motions and Baker seconds that ICAB and Friends explore funding opportunities for FCRB in Polk County and the surrounding counties of Boone, Dallas, Marshall and Story Counties. Motion passed unanimously.

Hoefer wants the board input on some of the boards being virtual all of the time to capture those rural areas.

The higher populated areas would continue to be in person with a virtual option. After discussion the board agrees that allowing some boards to be virtual all of the time is a good idea.

#### Budget Report, Steffani Simbric

Handout 5. ICAB was not consulted by DIA for budget numbers for FY23 so our numbers are going to look way off. For example, DIA put in revenue that we knew we were not going to bring in, so that's an area where we are off by quite a bit. Simbric reviews the budget numbers with the board. IV-E is lower this year. The penetration rate continues to drop. We've also worked with staff on what training counts toward IV-E and because of the changes that we've made with that, there will be a decrease.

Simbric is trying to find ways to increase our revenue to follow the strategic plan goals. Since she's been here grant funding has been pretty successful, but they are based on one-time projects. We are managing about \$300,000 in grants each year. Wernau wrote a grant for ICAB for technology money for the Eastern Polk Region and we were awarded the full funding of \$6500. Simbric states that her goal right now is to figure out how to fill our marketing/recruiting position.

#### Old Business

Judge Owens states that Legislative Day was very successful. There was great interaction with the legislators. Simbric also feels like the event went really well. We had staff and volunteers help with the event from across the state.

Background Check Policy. Guernsey provided some findings from programs across the country about what their background check policies look like. Carpenter states that Guernsey was going to put together some information and send it out to us. It's a work in progress and nothing new to report.

#### New Business

Judge Owens states that he's tried to keep the board up to date regarding the realignment. The proposal is to move us under HHS and give the HHS Director the authority that the board now has to staff ICAB under budgetary restrictions. Our message has been that we don't want to move, but if you're going to move us, give us the authority to run our own program. We will continue to monitor the realignment.

Carpenter states Representative Bergan asked for some language to allow judges authority to appoint CASA and allow CASA access to information about children back into code, since it had recently been removed. Carpenter and Simbric drafted the language, Judge Owens reviewed it, and it was sent on to Representative Bergan.

Simbric states that we were notified that we have a new board member appointment, Nicole Nicholson. Her

appointment starts May 1, 2023.

Light of Hope Breakfast, April 5th, 2023 from 7-8 a.m. sponsored by Friend of Iowa CASA. If you are able to attend please register online.

April 11, 2023 is the SE Iowa CASA Summit in Ottumwa. Registration is online.

Future Meeting Dates


Next meeting is scheduled for June 9, 2023 from 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Lucas Building Rooms 319 & 320. Upcoming dates: September 8 and December 8, 2023

McIntosh motions and Clarke seconds the meeting adjourns. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourns 2:11 p.m.

ICAB Minutes Prepared By:   
Sherri Ripperger

ICAB Minutes Approved On: 10-11-23

CAB Minutes Approved by Child Advocacy Board Vote

Approved By:   
Judge William S. Owens, ICAB State Board Chair

  
Steffani Simbric, ICAB Administrator

Handout 1: December 2022 Draft Board Minutes

Handout 2: January 2023 Draft Board Minutes

Handout 3: CASA Program Report

Handout 4: FCRB Program Report

Handout 5: ICAB Budget Report