



Vermont Children's Justice Act Task Force

2026 Annual Reporting

Grant:

Children's Bureau
Office on Child Abuse and Neglect Children's Justice Act Grant FY 2024
childrensjusticeact@acf.hhs.gov

Applicant Agency:

Vermont Department for Children and Families
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Vermont Children's Justice Act Task Force: Membership Listing

Task Force Membership Designation	Name	Title	Organization	Relevant Background/Experience
Law Enforcement	Loretta Stalnaker	Chief of Police	Royalton, Vermont Police Department	Chief Loretta Stalnaker has served as Chief of Police in Royalton, Vermont for seven years. Prior to that, she served with the Randolph Police Department as Officer, Sergeant, and Acting Chief. She is a retired Army National Guard member with 21 years of service (retired 2021). She has extensive experience investigating child abuse and neglect cases and collaborating with the Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF). She serves on the Vermont Criminal Justice Council Domestic Violence Subcommittee and is a member of the Windsor County Special Investigations Unit (SIU).
Criminal Court Judge	Allison Arms	Superior Court Judge, Honorable Allison Arms	Vermont Judiciary	Judge Allison Arms is a graduate of the University of Vermont and the University of Denver Sturm School of Law. She previously worked as a public defender with the Legal Aid Society (NYC), Chittenden County Public Defender's Office, and Federal

				Defender for Vermont. Appointed to the Vermont Superior Court in 2011, she has extensive experience presiding over child abuse and neglect cases. She received the David Jacques Award for Excellence in Juvenile Justice and helped establish Vermont's Family Treatment Docket in 2018.
Civil Court Judge	Kirstin K. Schoonover	Superior Court Judge, Honorable Kirstin K. Schoonover	Vermont Judiciary	Judge Schoonover graduated from the University of San Francisco School of Law and Pomona College. She worked as a public defender, assistant attorney general for DCF, and attorney with Vermont Legal Aid representing low-income clients. Appointed to the Vermont Superior Court in 2015, she has presided over complex child and family cases and is known for her evidence-based and access-to-justice focused approach.
Prosecuting Attorney	Kristin Gozzi	Senior Deputy State's Attorney	Vermont Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs (Washington County)	Kristin Gozzi has served as Deputy State's Attorney since 2007. She holds a JD from the University of Oklahoma College of Law and completed medical training in child abuse and neglect. She founded the Washington County Youthful Offender Workgroup, received the David Jaques Memorial Award (2019), and has served on multiple juvenile justice and advisory committees including the Advisory

				Committee on Rules for Family Proceedings.
Defense Attorney	Marshall Pahl	Deputy Defender General	Office of the Defender General	Marshall Pahl is Deputy Defender General and Supervising Attorney for the Juvenile Defender Office in Vermont. He has extensive trial and appellate experience with a focus on criminal defense and juvenile justice representation.
Attorney for Children	Kerrie Johnson	Juvenile Defender	Office of the Defender General	Kerrie Johnson is an attorney with Vermont's Office of the Defender General, where she works within the Juvenile Division representing youth and families involved in child welfare and juvenile justice matters.
Child Advocate	Patti Randall	Executive Director	Rutland Children's Advocacy Center & Vermont Children's Alliance	Patti Randall is Executive Director of the Vermont Children's Alliance (CAC State Chapter) and Rutland Children's Advocacy Center, supporting child advocacy services statewide.
Child, Youth and Family Advocate	Matthew Bernstein	Child, Youth, and Family Advocate	Office of Child, Youth and Family Advocate	Matthew Bernstein is the State of Vermont's first Child, Youth, and Family Advocate, appointed in 2023. He previously worked as Senior Staff Attorney at Pegasus Legal Services for Children in New Mexico, representing children in abuse/neglect and education matters. He is a Child Welfare Law Specialist certified by the National Association of Counsel for Children and former Vermont Law School professor.

Child, Youth and Family Advocate (Deputy)	Lauren Higbee	Deputy Advocate	Office of the Child, Youth and Family Advocate	Lauren Higbee holds an MSW from the University of Illinois Chicago. She has worked in child welfare and juvenile justice in multiple states including Vermont, with experience in investigations, foster care, adoption, juvenile probation, and youth homelessness services. She now focuses on systemic and individual advocacy for children and families.
CASA	Robert Post	Director, Guardian ad Litem Program	Vermont Court Administration	Robert Post manages statewide coordination of Vermont's Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Program, ensuring children's representation in court. He is a graduate of Vermont Law School.
Health Professional	Tracey Wagner	SANE RN, Pediatric Medical Director	Vermont SANE Board	Tracey Wagner is a pediatric nurse with over 30 years of experience. She is a certified Pediatric Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE-P) and serves as Pediatric Clinical Coordinator for the Vermont SANE Program and Nurse Clinician with UVM's Child Safe Program. She also has lived experience as a foster and adoptive parent for children with complex needs.
Mental Health Professional	Gary Marvel	Supervision & Re-Entry Coordinator; Co-Director	Vermont Department of Corrections / Agency of Human	Gary Marvel specializes in supervision and treatment of individuals with sexually harmful behaviors. He also has prior child welfare social work experience, contributing to expertise in both accountability and

			Services	rehabilitation systems.
Child Protective Services	Nancy Miller	Child Safety Director	Vermont DCF – Family Services Division	Nancy Miller has worked in Vermont DCF since 2006 with 13 years of experience in child abuse investigations and supervision. She oversees child safety policy, practice, consultation, and training statewide.
Child Protective Services	Lindsay Barron	Director of Policy and Planning	Vermont DCF – Family Services Division	Lindsay Barron has 15 years of experience in child welfare policy and practice. She leads policy development and implementation across foster care, permanency planning, system of care, and practice improvement initiatives.
Individual with Disabilities Expertise	Melanie Hall	Health Systems Specialist	Vermont Department of Health (Children with Special Health Needs)	Melanie Hall works with the Children with Special Health Needs Program supporting children with chronic medical conditions and developmental disabilities. She has experience as a medical social worker and in health systems coordination.
Parent / Representative of Parent Group	Larry Crist	Executive Director	Vermont Parent Representation Center	Larry Crist holds a JD and MSW with over 45 years of experience in legal and social services. He has served in leadership roles in health, corrections, and child welfare systems including Deputy Commissioner of Health and Commissioner of Aging and Disabilities.
Parent / Representative of	Shela Linton	Executive Director	Families United	Shela Linton has over 20 years of experience in family advocacy, harm

Parent Group				reduction, and recovery services. She co-founded the Windham County Turning Point Center and leads Families United supporting families navigating education and child welfare systems.
Individual with Lived Experience	Arial Beaulac	Executive Director	Kingdom Recovery Center	Arial Beaulac is a mother in long-term recovery and Executive Director of Kingdom Recovery Center in St. Johnsbury, Vermont. She works in prevention efforts and participates in multiple child welfare and community initiatives.
Individual with Lived Experience	Kelli O'Neill	Therapist	Private Practice	Kelli O'Neill holds MSW and BSW degrees and has 10 years of social work experience in Maine and Vermont, including work with DCF. She currently operates a private therapy practice serving children, adolescents, and adults in Barre, Vermont.
Individual with Experience Supporting Homeless Youth	Under Recruitment			Recruitment is in progress.

Functions, Rules, and Meetings

The purpose of the Children's Justice Act Task Force (CJATF) is to assess and make recommendations for system improvement in the realm of investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, and support designation and appropriation of CJA funding. This mission requires a spirit of collaboration and a positive working relationship between the Department for Children and Families (DCF) and the CJATF. As such, each party in the collaboration has a specific role to play. The respective roles are:

The role of **The Department for Children and Families** is to:

- Administer the CJA Grant and assign the function of Grant Manager to a position within the Department for Children and Families.
- Facilitate the appropriate business office process of grant funding allocation, based on recommendations it receives from the CJATF.

The role of **Task Force Members** is to:

- Act with regard for the well-being and welfare of children, youth, and their families.
- Contribute to the review of applications for funding.
- Contribute to the CJA three-year assessment review process in their specific area of expertise.
- Adhere to state confidentiality requirements.
- Regularly attend and fully participate in all scheduled meetings or identify an individual who fulfills the same role designation to attend.
- Meeting Facilitation: The Meeting Facilitator shall preside at the CJATF meetings and perform duties as appropriate to the mission of the CJATF.
- Note taking: Members may be asked to take notes.

The role of the **State Coordinator/Grant Manager** is to:

- Work with Grants and Contracts unit and the DCF Business office to administer the CJA funds.
- Serve as program manager on CJA funded projects.
- Provide advice, guidance, technical assistance, and information regarding the expected role and function of the CJATF as mandated by the requirements of the CJA Program Instruction.
- Attend all CJATF meetings.
- Keep CJATF members apprised of the meeting schedules and distribute minutes and other pertinent mailings necessary for Task Force members to fulfill their responsibilities.
- Act as liaison between CJATF and the Federal Administration for Children and Families to facilitate communication.

- Act as liaison between CJATF and the Vermont Department for Children and Families to facilitate communication.
- Present financial reports to task force members' status of CJA funds available for allocation to future projects.

Meetings

- CJATF meetings will occur at least four times per year. In 2025, meetings were held monthly through September, with a concentration of workgroups related to Child Protection Registry Reforms occurring throughout the fall.
- The State Coordinator/Grant Manager, in consultation with the Task Force, may schedule special meetings.
- The State Coordinator sets the agenda for the regular and special meetings with input from Task Force members.
- The Task Force coordinator shall document in minutes all regularly scheduled and special CJATF meetings, including any major decisions, action items, recommendations from the CJATF to the Department for Children and Families, and responses from the Department for Children and Families regarding recommendations previously submitted.
- Any major decisions, including the allocation of grant monies, recommendations and annual reports will be approved by a majority of a quorum vote. This may occur virtually during regularly scheduled or special CJATF meetings or through electronic communication with CJATF members. These decisions and correlating votes will be documented in minutes and saved as part of the TF permanent record.

Voting

- Each member of the CJATF shall have one vote.
- Voting will take place in person at the meetings, phone in attendance, or electronic communication with a response time set by the coordinator.
- A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of one more than half of the current membership of the CJTF. The members in attendance at a meeting where a quorum is not present, may elect (by majority vote), to proceed with the business of the meeting subject to ratification when a quorum is present at the next meeting.
- Any member who directly or individually may benefit from a grant application before the CJTF shall abstain from discussion and voting on the matter.
- Any member with a conflict of interest in an issue being considered by the CJTF, shall make a declaration to that effect, and abstain from further discussion and voting on that issue.

Meeting Content

The Children's Justice Act Task Force (CJATF) agenda for the calendar year from May 2025 to May 2026 outlines a series of meetings focused on improving child welfare practices and policies. Below is a summary of the agenda topics for each meeting:

June 25, 2025

- Annual Report and Application Review
- Membership and Recruitment Discussion
- Overview of Act 154 Implementation Work
- Centralized Substantiation Review Discussion
- Review of NJ Findings Model
- Discussion of Mitigating and Aggravating Factors
- Risk of Harm Statutory Definition Discussion
- Future Stakeholder Engagement and Scheduling

July 30, 2025

- Introductions and Membership Updates
- Act 154 Stakeholder Engagement Planning
- Child Welfare Summit Reminder
- Continued Discussion of NJ Findings Model
- Discussion of “Absolutes” for Registry Placement
- Aggravating and Mitigating Factors
- Internal Findings and Due Process
- Consideration of 3-Tier Model
- “Perpetrator Unknown” and Reopened Investigations
- False Reports and Records Retention

August 27, 2025

- Welcome and Orientation for New Stakeholders
- Child Protection Registry Purpose
- Review of Draft Investigation Determination Model

September 24, 2025

- Act 154 Stakeholder Planning and preparation for Act 154 Workgroups
- Future CJATF Topics
- 804A Hearings, future agenda planning

- Federal Funding and National Updates
- Conference and Training Updates

Conferences, Workgroups and Special Meetings

Task Force Members play an important role as participants with expertise and experiences in settings devoted to improve practice related to child protection. Vermont's current focus on Child Protection registry reform led to a series of workgroups in fall and early winter of 2025, alongside our annual Child Welfare Summit and a special CJATF meeting devoted to a newly legislative workgroup aimed at updating mandating reporting laws.

Child Welfare Summit – September 2025

Task Force members are invited annually to participate in the [Child Welfare Summit](#), which focuses on the use of Structured Decision-Making tools in and leading up to CHINS proceedings.

Child Protection Registry Reform Stakeholder Workgroups

- [December 11, 2025 - Stakeholder Meeting](#) (PDF)
- [November 19, 2025 - Joint Act 154 Stakeholder and Children's Justice Act \(CJA\) Task Force Meeting](#) (PDF)
- [November 7, 2025 - Stakeholder Meeting](#) (PDF)
- [November 5, 2025 - Stakeholder Meeting](#) (PDF)
- [October 10, 2025 - Stakeholder Meeting](#) (PDF)
- [October 9, 2025 - Stakeholder Meeting](#) (PDF)

Prior Year Performance Report

May 2025 to May 2026

Guardian Ad Litem Program

In Vermont, by statute, a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) is assigned to each child involved in a CHINS (child in need of care or supervision) child. It is imperative to have a well-staffed and well-trained pool of volunteers to ensure the delivery of competent and effective advocacy to assist the court as well as state and community stakeholder partners in the adjudication of cases involving abuse and neglect of children. Continued education and professional development for the GAL's is a large part of preparing them for service.

Narrative Description of Program / Activity

- Statewide Interagency Structured Decision-Making (SDM) Conference and Training. On September 5, 2025, Vermont Guardians ad Litem hosted the annual statewide interagency child welfare summit. This years summit brought over two hundred Vermont child welfare stakeholder partners including Guardians ad Litem, Judges, Attorneys, DCF workers, Judiciary staff, community organization and folks with lived experience. The day long in person conference was hosted by Heather Meitner, Director of Child Welfare, Evident Change.
- The overarching goal of this conference was to continue training our systems professionals on SDM which in child welfare is a research-based framework designed to improve the consistency, transparency, and quality of decisions made by child protection professionals. It provides a set of standardized tools and guidelines that help assess risk, determine service needs, and support the safety and well-being of children and families.
- Ultimately, SDM in child welfare helps child protection agencies make better, fairer decisions by combining professional judgment with structured tools. This leads to improved child safety, reduced recurrence of maltreatment, and more effective use of resources

The Current Task Force Recommendation(s)/goal(s) that are addressed by this activity

This activity relates to the CJA recommendation considering investigating and the judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect by offering support to groups and programs within our systems.

The CJA Required Category (A, B, or C) that is addressed by this activity- A

Description of evaluation work related to this activity, including outputs and outcomes:

Evaluation Methods

The main evaluation method used for this training was a series of local follow-up meetings at each courthouse in the fourteen counties of Vermont to have a smaller discussion on SDM and how it's being used and how practices may have shifted since the conference. Heather Meitner has also been brought back to conduct additional training for smaller groups using separate funding.

Outputs

A better trained and more capable network of child welfare professionals in Vermont

Outcomes

Using SDM in child welfare has been associated with multiple positive outcomes, including improved child safety and risk management, reduced recurrence of maltreatment, early identification of safety concerns, greater consistency and fairness in decision-making, more consistent decisions across workers, increased transparency and accountability, improved access to services across all populations, more efficient use of resources, and better case outcomes.

How evaluation results are used (i.e., monitoring, program improvement, dissemination, etc.

The evaluation results will be used to identify gaps in implementation, refine tools and procedures, measure effectiveness, monitor fairness and service accessibility across populations, understand trends over time, support data-driven policy development, promote accountability and transparency, and inform internal quality improvement across systems.

The Vermont Children's Alliance

Narrative Description of Program/Activity

- **Shield Our Children from Harm Conference:** Shield Our Children from Harm conference brings together a multidisciplinary audience of professionals involved in the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child maltreatment. Each year experts share cutting edge knowledge, research, and education on best practices in all aspects of child maltreatment.
- **2026 CAC Director Training:** For the CAC Director training, in addition to having our statewide partners at the Vermont Center for Crime Victims Services and the Vermont State's Attorney's office to present on grant and financial management, we brought trainers from the Northeast Regional Child Advocacy Center (NRCAC) to present on Strengthening Governance: From Board Recruitment to Onboarding as well as Secondary Traumatic Stress: Building Resilience for Teams. Dr. Metz and the Child Protection Team at UVM presented on The Medical Response to Child Abuse.
- **Hope Changes Everything Conference:** Hope Changes Everything is a two-day conference focused on Child Abuse, Exploitation and Trafficking. This conference provides training and education to law enforcement, mental health

clinicians, prosecutors, social workers, Child Welfare professionals, medical providers and school personnel by several nationally known presenters.

- **Statewide training from IROC2 for Online Safety:** MDTs and CAC staff statewide gained knowledge to promote responsible use of digital tools while also obtaining the wisdom to prevent negative, irresponsible, and malicious digital behaviors and trends
- **Forensic Interview training:** CJA funding supported basic forensic interview training
- **Guardify:** A secure, cloud-based digital evidence management system built for law enforcement agencies, prosecution offices, and child advocacy centers. 7 CACs signed on to utilize.
- **MDT Conference:** Our MDT conference included speakers like Adrienne Simone from The Mama Bear Affect; Dr. Georgia Winters presented on sexual grooming; Anthony DiVenczo spoke about the power of communication and collaboration; Richard Guerry from IROC2 talked about the dangers of the digital world; Lori McGovern from the Chief Medical Examiner's Office shared child death case sensitivities, and the Child Protection Team from UVM discussed the importance of forensic medical exams.

The Current Task Force recommendation(s) goal(s) that are addressed by this activity

Improve the process by which the state responds to cases of child abuse and neglect

The CJA Required Category (A, B, or C) that is addressed by this activity- A

Description of evaluation work related to this activity, including the following (as appropriate):

Evaluation Methods

Surveys conducted by presenters and VCA at the end of each training to determine changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills etc.

Outputs

1. Statewide and regional training opportunities supported professional development and strengthened multidisciplinary response efforts across Vermont's Child Advocacy Centers. Activities included participation in the Shield Our Children from Harm and Hope Changes Everything conferences, as well as statewide Basic Forensic Interview Training supported through CJA funding.
2. The 2026 CAC Director Training brought together statewide partners and national experts to provide training on financial management, governance and board development, secondary traumatic stress and resilience, and the medical response to child abuse.
3. Seven CACs also signed on to utilize Guardify, a secure cloud-based digital evidence management system for Child Advocacy Centers, law enforcement, and prosecution partners.

Outcomes

1. Five attendees from Bennington County attended the Shield Our Children from Harm Conference. The conference brings together a multidisciplinary audience of professionals involved in the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child maltreatment.
2. 12 CAC Directors attended the CAC Director training that brought together statewide partners and national experts to strengthen leadership, governance, and multidisciplinary response efforts across Vermont's Child Advocacy Centers. Training topics included grant and financial management, board recruitment and onboarding, secondary traumatic stress and team resilience, and the medical response to child abuse.
3. Implementation of Guardify expanded access to secure digital evidence management systems across Vermont, with seven CACs participating in 2025, including Addison, Bennington, Lamoille, Orange, Orleans, Washington, and Windham Counties.

Forensic Interview training

Supported attendance for three at the Basic Forensic Interview Training sponsored by the State's Attorney's and Sheriff's Office.

MDT Conference

85 attendees from across the state attended our first annual MDT conference. The Conference provided multidisciplinary professionals with training and education on vulnerability, sexual grooming behaviors, digital safety, communication and collaboration, child death investigations, and child forensic medical exams. The conference strengthened multidisciplinary teamwork, increased awareness of emerging risks and best practices, and reinforced the importance of trauma-informed,

collaborative responses to support the safety and well-being of children and families.

How evaluation results are used (i.e., monitoring, program improvement, dissemination, etc.)

- By strengthening multidisciplinary collaboration, forensic interviewing practices, and evidence management processes, these opportunities help support consistent, trauma-informed responses to child abuse cases and contribute to improved case coordination throughout the investigative and judicial process.
- While directly linking training or equipment purchases to judicial outcomes can be challenging, evaluation and aggregate case data help inform ongoing program development, resource allocation, and statewide systems improvement efforts.
- This work remains critical as Vermont's CACs served more than 1,200 new clients in 2025, facilitated or participated in nearly 800 forensic interviews, and supported multidisciplinary investigations resulting in nearly 200 filed charges and more than 30 convictions through plea agreements or trial outcomes. While judicial outcomes reported during a given year may not directly correspond to cases initiated during that same reporting period, this information helps identify patterns and fluctuations within the investigative and judicial process.
- Evaluation findings are also shared with partners, presenters, and funders to support accountability, program planning, and statewide improvement efforts.

SANE Program

Pediatric forensic nurses provide unique, trauma-informed medical care and evidence collection for pediatric victims of child sexual abuse and child physical abuse. This project will enhance the clinical skills of pediatric forensic nurses through providing nationally

recognized best-practice professional development. This will improve the clinical care provided directly to pediatric patients who are victims of child sexual and physical abuse.

Narrative Description of Program / Activity

- CJA funds are used to provide foundational and clinical education to pediatric forensic nurses in Vermont. This education includes a foundational educational course for prospective pediatric forensic nurses and at least one continuing education opportunity for currently credentialed pediatric nurses. Forensic nursing education is offered through a multi-disciplinary team approach, focused

on the role that pediatric forensic nurses have in the coordinated community response to identification, evaluation, assessment and response to child abuse and maltreatment.

- Between May 2025 and May 2026 the Vermont Forensic Nursing Program's Pediatric Clinical Coordinator conducted planning and preparation for the annual pediatric forensic nursing training course, including recruitment and course registration support of RNs, making course curriculum and content adjustments, and presenter/faculty engagement and scheduling. The Vermont Forensic Nursing Program (VFNP) offered its Adult/Adolescent annual educational course over 4 days in November of 2025. The Adult/Adolescent SANE portion of the course provides the required introductory learning for the Pediatric SANE portion of the course, which is scheduled for May 20th, 21st, and 22nd of 2026. The 32 hour pediatric portion of the course is developed and led by VFNP's Pediatric Clinical Coordinator Tracey Wagner, and built on a foundation of pediatric nursing practice to enable nurses to obtain and document a medical history and physical examination, to recognize and document child sexual and physical abuse, and to implement a treatment and discharge plan that incorporates nursing diagnosis and facilitates a multidisciplinary team approach for holistic care of a vulnerable child.
- Eleven new nurses are on track to completed the course for pediatric forensic nurse certification, which includes in-classroom education at the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and hands-on clinical education provided at the patient educational simulation lab at the University of Vermont.
- VFNP also hosted a multidisciplinary training available to all pediatric SANEs: "Aspects of Mandatory Reporting for Vermont Forensic Nurses" on January 14th. As well as a 2-part training series for Vermont school nurses: SANE School Nursing Training #1- Child abuse, sexual harm, and trauma on April 15, and # 2 - Demystifying Pediatric Forensic Care on April 16th 2026.

Sub-grantee implementing the program/activity (if applicable)

N/A

The Current Task Force Recommendation(s)/goal(s) that are addressed by this activity

Task Force recommendations in Area A are supported by these activities. Area A indicates priority for "continuing support to groups and programs dedicated to investigating, and the judicial handling of child abuse and neglect, such as GAL's, SANE's, and CAC/SIU's."

The CJA Required Category (A, B, or C) that is addressed by this activity

Category A, improving investigations are addressed by this priority.

Description of evaluation work related to this activity, including outputs and outcomes:

Evaluation Methods

The Vermont Forensic Nursing Program evaluates the foundational educational course activities via two methods: 1) Participants who complete the pediatric forensic nursing course receive a post-course evaluation asking them to rate the improvement of their knowledge and skills in responding to child abuse and maltreatment as a result of completing the course. Course evaluations highlight specific areas of expertise developed as a result of completing the course. 2) The Vermont Forensic Nursing Program also tracks the number of nurses who complete the annual training course and continue on to achieve credentialing as pediatric forensic nurses, as well as the number of hospitals or clinics which have resulting growth in the number of credentialed pediatric nurses available to provide care

Outputs

The Vermont Forensic Nursing Program will train 11 new pediatric forensic nurses at its 2025 annual training course.

Outcomes

The activity enhances and standardizes clinical knowledge and practice of pediatric forensic nurses in Vermont, as well as expands the workforce of pediatric forensic nurses in Vermont who contribute to the assessment and handling of suspected cases of child abuse and maltreatment. As of 1/1/26 there were 29 credentialed pediatric SANEs (SANE-P) and 4 RNs who had completed the pediatric forensic nursing certification course working toward credentialing. (Nurses have 2 years to meet credentialing requirements upon completion of the certification course.)

How evaluation results are used (i.e., monitoring, program improvement, dissemination, etc.

Results from the educational course evaluation are used to inform and improve ongoing educational activities such as monthly case review and future educational course offerings, as well as contribute to the maintenance the Vermont Forensic Nursing Program's status as an approved provider of nursing continuing professional development by the Northeast Multistate Division, (an accredited approver of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation).

Prior Year Line-Item Budget Expenditures

\$40,250.18

IV. FY25 Line-Item Budget Expenditures

FY25 CJA Line-Item Budget Expenditures			
Grantee	Grant Number	FAIN	Amount
DCF	Admin	2403VTCJA	\$4,304.97
DCF	Admin	2503VTCJA	\$2,726.37
DCF	Annual Meeting	2303VTCJA1	\$350.00
Total			\$6,481.34
Vermont Children's Alliance	03440-28484-VTCA-CJA-FY24	2303VTCJA	\$1,619.77
Vermont Children's Alliance	03440-28484-VTCA-CJA-FY25	2403VTCJA	\$16,893.24
Total			\$18,513.01
Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence	03440-28486-VNADSV-CJA-FY24	2303VTCJA	\$10,840.86
Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence	03440-28486-VNADSV-CJA-FY24	2403VTCJA	\$30.00
Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence	03440-28486-VNADSV-CJA-FY25	2403VTCJA	\$3,484.97
Total			\$14,355.83
Total expenditures using 2303VTCJA1			\$12,810.63
Total expenditures using 2403VTCJA1			\$24,713.18
Total expenditures using 2503VTCJA1			\$2,726.37
Total of all Expenditures			\$40,250.18

Application for Proposed Activities

Vermont Forensic Nursing Program

Narrative Description of Proposed Program/Activity

The Vermont Forensic Nursing Program will utilize Children's Justice Act (CJA) funds to strengthen and expand Vermont's pediatric forensic nursing workforce through foundational education, continuing education, and multidisciplinary collaboration. The program is designed to enhance the statewide availability of specialized, trauma-informed pediatric forensic medical care for children who may be victims of abuse or neglect.

Consistent with the executed grant agreement, the program will:

Provide a foundational educational course to prospective forensic nurses in Vermont in order to expand the workforce of specialized, trauma-informed clinicians;

Provide at least one continuing education opportunity for currently credentialed pediatric forensic nurses to enhance clinical knowledge, strengthen forensic assessment skills, and support ongoing professional development;

Support training for both prospective and currently credentialed pediatric forensic nurses in core areas including:

- Fundamentals of forensic nursing;
- Sexual violence and physical abuse;
- Victim responses and crisis intervention;
- Multidisciplinary collaboration;
- Medical forensic history taking and documentation;
- Observing and assessing physical examination findings and specimen collection;
- Medical forensic photography;
- Discharge and follow-up planning; and
- Legal and judicial procedures.

The program utilizes a multidisciplinary team approach that emphasizes the important role pediatric forensic nurses play within coordinated community responses to child abuse and maltreatment. Through this targeted education and workforce development effort, the Vermont Forensic Nursing Program seeks to improve the identification, evaluation, documentation, and response to suspected child abuse and neglect cases across Vermont.

Goals and Objectives of the Program/Activity

The Vermont Forensic Nursing Program aims to improve Vermont's capacity to provide accessible, specialized, trauma-informed forensic medical care to children who may be victims of abuse or neglect. The program supports both workforce development and ongoing clinical skill enhancement for pediatric forensic nurses across the state.

Key objectives of the program include:

Expanding Vermont's pediatric forensic nursing workforce through foundational training opportunities for prospective forensic nurses;

Increasing access to continuing education opportunities for currently credentialed pediatric forensic nurses;

Enhancing consistency and quality in forensic examinations, medical documentation, evidence collection, and multidisciplinary collaboration;

Strengthening pediatric forensic nurses' understanding of trauma-informed care, victim responses, and crisis intervention;

Supporting coordinated responses among medical providers, child protection professionals, law enforcement, prosecutors, advocacy organizations, and the judiciary; and

Improving statewide access to highly trained pediatric forensic nursing services for children and families involved in child maltreatment investigations.

Through these efforts, the program seeks to strengthen Vermont's overall child protection response system and improve outcomes for children and families.

Proposed Sub-Grantee to Implement the Program / Activity (If applicable)

N/A

Explanation of the Extent to Which This Project/Activity Contributes to the Reform of State Systems Handling of Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect

The Vermont Forensic Nursing Program contributes significantly to Vermont's multidisciplinary child protection system by strengthening the availability, consistency, and quality of pediatric forensic medical services statewide. Specialized pediatric forensic nurses play a critical role in the assessment, documentation, and coordinated response to suspected child abuse and neglect.

By supporting foundational education and ongoing professional development, the program helps ensure that pediatric forensic nurses are equipped with current clinical knowledge, trauma-informed practices, and forensic examination skills necessary to effectively respond to complex child maltreatment cases. Enhanced training in medical documentation, physical assessment findings, forensic photography, specimen collection, crisis intervention, and legal procedures contributes to improved coordination across systems and more reliable investigative and judicial outcomes.

The program also strengthens multidisciplinary collaboration among healthcare providers, child protection professionals, law enforcement, prosecutors, child advocacy organizations, and judicial partners. This coordinated approach improves system responsiveness and supports more effective and compassionate care for children and families.

An expanded and well-supported pediatric forensic nursing workforce enhances Vermont's capacity to respond to allegations of child abuse and neglect while promoting greater statewide consistency in forensic medical care and multidisciplinary practice.

The Current Task Force Recommendation(s)/Goal(s) That Would be Addressed by this Activity

This activity addresses the Task Force recommendations in Area A: The Vermont Children's Justice Act Task Force recommends continued support to programs such as the Vermont Forensic Nursing Program, the Guardian ad Litem program, and the Vermont Children's Alliance through grant awards to provide resources such as education, training, and equipment upgrades for those involved in the investigation of child abuse and the judicial handling of children who are victims of child abuse and neglect

Description of Proposed Evaluation Methods Related to This Activity, Including Desired Outputs and/or Outcomes

The Vermont Forensic Nursing Program will utilize multiple evaluation methods to assess the effectiveness of the proposed activities and measure program outcomes.

Evaluation methods include

1. Post-course and continuing education evaluations completed by training participants to assess increased knowledge, confidence, and clinical skill development related to pediatric forensic nursing and child maltreatment response;
2. Tracking participation in foundational and continuing education offerings, including the number of prospective and currently credentialed pediatric forensic nurses trained during the award period;
3. Monitoring workforce development outcomes, including increases in the number of credentialed pediatric forensic nurses and growth in statewide access to pediatric forensic nursing services; and
4. Ongoing programmatic and financial reporting submitted in accordance with CJA grant requirements and performance measures established in the executed agreement.

Desired outputs and outcomes

- Increased availability of trained pediatric forensic nurses across Vermont;
- Enhanced clinical competency and multidisciplinary collaboration among pediatric forensic nurses;
- Improved statewide consistency in trauma-informed forensic medical response practices;
- Strengthened support for child abuse investigations and judicial proceedings through high-quality medical forensic documentation; and
- Improved access to specialized care and coordinated services for children and families impacted by abuse or neglect.

The Vermont Children's Alliance

Narrative Description of Proposed Program/Activity

The Vermont Children's Alliance (VCA) will utilize Children's Justice Act (CJA) funds to strengthen Vermont's multidisciplinary response to child abuse and neglect through statewide training, continuing education, forensic interview training, and equipment support for Child Advocacy Centers (CACs), Special Investigation Units (SIUs), and Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs).

Statewide Training and Continuing Education Units (CEUs): The program will provide statewide training and Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for CAC Directors, SIUs, MDTs, and other multidisciplinary professionals involved in the investigation and response to child abuse and neglect. These training opportunities are intended to strengthen multidisciplinary coordination, improve service delivery to child victims and families, and minimize additional trauma to children involved in investigations.

Training activities will include:

- Specialized training for CAC Directors focused on leadership responsibilities, staffing oversight, multidisciplinary team investigations, detailed and accurate reporting, and full-service planning for children and families served by CACs;
- Statewide Basic Forensic Interview Training for CACs, SIUs, and MDTs designed to strengthen skills and techniques necessary for conducting developmentally appropriate forensic interviews with child victims of abuse or neglect while reducing the likelihood of re-interviews and retraumatization; and
- Continuing education opportunities to support ongoing professional development and best practices in multidisciplinary child abuse response.

Equipment Replacement, Upgrade, and Support: The program will replace and upgrade forensic interviewing equipment and provide investigative equipment support

for CACs, SIUs, law enforcement agencies, and MDT members as needed. These efforts are intended to ensure that multidisciplinary teams across Vermont have reliable and effective equipment to support the identification, assessment, investigation, and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases.

- Through these coordinated efforts, the Vermont Children's Alliance seeks to strengthen Vermont's child protection infrastructure, improve multidisciplinary collaboration, and support child-centered, trauma-informed responses to allegations of abuse and neglect.

Goals and Objectives of the Program/Activity

The Vermont Children's Alliance aims to improve Vermont's multidisciplinary response system for child abuse and neglect through training, education, forensic interview skill development, and equipment support for Child Advocacy Centers (CACs), Special Investigation Units (SIUs), and Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs).

Key objectives of the program include:

- Enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of CAC Directors, MDTs, SIUs, and other multidisciplinary professionals through statewide training and continuing education;
- Strengthening forensic interviewing skills and developmentally appropriate interview practices in order to reduce retraumatization and improve the quality of child abuse investigations;
- Supporting multidisciplinary collaboration and coordinated community responses to child abuse and neglect;
- Improving statewide access to reliable forensic interviewing and investigative equipment;
- Evaluating training activities and outcomes to identify improvements in practice and system response; and
- Strengthening Vermont's overall child protection response system through improved coordination, trauma-informed practices, and high-quality investigations.

Through these efforts, the program seeks to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families while promoting a more informed, responsive, and collaborative statewide system.

Proposed Sub-Grantee to Implement the Program / Activity (If applicable)

Most activities will be offered statewide; however, opportunities for sub-grants may be available, particularly for forensic interviewing equipment replacement and upgrades for Child Advocacy Centers and multidisciplinary partners.

Explanation of the Extent to Which This Project/Activity Contributes to the Reform of State Systems Handling of Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect

- The Vermont Children's Alliance contributes significantly to the reform and improvement of Vermont's systems handling child abuse and neglect cases by strengthening multidisciplinary coordination, enhancing forensic interviewing practices, and supporting statewide training and infrastructure development.
- Through statewide training and continuing education opportunities, the program equips CAC Directors, SIUs, MDTs, law enforcement professionals, and other multidisciplinary partners with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively respond to child abuse and neglect cases. Specialized training in developmentally appropriate forensic interviewing techniques supports child-centered investigations and reduces the likelihood of retraumatization caused by repeated interviews.
- The program also strengthens statewide investigative capacity by replacing and upgrading forensic interviewing and investigative equipment for CACs and MDT partners. Reliable and modern equipment supports accurate assessments, coordinated investigations, and effective prosecution efforts.
- By promoting multidisciplinary collaboration, trauma-informed practice, ongoing professional development, and systemwide consistency, the Vermont Children's Alliance helps improve the overall effectiveness, responsiveness, and coordination of Vermont's child protection system.

The Current Task Force Recommendation(s)/Goal(s) That Would be Addressed by this Activity

- The Vermont Children's Justice Act Task Force recommends continued support to programs such as the Vermont Forensic Nursing Program, the Guardian ad Litem program and the Vermont Children's Alliance through grant awards to provide resources such as education, training and equipment upgrades for those that are involved in the investigation of child abuse, and the judicial handling of children who are the victims of child abuse and neglect.

Description of Proposed Evaluation Methods Related to This Activity, Including Desired Outputs and/or Outcomes

The Vermont Children's Alliance will utilize both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods to assess the effectiveness of training activities, multidisciplinary collaboration efforts, and equipment support initiatives.

Evaluation methods include

- Tracking the number of statewide trainings, Continuing Education Units (CEUs), forensic interview trainings, and multidisciplinary learning opportunities provided during the grant period;
- Monitoring participation by CAC Directors, SIUs, MDT members, law enforcement, and other multidisciplinary professionals;
- Collecting participant feedback through post-training evaluations to assess increases in knowledge, confidence, and practical application of forensic interviewing and multidisciplinary response skills;
- Evaluating changes in practice and system improvements resulting from training activities and equipment upgrades;
- Tracking the distribution, replacement, and upgrade of forensic interviewing and investigative equipment across CACs and MDT partners; and
- Reviewing indicators of strengthened multidisciplinary collaboration and improvements in investigative response practices.

Desired outputs and outcomes

- Increased statewide access to high-quality forensic interview training and multidisciplinary education opportunities;
- Improved forensic interviewing practices and reduced retraumatization of child victims;
- Enhanced coordination among CACs, MDTs, SIUs, law enforcement, and partner agencies;
- Improved access to reliable forensic interviewing and investigative equipment; and
- Strengthened statewide capacity to effectively identify, assess, investigate, and respond to child abuse and neglect cases.

The Vermont Guardian Ad Litem Program

Narrative Description of Proposed Program/Activity

- Child Welfare Summit: Interagency conference and training which will bring together judges, family services workers, attorneys and advocates to take a close look at the decisions which lead to children being removed from their home due to child abuse and neglect. The training will be part 4 of a series looking closely at the Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools utilized by Family Services Division to assess safety and risk, and a newly released guide for courts designed to unify language and understanding across disciplines regarding the assessment of safety and risk for children. The following groups will be invited:

judges, Deputy State's Attorneys, GAL's, attorneys who represent parents and children Family Services Division staff and community stakeholders.

- The Vermont Court SDM Guide and Guide and the SDM Court Reference Sheet were developed by a collaborative workgroup consisting of judges, FSD, and our partners at Evident Change over a period of eight months. These guides were born from recommendations from the legislatively commissioned UVM study on the drivers of custody rates in Vermont, and are meant to help us all understand the linkages between statute and practice and increase objectivity and consistency around the state.

Goals and Objectives of the Program/Activity

The goal of the Child Welfare Summit is to train the participants on the use of the SDM tools, on the basics on risk assessment and danger identification, create unified language for better informed decisions in the courtroom and increased collaboration amongst all parties towards the goal of safer outcomes for children and families.

Area of Impact: A

How Will the Proposed Project(s) Contribute to Reform/Improvement

- The activity will inform stakeholders and parties on how to uniformly apply objective standards for identifying danger and assessing risk, thereby improving outcomes for children and families.

What Current Task Force Recommendations/Goal Would be Addressed

- This activity will address the Vermont CJA Task Force recommendation to support efforts such as the SDM Bench Guide or other innovative approaches for the speedy resolution of civil and criminal proceedings related to child abuse and neglect cases.

Description of Proposed Evaluation Methods Related to This Activity, Including Desired Outputs and/or Outcomes

- Vermont is closely watching our entrance rates of children into custody. The Bench Guide was developed to help reduce children coming into custody unnecessarily. The effectiveness of this program may be loosely tied to future custody entrance rates.
- Additionally, a preconference learning objective summary and evaluation combined with a post training evaluation will measure how participants gained knowledge and understanding of risk and safety assessment and the use of the SDM tools, particularly the Bench Guide.

Evaluation methods include

Desired outputs and outcomes

Explanation of the Extent to Which This Project/Activity Contributes to the Reform of State Systems Handling of Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect

- The Child Welfare Summit represents a significant initiative aimed at reforming Vermont's handling of child abuse and neglect by fostering a collaborative and informed approach among key stakeholders. By bringing together judges, family services workers, attorneys, and advocates, the summit seeks to address the critical decisions that lead to children being removed from their homes due to abuse and neglect. The focus on Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools and the newly released guide for courts is designed to unify language and understanding across disciplines, ensuring that assessments of safety and risk for children are consistent and objective.
- The summit's goals and objectives emphasize training participants on the use of SDM tools, risk assessment, and danger identification, while promoting unified language for better-informed courtroom decisions. This approach aims to increase collaboration among all parties involved, ultimately leading to safer outcomes for children and families. By standardizing the application of objective criteria for identifying danger and assessing risk, the summit contributes to improved decision-making processes, reducing the likelihood of unnecessary removals and enhancing the protection of children.
- The activity aligns with the Vermont CJA Task Force recommendation to support innovative approaches like the SDM Bench Guide, facilitating the speedy resolution of civil and criminal proceedings related to child abuse and neglect cases. The proposed evaluation methods include monitoring custody entrance rates to assess the program's impact on reducing unnecessary removals. Additionally, preconference and post-training evaluations will measure participants' knowledge and understanding of risk and safety assessment and the use of SDM tools, particularly the Bench Guide. These evaluations will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the summit in achieving its objectives and contributing to the reform of state systems handling child abuse and neglect cases.

The Current Task Force Recommendation(s)/Goal(s) That Would be Addressed by this Activity

Area A: The Vermont Children's Justice Act Task Force recommends continued support to programs such as the Vermont Forensic Nursing Program, the Guardian ad Litem program and the Vermont Children's Alliance through grant awards to provide resources such as education, training and equipment upgrades for those that are involved in the investigation of child abuse, and the judicial handling of children who are the victims of child abuse and neglect.

The Vermont Children's Justice Act Task Force

Goals and Objectives

The Vermont Children's Justice Act Task Force (CJATF) continued to strengthen Vermont's multidisciplinary response to child abuse and neglect through ongoing collaboration, policy review, stakeholder engagement, and systems improvement efforts. During this reporting period, the Task Force focused extensively on implementation planning related to Act 154, including reforms to Vermont's Child Protection Registry, centralized substantiation review processes, internal findings, secondary considerations for registry placement, and revised child protection levels tied to expungement review timelines.

The Task Force served as a central stakeholder body for reviewing proposed registry reform models, discussing due process considerations, evaluating aggravating and mitigating factors related to registry placement, and supporting broad stakeholder engagement across agencies and systems. Monthly meetings increasingly emphasized collaboration with judicial partners, legal stakeholders, medical professionals, individuals with lived experience, advocacy organizations, and community partners to ensure reforms were informed by multidisciplinary perspectives.

Throughout the year, the Task Force also supported broader child welfare system improvement efforts, including:

- Promotion of Structured Decision Making (SDM) fidelity and judicial education efforts;
- Discussion of 804A hearings and concerns related to children testifying in court proceedings;
- Continued support of grant-funded multidisciplinary programs and statewide training initiatives;
- Continued support of forensic interviewing technology and recording equipment

As Vermont moves into the next legislative and implementation phase, the Task Force is preparing to support additional systems reform efforts connected to S.239, which established [the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Working Group](#). This work will include examination of Vermont's mandated reporting framework, screening and response practices, multidisciplinary coordination, information sharing, prevention strategies, and opportunities for statutory and policy reform. CJATF members and partner organizations are expected to play an active role in supporting multidisciplinary collaboration and stakeholder engagement related to these efforts.

Central to all of this work is the Task Force's commitment to improving child safety outcomes while ensuring fairness, transparency, consistency, and meaningful stakeholder participation across Vermont's child welfare and judicial systems.

Areas of Impact

A, B, C

Contributions to Reform / Improvement

The Task Force plays a pivotal role in reviewing and monitoring the system's response to child abuse and neglect, identifying gaps and areas for potential improvement. Its membership includes a diverse array of professionals and stakeholders who collectively represent the child abuse and neglect response system, including law enforcement, judiciary, legal professionals, child advocates, and individuals with lived experience. This broad representation enables the Task Force to leverage a wide range of perspectives and expertise, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the system. By engaging directly with those who are both directly and indirectly involved in child protection, the Task Force is uniquely positioned to drive targeted reforms that enhance the protection and support of vulnerable children and families.

Through collaborative efforts, the Task Force aims to improve policy and practice, ensuring a more responsive and effective approach to handling cases of child abuse and neglect.

What Current Task Force Recommendations Will be Addressed?

Area A

1. The Vermont Children's Justice Act Task Force recommends continued support to programs such as the Vermont Forensic Nursing Program, the Guardian ad Litem program and the Vermont Children's Alliance through grant awards to provide resources such as education, training and equipment upgrades for those that are involved in the investigation of child abuse, and the judicial handling of children who are the victims of child abuse and neglect.

2. The Vermont Children's Justice Act Task Force recommends ongoing participation in workgroups, presentations and conversations related to the improvement of the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, such as the standardization of recording and storage of forensic interviews and the development of new quality assurance processes such as a centralized substantiation review.

Area B

3. The Vermont Children's Justice Act Task Force recommends support for efforts such as the SDM Bench Guide or other innovative approaches for the speedy resolution of civil and criminal proceedings related to child abuse and neglect cases.
4. The Vermont Children's Justice Act Task Force recommends collaboration with the Justice for Children Task Force or the Court Improvement Program on improving the quality of legal representation for children and families in Vermont.

Area C

5. The Vermont Children's Justice Act Task Force recommends ongoing participation in workgroups, presentations and conversations related to the reform of state laws, policies and procedures which provide comprehensive protection for children while ensuring fairness to all affected persons, such as efforts to develop a secondary layer of consideration prior to name placement on the child protection registry and continued observation and discussion of H.661, as the changes in law are put into place.

Evaluation Methods

The program coordinator will explore the use of periodic anonymous surveys to evaluate effectiveness of meeting structure, agenda topics, and special committee work in carrying out the mission and goals of the CJATF.

Outputs

- Task Force membership completes yearly recommendations, annual applications, reports and Three-Year Assessments as required
- funds directed appropriately
- attendance at the Annual Grantees Meeting

Outcomes

- Increased knowledge and awareness of membership about issues across the system of response to child abuse and neglect
- System improvement through supportive funding of needed programs

- System improvement through membership's participation in CJATF, whereas information obtained can be brought back to various disciplines, organizations, and agencies positioned to respond to child abuse and neglect in Vermont.

Proposed Line-Item Budget

\$ 5,644.06 - 2303VTCJA1

\$ 40,651.04 - 2403VTCJA1

\$ 68,939.63 - 2503VTCJA1

FY26 CJA Proposed Line Item Budget			
Grantee	Grant Number	FAIN	Amount
DCF	Admin	2303VTCJA1	\$1,318.90
DCF	Admin	2503VTCJA1	\$3,439.63
DCF	Annual Meeting	2503VTCJA1	\$2,000.00
Total			\$6,758.53
Lived Experience	N/A	2303VTCJA1	\$237.50
Lived Experience	N/A	2403VTCJA1	\$500.00
Lived Experience	N/A	2503VTCJA1	\$500.00
Total			\$1,237.50
Vermont Children's Alliance	03440-28484-VTCA-CJA-FY25	2403VTCJA1	\$22,106.76
Vermont Children's Alliance	03440-28484-VTCA-CJA-FY26	2503VTCJA1	\$42,000.00
Total			\$64,106.76
Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence	03440-28486-VNADSV-CJA-FY25	2403VTCJA1	\$6,044.28
Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence	03440-28486-VNADSV-CJA-FY26	2503VTCJA1	\$10,000.00
Total			\$16,044.28
Vermont Guardian Ad Litem	03440-28485-MOU-GAL-CJA-FY24	2303VTCJA1	\$4,087.66
Vermont Guardian Ad Litem	03440-28485-MOU-GAL-CJA-FY25	2403VTCJA1	\$12,000.00
Vermont Guardian Ad Litem	03440-28485-MOU-GAL-CJA-FY26	2503VTCJA1	\$11,000.00
Total			\$27,087.66
Total FY26 CJA Budget			\$115,234.73

Cody Inman
Delegated Commissioner
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Mary E. Switzer Building
330 C Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Commissioner Inman,

This letter is provided in support of Vermont's application for the FY 2026 Children's Justice Act (CJA) Grant available to states under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). Thank you for your consideration of this application. Vermont remains steadfast in its commitment to enhancing the safety and well-being of children impacted by abuse and neglect, and the Children's Justice Act grant funds are instrumental in sustaining and advancing these efforts.

Vermont received the FY 2025 CAPTA State Grant and continues to comply with the requirements stipulated in Section 106(b) of CAPTA.

The State has adopted and continues to make progress in implementing recommendations of the Vermont Children's Justice Act Task Force, including ongoing work related to multidisciplinary collaboration, child protection practice improvement, and child protection registry reform efforts intended to improve safety, fairness, and accountability within Vermont's child welfare system.

Vermont will make such reports to the Secretary as may reasonably be required, including an annual report on how assistance received under this program was expended throughout the State, with particular attention to the areas described in paragraphs (1) through (3) of Section 107(a).

The State will maintain and provide access to records relating to activities under the Children's Justice Act, ensuring transparency and accountability in the use of grant funds. Furthermore, Vermont's CJA Coordinator and Task Force Chairperson will participate in at least one Federally initiated CJA meeting each year that the grant is in effect.

Thank you for your continued support of Vermont's efforts to strengthen outcomes for children and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sandi Hoffman", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sandi Hoffman, Commissioner
Vermont Department for Children and Families



CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Listen

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, ``Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, ``Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying,' in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Signature



Title

Commissioner

Organization

Vermont Department for Children and Families
