

Idaho's Children at Risk Task Force Annual Report on Recommendations and Strategic Plan: 2022

Idaho's Governor's Children at Risk Task Force (CARTF) has comprehensively reviewed and evaluated Idaho's investigative, administrative, and both civil and criminal judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions. The following annual report documents Idaho's progress in relationship to the Children at Risk Task Force's recommendations and strategic planning previously submitted for the period of 2021-2024. This report covers performance from May 1, 2021, through April 30, 2022, and includes information in the form of CARTF's recommendations, tasks, findings, and outcomes, and an accountability of Children's Justice Act (CJA) funds used in each project. Additionally, this annual report summarizes the Task Force's activities during this reporting period. This annual report reflects the on-going mission of the Children at Risk Task Force which is *to make the system more sensitive and responsive to child victims*.

CARTF Recommendation/Objective **Goal One**

Continue to support the development and enhancement of Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) in each Idaho county in accordance with Idaho Code Section 16-1617. Support development of training in core competencies for professionals involved in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect.

Strategies

- A. Provide annual area multidisciplinary team training to promote the continued formation of MDTs and enhance existing MDTs.
- B. Encourage multidisciplinary team formation and functioning at the prosecutors' seminars which meet semi-annually. Prepare handouts for the prosecutors' meetings with information to promote initiating multidisciplinary teams or enhancing their current function.
- C. During the next three years, invite child protection stakeholders to share training strategies and concerns involved in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect.
- D. Using federal Children's Justice Act funds continue to provide funding resources that are available for training MDTs.
- E. Foster relationships with and support county MDTs and regional CACs through site visits by task force members, periodic updates from MDTs and CACs at task force meetings and facilitating training through grants and conferences.

Implementation of Recommendation/Objective and Strategies

Projects, Activities, Individuals Involved, Outcomes, and Expenditure of CJA funds for 2021-2022

The Governor's Children at Risk Task Force continues to distribute the multidisciplinary team funds, sponsor trainings, and work with the Idaho Network of Child Advocacy Center State Chapter Coordinator to promote multidisciplinary teams and provide multidisciplinary team training.

The multidisciplinary team grants assist counties in printing, distributing, and implementing signed multidisciplinary team protocols. Grant monies are also provided to purchase video/audio taping equipment and facilitate MDTs in hosting and attending specialized training.

Grant monies were distributed to MDTs between May 2021 and April 2022. CARTF has further streamlined the grant application process, created a guidance sheet for applicants, formed a subcommittee to conduct a preliminary review of all grant applications following a scoring rubric and matrix, and has established two reporting periods mandatory for all grantees. These reports keep CARTF well-informed of grantees use of funds, obstacles they may face, and success they experience.

During this grant cycle the Task Force made multidisciplinary team grants available to the following MDT partners:

Date	MDT Agency Name	Purpose	Amount Provided
6/10/2021	Elmore County Prosecutor's Office	Purchase a Dten7 cart and microphone, software and training to allow for virtual connection to clients and victims.	\$5,000.00
6/10/2021	Idaho Network of Children's Advocacy Centers	To conduct 2nd Annual Protecting Our Children Hybrid Training	\$3,000.00
11/04/2021	4 th Judicial District CASA	To create and conduct the 1 st Annual Idaho CASA Conference	\$3,058.00
11/04/2021	Nampa Police Department	To send several team members from their Child Abduction Response Team to training at National Missing Persons Conference	\$4,975.00
11/04/2021	Bright Tomorrows	To train and certify staff in EMDR	\$1,330.00
11/04/2021	Building Hope Today	To send national subject-matter experts to hold a 2-day training for 100 MDT members in northern Idaho	\$5,000.00
Total			\$22,363.00

Additionally, to encourage prosecutors to assume their responsibility in the formation and functioning of multidisciplinary teams throughout Idaho, a brochure highlighting the role of MDTs is distributed at the semi-annual prosecutors' seminars.

The Idaho Network of Children Advocacy Centers (INCAC) serves as a liaison with state agencies and local communities to unite law enforcement, medical workers, and social service providers to better serve the needs of local children. INCAC promotes and strengthens

multidisciplinary teams by providing training to MDTs and CACs. CARTF supports and engages with INCAC through grant funding and meeting with INCAC key leaders to partner in projects and understand the overlap of our organization's missions and resources.

Currently, Idaho has five child advocacy centers fully accredited by the National Children's Alliance. They include:

- CARES, St. Luke's – Boise
- CARES, St. Luke's – Magic Valley
- Nampa Family Justice Center
- Bright Tomorrows Child Advocacy Center – Pocatello
- Upper Valley Children's Advocacy Center – Rexburg (newest accredited CAC as of 2020)

There are also two centers that are member associates and in various stages of development. They include:

- LillyBrooke Family Justice Center – Sandpoint
- Safe Passage Children's Advocacy Center – Coeur d'Alene

To promote the continued formation of multidisciplinary teams and enhance existing multidisciplinary teams, the Governor's Children at Risk Task Force typically sponsors and hosts an annual conference each October. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to hold our annual conference. However, CARTF has convened a conference subcommittee to develop a one-day conference in October 2022. Considering a recent failing grade regarding Idaho's fight against child trafficking and training opportunities for those in child protection from Shared Hope International's inaugural Report Cards on Child & Youth Sex Trafficking, our October conference will focus solely on training MDT members on child trafficking in Idaho, and how to identify, investigate, and prosecute it. This free conference will be recorded and linked to the CARTF website (IDCARTF.org). Likewise, our conference subcommittee is developing ideas for a full-day virtual winter conference that will focus on the "day in the life of a child protection case".

To promote multidisciplinary teams and make counties aware of multidisciplinary team projects and grants, CARTF representatives typically provide a display of brochures and DVDs that are featured at vendor booths in trainings and conferences, when requested. These conferences usually include the summer and winter Idaho Prosecuting Attorneys Association Training, the Idaho State Bar Protection Conference, the Idaho School Counselor's Association Conference, and our MDT training conference. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of these were either canceled or held virtually. CARTF did participate in the virtual 2-day Stronger Together Super Conference which included partners from the Idaho School Counselors Association and the Idaho School Psychologists Association. We shared information about CARTF resources, mission, and grant program. We also continue making these free resources readily available on our website and have added new publications to our resources via an easily submitted online order form.

To keep multidisciplinary teams informed, the Governor's Children at Risk Task Force website, www.IDCARTF.org, shares up-to-date information in the area of child maltreatment, training opportunities, and other resources to assist in multidisciplinary team development and support. Additionally, the website supports on-line registration for the annual "Keeping Children Safe Conference," and ordering the *Care Enough to Call* DVD, brochures, and other free community resources. It also contains information on how to apply for multidisciplinary team grants. In June 2019, the website had a major overhaul and update to be more visually appealing and user-friendly.

CARTF also formed a bylaws subcommittee to update the bylaws to better reflect the current practices and work of the task force and improve the functionality of the task force. Furthermore, an updated executive order was issued by the governor of Idaho, reflecting the new changes in the bylaws, which now includes a representative from the Idaho Supreme Court Child Protection division, the administrator of the courts and court program supervisor.

During 2021-2022 meetings, representatives from the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Child Fatality Review Team, Citizens Review Panel, Nampa Family Justice Center, Upper Valley Children's Advocacy Center, the Idaho Network of Children's Advocacy Centers, Office of Performance Evaluation, Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections, Idaho Domestic Violence Council and Victim Assistance, and Community Outreach Behavioral Services attended CARTF meetings to share their strategies and concerns related to Idaho's child protection system. Typically, CARTF would also meet with the Idaho Foster Youth Panel. However, due to COVID-19, this group is unavailable to meet.

How the Activities Support Implementation of the Task Force's Recommendation

The Governor's Children at Risk Task Force continues to support the formation and enhancement of multidisciplinary teams by offering start-up funding for multidisciplinary teams and support needed equipment and training opportunities for MDT members. The Governor's Children at Risk Task Force organizes and produces an annual multidisciplinary team conference as well as sponsors other relevant conferences. Additionally, CARTF provides awareness of Idaho's statute regarding multidisciplinary teams by distributing a multidisciplinary team brochure and maintaining the CARTF website. The Governor's Children at Risk Task Force will support and coordinate multidisciplinary team training with the Idaho Network of Child Advocacy Centers. The Children at Risk Task Force will continue to monitor the progress and encourage multidisciplinary teams throughout Idaho. These activities improve the investigative and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect.

CARTF Recommendation/Objective

Goal Two

Review and make recommendations to improve current and proposed legislation and rules pertaining to the child protection process.

Strategies

- A. Review proposed legislation relating to child abuse and neglect, communicate conclusions to the Governor, and make recommendations if appropriate to legislators or other entities.
- B. Review the Child Protective Act and if appropriate, make recommendations for revision.
- C. Invite Office of Performance Evaluation (OPE) to update CARTF on current legislative issues regarding child protection system.

Implementation of Recommendation/Objective and Strategies

Projects, Activities, Individuals Involved, Outcomes, and Expenditure of CJA funds for 2021-2022.

During the 2022 legislative session, CARTF formed a legislative subcommittee to review proposed child protection legislation and discuss it with CARTF. Specific legislation reviewed pertaining to Idaho's child welfare system included:

HO453: diversion statute, clarification to put diversion into statute and the informal adjustment process; gives clearer instruction to judges.

HO483: conversion therapy bill

HO508: minimum sentence on sex crimes

HR088: ARPA funds will increase number of childcare slots

S1284 and 1285: increases age of tobacco use to 21 and makes it an infraction

S1320: allows adoptees to access their records when they turn 18

S1323: rape with penetration to apply to males

S1324: sexual abuse, battery, photographic- language clean-up

OPE legislative report on the definition of neglect

CARTF met with Office of Performance Evaluation (OPE) to update the task force on their 2021 report covering the definition of child neglect and how data and reports are being treated in the system. Two policy considerations came out of this report:

1. Clarify and strengthen Idaho's laws for child protection records by establishing criteria and timelines for when records must be deleted from the department's child welfare data management system.
2. Clarify Idaho's statutory definitions for child maltreatment by removing or further defining the term "failure to provide a stable home environment."

How the Activities Support Implementation of the Task Force's Recommendation

The Governor's Children at Risk Task Force activities included review of the statutory amendments and proposed legislation involving children for this reporting period. The Task

Force's representative from Child Protective Services reviewed the proposed legislation in relation to changes to the Child Protective Act and Idaho Code. These activities are undertaken to reform Idaho's State laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, or procedures to protect children from abuse and/or neglect.

CARTF Recommendation/ Objective

Goal Three

Evaluate and improve the investigation and prosecution process for civil and criminal cases involving child abuse and neglect.

Strategies

- A. Evaluate, develop, update, and distribute materials via a variety of modalities to educate the public and those involved in the legal processes related to child abuse and neglect.
- B. Annually, receive a report from the Supreme Court Child Protection Committee to identify and monitor practices within the legal process.
- C. Collaborate with the Supreme Court- Court Improvement Program to research the impact of court and foster care related trauma to children.
- D. Reduce court-related trauma to children by helping them understand their role in court.
- E. Review Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's Centralized Intake Unit's processes for receiving and dispatching reports of child abuse and neglect to protect children.
- F. Identify and review how societal issues affect child welfare in Idaho.
- G. Review the foster care system in the state of Idaho.

Implementation of Recommendation/Objective and Strategies

Projects, Activities, Individuals Involved, Outcomes, and Expenditure of CJA funds for 2021-2022

In years past, CARTF has sponsored an annual award to be presented to an individual who has gone above and beyond in advancing the cause of protecting children from neglect and abuse. This award was open to any professionals involved in the investigation and judicial handling of cases of abuse and neglect of children. Due to a continual lack of interest and nominations, CARTF has removed this goal for 2021-2024 but will reconsider it in future strategic plans.

To assist children in understanding their role in court and thereby reducing court-related trauma, in June 2009, CARTF adapted the coloring book, *What's My Job in Court*, for Idaho. The Governor's Children at Risk Task Force continues to order and distribute this coloring book and crayons to court rooms, child protection social workers, prosecuting attorneys, CASA/GAL, and victim witness coordinators throughout the state. Since the last report, 222 copies of "What's My Job in Court" have been distributed. Although the coloring book, *What's My Job in Court*, assists in preparing children for criminal proceedings, it does not address the features of civil court. Therefore, CARTF developed an additional activity coloring book for children involved in child protection civil court. This book, *What Happens in Court*, includes an explanation of CASA/GAL, public defender, child protection, permanency, and adoption. We have received a great deal of positive response from those involved in the court system about the beneficial

impact this activity book has had. Additionally, it has been useful for attorneys and judges as they talk to the community about court and the role of the judiciary in our state. Two hundred twenty-two copies of the coloring book have been distributed since May 1, 2021 to the time of this report.

The Governor's Children at Risk Task Force continues to distribute the brochure, *Care Enough to Call*. The brochure outlines the responsibility of educators, medical personnel, social workers, and community partners who do not work directly with child protection teams, regarding their roles as mandatory reporters. The brochure is available in English and Spanish. During this report cycle, 161 English brochures and 86 Spanish brochures have been distributed throughout Idaho. To encourage mandatory reporting, through a contract with University of Idaho Cooperative Extension System, the Children at Risk Task Force sponsored the development of an educational video on Idaho's child abuse reporting laws. The ten-minute DVD/video explains the definitions of child abuse and neglect, instructs citizens on their duty to report, and gives them information on who to call and what information they should include in their report. The Governor's Children at Risk Task Force distributes the DVDs upon request through online orders as well as at events and conferences. During this report cycle, 12 DVDs were distributed out of existing inventory. For the reporting period, CARTF received eighteen resource orders through its online order form. Typically, many of our brochures and DVDs are distributed during workshops and conferences that we host or participate in as vendors. We have found our distribution numbers are lower this reporting cycle due to the cancelation of several conferences and workshops because of COVID-19.

CARTF's publication and website subcommittee continues to oversee the update of our community resources, focused on content, relevance, visual appeal, access, and age-appropriateness. The subcommittee is also exploring avenues for streaming our mandated reporter DVD as well as updating our *What to Expect in Court* video for foster youth. Furthermore, the committee is looking at updating and combining our children's activity guides, *What's My Job in Court* and *What to Expect in Court*, as well as creating a guide more suitable for tweens and teens. Finally, a new resource was added to the free community resources available. The book, ***Getting Solid***, is designed to help youth in foster care understand and secure permanence.

The Task Force has continued to review and discuss the state's faith healing exemptions from prosecution for child deaths or medical neglect. The Governors' Children at Risk Task Force remains interested in the topic and is committed to ensure review of cases in the event of a fatality as part of the Child Fatality Review Team's scope of work. This strategy is now under the purview of Goal 4.

How the Activities Support Implementation of the Task Force's Recommendation

The Task Force actively supports the activities of the Supreme Court Improvement Project, meeting with the court administrator every year. Recently, the role of the court administrator was added to the CARTF representation to strengthen the partnership and work being done amongst the two groups. This will strengthen the collaboration between CARTF and the Supreme Court- Court Improvement Program in their research on the impact of court and foster

care related trauma to children. Additionally, to prepare children for court and reduce the trauma they may otherwise experience in participating in the judicial system, color activity books and *Quick Start Guides* have been provided to victim witness coordinators, child welfare social workers, prosecuting attorneys, CASAs, and children/youth in foster care. Additionally, CJA funds were used to print and distribute a brochure and DVD that explains the process of making a report of child maltreatment. These tools assist all Idaho citizens in recognizing their obligation to report child abuse and neglect and instruct them on how to make the report. All of these activities were undertaken to improve the skills of those individuals who are involved in the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect.

CARTF Recommendation/ Objective

Goal Four

Oversee the Statewide Child Fatality Review Team to examine child fatalities and child near-fatalities.

Strategies

- A. Continue to seek technical assistance as needed from the National Resource Center on Child Fatalities to assist in reestablishing and implementing a statewide Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT).
- B. Provide financial support of Child Fatality Review Team.
- C. Support legislation to meet the needs of the Statewide Child Fatality Review Team. Continue to support the ongoing development of Child Fatality Review Team bylaws and procedures for the gathering of child fatality and near-fatality data.
- D. Support the continued development of a robust Child Fatality Review Team membership.
- E. Support the dissemination of the Child Fatality Review Team Report.

Implementation of Recommendation/Objective and Strategies

Projects, Activities, Individuals Involved, Outcomes, and Expenditure of CJA funds for 2021-2022

The Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT) issued their first report in April 2014. The report was sent to all state legislators and many multidisciplinary team members across the state. It was also posted on the Task Force's website for public access. The Child Fatality Review Team issued their latest annual report in May 2021 and will release their next annual report in June 2022. The report continues to be distributed to a broad array of stakeholders. All Child Fatality Review Team publications are written for a general audience and presented to CARTF, with an overview presented at the CARTF conference each year.

Despite obstacles presented by the pandemic, CFRT was able to meet for reviews and finish case reviews through 2019. The results of these reviews and subsequent recommendations will be released in the annual report in summer of 2022. In January 2022, the CFRT started their 2020 fatalities reviews and recently updated their goal and objectives and started reviewing identified near fatalities reported to the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare.

CFRT has begun work on the bylaws and procedures of the team to better improve the functionality and efficiency of the team. They also diligently recruit members needed to improve their case reviews and recently add a representative from the Department of Education as well as an additional law enforcement officer.

The Child Fatality Review Team communicates regularly with the National Center for Child Fatality Review and Prevention related to the database and Data Use Agreement updates, secondary research on preventive specific causes of death, inquiries from potential local teams, and Idaho updates for their website. They also direct partner agencies to the national website to help explain the Idaho review process and how shared information is used for Child Fatality Review Team study.

The chairwoman and principal research analyst for the Idaho CFRT typically attend the three-day conference and training for western state child fatality review programs sponsored and organized by the National Center for Child Fatality Review and Prevention. However, due to the pandemic, the annual conference was cancelled.

During this reporting period, CARTF utilized approximately \$25,000 of CJA funds for the child fatality review team.

How the Activities Support Implementation of the Task Force's Recommendation

The Governor's Children at Risk Task Force will continue to support the Child Fatality Review Team. The Task Force will also continue to advocate for a process which provides protection of the review team from discovery and provides full access to records. The CARTF legislative subcommittee is studying the process and procedures the Idaho Maternal Mortality Review team used to obtain statute to determine how this might help CFRT gain the same statutory authority.