

Date of Meeting: February 20, 2026

Roll Call

Members Present

Sarah Arnold, Annette Craycraft, Kurt Keifer, Katie Hall, Nancy Springer, Karen Bowen, Rich Kosmala, Lee Anne Owens, Deena Hubler, Therese Miller, Judge Holly Harvey, Magistrate Matthew Gruett, Magistrate Jennifer Hubartt, Judge Ryan King

Ex Officio Members Present

Melissa Cunnynham, Kelly Bray, Teresa Lyles, Tara Rochford, Stan Piercefield

Members Absent

Therese Miller, Magistrate Virginia Lawrence

Guests Present

There were no guests present for the meeting.

Welcome and Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Katie Hall (interim chair due to the permanent absence of Hilary Laughner) called the virtual meeting to order at 10:00 AM (Eastern). She asked for approval of November 21, 2025, minutes that were sent to Members via email in advance of the meeting. Annette Craycraft moved that the minutes be approved as written, and Lee Anne Owens seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, all Members voted in favor of accepting the minutes as written.

Committee Reports

State Conference/Training Committee

Katie Hall/Chair, Conference and Training Committee will be meeting soon to plan for the 30th Annual Indiana GAL/CASA Conference. Conference dates are September 24- 26, 2026 at the Grand Wayne Convention Center in Fort Wayne. Plans are also in the works for the 2026 Annual Spring Directors' Meeting on April 23 and 24, 2026, at the Renaissance Hotel in Carmel

Public Relations and Legislative Committee

Annette Craycraft/Chair, Public Relations, and Legislative Committee reported on the status of the plans for the upcoming CASA Day at the State House scheduled for February 24, 2026. Our theme will be Advocacy Full Circle, and the scheduled program will begin at 11:00 AM in the North Atrium on the main level of the State House. The Chief Justice of Indiana, legislators, and a youth with lived experience, and a seasoned volunteer will be sharing. The agenda for CASA Day was shared. The committee has also encouraged programs to send letters to their individual legislators in advance of the event.

Certification Standards and Best Practices Committee

There were no updates from the Standards and Best Practices Committee.

Other Reports

Judge Reports

Judge Harvey – SB171 will enable adoption courts to make custody decisions in open CHINS cases. This may cause a great deal of confusion in pending CHINS cases. The dilemma is that judges know the families in their CHINS cases well and this will cause cases to be heard in two courts at one time.

Magistrate Matt Gruett --The Child Welfare Improvement Committee is working on ways to improve parent engagement through applications, and they are investigating different versions of software to avoid confidentiality breaches. The goal is to provide information up front and to ensure parents understand and are in the loop as the case moves forward.

Judge Harvey – The proposed pilot for prosecutor’s offices to incorporate DCS attorneys has been shelved for now. The Steering Committee has placed it on hold due to a number of factors surrounding confidentiality, attorney-client relationships, and management roles between DCS and prosecutor’s office.

Magistrate Hubartt – A reminder was offered to all to remember safety protocols in light of the recent assault of a member of the judiciary. State Director Report

State Director Report

Melissa Cunnyingham reported to the Commission that all 2025 Financial Reports have been submitted by our certified local program offices, and that request for use of the GAL/CASA Attorneys for the Network (GCAFN) are also still coming in from our programs. Melissa also provided a brief update on the first Indiana GAL/CASA Training Curriculum Pilot. Volunteers from five programs have completed the National and States series of the training and will be starting on the Local Training portion next. A second Pilot is slated to begin on March 1, 2026. Stan Piercefield shared some statistics regarding volunteer involvement in the training, and Annette Craycraft, Deena Hubler, and Nancy Springer (participant programs in the first Pilot) gave positive comments about the training thus far. We are still waiting for a few more evaluation surveys to be returned as we continue to adjust during the Pilot phase. Additionally, It was reported that SB171 is being monitored closely, and that updates will be passed along to local program directors as they become available. Additionally, Melissa reported that programs will experience a significant decrease in VOCA funds during their next grant cycle. Programs seeking VOCA grants have been meeting in collaboration with the State Office to have open conversations about potential strategies as they brace for the cuts.

Program Coordinator Report

Teresa Lyles provided regional updates from across the Indiana GAL/CASA Network. In Region One, Sue Hartman will be leaving the program sometime in April 2026 after a new director has been appointed. Also in Region One, long-time staff member Cynthia Wolfschlag has been appointed as the Interim Director until a new director is appointed. In Region Two, Grace Wida has assumed the role of Program Director. In Region Three, Chris Mundy has assumed the role of Program Director, and in Region 4, Christina Evans is the new Program Director in Orange County and Jonna Booth has been appointed as Director in Pike County. Teresa also provided updates on sessions and attendance at the virtual CASA Training Academy and New Director Cohorts in the past quarter.

Adjournment

Kurt Kiefer moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Nancy Springer seconded the motion; all voted in favor. The next meeting will be held virtually on Friday, May 15, 2026, at 10:00 AM (Eastern).