

Date of Meeting: February 21, 2025

Roll Call

Members Present

Katie Hall, Hilary Laughner, Kurt Kiefer, Brenda Matuszkiewicz, Annette Craycraft, Emily Shaw, Deena Hubler, Karen Bowen, Leslie Hendricks-Holt (Chair), Magistrate Jennifer Hubartt, Rich Kosmala, Magistrate Virginia Lawrence, Magistrate Shawna Webster, Judge Ryan King, Magistrate Matt Gruett, Judge Stephanie Campbell

Ex Officio Members Present

Rae Feller, Kelly Bray, Teresa Lyles, Tara Rochford, Stan Piercefield

Members Absent

Therese Miller, Judge Holly Harvey, LeeAnne Owens

Guests Present

There were no guests present for the meeting.

Welcome and Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Chair Leslie Hendricks-Holt called the virtual meeting to order at 10:00 AM (Eastern). She asked for approval of November 15, 2024, minutes that were sent to Members via email in advance of the meeting. Brenda Matuszkiewicz moved that the minutes be approved as written, and Deena Hubler 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 was in court at the time of the Committee report, so Teresa Lyles reported that plans are in the works for both the 2025 Annual Spring Directors' Meeting on April 9 and 10, 2025, at the Renaissance Hotel in Carmel and for the 29th Annual GAL/CASA Conference to be held on September 11-13 at the French Lick Resort.

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 March 4, 2025. Breakfast with the Legislators will begin at 8:00 AM (Eastern), and the scheduled program will begin at 11:00 AM. Both events will be held in the North Atrium on the main level of the State House. The Chief Justice of Indiana, legislators, and both youth and parents with lived experience will be sharing as we celebrate the 35th anniversary of the existence of the State Office.

Certification Standards and Best Practices Committee

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

Other Reports

Judge Reports

Magistrate Matt Gruett (Lake County) announced that Christopher Anderson has been named as the new Lake County CASA Program Director. Anderson has served both in the public sector, as well as in the prosecutor's office. Magistrate Hubartt reported that new Family Court Judge Tara Melton has taken the bench in Court D15. Magistrate Hubartt will also be attending a Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting in the near future. Magistrate Virginia Lawrence reported that some courts in Marion County are now returning to hearing juvenile cases in person and that will be discussed more at the upcoming aforementioned Quarterly Stakeholder's Meeting.

Judge Campbell will be part of a panel discussion on "Stumbling Blocks in CHINS Cases" at the upcoming Judicial Conference in April, and Magistrate Lawrence, Rae Feller, Judge Lori Morgan, and Sr. Judge Steve Galvin will be facilitating a session on Family Law GAL at the conference as well. Additionally, Judge King will be hosting a GAL Family Law Training with Kids' Voice in Batesville in March. Judge King, Magistrate Lawrence, and Magistrate Hubartt will also be facilitating a panel discussion for the Indiana CASA Training Academy on March 21, 2025.

State Director Report

Rae Feller reported that the new Family Law GAL Guidelines went into effect on January 1, 2025. She asked Commission members present to convey the information to all local attorneys who file appearances in Family Law cases to visit the website and apply. The application is very brief and should only take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Attorneys who have been practicing as GAL in family law cases for at least three years and have served on ten cases will be waived from taking the initial training. The GAL Guidelines are for new GAL appointments for cases filed after 01/01/2025, and complaints can be made 60 days after a final order is issued by the judge (the official complain form is still in the process of being completed).

The GAL/CASA Attorneys for the Network (GCAFN) Pilot is up and running. The State Office has approved requests from 13 counties/programs, and has awarded \$40,900.00 to date. We encourage programs to continue to reach out to the State Office to apply for financial assistance to fill the gap in the need for legal services for both children and the programs.

On the topic of the required pre-service/initial training required for all GAL/CASA staff and volunteers, National GAL/CASA has temporarily halted access to both the Flex and Guided Learning versions of the curriculum until they can offer interim guidance regarding various sections of the current training per direction from the OJJDP. Information will be passed on to our network as it is made available. Stan Pierced was asked to provide an update on the ongoing Indiana Pre-Service Curriculum version that can be used specifically by our programs instead of the National curriculum. Stan reported that the Foundational Section of the training is nearly completed, as well as several pieces of the State Section. He is in the process of holding Regional Zoom meeting with all programs to update them on the progress as well.

Rae recently participated in a meeting with Representative Julie Olthoff to share information on the topic of Direct Representation of Children involved in juvenile cases. Potentially, an informal group of local Indiana GAL/CASA directors could form a focus group and meet to offer suggestions in order to create the tool. Judge King advised that a judicial officer should also be included in the focus group. Emily Shaw advised that creating a screening tool could be limiting because some youth have unique

needs and may be the ones who need the resources the most. Hilary Laughner motioned that a focus group be created for this purpose, and Annette Craycraft seconded the motion. Having no further discussion, all voted in favor of creating an informal focus group to discuss the possibility of creating a screening tool and/or for further discussions. House Bill 1605 was also briefly discussed, specifically on the topic of allowing judges discretion as to whether a foster parent should be considered a party to juvenile proceedings. At the present time, part of the language in this section was amended before being put back into the proposed legislation.

Program Coordinator Report

Teresa Lyles provided the following updates from across the Indiana GAL/CASA network:

Regional Updates—Region 1—New Program Director named in Lake County: Christopher Anderson
New Director Training Cohort—January 29-30, 2025: Eight new program directors completed 8 hours of required Leadership Training with the State Office via Zoom:

Region 1: Chris Anderson, Lake County; Sarah Arnold, Porter County

Region 2: Kristi Bachman, Northeastern Indiana CASA, Inc.

Region 3: Anita Reckers, Dearborn/Ohio Counties

Region 4: Tia Arthur, Monroe County; Beth Ficker; Spencer County; Jonna Norris, Owen County; Sarah Reis, Vanderburgh County.

CASA Training Academy This Quarter

- November—Older Youth Initiatives: Rewriting Their Story (396 Registered)
- November—Advocating for Infants and Toddlers (444 Registered)
- January—Situational Awareness and GAL/CASA Volunteer Safety (521 Registered)
- February—Book Club on The Child Catcher (186 Registered)

Adjournment

Annette Craycraft moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Hilary Laughner seconded the motion; all voted in favor. The next meeting will be held virtually on Friday, May 16, 2025, at 10:00 AM (Eastern).