

IOWA CHILD ADVOCACY BOARD  
STATE BOARD MEETING  
Conference Room 319 & 320  
Lucas State Office Building  
Des Moines, Iowa  
Friday, September 10, 2021  
12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

State Board Members Present:

Courtney Clarke - Virtual  
Mark Elcock - Virtual  
Alison Guernsey - Virtual  
Beth Myers  
Judge Owens - Virtual  
Michael Steele - Virtual  
Wayne Schellhammer

Staff Present:

Amy Carpenter  
Sherri Ripperger  
Steffani Simbric

Guests Present:

Jamie Fitzgerald, Friends President

Call Meeting to Order; Roll Call of Board Members

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

Approval of Minutes for Previous Meetings

Handout 1. Judge Owens moves and Clarke seconds a motion to approve the June 2021 Iowa Child Advocacy Board meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

CASA Program Report, Amy Carpenter

Handout 2. CASA numbers for FY21 are finalized. In reviewing the report, Carpenter points out that we are serving the largest number of children and families since beginning the dashboard. We are still having trouble capturing volunteer miles and hours. Volunteers do a good job of putting case notes into our system, but are not putting in other times where we could be collecting their hours or miles. We are working with coordinators and volunteers on this.

Handout 3. The Judicial survey is finished. All coordinators were asked to meet with their Judges face to face to complete the survey. Overall, the survey results were very positive. We had a 76% response rate. Judge Owens offered his assistance to reach out to Judges if we received any comments that were not positive. Carpenter will send the comments from the survey to Judge Owens for review.

Simbric and Carpenter participated in the “on-site” reviews for the National CASA Highly Effective Standards Review Process August 3rd and 4th. Carpenter feels the review went very well. The document review had not been completed by National CASA prior to the onsite review, so there’s no feedback on the documents submitted. We will receive a draft report as soon as it is complete.

We are currently working on clarifying the language for our confidentiality policy for both volunteers and staff. We would like one policy for both volunteers and staff. ICAB is also working on a background check policy for staff.

ICAB continues to work with volunteers who have not had a child visit due to Covid. The number of children who have not had a face to face visit due to Covid continues to decline.

We continue to work with volunteers to ensure they receive their 12 hours of training per year. If volunteers do not get their 12 hours of training in, they can finish the case they are on, but will then be removed from the program for not following policy. Clarke asked if this has been communicated and if we’ve received any feedback. Carpenter states that overall from volunteers she’s heard it’s not a problem, but then getting them to do the training is a problem. The change to the policy and procedures was sent out to volunteers in June. Guernsey asks what we are doing to make sure volunteers know where to get the 12 hours of training annually. Coordinators put together calendars listing their training offered for the month/year and share with their volunteers. These are in house training as well as training in their community. We also have many online and self-study options. Guernsey suggests being more direct and sending more reminders. Simbric states there is a fine balance between being very direct and easing into it, because these are volunteers. It’s something ICAB is working on.

Polk County received a \$50,000 National CASA marketing grant. We will be using the money for television commercials and yard signs throughout Polk County. We also plan to hire a temporary part-time position to help us with inquiries as well as help us see where we are losing volunteers during the onboarding process.

Lastly, we are working on preparing for local program reviews and self-assessments. National CASA released

new standards for our local programs. Carpenter is conducting monthly meetings with coordinators to familiarize them with the standards and help them with the development of required plans and documents. National CASA will be conducting a local program standards review sometime from 2022-2024.

#### Friends of Iowa CASA, Jamie Fitzgerald

Board members introduced themselves to Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald states that Friends is in the process of hiring a new Executive Director. Friends recently applied for a \$20,000 Nationwide grant.

#### FCRB Program Report, Steffani Simbric

Handout 4. The number of reviews is decreasing. The speculation is because of Families First. ICAB was awarded \$350,000 from the Governor's office for the sole purpose of upgrading/developing the FCRB data system. At this point, we are waiting on information from a couple different vendors. The money does need to be spent by June 2022. We feel like this is manageable.

Proposed changes to Chapter 237 are over at the Governor's office right now. We are waiting for the next steps.

Almost all of our boards are now paperless. It's a cost savings as well as a more secure method for sharing confidential case information.

The Polk County FCRB pilot is underway. Two meetings have occurred. The number of APLA cases is less than we anticipated. We will be working with DHS to see if we need to expand the scope of what we are reviewing.

ICAB has been operating a Citizen Review Panel (CRP) based out of Bremer County that serves as one of Iowa's three citizen review panels. This helps fill a requirement for DHS. This board, however, did not meet the requirements needed of the CRP. ICAB is currently in the process of developing a new panel to meet federal CAPTA requirements and will consist of CASA and FCRB volunteers across the state. An introductory meeting was held to review bylaws and learn more about the role of the CRP.

#### ICAB Budget, Steffani Simbric

Handouts 5. Simbric reviewed the FY21 budget. ICAB ended up approximately \$3500 under budget. ICAB had a conference room built on the 4th floor and vacation payouts for staff.

Handout 6. The FY22 budget is almost finalized. We are just waiting on a few adjustments from DIA. Because of some staffing changes we do not feel like we will bring in the \$660,000 for IV-E. ICAB changed the IV-E prediction amount to \$600,000. One thing that will look different this year, is that we had to start contracting with a vendor for our background checks. This increases the budget line by double the amount.

New Business, Steffani Simbric

Simbric asks the Board if there is anything they would like to include or see differently in the Annual Report. Judge Owens states that we have talked many times about changing the mission of FCRB to include looking at placements with relatives instead of just foster care. He's not sure the numbers on the FCRB are all attributed to Families First because the numbers have been going down since 2018. He feels this is something we should think about. Myers wants us to be very aware of how we are presenting the FCRB material in the annual report this year. Schellhammer asks if we want to put in the annual report, what we'd like FCRB to become, or our vision with Families First. Simbric says we want to stick with our mission, but make it statewide. Schellhammer asks if the Governor's agenda will go with that, because they are pushing toward Families First. Make sure the wording does not create a conflict toward Families First. Simbric plans to have the annual report ready for the Board's review by the December 10th meeting.

Handout 7. Simbric asks if the board has any feedback or suggestions for the Messaging Book. The Board really likes it.

Myers reports there is a board vacancy. If anyone has someone in mind to join the board, ask them to apply on the Governor's website. Simbric is working through the process with the Governor's Office. There are several ICAB Board members whose term is expiring. Simbric asks that these members let her know, by the end of the month, if they would like to be reappointed.

Legislative Day is Thursday, March 10, 2022. Please let Simbric know by next week if you would like to be involved. The ICAB State Board meeting will be held the afternoon of that day.

Future Meeting Dates

Next meeting is scheduled for December 10, 2021 from 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Lucas Building Rooms 319 & 320. Upcoming dates for 2022 are March 10 (this is a Thursday) and June 10.

Schellhammer motions and Clarke seconds the meeting adjourned. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourns 1:35 p.m.

ICAB Minutes Prepared By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sherri Ripperger

ICAB Minutes Approved On: \_\_\_\_\_

CAB Minutes Approved by Child Advocacy Board Vote

Approved By:

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Beth Myers, ICAB State Board Chair

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Steffani Simbric, ICAB Administrator

Handout 1: June 2021 Board Minutes

Handout 2: CASA Program Report

Handout 3: 2021 CASA Judicial Survey

Handout 4: FCRB Program Report

Handout 5: FY21 Budget Report

Handout 6: FY22 Budget Report

Handout 7: ICAB Messaging Book