

**Attorney Ad Litem Program Advisory Board
Formed August 2006
Organizational meeting August 4, 2006**

Members:

Kim Bibb

Janet Bledsoe

Jeannie Denniston

Deanna Suzie Evans

Jefferson K. Faught

Amy Freedman

Carla Fuller

Teri Hays

Marjorie Kesl

Carla Reyes

Renia Robinette

Sherri Stewart

**Chair: AAL Program Coordinator: Teri Hays
Vice Chair:**

Purpose: To provide Attorney Ad Litem (“AAL”) Program advice and assistance toward statewide improvement in the quality of AAL representation, compliance with AAL standards, Program improvement, and the implementation of best practices.

Organization: Twelve-member Board of volunteers. Volunteers can be either full-or part-time AALs. Board members must be either employed by or contracted with the AAL program of the Administrative Office of the Courts (“AOC”). The Board chair will be the AAL Program Coordinator. The Board will have quarterly meetings and an annual planning retreat. Board members will chair the various committees and provide a monthly report on committee activities. Monthly reports and annual reports will be provided to Juvenile Division Director, Connie Hickman Tanner.

Functions: Board Members/Committee Chairs perform the following functions:

1. Facilitate committee meetings as needed; organize and facilitate committee efforts: and report on committee activities.

2. Obtain input from committee members as well as AALs in respective regional areas and reflect the views, feedback, and desires of these groups in advisory discussions of the Board.
3. Each member will be given the opportunity to express his or her views and discuss and debate items and topics being considered by the Board.
3. Participate in special projects of the AAL program as availability allows.
4. To provide advice and recommendations to help the Program coordinator address and shape various policy issues impacting AALs.
5. To contribute to the overall goal of optimizing the AAL Program and attorney representation provided through the Program, for the benefit of abused and neglected children.

Membership: Initial Board Members will be selected by the AAL program Coordinator. One third of members will serve a one year term, one third will serve a two year term, and one third will serve a three year term. Board members in good standing may re-apply for a board position and will be voted upon by a two-thirds majority of the Board members.

If a Board member leaves employment with the AOC or if the Board member's contract with the AOC is cancelled, the Board member will cease to serve on the Board as of the date of such separation and a new member will be elected for the remainder of that term. New member applicants will be voted upon by the Board and a two-thirds majority will be needed to install a board member. After the initial Board terms, all members will be elected for subsequent two-year terms until their retirement from the board or their removal from the board for other reasons.

Board members will make earnest efforts to attend Board meetings and may participate by speaker phone when needed.

Chair and Vice Chair: The AAL Program Coordinator of the AOC will serve as the Board Chair. The Chair's role is to facilitate effective operation of the Board; help bring the Board to a consensus on specific issues and topics as needed; set and confirm agendas with the suggestions and guidance of Board members; represent the Board's positions to outside agencies and interests; and other leadership functions.

The Vice Chair will serve as the Chair when the Chair is absent or otherwise unavailable to serve the above functions.

Committees:

Empowering Foster Youth – to develop mechanisms to help foster kids have more voice in the child welfare system, and in the AAL Program. To learn what works for them, what doesn't, and how we can better represent them.

Adoptions – to study the strengths and weaknesses of the current system and prepare recommendations on how it needs to be improved. This will encompass recruitment, the adoption process, concurrent planning, and all stages of the adoption process.

ILP/Chafee/Working with Teens – to study the needs and current outcomes of teens and make recommendations on improving services, resources, and representation for teenagers.

Appeals – to study the new appellate rules and look at ways to improve our process for handling appeals in a way that serves the best interest of the children involved.

Foster Care – to study the present foster care system, including issues concerning foster parents, issues concerning foster children, the current foster care system, and make recommendations on how to affect change and improvements.

Peer Review and Investigations – to help develop and to help perform processes by which AALs will work with their fellow AALs to assure compliance with AAL standards, quality in representation, and to assure that all necessary supports are in place for AALs. This committee will also help form processes and procedures to assist areas, districts, or counties facing special challenges.

Resources – to make recommendations for resources needed by AALs to effectively and efficiently perform their duties. This may include materials, supports, trainings, website materials and other things that would be of benefit to AALs.