

**CCTV and Recording Technology Site Visit Report
Hawaii State Judiciary, Children's Justice Centers
Oahu, Maui and the Big Island, Hawaii
December 8, 2008 – December 10, 2008**

The CCTV and Recording Technology Grant Program conducted site visits to three of the five Children's Justice Centers in Hawaii receiving grants through an ABA grant program through the Hawaii State Judiciary. The ABA visited: the Oahu Children's Justice Center; the Maui Children's Justice Center; and the West Hawaii (Kona) Children's Justice Center. The following is a summary of the three visits:



Entrance to the Maui CJC.

Jurisdictional Information

All three islands have diverse populations comprised mostly of Caucasians, Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Native Hawaiians. Immigrants are primarily from Asia and the Pacific Islands. On both Oahu and the Big Island, there has been an influx of Micronesian immigrants, specifically from the Marshall Islands, as well as some Hispanic and Laotian migrants.

Grant Information

The Hawaii State Judiciary was awarded \$54,000.00 to upgrade the recording equipment in all five Hawaii Children's Justice Centers and to create one statewide child interview digital recording standard. Their grant period is August 1, 2007 to January 31, 2009.

Children's Justice Centers (CJCs)

The Oahu center, which was established in 1988, was one of the first CACs to operate in the United States. The other 4 sites (East Hawaii, West Hawaii, Maui and Kauai) opened in 1990-91.

The State of Hawaii Judiciary is the primary source of funding. In addition, donations from non-profit partner agencies and grants from the National Children's Alliance fund operations. The Children's Justice Act Grant assists with training expenses.

At the Oahu CJC, there are 4 staff members (Program Director, Forensic Interviewer, Social Worker, and Clerk Typist). In addition to local staff, there are 3 statewide staff members housed at the Oahu CJC (CJC Statewide Director, Statistician and Statewide Secretary). Both the Maui and West Hawaii CJCs have 2 staff members (Program Director and Secretary). All three CJCs have contracted with mental health consultants.

All three sites report a good working relationship with the local Prosecutor's office. There is representation from the Prosecutor's office on the CJC Interagency Committee

and they share case-tracking information. Deputies assigned to specific cases participate in case conferences and coordination meetings; they are also encouraged to participate in trainings provided or sponsored by the CJC.

The Oahu CJC has working agreements with the five Military branches present on the island of Oahu. Military law enforcement utilizes the Oahu CJC forensic interviewer and the child psychologist consultants to conduct child forensic interviews. Military personnel attend trainings offered through the Oahu CJC. The Oahu CJC Program Director and the Multidisciplinary Team Coordinator/Social Worker attend Military Family Advocacy Coordinated Council meetings.

Investigations, Case Flow and Child Abuse Case Processing

The local county police handle the majority of criminal cases and the county sheriffs work with the courts. The Hawaii Attorney General investigates cyber crimes, usually in partnership with local and federal law enforcement. The FBI and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are based on Oahu, but oversee the entire state.

Reports of alleged child abuse are made to law enforcement or Child Welfare Services (CWS). After a report, the assigned investigators contact the Children's Justice Center (CJC) to schedule an interview. The CJC does not accept referrals. Instead, it works closely with the police and CWS in coordinating the investigation and interview.

Children are generally not interviewed prior to the CJC interview, but periodically field interviews are conducted. For example, a child welfare worker may conduct a cursory safety assessment with a child at their school. If the child is believed to be in imminent harm, he/she would be taken by the police into protective custody. If the report is made directly to the police, a patrol officer responds and gathers information prior to referring the case to the appropriate investigation unit.

The CJCs primarily handle child sexual abuse cases, and a small number of felony physical abuse and child witness cases. In 2008, the Center in Oahu tracked over 600 reports of child abuse. Both Maui County and West Hawaii each averaged approximately 120 reports of child sexual abuse over the last several years, and under 10 physical abuse cases per year.

From January to November 2008, 527 children had recorded interviews at the Oahu CJC, 88 at the West Hawaii CJC, and 58 at the Maui CJC.

The tracking systems for Oahu and Maui currently indicates that they have each had 10 criminal cases prosecuted this year, while the West Hawaii CJC has had 7 prosecutions. Kona and Maui report that having the interviews recorded seems to encourage plea agreements, especially in intra-familial abuse cases.

Equipment Set Up and Demonstration

All of the interview rooms in the three CJCs are set-up similarly.

The Oahu CJC has 3 interview rooms: the first for children aged 2-5 years, the second for children aged 6-11 years, and the third for teenagers or children who are physically mature. Each room contains a cabinet built into the corner, which holds anatomically correct dolls and line drawings of children and adults in various ethnicities/genders, and other materials. Each interview room has a one-way mirror. The microphones are in the ceiling, and the cameras are in the corner of the ceiling and in the wall just below the one-way mirror. Children know they are being recorded. The cameras do not have a zoom or pan-tilt feature. If the child moves to the corner and gets out of range, the interviewer will attempt to bring the child back into view.

Observation rooms are small, holding 2-3 people comfortably, and are immediately adjacent to the interview rooms. Maui and West Hawaii have 2 interview rooms with an observation room in the center. Only one interview can be conducted at a time.

The new equipment from iRecord has been installed and is running; the previous equipment has been unplugged but currently remains in the rooms. While the interviewer is in with the victim, the observer stays in the monitoring room to monitor the interview and the equipment. Ear pieces are available if the observer wants to ask questions during the interview.



Interview Room in the Oahu CJC.

The CJC makes 3 original DVDs of the forensic interview. DVD storage is easy. A Maui Detective notes he likes the new system as it provides clearer interviews that are easily transcribed.

At the Maui CJC, interviews are now down to 10 per month, which is a reduction from 10 years ago, and is seen as a success based on prevention efforts and the imprisonment of offenders.

Both the MPD Detectives and CPS Social Workers have access to the CJC 24 hours a day. If CPS gets a call, they must see the child within 24 hours. After a call, a Social Worker contacts the MPD, performs an intake, and brings the child to the CJC to meet with a Detective. They decide between themselves who conducts the interview and who monitors and operates the recording equipment. In Maui, translation is sometimes an issue, as they have victims that speak a number of different Pacific Island languages and Spanish. Sometimes they have to find someone in an agency on another island who speaks a particular language, even if they are not trained in child abuse interviewing.



Observation room in the West Hawaii CJC.

The Maui MDT perceive themselves as a close team, and feel the CJC is a much better environment in which to interview children than at the police station. One of the deputy Prosecutors said that the CJC and the recorded forensic interview minimizes trauma, so child victims are comfortable when they come to their office to discuss the case.

The Deputy Prosecutor notes that DVDs make a big difference, as the sound and lighting quality on the old VHS tapes was poor. All the CJs mentioned the improved quality and the added convenience of the DVDs over the old VHS tapes.

Trainings

Everyone involved with the CJC is offered training, as part of their cross-training efforts. The numbers of trainings offered throughout the year vary among the different CJs; however, each CJC offers a variety of sessions.

Approximately three times per year, the Oahu CJC offers a formalized three-day training curriculum for all new law enforcement and CWS investigators who interview children at the CJC. This training covers how to conduct an interview, operate the equipment, and troubleshoot. General Dynamics of Child Sexual Abuse, a one-day training offered at five sites across the state, is sponsored by the local CJs. This is open to agencies with new staff who handle child abuse.

The Maui CJC offers at least one training every month concerning topics of interest, which is often funded by the Maui Children's Justice Grant Committee.

In West Hawaii, in addition to the General Dynamics of Child Sexual Abuse and the CJC Forensic Interviewer Training, large-scale training is done based on funding, partnership with other agencies, and opportunity.

Evaluation

All three sites report the completion of informal assessments every month during their CJC Interagency Advisory Committee meetings and Investigator Team meetings. A one-page evaluation tool is used for all of the trainings. Formal evaluations have not been conducted by the program itself.

In 2008, a consultant was contracted to review and make recommendations to improve the interview guidelines. In addition, Hawaii has a five-year system reform plan. This involves the CJC and partnering agencies using Children's Justice Grant funds to conduct a review of the system's response to child sex abuse cases. Focus groups have been completed and the data is being compiled. The goal is to document the current system, identify strengths and gaps in services, and make recommendations.