

**MINUTES, VA FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND (VA-FACT) Board of Trustees Meeting, September 23rd, 2025  
CARITAS, 2220 Stockton Street, Richmond VA 23224**

**Participation:**

Trustees Present: Season Roberts (Chair), Abigail Wescott (Vice Chair), Tiffany Garner (Secretary), Tyler Hart (Treasurer), Nichele Carver, Amy Greear, Joseph Van Name, Ian Danielsen, Maria Salgado, Carl Ayers (VDSS Deputy Commissioner) – arrived 12:10pm, left at 2:15pm

Remote Participating Trustees: Cherie Short (Alexandria)

Trustees Absent: Cindy Han

Staff/Guests Present: Nicole Poulin (Executive Director), Michelle L'Hommedieu (Office of Attorney General - FACT Counsel), Taylor Hohle (Senior Research Associate), Wendy Goldberg, CPA (W.C. Goldberg & Co.), Emily Lehmann (CARITAS Chief Program Officer)

**Opening:** Chairperson Roberts called the meeting to order at 11:06 AM. A quorum was present.

**Decisions and Actions:** The following actions were approved by the Board unanimously unless otherwise noted.

CARITAS Presentation: Emily Lehmann, Chief Program Officer CARITAS

- Emily provided the Trustees with an overview of CARITAS programming and answered questions.  
<https://caritasva.org/>

Remote Participation:

- Trustee Short requested to participate remotely due to residing more than 60 miles from the meeting location.
- **A motion was made by Trustee Wescott to allow remote participation for Trustee Short. Trustee Van Name seconded.**

Minutes Approval:

- Chairperson Roberts opened the floor for comments and corrections on the previous Board minutes from the December meeting.
- **A motion was made by Trustee Van Name to approve the minutes as presented. Trustee Hart seconded.**

Chair's Report: Chairperson Roberts provided the report.

- A copy of the Fiscal Year 2025 report provided to the Office of the Attorney General for their annual report on Domestic and Sexual Violence was provided to Board members as a summary of funding for last fiscal year.
- Trustees Roberts and Wescott met with staff over the summer to discuss possible ideas for events to take place next year to celebrate FACT's 40th anniversary.
  - Options include hosting a legislative coffee hour during General Assembly session, developing a grant/nomination process to recognize 40 Champions for Kids and Families, and hosting an event to present them with a FACT Award of Recognition and donation to their favorite nonprofit that supports kids and families.
  - There was discussion on the creation of an ad hoc committee to focus on finalizing a plan for these events and begin working on organizing them. Michelle provided

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additional clarification on the meeting requirements for the ad hoc committee.

- **A motion was made by Trustee Danielsen for the establishment of an ad hoc committee for the FACT 40th Anniversary Celebration composed of Trustees Salgado, Greear, and Roberts. Trustee Wescott seconded.**

Child Abuse & Neglect (CAN) Advisory Committee Report: Chairperson Roberts provided the committee update.

- The CAN Advisory Committee met on September 3<sup>rd</sup>. Nicole provided background information for new Trustees on the CAN Advisory Committee as a Citizen Review Panel for the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).
- During the September meeting, the Committee heard updates from Eric Reynolds from the Office of the Children's Ombudsman. Their annual report is expected to be out at the beginning of October.
- The Committee also heard updates from the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). Nikki Cox, the Division Director for Family Services, provided information on the Safe Kids, Strong Families initiative and Laurie Crawford, Division Director for the Office of Trauma and Resilience Policy, provided an update on workforce development.

Grants Committee Report: Trustee Wescott provided the update.

- The Grants Committee met this morning and received an update on FACT's progress on developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for release in January. FACT Staff and Michelle worked with staff from VDSS's Office of Procurement to create a new process specific to the development of an RFP for FACT funds.
  - Based on the approved funding for Fiscal Year 2026, the current RFP will be for a total of \$1.5 million for two-year awards between \$200,000-\$300,000 each.
  - Progress is on track to have a final draft of the RFP available for Board review and approval in December. Once approved, the RFP will be posted by Procurement. Applications will be received and reviewed by the Grants Committee in late winter/early spring with final recommendations for funding to the Board at the June meeting. Upon approval of the recommendations, programs will be awarded funding to begin services July 1, 2026.
- The Ad Hoc Grants policy was revised during the June meeting to allow programs to apply for up to \$10,000 for direct service and up to \$5000 for training or organizational capacity. The budget for the fiscal year was \$300,000 with \$150,000 allotted for each round of funding.
  - We received 62 applications for a total of \$459,558 in requests. The training and organizational capacity applications total \$144,268 and the direct service applications total \$315,290.
  - Due to the high level of requests, the Grants Committee is recommending that the Board fund only those for training/organizational capacity support to stay within the current budget.
  - The Grants Committee will be meeting prior to the next FACT Board Meeting scheduled for December 9th to determine what further recommendations, if any, should be made for this grant funding opportunity this fiscal year. Any changes to the application or process will be communicated to applicants on the FACT website and through our newsletter and social media accounts.
- **A motion was made by Trustee Wescott to accept the recommendations of the Grants Committee for approval of the training and organizational capacity applications for the current round of funding.**

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VDSS Report: Deputy Commissioner Ayers provided the update.

- Deputy Commissioner Ayers provided information about the recent federal changes to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.
  - Effective October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2027 – States will have to pay a match percentage of SNAP benefits based on the SNAP error rate. The error rate does not include fraud but covers overpayment or underpayment of approved benefits.
    - Under 6% error rate does not require a match.
    - 6-8% error rate requires a 5% match.
    - 8-10% error rate requires a 10% match.
    - 10% or higher error rate requires a 15% match.
  - Last year Virginia's error rate was 11%, which would require a 15% match. The fiscal impact is expected to be \$67 million for administrative costs in the first year and then an additional \$270 million based on the current error rate.
  - There was discussion on the difficulties of Virginia's state supervised, locally administered system and the difficulty for VDSS to address errors at the local level. This is also an issue identified within the Safe Kids, Strong Families initiative.
- Safe Kids, Strong Families Update
  - The Steering Committee for the initiative has developed six pillars: Strengthening Workforce, Child Protective Services, Modernization of Oversight and Infrastructure, Permanency of Youth, Behavioral Health and Child Welfare, and Community Pathways.
    - There was discussion on the differences in screen-in and screen-out rates in different localities. Some localities screen-in most of their reports while others screen-out the majority.
    - There was discussion on workforce development and the difficulties with staff turnover rates. 40% of entry-level Family Services Specialists leave their jobs annually.
    - There was discussion on the open rate to In-Home services for high or very high-risk cases. All these cases should be opened to in-home services; however, that is not the case in many localities.
    - There was discussion on the development of a statewide accountability framework to address the issues under the state-supervised, locally-administered system.
- Trustee Short brought up continued concerns about the hotline wait times and dropped call rates. Additionally, she mentioned adding a texting option for individuals rather than calling. Today, there was a 12-minute wait time when Trustee Short called during working hours. Staff at the state hotline usually cover most of time when the local departments are closed rather than during working hours when the local department takes calls.
  - Replacement for the child welfare system has been in the works since 2015 but has not gone through due to administration changes and differing priorities for the contracts. The FACT Board has previously sent a letter for co-chairs of the CAN Advisory Committee to be involved in the development of the new system once a vendor is selected.
  - There was discussion around opening the mandated reporter portal to all individuals rather than just mandated reporters to decrease waiting times.

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Treasurer's Report: Trustee Hart and Wendy Goldberg provided the update.

- Over the summer, Trustee Hart met with FACT's staff, bookkeeper (Kerri Swaim), and CPA Consultant (Wendy Goldberg) to develop a new system for tracking FACT grants and finances.
- Wendy provided a review of the new system and presented a report on Fiscal Year 2025 financials.

FOIA Presentation: Michelle L'Hommedieu provided the presentation.

- Michelle provided a presentation reviewing the Freedom of Information Act in regard to its impact on Trustee communications and meetings.
- Because of recent changes, the FACT By-laws and Appendices need to be amended. Michelle presented an updated draft that includes the new language.
  - Amendment - Revise the language in Article III, Section 2. to reference the Code section that outlines the appointment of Board members, <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title63.2/chapter21/section63.2-2101/>
  - **A motion was made by Trustee Wescott to accept the new edition of the by-laws as amended. Seconded by Trustee Hart.**

Staff Report: Executive Director Poulin provided the update.

- The Problematic Sexual Behavior Project will be accepting applications for the pilot program for Multidisciplinary Teams in the upcoming year.
- An update to the Child Fatality Investigations and Reviews report that will feature anonymized case level data based on the reviews conducted by the CAN Advisory Committee workgroup.
- FACT was invited to participate in the Anti-Trafficking Forum led by First Lady Susan Youngkin and Secretary Kelly.
- The Leadership for Empowerment and Abuse Prevention (LEAP) program expansion is underway. This program is one of the only evidence-based training programs to prevent sexual assault against people with intellectual disabilities.
- A biennial report will be coming out soon detailing Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025.

Adjournment/Wrap up: The next Board meeting will be held on December 9th, 2025, virtually. Chairperson Roberts concluded the meeting at 2:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tiffany Garner

Tiffany Garner, Secretary

Taylor Hohle

Taylor Hohle, Senior Research Associate