Child Advocacy Center Services FY 2023 Annual Report

Criminal Procedure Article, § 11-928(f); Senate Bill 748/Chapter 627, 2020; MSAR #12784

Wes Moore
Governor

Aruna Miller
Lt. Governor

Dorothy J. Lennig, Esq.
Executive Director
Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy

Submitted by:
Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy

Contact: Jennifer Krabill
410-697-9241 | Jennifer.Krabill@Maryland.gov

June 1, 2024

WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lieutenant Governor

DOROTHY LENNIG
Executive Director

May 15, 2024

The Honorable William C. "Bill" Ferguson IV
President of the Senate
State House, H-107
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

The Honorable Adrienne Jones
Speaker of the House of Delegates
State House, H-101
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Report required by Criminal Procedure Article § 11-928(f) - Child Advocacy Center Services FY 2023 Annual Report

Dear President Ferguson and Speaker Jones:

In accordance with § 11-928(f) of the Criminal Procedure Article, please find an enclosed copy of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy's report, titled *Child Advocacy Center Services FY 2023 Annual Report*. This report includes information on the distribution of funds to coordinate the investigation of child abuse and neglect and to provide services to children and their non-offending family members without causing further trauma. Funds are used to assist subrecipients with providing victim assistance, advocacy, support, and other coordinated justice system responses throughout Maryland.

Should you have any questions relating to the information provided in this report, please feel free to contact me at 410-697-9338.

Sincerely,

Dorothy J. Lennig, Esq.
Executive Director

cc: Sarah Albert, Department of Legislative Services (5 copies)

100 Community Pl. • Crownsville, MD 21032
Tel: 410-697-9338 • Fax: 410-558-6697 • Toll Free: 1-877-687-9004 • TTY Users: Call via Maryland Relay
http://goccp.maryland.gov/

Table of Contents

Introduction **4**
Child Advocacy Centers **5**
Child Advocacy Center Services Grant Program **5**
Grant Awards 8
Conclusion **14**

Introduction

In accordance with § 11-928(f) of the Criminal Procedure, the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (Office) must establish and sustain Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) in the State through the allocation of grant funding and submit a report to the General Assembly by June 1 of each year as it relates to the CACs.

Pursuant to its charge, this *Child Advocacy Center Services FY 2023 Annual Report* includes information on the Child Advocacy Center Services (CACS) grant program, which makes funding available to law enforcement, child protective services, social workers, and individuals who work to protect Maryland's vulnerable child victims of crime and abuse. It also provides a follow-up to several reports submitted in prior years. These reports are available on the Office's website at: https://goccp.maryland.gov/reports-and-publications/.

Background

A nationally recognized model, CACs provide a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, community response to child abuse and neglect. These centers coordinate the prevention, investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse and neglect at the local level and through a multidisciplinary team comprised of law enforcement, state's attorney's offices, child protective services, medical providers, mental health practitioners, and victim advocates.

As required by § 11-928(d) of the Criminal Procedure Article:

(1) The Office shall contract with a nonprofit organization that is qualified under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and represents urban, rural, and suburban CACs in the State to establish a Maryland Statewide Organization for CACs.
(2) The purpose of the Maryland Statewide Organization for CACs is to provide training, technical assistance, data collection, and capacity building to meet local, State, and national requirements for CACs.
(3) The Maryland Statewide Organization for CACs shall establish standards for CACs in the State that meet national accreditation standards for CACs and shall include:
    (i) Multidisciplinary teams that include representation from law enforcement, prosecutors, child protective services, the medical and mental health fields, and victim advocacy;
    (ii) Cultural competency and diversity;
    (iii) Forensic interviews that are neutral, fact-finding, and avoid duplicative interviewing;

(iv) Victim support and advocacy for children and caregivers, including appropriate counseling, legal, and medical services or referrals;
(v) Medical evaluations;
(vi) Mental health services;
(vii) A formal case review process;
(viii) A case tracking, monitoring, and outcomes process;
(ix) Organizational capacity;
(x) Creating a child-focused setting that is comfortable, safe, and private; and
(xi) Any additional necessary standards.

Child Advocacy Center Services Grant Program

In accordance with § 11-928(f) of the Criminal Procedure Article, this *Child Advocacy Center Services FY 2023 Annual Report* includes information on the Child Advocacy Center Services (CACS) grant program which helps to establish and sustain CACs in the State.[1] Through a formula agreed on by the Maryland Statewide Organization and the Office, this program makes funding available to law enforcement, child protective services, social workers, and all who work to protect Maryland's vulnerable child victims of crime and abuse.

The primary purpose of this program is to coordinate the investigation of child abuse and neglect and to provide services to children and their non-offending family members without causing further trauma. Funds are used to assist subrecipients in providing victim assistance, advocacy, support, and other coordinated justice system responses. Funds also assist CACs in becoming accredited by the National Children's Alliance (NCA).

Maryland currently has 24 CACs operating in all 24 jurisdictions. As of March 2024, 17 CACs in Maryland are accredited through the NCA, six are associate members, and one is an affiliate member. All 24 CACs are members of the Maryland Children's Alliance (MCA). The distinctions between the NCA memberships are as follows[2]:

- Accredited Members: CACs that meet each of the 10 National Standards of Accreditation. Re-accreditation for every applicable CAC occurs every 5 years.
- Associate Members: CACs that are working toward, but have not yet achieved, implementation of all Standards for Accreditation may be granted this type of membership.
- Affiliate Members: CACs or Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) that are working to improve services for abused children through a collaborative approach to intervention in communities where all resources may not be available to achieve Accreditation at this time.

[1] Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy. *Child Advocacy Center Services (CACS)*. http://goccp.maryland.gov/grants/programs/cacs/
[2] National Children's Alliance, May 13, 2024.

All CACs (accredited and those working towards accreditation) work with comprehensive multidisciplinary teams as a requirement for accreditation. In Maryland, government entities oversee and administer most CACs and employ staff through these entities, including the local Department of Social Services and local law enforcement entities. For a CAC to become accredited through the NCA, they must meet the criteria for the standards of accreditation, which fall under the following broader categories:

- Multidisciplinary Teams
- Cultural Competency and Diversity
- Forensic Interviews
- Victim Support and Advocacy
- Medical Evaluation
- Mental Health
- Case Review
- Case Tracking
- Organizational Capacity
- Child-Focused Setting

In accordance with § 11-928(d)(1) of the Criminal Procedure Article, the Office entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the MCA which remains in effect through June 30, 2025. The Office will continue to work directly with the MCA to provide these necessary services as described above.

In 2023, a total of 5,138 children were served by Maryland CACs, 66% of whom identified as female.[3] A breakdown of the types of abuse addressed by the CACs include:

Type of Abuse*					
Sex Abuse	Physical Abuse	Neglect	Violence	Drug	Other
3,153	561	388	80	23	652

*MCA provided the above breakdown of the types of abuse.

CACs served 5138 children during the 2023 calendar year. Of those children, 65.8% were given a forensic interview - 3059 of the forensic interviews were conducted on-site, and 323 were provided off-site.

[3] Maryland Children's Alliance. (2024). *Maryland Children's Alliance: 2023 Annual Report*. https://www.marylandchildrensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/MCA%202023%20Annual%20Report.pdf

Maryland Child Advocacy Center 2023 Data

As reported by 24 Maryland CACs between January - December 2023

5,138 Total children served

Member CACs
24
(100%)

Accreditation Status

17	6	1
Accredited	Associate	Affiliate

Organizational Types

79%	21%
(Government-based)	(Nonprofit)

Children served by Maryland CACs between 2016 and 2023

Demographic Breakdown

Child Gender

Child Age

Child Race

Offender Relationship

Sexual abuse continues to be the primary allegation investigated by Maryland CACs, representing **64.9%** of cases in 2023.

Member CACs provided **9,532** instances of prevention services to children and adults

+7.14% from 2022

Member CACs provided

2,315	1,820
case management services to children	case management services to adults

Most (79%) of CACs are affiliated with a government organization, including the local department of human services, county government, the state's attorney's office, and local law enforcement agencies. The remaining 21% are nonprofit agencies. Sexual abuse continues to be the primary allegation investigated by CACs, representing 64.9% of cases.[4] In addition, most CACs stated that the medical examinations that occur through their center fall under the non-urgent category of the NCA Standards, which means that exams are scheduled at the convenience of the family and provider and are typically performed within one to two weeks.

Grant Awards

In FY 2023, the annual State budget provided $400,000 in general funds for the CACS grant program. Through this program, the Office made funding available to accredited CACs or those seeking accreditation by the NCA. This funding supported a broad range of services, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Counseling and psychological services for children who have been physically, sexually, and/or emotionally abused;
- Services to help child victims overcome trauma;
- Counseling and support for families of children who have been victimized and abused;
- Forensic and medical evaluations;
- Specialized equipment;
- Specialized personnel to include child protective service workers;
- Support for the successful prosecution of all child abuse cases;
- Training; and
- Public outreach.

In FY 2023, 24 subrecipients received CACS program funds to continue to coordinate the investigation of child abuse and neglect and to provide services to children and their non-offending family members without causing further trauma (*as illustrated below*)[5].

Award Number	Award Amount	Implementing Organization	Jurisdiction	Project Summary
CACS-2024-0018	$16,666.00	Jane's Place, Inc.	Allegany	The program assisted in developing and implementing strategies specifically intended to provide assistance to child sexual abuse/assault victims, severe physical abuse and neglect victims, and their families. The program provided forensic interviews, child advocacy services, access to medical exams, and referrals to community partners. Program funds covered a portion of rent for the facilities where forensic interviews and victim advocacy were provided.

[4] Ibid.

[5] This funding is distributed equally across each of the 24 jurisdictions and MCA. If a jurisdiction did not apply for funding, or if an amount below the $16,666 available for each jurisdiction was requested, those remaining funds were awarded to the Maryland Children's Alliance to support CACs statewide.

CACS-2024-0002	$16,666.00	Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services	Anne Arundel	The program provided a safe environment for victims of child sexual abuse, and offered the support needed to obtain closure from the traumatic offense. Accredited by the National Children's Alliance, CACs staff worked collaboratively with law enforcement, the State's Attorney's Office, advocates, medical practitioners, and behavioral health professionals to address allegations of child sexual abuse. Program funds covered the cost of the iRecord system, accreditation costs, professional development, office supplies, and other program expenses.
CACS-2024-0006	$16,666.00	Center for Hope, Inc. (formerly The Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Inc.)	Baltimore City	The program assisted in developing and implementing strategies specifically intended to aid victims of child sexual abuse, maltreatment and trauma, and their families. The program supported the multidisciplinary response to child sexual abuse and maltreatment in the Baltimore region. Program funds provided personnel support.
CACS-2024-0001	$16,665.00	Baltimore County Department of Social Services	Baltimore County	The program supported multidisciplinary team members in the investigation of crimes against children, specialized victim advocacy services, and mental health treatment for victims of crime. Program funds provided professional training for five team members to attend the 39th Annual International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment in San Diego, CA.
CACS-2024-0017	$16,666.00	Calvert County Department of Social Services	Calvert	The program provided a professional and child friendly environment to lessen the traumatic impact to children during the course of an investigation of physical abuse, sexual abuse, serious neglect, and assessments of "at risk" youth. Program funds provided for operational expenses, equipment, and training.
CACS-2024-0019	$16,666.00	Caroline County Department of Social Services	Caroline	The program supported training for the multidisciplinary team and CAC staff to attend specialized training for CAC leadership and specialized child abuse training for the multidisciplinary team. Programt funds supported travel, training opportunities, annual dues, and other expenses.
CACS-2024-0004	$16,666.00	Carroll County Sheriff's Office	Carroll	The program provided a friendly environment committed to reducing trauma as it investigated allegations of sexual and physical abuse and sexual assault, assessed and protected the victim, and provided resources for the victim. Program funds supported training, software, and resource materials for child victims and their families.
CACS-2024-0015	$16,666.00	Cecil County Department of Community Services	Cecil	The program provided contracted medical services to child victims served through the Cecil County CAC. The Medical Providers performed direct services on-site to include examination, treatment, and consultation; and served as a member of the multidisciplinary team. Program funds covered membership fees, registration fees, and supplies.
CACS-2024-0005	$16,666.00	Center for Children, Inc.	Charles	The program provided multidisciplinary child abuse investigation, prosecution, and treatment, as well as training and support to allow the CAC to retain accreditation with NCA and foster collaboration among inter-agency team members. Program funds provided salary support, travel, and other accreditation expenses.
CACS-2024-0016	$15,818.00	Dorchester County Department of Social Services	Dorchester	The program enhanced collaboration between members of the multidisciplinary team and enhanced their understanding of the CAC process. It also sent members to the annual NCA Leadership Conference to network with peers and learn best practices; and sent

				multidisciplinary team members to the conference for forensic interviewers training. Program funds provided for conference registration, hotel, and meal reimbursement as well as accreditation fees.
CACS-2024-0008	$16,666.00	Frederick County, Maryland	Frederick	The Frederick County CAC Interpreting Services & Operational Costs program supports activities to provide interpreting services to Spanish-speaking CAC clients; enhance communication capabilities between CAC staff, MDT partners, and clients; provide mental health service provision options to CAC clients;to help manage case and client data; maintain national accreditation standards through membership in the National Children's Alliance, Maryland Children's Alliance, and American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children; and providing families with information on the multi-disciplinary approach, the investigatory process and roles of each partner, the child-friendly/focused setting, and CAC services.
CACS-2024-0003	$16,666.00	Harford County Child Advocacy Center	Harford	The program improved public safety by supporting technological advancements, equipment enhancements, and updated training. It also improved the CAC's ability to investigate crimes and present evidence in court for child abuse and exploitation cases. Program funds provided equipment and training.
CACS-2024-0009	$16,666.00	Howard County Police Department	Howard	The program helped to ensure that multidisciplinary team members were provided with up-to-date training each year to provide the best possible services to child abuse survivors in Howard County. Specifically, the program provided multidisciplinary team members with training specific to child abuse and maltreatment investigations to better serve the children and families who come to the CAC for help when children experience the trauma of sexual and physical abuse. Program funds provided training and covered travel costs associated with training.
CACS-2024-0011	$16,666.00	Kent County Department of Social Services	Kent	The program provided comprehensive services to child victims of sexual abuse, severe physical abuse or neglect, witnesses to violence, and sex trafficking. The program collaborated with a multidisciplinary team to provide a trauma-informed approach for service provision, investigations, and prosecutions. Program funds provided for contractual, other, and operating expenses.
CACS-2024-0020	$16,663.00	The Tree House Child Advocacy Center of Montgomery County MD Inc.	Montgomery	The program helped reduce existing gaps in services and fostered collaboration and cooperation among partner agencies and stakeholders in Montgomery County. The program provided victim advocacy services to suspected victims of child abuse and neglect. Program funds provided personnel.
CACS-2024-0021	$16,666.00	Prince George's County Department of Social Services	Prince George's	The program is a nationally accredited CAC that serves children and families in Prince George's County. The CAC maintained best practices to provide services to children and families who were served at the center. Program funds supported efforts to continuously improve the services provided to child victims and their families, and sustain accreditation status.
CACS-2024-0007	$16,453.64	Queen Anne's County Department of Social Services	Queen Anne's	The program enhanced the multidisciplinary team's expertise in investigating, prosecuting, and treating cases of child sexual abuse. It also offered specialized, advanced level training in core concepts around child sexual abuse and the CAC model. Program funds provided training registration, travel, and other expenses.

CACS-2024-0010	$16,666.00	Life Crisis Center, Inc.	Somerset	The program assisted in developing and implementing strategies specifically intended to provide assistance to child sexual assault victims and their families throughout the Lower Shore, and ensured that the CAC model was followed. Program funds provided training, travel, case management software, and therapeutic supplies.
CACS-2024-0014	$16,665.00	St. Mary's County Department of Social Services	St. Mary's	The program helped to ensure that all child victims and their family members receive assistance through services that recognize their unique circumstances and needs. It also ensured that St. Mary's County CAC utilized best practices and followed national standards. In addition, the program provided ongoing, specialized training for members of the multidisciplinary team to ensure that child victims and their family members receive assistance provided by highly skilled professionals who utilize evidence-based practices. It also provided access to trauma-informed interventions for child victims and their families
CACS-2024-0012	$16,658.00	Talbot County Department of Social Services	Talbot	The program provided assistance to child sexual assault victims and their families in the Mid Shore Region of the Eastern Shore of Maryland. It also coordinated the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of child abuse and neglect, and aided in the treatment of the victims and their non-offending family members by providing best practice, trauma-informed services. Program funds provided travel, contractual, and other expenses.
CACS-2024-0022	$16,666.00	Washington County Department of Social Services	Washington	The program provided a child-friendly environment during collaborative investigations, therapeutic/medical interventions, and criminal prosecutions of child maltreatment. Program funds provided operating and other expenses.
CACS-2024-0013	$16,666.00	Wicomico County Department of Social Services	Wicomico	The program provided a safe, trauma-informed, child focused response to child abuse and neglect through assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment; and promoted public education and prevention. The CAC applies a nationally recognized best practice model to offer a multidisciplinary team approach representing child protective services, law enforcement, medical and mental health services, prosecution, and victim family advocacy. Program funds provided resources needed for day-to-day operations and to advance the CAC's status with the NCA accreditation process. It also supported activities and services in the operating and other budget categories.
CACS-2024-0023	$16,666.00	The Cricket Center, Inc.	Worcester	The program served all of Worcester County to ensure that child victims of physical and sexual abuse in and their non-offending caregivers embark on a path to healing. The program helped to reduce existing gaps in services and foster collaboration and cooperation among partnering agencies, to include: the State's Attorney's Office, Child Protective Services, law enforcement, and the Life Crisis Center. The Victim Advocate provided direct services to the victim and their family from initial outcry through prosecution. Program funds supported the Victim Advocate position.
CACS-2024-0024	$17,618.00	Maryland Children's Alliance	Statewide	The program helped to improve victim services in Maryland and increase CAC preparedness for accreditation. It also maintained and enhanced MCA's relationship with the statewide network of CACs by providing universal technical assistance and training through

				membership meetings to CAC leaders; and focused on addressing and meeting the needs of developing CACs. Program funds provided personnel, travel, and contractual.
Total	**$399,862.64**			

Through the CACS grant program, awarded funds built upon existing efforts to coordinate the investigation of child abuse and neglect and to provide services to children and their non-offending family members without causing further trauma. In addition, and based on the quarterly submission of performance measure data, awarded subrecipients reported the following outcomes in FY 2023 (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023):

- 8,351 victims served
- 4,789 investigations
- 548 prosecutions
- 309 convictions
- 323 trainings held

Conclusion

The Office will continue to support the development, growth, and continuation of CACs through this grant program. Program funds will continue to be used to assist subrecipients in providing victim assistance, advocacy, support, and other coordinated justice system responses throughout Maryland.