Child Advocacy Center Services FY 2024 Report

Criminal Procedure Article, Section 11-928(f)

Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy

May 20, 2025

WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lieutenant Governor

DOROTHY LENNIG
Executive Director

May 20, 2025

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: Criminal Procedure Article § 11-928(f) (MSAR #15687)

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 2024 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.

As required, five color copies will be sent to the DLS Legislative Library.

Sincerely,

Dorothy J. Lennig, Esq.
Executive Director

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

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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 2024 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://gocpp.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.

Training and Technical Assistance

The statewide organization for CACs in Maryland is the Maryland Children's Alliance (MCA). MCA engages in significant investment in the 24 jurisdictions by providing training and technical assistance on topics ranging from forensic interviewing techniques to organizational capacity and technology improvements. In 2024, MCA provided over 380 hours of training to its members, including 108 hours of individual technical assistance for different CAC members. The following graph shows the different types of individual assistance provided by MCA to the local jurisdictions.[1]

[1] Maryland Children's Alliance, Inc. (2025). *2024 Annual Report: Empowering Maryland's Child Advocacy Centers*. https://www.marylandchildrensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2024-Annual-Report.pdf

Statewide Standards for Child Advocacy Centers

In accordance with § 11-928(d) of the Criminal Procedure Article, MCA is required to develop and implement statewide standards for CACs in Maryland that meet or exceed the accreditation standards set by the National Children's Alliance. In 2024, MCA initiated a multidisciplinary workgroup to develop those standards. Implementation is expected to begin in Fall 2025. The implementation of these standards will likely create additional fiscal responsibilities,which will impact CACs differently, depending on their organizational structure and available resources. Despite the challenges that come with implementing statewide standards, MCA remains committed to assisting local jurisdictions in continuing to provide trauma-informed services to children and families in Maryland.

MCA utilizes the Outcome Measurement System (OMS) as a tool to evaluate the services provided by CACs and how multidisciplinary teams are functioning. This tool allows CACs to gather confidential information about their experiences from families or caregivers of youth who are seen at a CAC. OMS is also used to collect data from multidisciplinary members about MDT team functioning. Most CACs use OMS for its multidisciplinary team functioning analysis, and 80% of CACs utilize the tool for clients and caregivers.[2]

The Outcome Measurement Report for 2024 shows that Maryland CACs prioritize making families feel as comfortable as possible when interacting with staff. The report also shows a 94.8% overall satisfaction rating by families regarding their experience at the CAC. The figures below illustrate the big-picture findings from the OMS in 2024.[3]

[2] Maryland Children's Alliance. *2024 Outcome Measurement Survey (OMS) Report*. https://cm20-s3-mca-new.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/ResourceFiles/4b81fd634ddd466f9021c990b26d4715OMS_2024_Report.pdf

[3] Maryland Children's Alliance, Inc. (2025). *2024 Annual Report: Empowering Maryland's Child Advocacy Centers*. https://www.marylandchildrensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2024-Annual-Report.pdf

Population Served

In 2024, a total of 5,387 children were served by Maryland CACs, 67.6% of whom identified as female.[4] Of those children, 69.2% received a forensic interview - 3,339 of the forensic interviews were conducted on-site, and 389 were provided off-site. A breakdown of the types of abuse addressed by the CACs include:[5]

Type of Abuse					
Sex Abuse	Physical Abuse	Neglect	Violence	Drug	Other
3,106	808	507	92	14	508

[4] Maryland Children's Alliance. (2025). *Maryland Children's Alliance: 2024 Annual Report*. https://www.marylandchildrensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2024-Annual-Report.pdf

[5] It is important to note that several types of abuse may be investigated for a case.

Maryland Child Advocacy Center 2024 Data

As reported by 24 Maryland CACs between January - December 2024

5,387 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 2024

Demographic Breakdown

Child Gender

Child Age

Child Race

Offender Relationship

Sexual abuse continues to be the primary allegation investigated by Maryland CACs, representing **60.2%** of cases in 2024.

Member CACs provided **5,692** instances of prevention services to children and adults

Member CACs provided

2,312	2,064
case management services to children	case management services to adults

5

Most (79%) CACs are affiliated with a government organization, including the local department of social 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 57.66% of cases.[6] 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 the exams are scheduled at the convenience of the family and provider and are typically performed within one to two weeks.

Child Advocacy Center Services Grant Program

The Office administers the CACS grant program, which helps to establish and sustain CACs in the State.[7] Through a formula agreed on by the Maryland Statewide Organization, MCA, 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 2025, 17 CACs have been accredited through NCA, six are associate members and one is an affiliate member. All 24 CACs are members of MCA. The distinction between NCA memberships are as follows:[8]

- Accredited Members: CACs that meet each of the 10 national standards of accreditation. Re-accreditation for every applicable CAC occurs every five 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 that are working to improve services for abused children through a collaborative approach to intervene in

[6] Maryland Children's Alliance. (2025). *Maryland Children's Alliance: 2024 Annual Report*. https://www.marylandchildrensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2024-Annual-Report.pdf

[7] Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy. *Child Advocacy Center Services (CACS)*. https://gocpp.maryland.gov/grants/programs/cacs/

[8] National Children's Alliance. (2025). *Member Types and Pricing for CACs*. https://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/ncamembership-types/

communities where all resources may not be available to achieve accreditation at this time.

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 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 (MOU) with MCA which remains in effect through June 30, 2025. A new MOU with the same terms is in the process of being constructed. The Office will continue to work directly with MCA to provide these necessary services.

Grant Awards

In FY 2024, the annual State budget provided $400,000 in general funds for the CACS grant program. Through this program, the Office distributed a total of $376,381.91 to 24 subrecipients, consisting of CACs and the Maryland Children's Alliance, 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*).[9]

Grant Number	Implementing Agency	Start Date	End Date	Award Amount	Jurisdiction
CACS-2024-0018	Jane's Place, Inc.	7/1/23	6/30/24	$13,212.15	Allegany
CACS-2024-0002	Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services	7/1/23	6/30/24	$16,630.15	Anne Arundel
CACS-2024-0006	Center for Hope, Inc. (formerly The Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Inc.)	7/1/23	6/30/24	$16,666.00	Baltimore City
CACS-2024-0024	Maryland Children's Alliance	7/1/23	6/30/24	$17,618.00	Baltimore City

[9] It is important to note that funding is distributed equally across the 24 jurisdictions and MCA. If a jurisdiction did not apply for funding, or if a subrecipient requested less than the $16,666 available for each jurisdiction, the remaining funds were awarded to MCA to support CACs statewide.

CACS-2024-0001	Baltimore County Department of Social Services	7/1/23	6/30/24	$16,064.63	Baltimore County
CACS-2024-0017	Calvert County Department of Social Services	7/1/23	6/30/24	$14,703.51	Calvert
CACS-2024-0019	Caroline County Department of Social Services	7/1/23	6/30/24	$15,395.48	Caroline
CACS-2024-0004	Carroll County Sheriff's Office	7/1/23	6/30/24	$15,346.86	Carroll
CACS-2024-0015	Cecil County Department of Community Services	7/1/23	6/30/24	$16,666.00	Cecil
CACS-2024-0005	Center for Children, Inc.	7/1/23	6/30/24	$15,962.94	Charles
CACS-2024-0016	Dorchester County Department of Social Services	7/1/23	6/30/24	$14,121.15	Dorchester
CACS-2024-0008	Child Advocacy Center of Frederick County	7/1/23	6/30/24	$16,564.05	Frederick
CACS-2024-0003	Harford County Child Advocacy Center	7/1/23	6/30/24	$16,282.13	Harford
CACS-2024-0009	Howard County Police Department	7/1/23	6/30/24	$16,177.64	Howard
CACS-2024-0011	Kent County Department of Social Services	7/1/23	6/30/24	$16,387.87	Kent
CACS-2024-0020	The Tree House Child Advocacy Center of Montgomery County MD Inc.	7/1/23	6/30/24	$16,663.00	Montgomery
CACS-2024-0021	Prince George's County Department of Social Services	7/1/23	6/30/24	$15,974.00	Prince George's
CACS-2024-0007	Queen Anne's County Department of Social Services	7/1/23	6/30/24	$14,267.45	Queen Anne's
CACS-2024-0010	Life Crisis Center, Inc.	7/1/23	6/30/24	$16,666.00	Somerset
CACS-2024-0014	St. Mary's County Department of Social Services	7/1/23	6/30/24	$12,417.79	St. Mary's
CACS-2024-0012	Talbot County Department of Social Services	7/1/23	6/30/24	$16,658.00	Talbot
CACS-2024-0022	Washington County Department of Social Services	7/1/23	6/30/24	$16,095.76	Washington
CACS-2024-0013	Wicomico County Department of Social Services	7/1/23	6/30/24	$13,175.35	Wicomico
CACS-2024-0023	Worcester County Child Advocacy Center, Inc. (formerly The Cricket Center, Inc.)	7/1/23	6/30/24	$16,666.00	Worcester
Total				**$376,381.91**	

Through the CACS grant program, awarded funds were used to build 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 2024 (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024):[10]

- 7,247 victims served
- 5,013 investigations
- 4,168 forensic interviews conducted
- 445 trainings held
- 6,571 training attendees reported an increased understanding about the topic

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.

[10] It is important to note that the performance measures are based on fiscal 2024; whereas, MCA figures are based on calendar 2024. For this reason, the figures may appear different.