

Child Advocacy Center Services FY 2025 Report

Criminal Procedure Article, Section 11-928(f)

Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy

June 1, 2026



WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lieutenant Governor

DOROTHY LENNIG
Executive Director

June 1, 2026

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

The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk
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 Peña-Melnyk:

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 2025 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 Department of Legislative Services' Legislative Library.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dorothy J. Lennig". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing "D" and a cursive "Lennig".

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 2025 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 attorneys' 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;

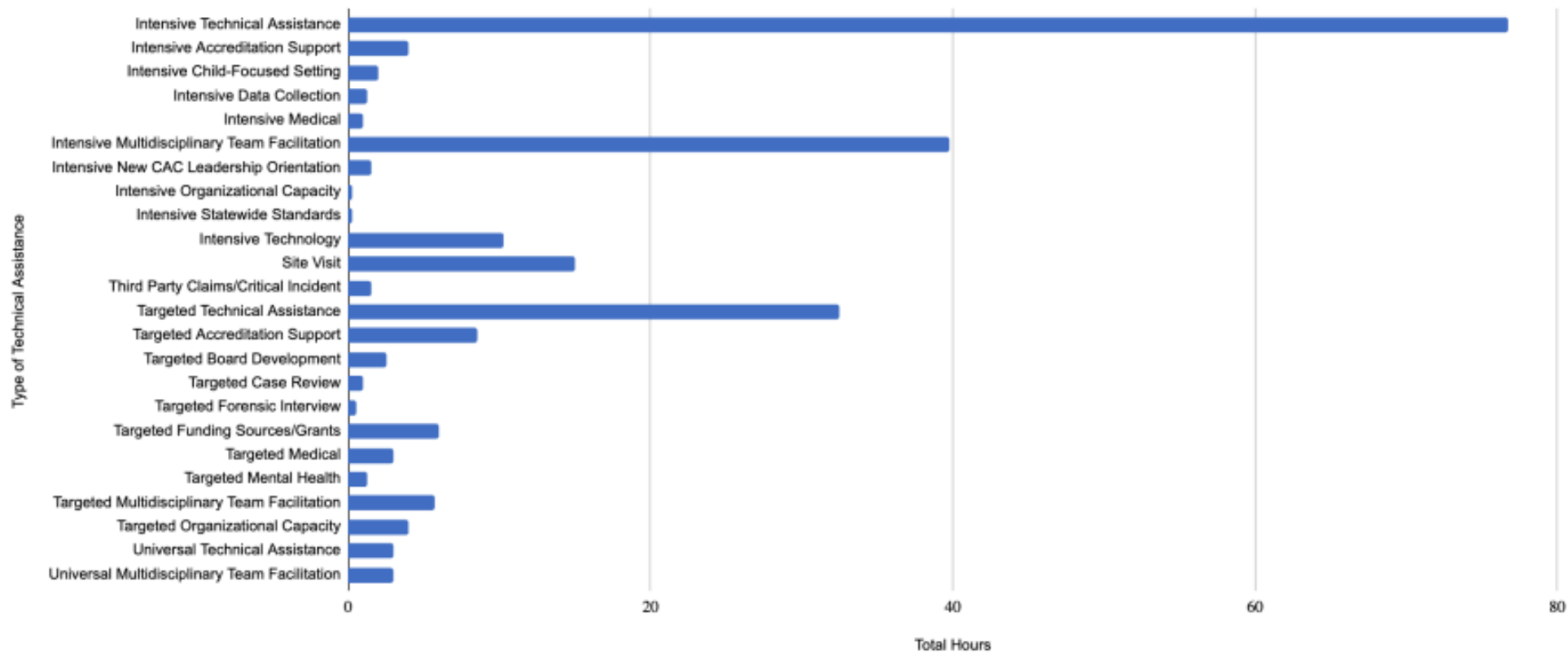
- (iv) Victim support and advocacy for children and caregivers, including appropriate counseling, legal, and medical services or referrals;
- (v) Medical evaluations;
- (vi) Mental health services;
- (vii) A formal case review process;
- (viii) A case tracking, monitoring, and outcomes process;
- (ix) 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 invests significant resources in the 24 jurisdictions by providing training and technical assistance on topics ranging from forensic interviewing techniques to organizational capacity and technology improvements. In 2025, MCA provided over 340 hours of training to its members, including 112 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. (2026). *2025 Annual Report: Empowering Maryland's Child Advocacy Centers*. <https://www.marylandchildrensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/MCAs-2025-Annual-Report.pdf>

Hours of Technical Assistance by Category

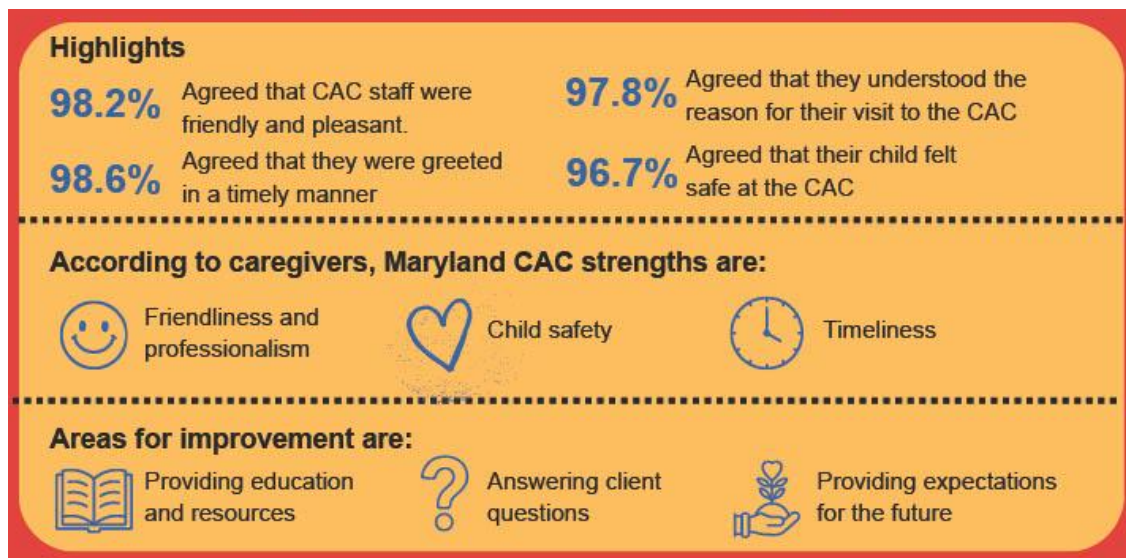


Statewide Standards for Child Advocacy Centers

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 (NCA). The statewide standards workgroup, composed of MCA staff, CAC leaders, and subject-matter experts, met regularly beginning in early 2024, culminating in the launch of the Maryland Statewide Standards for Child Advocacy Centers in July 2025. MCA began conducting site visits in fall 2025 to support progress toward implementation. Although meeting statewide standards is not yet required, implementing them can present challenges. MCA remains committed to supporting local jurisdictions as they continue providing 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 Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) functioning. Most CACs use OMS for its multidisciplinary team functioning analysis, and almost 71% of CACs utilize the tool for clients and caregivers.²

The Outcome Measurement Report for 2025 shows that Maryland CACs prioritize making families feel as comfortable as possible when interacting with staff. The figures below illustrate the big-picture findings from the OMS in 2025.²



² Maryland Children's Alliance, Inc. (2026). *2025 Annual Report: Empowering Maryland's Child Advocacy Centers*. <https://www.marylandchildrensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/MCAs-2025-Annual-Report.pdf>

Population Served

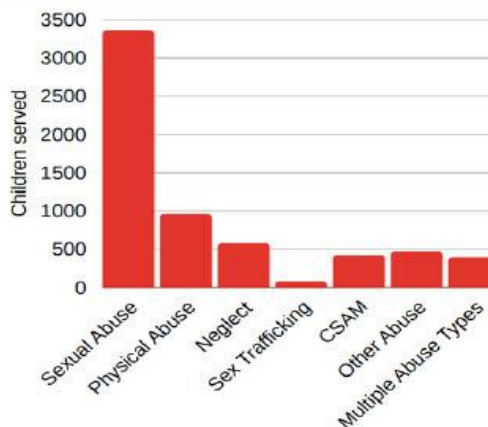
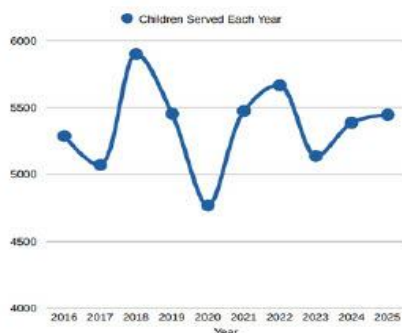
In the calendar year 2025, Maryland CACs served a total of 5,446 children, a 2% increase over 2024. Of those children, 65.6% received a forensic interview, including both onsite and offsite interviews, and 53% received mental health treatment or referral for treatment. A breakdown of the cases addressed by the CACs is shown in the visual below.



Maryland Child Advocacy Center Data, 2025

As reported by 24 CACs between January and December 2025

5,446 total children served		
24	52.8%	65.6%
CACs in Maryland, all members of MCA and NCA	of children served experienced child sexual abuse	of children referred received a forensic interview



Community violence (0), labor trafficking (2), teen dating violence (5), sextortion (10), drug endangerment (11), witness to mass violence (11), intimate partner violence (12), commercial sexual exploitation of children (17), and adult survivors of abuse (25) were excluded as they were experienced by fewer than 1% of children.

Services provided	2023	2024	2025
Medical Evaluation	790	1,221	941
Forensic Interview (Onsite and offsite)	3,382	3,728	3,573
Victim Advocacy and / or Case Management	2,315	2,441	3,463
Mental Health Treatment and / or Referral	1,905	2,539	2,885

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 52.8% of cases.³ In addition, most CACs stated that the medical examinations that occur through their centers 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 (CACS) Grant Program

The Office administers the CACS grant program, which helps to establish and sustain CACs in the State.⁴ 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 NCA.

Maryland currently has 24 CACs operating in all 24 jurisdictions. As of April 2026, 18 CACs have been accredited through NCA, with Caroline County joining as the newest accredited in February 2026. The remaining six CACs are associate members of NCA. St. Mary's County has submitted its application for accreditation and scheduled its site visit for summer 2026. Somerset, Kent, and Dorchester Counties are planning to submit applications later in 2026. MCA expects to have 22 CACs accredited by January 2027, and all 24 accredited by 2028. The distinction between NCA memberships is as follows:⁵

- Accredited Members: CACs that meet each of the 10 national standards of accreditation. Re-accreditation for every applicable CAC occurs every five years.

³ Maryland Children's Alliance, Inc. (2026). *2025 Annual Report: Empowering Maryland's Child Advocacy Centers*. <https://www.marylandchildrensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/MCAs-2025-Annual-Report.pdf>

⁴ Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy. *Child Advocacy Center Services (CACS)*. <https://gocpp.maryland.gov/grants/programs/cacs/>

⁵ National Children's Alliance. (2026). *Member Types and Pricing for CACs*. <https://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/ncamembership-types/>

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

In accordance with § 11-928(d)(1) of the Criminal Procedure Article, the Office entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in June 2025 with MCA, which remains in effect through June 30, 2027.

Grant Awards

In state fiscal year 2025, the annual State budget provided \$650,000 in general funds for the CACS grant program, which included a one-year \$350,000 increase from the previous year's budget. Through this program, the Office distributed a total of \$622,656.19⁶ to 24 subrecipients, consisting of CACs and MCA, 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*).⁷

⁶ The \$622,656.19 is the actual amount spent by the organizations combined. The remaining amount was returned by the subrecipients as unused.

⁷ 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 \$26,000 available for each jurisdiction, the remaining funds were awarded to MCA to support CACs statewide. An additional \$500 was awarded to Cecil County at their request due to unused funds becoming available.

Grant Number	Implementing Agency	Start Date	End Date	Award Amount	Jurisdiction
CACS-2025-0015	Jane's Place, Inc.	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$21,651.24	Allegany
CACS-2025-0021	Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$24,770.25	Anne Arundel
CACS-2025-0003	Center for Hope, Inc. (formerly The Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Inc.)	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$22,136.56	Baltimore City
CACS-2025-0011	Maryland Children's Alliance	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$57,407.00	Statewide (located in Baltimore City)
CACS-2025-0001	Baltimore County Department of Social Services	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$26,000.00	Baltimore County
CACS-2025-0024	Calvert County Department of Social Services	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$22,166.08	Calvert
CACS-2025-0019	Caroline County Department of Social Services	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$25,552.73	Caroline
CACS-2025-0022	Carroll County Sheriff's Office	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$23,964.89	Carroll
CACS-2025-0016	Cecil County Department of Community Services	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$26,500.00	Cecil
CACS-2025-0002	Center for Children, Inc.	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$23,395.30	Charles
CACS-2025-0018	Dorchester County Department of Social Services	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$23,275.00	Dorchester
CACS-2025-0017	Child Advocacy Center of Frederick County	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$25,999.69	Frederick
CACS-2025-0006	Harford County Child Advocacy Center	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$25,874.67	Harford
CACS-2025-0005	Howard County Police Department	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$25,897.00	Howard
CACS-2025-0009	Kent County Department of Social Services	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$23,456.70	Kent
CACS-2025-0020	The Tree House Child Advocacy Center of Montgomery County MD Inc.	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$26,000.00	Montgomery
CACS-2025-0012	Prince George's County Department of Social Services	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$25,604.85	Prince George's
CACS-2025-0004	Queen Anne's County Department of Social Services	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$24,084.14	Queen Anne's
CACS-2025-0008	Life Crisis Center, Inc.	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$26,000.00	Somerset
CACS-2025-0010	St. Mary's County Department of Social Services	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$22,719.13	St. Mary's

Grant Number	Implementing Agency	Start Date	End Date	Award Amount	Jurisdiction
CACS-2025-0007	Talbot County Department of Social Services	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$25,999.99	Talbot
CACS-2025-0013	Washington County Department of Social Services	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$25,785.29	Washington
CACS-2025-0023	Wicomico County Department of Social Services	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$22,415.68	Wicomico
CACS-2025-0014	Worcester County Child Advocacy Center, Inc. (formerly The Cricket Center, Inc.)	7/1/24	6/30/25	\$26,000.00	Worcester
Total				\$622,656.19	

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 state fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025):⁸

- 7,384 victims served
- 4,961 investigations
- 4,100 forensic interviews conducted
- 340 trainings held
- 6,805 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.

⁸ It is important to note that the performance measures are based on state fiscal year 2025; whereas, MCA figures are based on calendar year 2025. For this reason, the figures may appear different.