



**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF
CRIME PREVENTION, YOUTH,
AND VICTIM SERVICES**

**Child Advocacy Center (CAC) Services FY
2020 Annual Report**

*Criminal Procedure Article § 11-928(f), Senate Bill
748/Chapter 627, 2020*

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Introduction

Chapter 453 of 2010 (House Bill 1043), *Criminal Procedure - Child Advocacy Centers*, required the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (Office) to establish and sustain Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) in the State through the allocation of grant funding.¹ The Act also required the Office to submit a report to the General Assembly on or before January 1 of each year as it relates to the CACs.

Chapter 356 of 2011 (House Bill 739), *Sexual Assault Crisis Programs and Domestic Violence Programs - Transfer to the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services*, amended the requirement of the Office to establish and sustain CACs from § 11-923(g) of the Criminal Procedure Article to § 11-923(h) of the Criminal Procedure Article.²

Chapter 659 of 2017 (Senate Bill 734), *Sexual Assault Victims Resources Act of 2017*, provided no change to § 11-923(h) of the Criminal Procedure Article.³

Chapters 51 and 50 of 2019 (Senate Bill 739/House Bill 1007), *Child Advocacy Centers - Expansion*, amended the requirement of the Office to establish and sustain CACs from § 11-923(h) of the Criminal Procedure Article to § 11-928(f) of the Criminal Procedure Article.⁴

Chapter 627 of 2020 (Senate Bill 748), *Annual Curative Bill*, repealed and reenacted, without amendments, § 11-928 of the Criminal Procedure Article to ensure that every child in the State has access to a CAC.⁵ In addition, and in accordance with § 11-928(d) of the Criminal Procedure Article:⁶

- (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.

¹ Maryland General Assembly. (2010). [*Chapter 453 of 2010 \(House Bill 1043\). Criminal Procedure - Child Advocacy Centers*](#). In accordance with § 11-916 of the Criminal Procedure Article, the State Victims of Crime Fund shall be used to pay for: (i) carrying out Article 47 of the Maryland Declaration of Rights; (ii) carrying out the guidelines for the treatment and assistance for victims and witnesses of crimes and delinquent acts provided in §§ 11-1002 and 11-1003 of this title; (iii) carrying out any laws enacted to benefit victims and witnesses of crimes and delinquent acts; and (iv) supporting child advocacy centers established under § 11-923(h) of this subtitle.

² Maryland General Assembly. (2011). [*Chapter 356 of 2011 \(House Bill 739\). Sexual Assault Crisis Programs and Domestic Violence Programs - Transfer to the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services*](#).

³ Maryland General Assembly. (2017). [*Chapter 659 of 2017 \(Senate Bill 734\). Sexual Assault Victims Resources Act of 2017*](#).

⁴ Maryland General Assembly. (2019). *Chapters 51 and 50 of 2019 (Senate Bill 739/House Bill 1007), Child Advocacy Centers - Expansion*.

⁵ Maryland General Assembly. (2020). [*Chapter 627 of 2020 \(Senate Bill 748\). Annual Curative Bill*](#).

⁶ Ibid.

- (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.

Pursuant to § 11-928(e) of the Criminal Procedure Article, money for CACs shall be distributed in accordance with a formula agreed on by the Maryland Statewide Organization for CACs and the Office. The money shall be used to supplement, not supplant, money that the program receives from other sources, and may be used to assist CACs in meeting the standards under subsection (d) of this section.

Furthermore, and in accordance with § 11-928(f) of the Criminal Procedure Article, the Office shall submit an annual report to the General Assembly by June 1 of each year, as it relates to CACs.

Child Advocacy Centers

As 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. Research shows that children who receive services from a CAC are more likely to have:

- Access to medical evaluations and other forms of medical care;
- A referral to therapeutic services; and
- Greater access to community resources needed to help them recover.

CACs also help to reduce existing gaps in services and foster collaboration among partner agencies and stakeholders. Through a multidisciplinary team approach, the centers successfully coordinate investigative and intervention services to ensure children are not traumatized by the very system designed to protect them. In addition, these centers promote and provide specialized training for professionals, and extend efforts to promote public awareness and prevention. These efforts support the Office's objective to reduce victimization in Maryland's children by protecting them from abuse or neglect.

The CAC model is also effective at addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). A landmark study by the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente revealed that, left unchecked, a high number of ACEs can have a significant negative impact on an individual well into adulthood. Access to specialized mental health services is critical for abused children and their families to move forward in the healing process. At the CAC, children and families are connected with counseling and other mental health resources.

Child Advocacy Center Services Grant Program

In accordance with § 11-928(f) of the Criminal Procedure Article, this *Child Advocacy Center Services FY 2020 Annual Report* includes information on the Child Advocacy Center Services (CACS) grant program which helps to establish and sustain CACs in the State.⁷ 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 are also used to assist CACs become accredited by the National Children's Alliance (NCA).

Maryland currently has 23 CACs operating in 23 of its 24 jurisdictions. Seventeen of the centers are accredited by the NCA, while six are currently on the path to accreditation. All CACs (accredited and those working toward that) work with comprehensive multidisciplinary teams made up of law enforcement, child protective services, state's attorney's offices, medical

⁷ Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim, Services. (2020). [*Child Advocacy Center Services \(CACS\)*](#).

professionals, mental health professionals, and victim advocates as a requirement for accreditation. 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. In order 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 2019, the Office entered into a contract with Maryland Children's Alliance (MCA) which represents the Maryland Statewide Organization for CACs. The Office also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with MCA which will remain in effect through June 30, 2021 with the intention of a new MOU being implemented on July 1.

In 2020, MCA gathered information from Maryland's CACs and found that nearly 5,000 children were seen at a CAC - this information was also submitted to the NCA.⁸ The number of children served represents a 7% decrease from the previous year, due to the impact of COVID-19. During the 2020 calendar year, 2,593 children received an onsite forensic interview and 286 children received an offsite interview.⁹ Additionally, 482 received a medical exam, 1,128 were referred to counseling, and 1,087 received counseling.¹⁰ Reports from CACs NCATrak and other CAC databases indicated that 482 medical exams were conducted through CAC. While "on-site" technical assistance was not physically possible, due to COVID-19, MCA stayed connected to and "visited" CACs through web-based platforms, which enabled them to create and enhance relationships between MCA program staff and the CAC to improve outcomes at the CAC system levels. Through Zoom and GoToMeeting platforms, MCA was able to provide more frequent localized technical assistance to multiple CACs in one day.

The majority (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

⁸ Maryland Children's Alliance. (2020). *Maryland Children's Alliance: 2020 Annual Report*. For more information, please refer to the [Statewide Data: 2020 Annual Report](#).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

enforcement agencies. The remaining 21% are nonprofit agencies. Sexual abuse continues to be the primary allegation investigated by CACs, representing 65% of cases. Almost all CACs reported that they do not work with acute cases. 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 2020, the annual State budget provided \$300,000 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, to include, 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 successful prosecution of all child abuse cases;
- Training; and
- Public outreach.

In FY 2020, 23 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*).

Award Number	Award Amount	Implementing Organization	Jurisdiction	Project Summary
CACS-2020-0001	\$12,500	Cecil County Department of Social Services	Cecil County	The program provided contracted medical services to victims of child abuse. The medical provider performed direct services onsite to include examination, treatment, and consultation; the provider served as a member of the multidisciplinary team. Program funds provided travel, contractual services, and other expenses.
CACS-2020-0002	\$12,262	Queen Anne's County Department of Social Services	Queen Anne's County	The program enhanced the center's multidisciplinary team's expertise in investigating, prosecuting, and treating cases of child sexual abuse. It also offered specialized and advanced level training in core concepts around child sexual abuse and the child advocacy center model. Program funds provided travel and other expenses.

CACS-2020-0003	\$12,500	Frederick County, Maryland	Frederick County	The program met national accreditation standards and supported community partners to proactively address exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Program funds provided travel, contractual services, and other expenses.
CACS-2020-0004	\$12,496	Howard County Police Department	Howard County	The program provided a multidisciplinary team approach for the investigation of child abuse, and provided services to child victims and their families. Program funds provided travel and other expenses.
CACS-2020-0005	\$12,500	The Cricket Center, Inc.	Worcester County	The program provided a multidisciplinary team approach to assess allegations of child maltreatment. It also addressed issues of child physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and mental injury. Program funds provided personnel support.
CACS-2020-0006	\$12,500	Washington County Department of Social Services	Washington County	The program provided a child-friendly environment during collaborative investigations, therapeutic/medical interventions, and criminal prosecutions of child abuse. Program funds provided travel, operating expenses, and other expenses.
CACS-2020-0007	\$12,500	Harford County Child Advocacy Center	Harford County	The program improved public safety by supporting technological advancements and training at the center. It also improved the ability to investigate crimes and present evidence in court for child abuse and child exploitation cases. Program funds provided travel and other expenses.
CACS-2020-0008	\$10,500	Carroll County Sheriff's Office	Carroll County	The program provided a friendly environment committed to reduce 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 provided travel and other expenses.
CACS-2020-0009	\$12,500	Life Crisis Center, Inc.	Somerset County	The program fostered collaboration and team building among partner agencies and stakeholders throughout the lower shore, ensuring that the child advocacy model was followed. Program funds provided travel, equipment, operating expenses, and other expenses.
CACS-2020-0010	\$17,421	Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Inc.	Baltimore City	The program reduced the duplication of work for staff and improved access to education for mandated reporters and the general public. Specifically, it integrated and redesigned two websites and incorporated the center's relationship management database which reduced the need for duplicate work. Program funds provided personnel support, contractual services, and other expenses.
CACS-2020-0011	\$12,500	Talbot County Department of Social Services	Talbot County	The program coordinated the investigation of child abuse and provided services to children and their non-offending family members without causing further trauma to the child victim. Program funds provided travel, contractual services, and other expenses.
CACS-2020-0012	\$12,500	Kent County Department of Social Services	Kent County	The program provided a multidisciplinary team approach to coordinate services for victims of child sexual and/or severe physical abuse, from the first response through the criminal justice system, to ensure a successful prosecution. Program funds provided personnel support.
CACS-2020-0013	\$12,500	Center for Children, Inc.	Charles County	The program provided a multidisciplinary team approach for child abuse investigation, prosecution, and treatment. It also provided training and support for the Center for Children, Inc. to move forward with accreditation and foster collaboration among interagency team members. Program funds provided personnel support, travel, and other expenses.

CACS-2020-0014	\$17,406	Baltimore County, Maryland	Baltimore County	The program provided assistance to personnel in the investigation of crimes against children, specialized services, and mental health treatment to victims of crime. Program funds provided travel and other expenses.
CACS-2020-0015	\$12,500	Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services	Anne Arundel County	The program provided for the investigation of allegations of sexual child abuse and assault in collaboration with law enforcement, the state's attorney's office, and the victim witness program. It also provided for forensic interviews, crisis intervention services, forensic medical exams, therapeutic treatment group for victims, and referrals for appropriate services. Program funds provided contractual services and other expenses.
CACS-2020-0016	\$17,415	Prince George's County Department of Social Services	Prince George's County	The program provided trauma centered psychological services and advocacy for child victims and their families. It also offered counseling to non-offending caregivers and adult survivors of child sexual abuse, rendered medical expertise in the evaluation of child sexual abuse, and supported training opportunities. Program funds provided travel, contractual services, equipment, and other expenses.
CACS-2020-0017	\$12,500	The Tree House Child Advocacy Center of Montgomery County MD Inc.	Montgomery County	The program funded a victim advocate who provided services to child victims and non-offending family members, to include: crisis intervention and prevention; information and support during investigation, prosecution, and treatment; and guidance as cases moved through the justice system. Program funds provided personnel support.
CACS-2020-0018	\$12,500	Caroline County Department of Social Services	Caroline County	The program supported training for members of the multidisciplinary team to provide quality services to children and their non-offending family members, without causing further trauma to the child victim. Training opportunities included multidisciplinary team attendance at the NCA Leadership conference and specialized training through the National Children's Advocacy Center. It also supported the provision of trauma therapy for Caroline County residents through the Child Advocacy Center Community of Care mental health program. Program funds provided travel, contractual services, and other expenses.
CACS-2020-0019	\$12,500	Jane's Place, Inc.	Allegany County	The program provided assistance to child sexual abuse/assault victims, severe physical abuse and neglect victims, and their families. It also provided forensic interviews, access to therapy and medical exams, child advocacy services, and referrals to community partners. Program funds provided personnel support, travel, contractual services, operating expenses, and equipment.
CACS-2020-0020	\$12,500	St. Mary's County Department of Social Services	St. Mary's County	The program provided access to trauma informed interventions for child victims and their families. It also supported ongoing, specialized training for members of the multidisciplinary team to ensure that child victims and their family members received assistance by highly skilled professionals that utilize evidence based practices. Program funds provided travel and other expenses.
CACS-2020-0021	\$12,500	Calvert County Department of Social Services	Calvert County	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 contractual services and other expenses.

CACS-2020-0022	\$12,500	Wicomico County Department of Social Services	Wicomico County	The program provided a multidisciplinary team approach to assess allegations of child maltreatment. It also addressed issues of child physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and mental injury. Program funds provided contractual services, operating expenses, and other expenses.
CACS-2020-0023	\$12,500	Garrett County Department of Social Services	Garrett County	The program provided services to include child abuse investigation, forensic interviewing, medical services, and therapeutic services. Partners included representatives from the disciplines of child welfare, law enforcement, medical, prosecution, and multiple community partner agencies. Program funds provided contractual services, operating expenses, and other expenses.
Total	\$300,000			

Conclusion

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