



Maryland

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

Child Advocacy Center Services (CACCS) FY 2021 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) 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) 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) 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) 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Chapter 627 of 2020 (Senate Bill 748) repealed and reenacted, without amendments, § 11-928 of the Criminal Procedure Article to ensure that every child in the State has access to a CAC.⁵ In addition, and in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:

- (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;

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*](#).

- (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.

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.⁶ 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.

⁶ Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services. (2021). [*FY 2022 Child Advocacy Center Services \(CACS\) Grant Program Notice of Funding Availability Application Guidance Kit*](#).

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.⁷ 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 2021 Annual Report* includes information on the Child Advocacy Center Services (CACS) grant program which helps to establish and sustain CACs in the State.⁸ 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 towards accreditation) work with comprehensive multidisciplinary teams as a requirement for accreditation. Unique to 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. 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

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [About the CDC-Kaiser ACE Study](#).

⁸ Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services. (2020). [Child Advocacy Center Services \(CACS\)](#).

- Case Review
- Case Tracking
- Organizational Capacity
- Child-Focused Setting

In 2019, the Office entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Maryland Children's Alliance (MCA) which will remain in effect through June 30, 2023. In 2021, MCA gathered information from Maryland's CACs and found that over 5,400 children were seen at a CAC - this information was also submitted to the NCA (*as illustrated on the following page*).⁹ The number of children served represents a 14.76% increase from the previous year. During the 2021 calendar year, 3,184 children received an on-site forensic interview and 181 children received an off-site interview. Additionally, 578 received a medical exam, 1,183 were referred to counseling, and 1,164 received counseling.

⁹ Maryland Children's Alliance. (2022). *Maryland Children's Alliance: 2021 Annual Report*.



Maryland Children's Alliance 2021 Data

As reported by 22 CACs between January-June and 24 CACs between July and December 2021

Total children served

5,474

(+14.76% increase from 2020)

Member CACs

24

(100% of Maryland counties are represented by a member CAC)

Accreditation Status

17

5

1

1

Accredited Associate Affiliate Non NCA Member

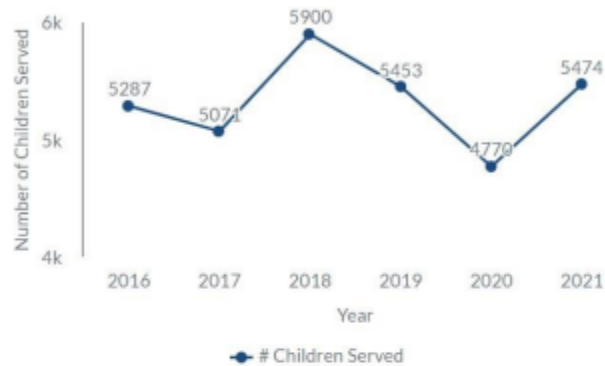
Organizational Types

79%

21%

(Government-based) (Nonprofit)

Trends in children served by CACs between 2016 and 2021



Services to Children

61.5%

of children received a

Forensic Interview

+7.5% from 2020

21.3%

of children received

Therapy services within a CAC

-1.5% from 2020

10.6%

of children received a

Medical Exam

+5.5% from 2020

16.5%

of cases resulted in

Law Enforcement Charges

-1.8% from 2020

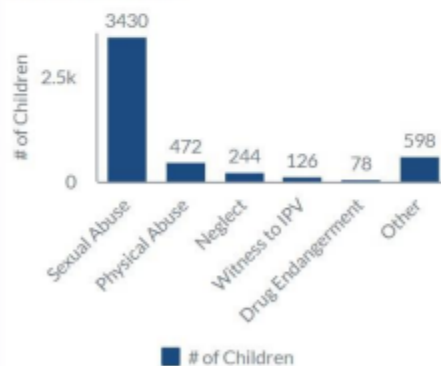
10.4%

of cases resulted in

Prosecution

-2.7% from 2020

Types of Abuse



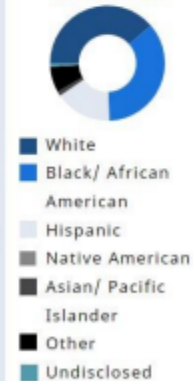
Child Gender



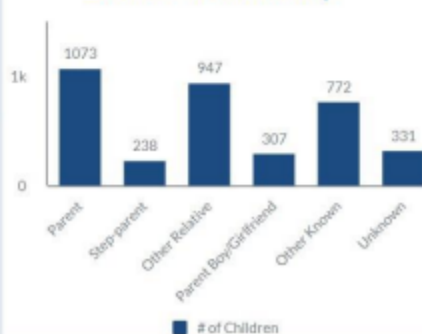
Child Age



Child Race



Offender Relationship



Sexual abuse continues to be the primary allegation investigated by the CACs, representing 69.3% of cases.

CPS disposition

32.7%

of cases were founded by CPS



MCA and Maryland CACs continue to serve children and families to the best of their abilities while adapting to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Part of MCA's ongoing COVID-19 response is to accommodate staff who are vulnerable to the virus or those that became sick and could not work in an in-person setting. MCA adapted a hybrid workplace by providing staff an opportunity to obtain an "Owl Lab" - a 360-degree camera, mic, and speaker. This allows multidisciplinary teams to participate seamlessly in meetings with in-person and remote staff.

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 enforcement agencies. The remaining 21% are nonprofit agencies. Sexual abuse continues to be the primary allegation investigated by CACs, representing 69.3% 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 2021, 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 2021, 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-2021-0002 | \$12,500 | Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services | Anne Arundel | The program provided for the investigation of allegations of child sexual abuse/assault in collaboration with child protective services, law enforcement, state's attorney's office, and victim advocacy. It also provided forensic interviews for child sexual abuse/assault victims; crisis intervention services; forensic medical evaluations; and victim advocacy services. Program funds provided contractual services and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0003 | \$12,500 | Cecil County Department of Social Services | Cecil County | The program provided contracted medical services to child victims of abuse. The medical provider performed direct services on-site to include examination, treatment and consultation, and served as a member of the multidisciplinary team. Program funds provided contractual services and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0004 | \$12,500 | Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Inc. | Baltimore City | The program supported the multidisciplinary response to child sexual abuse and maltreatment in the Baltimore region. Program funds provided personnel support and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0005 | \$12,500 | Garrett County Department of Social Services | Garrett County | The program provided services to include a multidisciplinary system of care through a CAC which utilized various methods of treatment for individuals and groups as well as ancillary child and family support services. These services included child abuse investigation, forensic interviewing, medical services, and therapeutic services. Partners included representatives from the disciplines of child welfare, law enforcement, medical, and prosecution as well as multiple community partner agencies. Program funds supported operating expenses, contractual services, and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0006 | \$12,500 | Frederick County | Frederick County | The program met national accreditation standards and supported community partners to proactively address exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Program funds supported contractual services, travel, and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0007 | \$12,500 | Queen Anne's County Department of Social Services | Queen Anne's County | The program enhanced the team's expertise in investigating, prosecuting, and treating cases of child sexual abuse, offering specialized, advanced level training in core concepts around child sexual abuse and the child advocacy center model. Program funds provided travel and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0008 | \$12,500 | Howard County Police Department | Howard County | The program included a team approach to investigate child abuse and provide services to victims. Program funds supported travel and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0009 | \$12,500 | Harford County Child Advocacy Center | Harford County | The program improved public safety by supporting technological advancements, equipment enhancements, and updated training. The program improved the CAC's ability to investigate crimes and present evidence in court for child abuse and exploitation cases. Program funds provided travel and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0010 | \$12,500 | Kent County Department of Social Services | Kent County | The program coordinated a multidisciplinary team consisting of child protective service workers, local law enforcement, state's attorney's office, victim witness coordinator, medical professionals, and mental health providers. The program managed a multifaceted victim-centered approach that |

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|----------------|----------|--|------------------------|--|
| | | | | provides services to children victimized by sexual and/or serious physical abuse. Program funds provided salary support. |
| CACS-2021-0011 | \$12,500 | Life Crisis Center, Inc. | Somerset County | The program - consisting of partners from the local Department of Social Services, the state's attorney office, Life Crisis Center, and local law enforcement agencies - assisted in developing and implementing strategies specifically intended to provide assistance to child sexual assault victims and their families throughout the Lower Shore, and ensures that the child advocacy model is followed. Program funds provided travel, contractual services, and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0012 | \$12,500 | Wicomico County Department of Social Services | Wicomico County | The program used a multidisciplinary team approach to assess cases of alleged child abuse and neglect, and provide services to child victims and their families. Program funds provided operating expenses, contractual services, and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0013 | \$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 supported travel, contractual services, and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0014 | \$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 provided ongoing, specialized training for members of the multidisciplinary team to ensure child victims and their family members receive assistance by highly skilled professionals who utilize evidence-based practices. Program funds provided travel and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0015 | \$12,500 | Prince George's County Department of Social Services | Prince George's County | The program ensured that previous services were put in place to: collect client data for continuous improvement, provide high quality recordings for law enforcement and state's attorneys, and keep multidisciplinary team members abreast of best practices. It also provided children of alleged sexual abuse or severe physical abuse with the opportunity to tell their experiences and be heard. Program funds provided contractual services, travel, and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0016 | \$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 maltreatment. Program funds provided operating expenses, travel, and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0017 | \$12,500 | The Cricket Center, Inc. | Worcester County | The program addressed issues of child physical and sexual abuse, and expanded the use of the multidisciplinary team approach by providing needed supplies and team training. Program funds provided travel and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0018 | \$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 in Calvert County. Program funds provided operating expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0019 | \$12,500 | Jane's Place, Inc. | Allegany County | The Center provided a safe, child-friendly environment for children and families to feel comfortable in and to share about what has happened to them. The program provided forensic interviews, access to therapy and medical exams, child advocacy services, and referrals to community partners. |

| | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| | | | | Program funds provided personnel support and operating expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0020 | \$12,500 | The Tree House Child Advocacy Center of Montgomery County MD Inc. | Montgomery County | The program provided child victims and their family members: crisis intervention and prevention; information and support during investigation, prosecution, and treatment; and guidance as cases move through the justice system. Program funds provided personnel support. |
| CACS-2021-0021 | \$12,500 | Caroline County Department of Social Services | Caroline County | 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. Program funds supported travel, contractual services, and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0022 | \$12,500 | Carroll County Sheriff's Office | Carroll County | The program provided a friendly environment committed to reducing trauma as it investigates allegations of sexual and physical abuse and sexual assault, assesses and protects the victim, and provides resources for the victim. Program funds supported travel and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0023 | \$12,500 | Center for Children, Inc. | Charles County | The program provided multidisciplinary child abuse investigation, prosecution, and treatment, as well as training and support to allow the CAC to retain accreditation with the NCA and foster collaboration among inter-agency team members. Program funds provided salary support, travel, and other expenses. |
| CACS-2021-0024 | \$12,500 | Baltimore County | Baltimore County | The program provided advanced educational opportunities to CAC personnel in the investigation of crimes against children, victim advocacy services, and mental health treatment to victims of crime. Program funds provided travel and other expenses. |
| Total | \$300,000 | | | |

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 2021 (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021):

- 5,621 victims served
- 4,080 investigations
- 439 prosecutions
- 241 convictions
- 155 trainings

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.