

Research Summary

State Support for Children's Advocacy Centers

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BACKGROUND

Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) were established to coordinate the multi-disciplinary response to the investigation, treatment and prosecution of child maltreatment, while mitigating the stress and trauma for child victims and non-offending family members. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, CACs are required to provide the:

- Child-appropriate facility.
- Multidisciplinary team.
- Designated legal entity responsible for program and fiscal operations.
- Forensic interviews conducted in an objective, nonduplicative manner.
- Medical evaluation and treatment.
- Therapeutic intervention.
- Victim support/advocacy.
- Case review and tracking

STATE FUNDING OF CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS

According to the National Children's Alliance, state support makes up **33.83% of CAC funding** primarily through general revenue, special revenue or the application and management of federal grants. Below are examples of administrative actions that provide funding to child advocacy centers.

- **Arizona's** Office of the Attorney General has **provided over \$1.8 million** to Children and Family Advocacy Centers since 2021.
- **California's** Office of the Governor **provided \$8.1 million** to Children's Advocacy Centers through the Child Advocacy Center (KC) Program in 2023. The funding source for this program was the Victims of Crime Act's **Victim Assistance Formula Grant Program**, administered by the federal government.
- **Montana's** Department of Justice **provided \$3.5 million** to Children's Advocacy Centers in 2024. The funding source for the grant was a **settlement** from a lawsuit against Johnson & Johnson brought by the attorney general.

STATE LEGISLATIVE EXAMPLES

Below is a chart of enacted state legislation related to the funding, support and oversight of children's advocacy centers.

State	Legislation
Florida	FL H 5001 (2024) Provides moneys for annual period beginning specified date, and ending on the specified date, and supplemental appropriations for period ending on specified date, to pay salaries and other expenses, capital outlay - buildings and other improvements, and for other specified purposes of

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	various agencies of state government. Allocates \$9.8 million to child advocacy centers accredited by the National Children's Alliance to be used for the following uses: • \$4.1 million to reimburse expenses for services among all centers • \$4.8 million to offset Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) federal funding reductions • \$428,240 to the Florida Network of Children's Advocacy Centers for administration, contract monitoring and oversight operations • \$300,000 for child protections teams at centers conducting forensic interviews, specialized interviews, and medical assessments • \$100,000 for Walton County Children's Advocacy Center
Idaho	S 1203 (2025) Appropriates additional moneys to the Department of Health and Welfare for the independent councils for fiscal year 2026. Allocates \$3 million to the Domestic Violence Council to support children's advocacy centers.
Kansas	S 125 (2025) Authorizes and directs payment of certain claims against the state; authorizes certain capital improvement projects, assessments and fees; authorizes certain transfers; imposes certain restrictions and limitations; directs or authorizing certain disbursements, procedures and acts incidental to the foregoing. Allocates \$4.5 million to child advocacy centers.
Louisiana	LA H 313 (2025) Exempts purchases by the State Alliance of Children's Advocacy Centers and purchases by other nonprofit entities operating as child advocacy centers governed by a child advocacy board of directors from State and local sales and use taxes; requires that a center seek full membership in the National Children's Alliance and remain in full compliance with its standards; requires each child advocacy center to apply annually for a one year exemption certificate with the Department of Revenue.

STATE STATUTORY EXAMPLES

Below is a chart of state laws regarding the administration, oversight, and support of children's advocacy centers.

State	Statute
Arkansas	Ark. Code § 8-466 Child and family advocacy center; requirements for funding; immunity; definition A. To be considered for funding from the child and family advocacy center fund established by § 41-191.11, a child and family advocacy center must be a private, nonprofit incorporated agency or a governmental entity that either. 1. Is accredited by a national organization that is organized to promote multidisciplinary child abuse investigation and prosecution programs as outlined in 42 United States Code §§ 13001 through 13005 and is a member of or affiliated with an organization that has set core standards for best practices of a child and family advocacy center. 2. Annually certifies to the attorney general that the center meets all of the following: (a) Maintains and provides services at a neutral facility that is focused on victims and that allows: (i) Evidence-based forensic interviews by a trained forensic interviewer of victims or witnesses of one or more suspected offenses. (ii) Interaction with a victim as investigative or treatment needs or victim services require. (b) Has a multidisciplinary case review team that meets on a regular basis and that consists of members who are appropriate for serving a victim of a suspected offense. Membership of the team may include: (i) A representative of the department.

	(ii) A representative of the county attorney. (iii) A mental health service provider. (iv) A representative of law enforcement. (v) A victim advocate. (vi) A forensic medical professional. (vii) A forensic interviewer. (c) Provides medical evaluations or referrals for medical evaluations by a health care provider who has specific training in child or adult sexual abuse. (d) Provides mental health therapy or referrals for mental health therapy by professionals who have training in and who provide trauma-focused and evidence-supported mental health treatment. (e) Facilitates evidence-based training for various disciplines in the community that respond to reports of one or more suspected offenses. (f) Has a written commitment from any agency that is participating in the multidisciplinary approach to handling one or more suspected offenses. (g) Provides the attorney general with proof of compliance with standards prescribed pursuant to this section. (h) Complies with the relevant safety assessment and investigation protocols developed pursuant to § 8-817. B. An employee or designated agent of a child and family advocacy center that meets the requirements of subsection A of this section is immune from any civil liability that arises from the employee's or designated agent's participation in the investigation process and services provided by the child and family advocacy center, unless the employee or designated agent acted with malice or has been charged with or is suspected of abusing or neglecting the child who is the subject of the investigation or services provided. This subsection does not displace or limit any other immunity provided by law. C. For the purposes of this section, "suspected offense" means one or more of the following: 1. Child abuse or neglect. 2. Abuse of an adult or a vulnerable adult. 3. Sexual assault. 4. Domestic violence. 5. Juvenile sex trafficking. 6. Homicide. Ark. Code § 9-5-104 Duties of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Arkansas--Child safety centers (a) The Department of Finance and Administration shall: (1) Distribute grants to one (1) or more child safety centers and an entity receiving funding under this chapter; (2)(A) Retain oversight of all grants distributed under this chapter. (B) The Secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration or his or her designee shall be the agency contact concerning the oversight of grants distributed under this chapter; and (3) Evaluate the Children's Advocacy Centers of Arkansas's quarterly reports concerning funding received by the Children's Advocacy Centers of Arkansas and each child safety center. (b) The Department of Finance and Administration and the Children's Advocacy Centers of Arkansas shall work together to: (1)(A) Establish the criteria for grant applications and awards under this chapter. (B) A grant application shall be submitted directly to the Department of Finance and Administration; (2)(A) Establish the criteria for awarding or denying a grant application under this chapter. (B) The Department of Finance and Administration shall remit funds awarded to a child safety center directly to the child safety center;
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	(3) Annually evaluate each child safety center for compliance with the best program practices of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Arkansas, fiscal, and training requirements under this chapter;(4) Promote and uphold procedures to implement this chapter and the forms for the evaluation of each child safety center; (5) Adopt a uniform system of recordkeeping and reporting to ensure the proper handling of funds by child safety centers and to ensure uniformity and accountability by child safety centers; (6) Provide training and technical assistance to child safety centers to ensure best practice standards for forensic interviews, prevention, and medical evaluations; and (7) Coordinate and provide training statewide for multidisciplinary teams. (c) The Children's Advocacy Centers of Arkansas may enter into contracts with any entity to fulfill its duties under this chapter. (d) A child safety center shall: (1) Receive, review, and track reporting from the Department of Human Services relating to the alleged abuse or neglect of a child in order to ensure a consistent and comprehensive approach to providing services to a child and the family of a child who is the victim of alleged abuse or neglect; (2) Work with participating agencies relating to the delivery of services to a child and the family of a child who is the alleged victim of abuse or neglect; (3) Provide support services to a child and the family of a child who is the alleged victim of abuse or neglect; (4) Provide forensic interviews that are conducted in a neutral, fact-finding manner and coordinated to avoid duplicative interviewing; (5) Provide access to specialized medical evaluations and treatment services to a child who is the alleged victim of abuse or neglect; (6) Provide access to evidence-based, trauma-focused mental health services to a child who is the alleged victim of abuse or neglect; and (7) Provide a child-focused setting that is comfortable, private, and physically safe for a diverse population.
Maryland	Md. Code, Com. Law § 11-928 Child advocacy centers (a) The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy shall establish and sustain child advocacy centers in the State and ensure that every child in the State has access to a child advocacy center. (b) The child advocacy centers: (1) may be based in private nonprofit organizations, local departments of social services, local law enforcement agencies, or a partnership among any of these entities; (2) shall be developed and located to facilitate their use by alleged victims residing in the surrounding areas; (3) shall assist in the response to or investigation of allegations of sexual crimes against children under Title 3, Subtitle 3 of the Criminal Law Article and sexual abuse of minors under Title 3, Subtitle 6 of the Criminal Law Article and Title 5, Subtitle 7 of the Family Law Article; (4) may assist in the response to or investigation of allegations of child abuse and neglect under Title 3, Subtitle 6 of the Criminal Law Article and Title 5, Subtitle 7 of the Family Law Article and allegations of a crime of violence in the presence of a minor under § 3-601.1 of the Criminal Law Article; (5) shall provide a level of care that meets or exceeds the national accreditation standards for child advocacy centers established by the Maryland Statewide Organization for Child Advocacy Centers under subsection (d) of this section; and (6) shall be included in all joint investigation procedures developed in accordance with § 5-706 of the Family Law Article.

	(c) The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy may contract with public or private nonprofit organizations to operate child advocacy centers. (d)(1) The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy shall contract with a nonprofit organization that is qualified under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and represents urban, rural, and suburban child advocacy centers in the State to establish a Maryland Statewide Organization for Child Advocacy Centers. (2) The purpose of the Maryland Statewide Organization for Child Advocacy Centers is to provide training, technical assistance, data collection, and capacity building to meet local, State, and national requirements for child advocacy centers. (3) The Maryland Statewide Organization for Child Advocacy Centers shall establish standards for child advocacy centers in the State that meet national accreditation standards for child advocacy centers 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. (e) Money for child advocacy centers: (1) shall be distributed to child advocacy centers in accordance with a formula agreed on by the Maryland Statewide Organization for Child Advocacy Centers and the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy; (2) shall be used to supplement, not supplant, money that the program receives from other sources; and (3) may be used to assist child advocacy centers in meeting the standards under subsection (d) of this section. (f) On or before June 1 each year, the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy shall submit an annual report, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, on child advocacy centers to the General Assembly.
Michigan	Mich. Comp. Laws § 722.1044 Expenditures; limitations; annual audit and report of incomes and expenditures Sec. 4. (1) Money shall not be expended from the fund for the first year after the effective date of this act. Beginning 2 years after the effective date of this act, the board may expend money from the fund as appropriated. Money in the fund shall be expended only as follows: (a) To provide investigative, assessment, counseling, support, and educational services to victims of child sexual abuse and their families through children's advocacy centers. (b) To pay the actual and reasonable operating costs of children's advocacy centers. (c) To provide training related to child sexual abuse for personnel employed or otherwise retained by children's advocacy centers.

	(d) To improve the detection, investigation, treatment, and prevention of child sexual abuse through the coordinated activities of children's advocacy centers, medical care providers, crime victim organizations, and local, state, and federal law enforcement officials. (e) To improve public awareness of child sexual abuse through the use of children's advocacy centers. (f) To pay the actual and reasonable costs of administering the fund. Not more than 10% of distributions made in any fiscal year shall be used to pay administrative costs under this subdivision. (2) The board shall require an annual audit of income and expenditures under this section and shall provide an annual report of incomes and expenditures to the secretary of the senate and the clerk of the house of representatives by February 1 of each year.
Nevada	Nev. Rev. Stat. § 432B.4018 Requirements for operation; convening of multidisciplinary team to develop standards for acceptance of cases; access to services; immunity from liability for employee, officer or member of multidisciplinary team; confidentiality and disclosure of information maintained by center 1. To operate in this State, a children's advocacy center must: (a) Be recognized by the National Children's Alliance, or its successor organization, as an accredited member, an associate/developing member or an affiliate member; and (b) Operate in accordance with the standards prescribed by the National Children's Alliance, or its successor organization, to the extent that those standards do not conflict with federal or state law. 2. Each children's advocacy center shall convene a multidisciplinary team to develop standards for the acceptance of cases by the children's advocacy center. To the extent that money is available, the governing body of each county and each agency which provides child welfare services shall ensure that children whose cases meet those standards have access to services available through the children's advocacy center. 3. An employee or officer of a children's advocacy center is immune from civil liability for any action or omission in the performance of his or her duties on behalf of or through the children's advocacy center if he or she acts in good faith. 4. A member of a multidisciplinary team is immune from civil liability for any act or omission with regard to communications with another member of a multidisciplinary team as part of the performance of his or her duties on behalf of or through a children's advocacy center if he or she acts in good faith. 5. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection and NRS 239.0115, 432B.165, 432B.175, 432B.513 and 439.597 or as ordered by a court, information maintained by a children's advocacy center, including, without limitation, reports and investigations made pursuant to this chapter, is confidential. Such information may, at the discretion of the children's advocacy center, be made available only to the persons described in subsection 2 of NRS 432B.290.
New Jersey	N. J. Rev. Stat. § 9:6-8.111 Certification program for child advocacy centers and multidisciplinary teams; goals; adoption and implementation of guidelines; annual compliance review a. The board shall establish a certification program for the State's child advocacy centers and multidisciplinary teams. The goal of the program shall be to ensure that: (1) every child advocacy center or multidisciplinary team in the State applying for certification pursuant to subsection b. of this section is in compliance with guidelines of practice that are consistent with the accreditation standards developed by the National Children's Alliance, or its successor; and (2) the State's child advocacy centers and multidisciplinary teams incorporate best practices and standards in providing child abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment services to survivors of child abuse and neglect. b. Every child advocacy center and multidisciplinary team in the State may apply to the board for certification in a manner and on a form prescribed by the board. In order to qualify for certification with

	the board, a child advocacy center or multidisciplinary team shall adopt and implement guidelines of practice that are consistent with the accreditation standards developed by the National Children's Alliance, or its successor. The guidelines shall, at a minimum, provide for: (1) a multidisciplinary team response in an investigation of child abuse and neglect by representatives of the following core disciplines: law enforcement, child protective services, mental health, prosecution, victim advocacy, and medicine; (2) the designation of a private, child-friendly interview and family meeting room which provides an environment that is physically and psychologically safe for, and provides comfort to, a survivor of child abuse and neglect and the survivor's family during the course of an investigation of child abuse and neglect; (3) protocols governing the forensic interview of a survivor of child abuse and neglect that comply with the 2010 Guidelines of Practice for Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Teams in New Jersey and current best practice standards and nationally recognized methods for forensic interviews, New Jersey Court Rules, relevant case law, and internal or external peer review; (4) an interdisciplinary case review process that describes the responsibilities of each team member in an investigation of child abuse and neglect and the provisions of the services to a survivor of child abuse and neglect and the survivor's family; (5) a uniform system to identify, track, collect, and coordinate information obtained during an investigation of child abuse and neglect, and to monitor the progress and outcomes of the investigation; (6) procedures to facilitate communication, collaboration, coordination, information sharing, problem solving, and decision making between team members during an investigation of child abuse and neglect; (7) a dispute resolution process to resolve interdisciplinary conflicts that may arise between team members during the course of an investigation of child abuse and neglect; (8) the provision of services, supports, and other assistance in a culturally competent manner to a survivor of child abuse and neglect and the survivor's family during an investigation of child abuse and neglect; (9) on-going, specialized interdisciplinary training for team members to enhance their basic skills and expertise in the investigation and prevention of child abuse and neglect; (10) mechanisms and processes to allow the center to self-evaluate the effectiveness of its operations and its success in investigating child abuse and neglect. (11) the establishment of county based child advocacy center-multidisciplinary team advisory boards to oversee the operations and administration of the child advocacy center or multidisciplinary team; (12) the creation of an education and outreach program to train professionals from State and local governmental and community-based social services agencies in providing multidisciplinary services to survivors of child abuse and neglect and their families, and to educate the community on child maltreatment and child abuse prevention techniques; (13) procedures to apply for and accept any grant of money from the State or federal government or other sources, which may be available to child advocacy centers and multidisciplinary teams; and (14) reporting requirements on the use of grant funds received by a child advocacy center or multidisciplinary team pursuant to section 7 of this act.¹ c. If a child advocacy center or multidisciplinary team adopts and implements the guidelines of practice specified in subsection b. of this section, the board shall certify that a child advocacy center or multidisciplinary team is in compliance with the provisions of this act. d. The board shall conduct an annual compliance review of each child advocacy center and multidisciplinary team the board certifies pursuant to subsection c. of this section, and shall evaluate the center or team to determine whether it continues to comply with the provisions of this act.
North Carolina	N.C. Gen. Stat. § 108A-77.2

	Entity; eligibility (a) In order to receive State funds or federal funds administered or distributed by a State agency or any other funds appropriated or allocated by the North Carolina General Assembly, a Child Advocacy Center must satisfy all of the following requirements: (1) Be in good standing with State standards set forth by Children's Advocacy Centers of North Carolina, Inc. Children's Advocacy Centers of North Carolina, Inc., will notify State partners, including the Department of Health and Human Services, when a determination is made that a Children's Advocacy Center is no longer in good standing with Children's Advocacy Centers of North Carolina, Inc. (2) Be an independent agency, which may be a nonprofit or affiliated with an umbrella organization, such as a hospital or another human or victim service agency, or a part of a governmental entity, with sound administrative policies and procedures designed to ensure quality of services and sustainability, which, at a minimum, include policies governing job descriptions, personnel, financial management, document retention and destruction, and safety and security, and maintains appropriate commercial directors and officers and professional liability insurance. (3) Provide a child-friendly, trauma-informed space for children suspected to be victims of child maltreatment and their appropriate caregivers. (4) Conduct on-site interviews of children by a forensic interviewer in referred cases of suspected child maltreatment. (5) Maintain a multidisciplinary team, the members of which meet on a regularly scheduled basis and are routinely involved in investigations and multidisciplinary team interventions. (6) Have a written interagency agreement signed by authorized representatives of all multidisciplinary team participants that commits the signed parties to the multidisciplinary model for the investigation of child maltreatment. The agreement must be reviewed and signed annually. (7) Provide a space for multidisciplinary team meetings. (8) Establish and maintain written protocols, which comply with State and national standards and State and federal laws, governing (i) multidisciplinary team case review, (ii) access to medical and mental health treatment, (iii) confidentiality of medical and mental health records, (iv) confidentiality of a department's protective services information and records, (v) information sharing among multidisciplinary team members that complies with State and federal laws and rules for the participating entities, (vi) functions of the multidisciplinary team, (vii) roles and responsibilities of multidisciplinary team members and their interaction in the Children's Advocacy Center, (viii) victim support, and (ix) advocacy services. These protocols must be reviewed every three years and updated as needed to reflect current practice. (9) Have a designated staff that is supervised and approved by the Children's Advocacy Center's Board of Directors or other governing entity. (10) Provide case tracking of child maltreatment cases served through the Children's Advocacy Center, according to written protocols. A Children's Advocacy Center shall also track and be able to retrieve statistical data on the number of child maltreatment cases seen at the center by sex, race, age, type of maltreatment, relationship of the alleged offender to the child, multidisciplinary team involvement and outcomes, charge disposition, child protection outcomes, and status and follow-through of medical and mental health referrals to the extent this information was available and known to the Children's Advocacy Center. (11) Provide or refer child medical evaluations and law enforcement child medical evaluations, as requested by a department or a law enforcement agency. (12) Provide mental health services or referrals for those mental health services, which will be provided by licensed mental health professionals who deliver trauma-focused, evidence-supported treatment and who meet State standards. (13) Provide training for various disciplines in the community that deal with child maltreatment. (14) Provide victim support and advocacy that meets State and national standards.
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	(15) Maintain diversity, equity, and inclusion by completing a community assessment every three years, which, at a minimum, shall do all of the following: a. Determine the demographics of the community, clients, and the Children's Advocacy Center's staff and board. b. Identify underserved populations. c. Identify and address gaps in services to underserved populations. d. Develop strategies for outreach to underserved populations. e. Monitor effectiveness of outreach and intervention strategies and services that are tailored to meet the unique needs of all children. (16) Provide annual trainings or educational opportunities for multidisciplinary team members' professional development. (17) Ensure that Children's Advocacy Center employees and volunteers are properly screened and trained in accordance with State and national standards. (18) Provide all services to a child client regardless of the child or child's family's ability to pay for those services. (b) Children's Advocacy Centers of North Carolina, Inc., shall be responsible for tracking and documenting compliance with all of the requirements of this section and any funds it administers to an eligible Children's Advocacy Center.
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