GUIDELINES FOR CHAPTERS ADMINISTERING A STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Administering a Statewide Needs Assessment

Chapters are vital to the success of Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) and multidisciplinary teams (MDTs). This guide helps Chapters develop and use statewide needs assessments to inform planning, resource allocation, and decision-making, ensuring they stay responsive to stakeholder needs and future goals.

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Disclaimer

This project is sponsored by cooperative agreements 15PJDP-22-GK-03060-JJVO, 15PJDP-22-GK-03061-JJVO, 15PJDP-22-GK-03059-JJVO, and 15PJDP-22-GK-03062-JJVO awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this program are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of OJJDP.

Overview

Chapters are essential resources to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) and multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) in each state. Chapters have a unique position to understand, communicate, and respond to the current needs of their stakeholders while casting a strategic vision for the future of their state. While Chapters regularly collect data through formal and informal methods, data collected through deploying a statewide needs assessment can be useful for the Chapter in strategically growing towards a desired outcome. This guide supports Chapters in creating, implementing, and analyzing a statewide needs assessment of their members and stakeholders.

Regularly administering a statewide needs assessment is an effective practice for Chapters to stay responsive and relevant to the ever-evolving needs of CACs and MDTs. Data collected through a statewide needs assessment can be used to support many functions of a Chapter including strategic planning, resource allocation, informed decision-making, legislative efforts, and demonstrating the Chapter's effectiveness. Data analysis can also contribute to the long-term success of CACs and MDTs by identifying training gaps, prioritizing resources needed, and measuring community engagement.

Chapters have several options for support when developing their first formal needs assessment or improving their current one. Options include working with the Regional Children's Advocacy Center, local universities, and grant-designated data consultants. The key is to start with a small assessment to inform the Chapter's work and to develop and change with time. This guide will provide pieces that one Chapter may use, and that another Chapter may scale up to fit their resources and needs. This guide is for all Chapters to think differently about evaluating their needs.

The stakeholders completing the needs assessment are the true experts on their strengths, challenges, and unique needs. Giving a voice to those local experts through this process will help a Chapter make informed decisions about the prioritization of resources. The primary benefits that can emerge from this process for the Chapter and its membership are:

- *Understanding the Dynamic Needs of CACs and MDTs* — Every CAC and MDT has its own unique set of needs, and a needs assessment can give deeper insight into where those needs intersect across multiple organizations. This data can be used to assess whether a tailored approach is needed for that entity or if there is a statewide gap or need that can be met through broader programming and support.
- *Strategic Decision Making* — Data collected through a needs assessment can help the Chapter with their strategic priorities. This guide will help Chapters understand the level of urgency to respond to certain needs within their state. Information gathered will help determine whether to revamp current programming or allocate resources to a new initiative.
- *Improve Stakeholder Relationships* — Using the data gained from administering a needs assessment, Chapters can show the impact and reputation of the Chapter. This data can be used by the Chapter to create buy-in and improve relationships between partner agencies.

Assessment Design

Clarifying Purpose

Before designing or revamping a needs assessment, Chapters must determine their organization's "why" behind launching this assessment. Defining the purpose and objectives of the needs assessment will help identify the most relevant audience and questions to ask. Some examples of needs that can be considered are:

- Identifying gaps
- Gathering feedback on products, programming, and processes
- Understanding the Chapter's alignment with goals
- Discovering root causes of common challenges
- Highlighting areas of innovation or partnership

By defining what the Chapter wants to measure, the audience will be clarified—they are the ones who have insight into the questions the Chapter has.

A Friendly Introduction to Evaluation and Why It Matters

Nora Robinson, Strategy Director for WithInsight, helps participants improve their relationship with data and evaluation in this informational recorded presentation.

Chapters should identify participants who have a personal stake in the outcomes of the needs assessment and whose voices are critical to achieving their primary purpose for administering a needs assessment. Is the Chapter looking to assess CAC staff and MDT members, or does the Chapter want a broader group including community members and stakeholders? If stakeholders hold the information needed, an interview with more relevant questions should be planned with the stakeholders.

The Chapter should not worry about creating the "perfect" list but should do its best to capture an appropriate scope of professionals to inform strategy. It might be helpful to break down the Chapter's list by type of respondents and identify the pros and cons of including them. Including people/organizations that identify needs the Chapter cannot respond to will not be helpful.

Before introducing different data collection methods, addressing response rates and representation is important. People often worry about achieving high response rates, but focusing on representation is even more crucial. The participants in the data collection process should accurately reflect the roles and identities of the population from whom feedback is needed. Assess whose voices are missing from the assessment or focus group invitations and the responses received. Additional one-on-one outreach may be necessary to obtain a representative sample. To clarify who has completed the assessment, it may be helpful to have a question asking the participant to identify their CAC, profession, or name. It is important to clarify within the assessment how this data will be reported, and used, and what levels of confidentiality will be implemented.

Response rates, however, are relative to assessments. More responses are typically better, but the ideal response rate depends, in part, on the number of assessment invitations sent. For example, for a small assessment audience of 20, the expected response rate should be high to ensure diverse voices are represented. For larger pools of 100+ people, response rates around 50% will be sufficient and will start to approximate a representative sample.

Sample Timeline

Week 1-2: Planning and Preparation
Week 3-4: Designing the Needs Assessment
Week 5-6: Data Collection Preparation
Week 7-9: Data Collection
Week 10-11: Data Analysis
Week 12: Interpretation and Reporting
Week 13: Dissemination and Follow-Up

**Check out the resource section of this guide for a sample in-depth timeline Chapters can consider and customize while acting on implementing a statewide needs assessment. Chapters can consider while acting on implementing a statewide needs assessment.*

Identify Appropriate Sample Size

The more people who complete the assessment, the more valid the data will be. Consider how many respondents would be needed for the data to be meaningful. If the Chapter wanted more information on their training program, asking who the primary training and technical assistance audience is can help to determine who and how many people to aim for assessment completion. Consider the target audience and then compare it with the contact information that the Chapter has for that group of individuals. Additionally, what is the anticipated expected response rate to be? If the end goal is 50 people to respond to the assessment and the typical response rate is 50%, the assessment should be sent to at least 100 people.

Using Previously Collected Data

Evaluation data collected throughout the year can be included in a final needs assessment report to minimize redundancies and manage the length of the needs assessment tool. Additionally, Chapters should consider reviewing previously collected data and determine if the needs assessment can provide additional clarity around trends or needs through follow-up questions. Below is a table with some examples of what a Chapter may already have access to that can either inform or complement the development of an assessment.

Data Source	Considerations for Building Upon Pre-Existing Data in Assessment Design	Utilizing Pre-Existing Data in Assessment Findings and Report
Training Data	What trends or surprises has the Chapter seen, either observationally or in previously collected training evaluations and surveys, that need further exploration? For example, if the Chapter has seen a decrease in training attendees, questions could be asked about barriers to learning opportunities.	Data gathered from training evaluations and surveys related to increased skills and knowledge, behavior change, or satisfaction may be considered as additional supporting data in the final assessment report even though it wasn't collected through the assessment tool itself. Utilizing this pre-existing data can be useful for highlighting the Chapter's program effectiveness.
Strategic Plan Data	If a Chapter has recently undergone strategic planning, consider utilizing pre-existing data from that process to inform the purpose behind launching a needs assessment. For example, a Chapter's strategic planning assessment could have questions about what is on the horizon for the local CAC. This information can be used to develop additional questions for the needs assessment.	Strategic planning processes often include a variety of data collection methods—from surveys to key stakeholder interviews. If this pre-existing information aligns with the purpose of a Chapter's assessment, it can be added to the final assessment report to complement the newly collected data.
State Agency Surveys	A Chapter often has access to additional data sources from key stakeholders and statewide partners such as workforce assessments, community health surveys, and census data. Consider what, if anything, the assessment can clarify and/or build upon to gain a greater understanding of the unique work and context of MDTs and CACs.	Statewide data sources can often be represented in a final report as comparison data and/or additional support for the needs that are discovered through the assessment. For example, comparing child population and mental health provider accessibility indicated by statewide data may support an expressed need for additional specialized mental health training to support CACs across the state.

Review existing data, research, and needs assessments relevant to the target population or issue area. This can be data collected by the Chapter, other non-profit agencies, or entities involved in assessing community needs like a local hospital or state agency. Identify gaps in knowledge or areas where additional information is needed to inform decision-making. Also, look at previous evaluation tools and identify what time of year the Chapter sent out the assessment.

Developing Assessment Questions

A statewide needs assessment is a wonderful way to assess to what extent a Chapter is achieving the goals and objectives outlined in its strategic plan. Chapters should consider the following questions upon review of their strategic plan before creation of a needs assessment:

- What are the external-facing goals and objectives within the strategic plan?
- What metrics were identified to assess progress toward those goals and objectives?
- What information might the Chapter need to collect from CAC members and MDT partners to inform the current and future strategies?

Alternatively, a Chapter may consider administering a statewide needs assessment in preparation for the development of a new strategic plan to collect important data regarding strengths, challenges, and needs.

When considering what questions to ask, it is often critical to limit them to items the Chapter hopes to act on soon. Member CACs and MDT partners will notice when they are asked to provide information and then do not see any follow-up or obvious examples of how that information was used to change practice. Consider looping back with participants once the data has been analyzed to share aggregate results and how the Chapter plans to act on the information collected.

Assessment Frequency

Chapters need to consider various factors that have the potential to impact the response rate and quality of data collected through a needs assessment. Once a Chapter has determined how often they'd like to administer a needs assessment and at what time of year they'd like to have the final data, they should explore how this might fall into the participants' schedules. Cadence and timing will impact capacity and motivation to complete the assessment. Is the Chapter asking for information at the same time of year that other assessments are going out, national conferences are occurring, or grant reporting is due? Response rate will also be related to capacity and survey "burnout" of the people that are targeted. The chart below will help a Chapter determine which frequency will best meet the Chapter's needs.

Assessment Frequency Benefits and Challenges

Cadence of Administration	Benefits	Challenges
Annual	• Demonstrates that the Chapter values input to key stakeholders • Provides opportunity for year-to-year comparison	• Can lead to survey fatigue • May be limited to smaller sample size • May be ineffective at measuring long-term change and progress
Every Two Years	• Allows the Chapter an adequate amount of time to deploy, analyze, and respond to assessment results • Assessment design can be adjusted to monitor the Chapter's progress on strategies • Gives the Chapter an opportunity to cultivate a larger sample size	• Feedback may be outdated on alternating years • The further back participants are asked to recall, the less reliable the data will be
Pulse Survey	• Often a shorter survey, which may increase engagement • May have questions focused on the immediate future • Allows the Chapter to remain responsive to changing needs and demands of the field	• May not allow enough time for the Chapter to develop appropriate programming • May impact the engagement rate due to over-surveying

Reading the NCA Standards will aid Chapters in deciding frequency. These can determine the minimum number of opportunities for input, but a Chapter may seek to obtain feedback more frequently.

Timing and Frequency Considerations

<u>What other surveys are currently pending in the field?</u>
If known, considerations should be made for the audience on what other surveys and questionnaires have been administered recently by other agencies. The Chapter should plan on not administering the assessment while other well-known surveys have been asked of their audience.

<u>Have there been recent landscape changes that alter the needs of the audience?</u>
Thinking through current shifts in resources or policy changes can help time when to administer the needs assessment as this will produce results of needs that coincide with those changes.

<u>How can the Chapter use this information for planning?</u>
Thought should be given to budgetary cycles and plans to use the information gathered for funding proposals and allocation. Keeping in mind that there should be time given for developing the assessment, administration, completion by participants, and analysis of the data.

When can the Chapter administer this?
Administering the assessment on a regular cadence allows the Chapter to conduct a longitudinal analysis of the data to identify trends, patterns, and ongoing issues. Having the assessment planned for the same ongoing cycle provides CACs with a predictable feedback mechanism and allows for consistent data collection.

Assessment Methods

There are many approaches for systematically gathering information. The method chosen should be a good match for the quantity and nature of the information requested, as well as the number and diversity of people the Chapter wants to hear from. An approach should be selected that maximizes advantages and considers feasibility given the time and resources available. Each method is briefly described below in the table, along with their advantages and disadvantages. This guide provides a detailed exploration of online assessments and focus groups, as they are two commonly used data collection methods used by Chapters.

Summary of Common Methods

Method	Pros	Cons
Online Assessments	• Able to target a larger intended audience • Quick response rates • Easier data compilation • Can be less expensive • Can automate the follow-up process for incomplete assessments	• Cannot instantly ask follow-up questions • Data limited to how the questions are designed • Requires knowledge on assessment data exportation to effectively create the assessment
One-on-One Interviews	• Ability to ask to follow-up questions to gain greater clarity on more complex topics • Gathers rich data about personal experiences • Allows the interviewer to pick up on non-verbal responses	• Not ideal for large sample sizes • Greater potential to be influenced by biases • Requires extensive time to analyze assessment results • Limited confidentiality and anonymity
Focus Groups	• Efficient for receiving feedback from large groups of people • Can generate conversation to develop innovative ideas	• Participants can be influenced by others' responses • Requires a strong facilitator • Typically, does not generate quantitative data

Online Assessments

There are several free or low-cost assessment platforms that allow Chapters to program an online assessment and send out assessment invitations via an emailed link. These tools automatically compile responses and provide an opportunity to download raw data as an Excel file, or to view results in the platform's data visualization tools.

Online assessments are a desirable choice when Chapters have a large sample size. A more comprehensive online assessment may also be appropriate when there's a need for strong representation from a large group of several different stakeholders. Online assessments are also useful when statistical data is needed: for example, the proportion of CACs who are interested in a specific training topic, the average caseload for forensic interviewers, or the percentage of CACs who endorse a particular initiative. This kind of data can be harder to compile systematically from interviews or focus groups.

Online Free or Low-Cost Assessment Platform Options

Surveys:

Survey Monkey. See an intro video about Survey Monkey HERE.
Alchemer. See an intro video about Alchemer HERE.

Forms:

Microsoft Forms. See an intro video about Microsoft Forms HERE.
Google Forms. See an intro video about Google Forms HERE.

Question Types

There are typically two types of questions in online assessments: closed-ended quantitative questions, and open-ended qualitative questions. Closed-ended questions provide a predetermined set of responses to participants, like yes/no, a checklist of options, or "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" answer choices. Closed-ended questions are useful when there is certainty about all responses the participants might give to a particular question, or when limiting participants to a defined set of possible answers is needed. Because closed-ended questions force participants to choose among predetermined options, there are few data entry errors, and data quality can be higher.

Open-ended questions provide respondents with an opportunity to write a response in a text box. These are good questions to use when participants need to elaborate upon why they gave a particular answer in a closed-ended, and/or when more in-depth feedback is desired about a particular issue. A good example of an open-ended question from the sample tool in this document is, "What are the primary challenges facing your organization at the time of survey distribution?"

An advantage of collecting information via an online assessment is that the designer can also include skip patterns. This is logic that is easy to build into an assessment and allows participants to skip over questions that do not apply to them (participants will not even know they have skipped over questions!). This can allow the administrator to have a longer assessment and collect more data, and participants are only shown the parts of the assessment that directly apply to them.

Length

The goal of online assessments is to capture the most critical information while keeping the assessment short enough that the participants will still complete it. It is best to try to keep assessments short enough that the target respondents can complete the assessment in no more than 15 minutes (10 minutes is better!). On average, most assessment respondents can complete three to five closed-ended questions per minute. Each open-ended question can take one to three minutes to complete, depending on the complexity of the information requested. Thus, it is better to limit the total number of open-ended questions included to no more than three to four; select the issues that are most important to the Chapter to ask for in-depth information about.

It is also a good idea to test the assessment internally before sending it to the participants. Ask a couple of colleagues to take the assessment and test its length and clarity. If the assessment includes skip patterns, it is important to test those as well. Before finalizing the assessment, scrutinize each question and ask how the Chapter will interpret and use the answers returned. If the answer is unclear, or the answer choices listed may not be useful down the line, consider eliminating or re-writing the question.

RCAC Evaluation Round Table

This course is available free of charge to registered users through the NCAC Virtual Training Center (VTC). If you do not already have an account, it is quick and easy to create one. Once signed in, go to the VTC Dashboard and type "Creating Powerful Questions for Data Collection and Assessment" in the Search box to access the training.

Nora Robinson, Strategy Director, and Kara Bixby, Evaluation Director for WithInsight, provide participants with a deeper understanding of how to write good questions in this informative recorded presentation.

Dissemination and Response Rates

Links to complete an online assessment can be provided in an email, over text, or via a QR code on a flyer or mailed document. As with any data collection effort, it is important to pre-notify potential participants that they will receive an invitation to complete the assessment. When potential respondents have a chance to see the value of the data and reports that will come from the assessment to their work, they are more likely to complete the assessment. Before sending out the assessment, contact potential respondents and share information about the data collection effort's importance. If possible, share examples of how the data has been used to make a difference in the past, or of how respondents could use the resulting data for advocacy, strategic planning, or education efforts. Once the assessment has been distributed, follow-up with one to two reminders to encourage participation, and provide a clear deadline (three to four weeks is usually sufficient).

Bottom Line	
Advantages	**Disadvantages**
• Can be less time and resource-intensive than interviews and focus groups • Capable of reaching many respondents • Production of more standardized data and reduction of data entry errors. • Anonymous participation by respondents is possible • Ability to capture quantitative data in a systematic process • Potential for a greater quantity of data collection using skip patterns	• Learning curve when using an assessment platform for the first time • Limited capacity to get in-depth open-ended answers to complex questions • Lower response rates than interviews or focus groups • May require some data analysis capacity • May not uncover hidden issues or challenges, because most response options are determined ahead of time

Focus Groups

Focus groups are gatherings of 5-10 stakeholders who are asked for feedback via a facilitated conversation. Focus groups can be a good option for gathering information when there is a smaller target audience or when an approach is needed that allows for more in-depth exploration than an assessment can provide. Focus groups can be an efficient way to get feedback from several people at one time and to elicit deep exploration of a topic, as participants' contributions spark ideas for other participants in the room.

Preparing for a Focus Group

Focus group conversations are typically guided by a pre-determined set of open-ended questions. Before beginning to schedule focus groups, consider what information is needed from participants, and create a list of topics and questions in advance. This list of questions will then be a loose guide to help facilitate the focus group conversation. It can be helpful to create both broad questions (such as, "What are your biggest needs for technical assistance?") as well as follow-up prompts if participants are having a challenging time answering comprehensively (such as, "What about technical assistance in the area of accreditation?"). It can also be helpful to put questions in order of importance so that time does not run out before obtaining the "must-have" items.

While creating a schedule for the focus groups, try to create groups that, collectively, are representative of all the stakeholders whose voices should be represented. It is also important to create groups in which people feel comfortable being honest and thinking deeply about the conversation. Thus, it is important to try to avoid obvious power differentials or supervisory relationships among participants in the same group.

Composition and Facilitation Considerations

Focus groups can be done in-person or virtually. The advantages to virtual focus groups are that they are low-cost, involve no travel for participants, and can be done on platforms like Zoom that can record the conversation and obtain a transcript after the meeting is completed. If a focus group is planned for in-person, it is strongly recommended to record the conversation, so no important contributions are lost. Make sure that all focus group participants have consented to be recorded.

If possible, it is most helpful to have two focus group facilitators. This allows one person to lead the conversation, and a second person to handle coordination or attend to group dynamics. Before starting the questions, let participants know the goals and purpose of the conversation, remind participants about confidentiality, and give participants a chance to introduce themselves and ask questions.

The prepared list of questions then becomes a general guide for the conversation. It is fine to skip around on the list of questions as participants naturally mention topics. Use active listening, reflecting on what is heard from participants and asking follow-up questions, even if they are not on the question list.

A challenge of focus groups is ensuring everyone's voices are heard, and that people feel free to disagree. Often, the first person who answers a particular question sets the tone and direction for the conversation that follows. Focus groups can easily be sidetracked by a particularly talkative person, or someone with a particular agenda. Facilitators should honor each person's contributions, but also make space for quieter members, (e.g., "Thank you so much, Jane, for that interesting contribution. I want to make sure we hear from as many folks as possible... what came to mind for others when I asked that question?"). Or, consider asking each person, "What would you add to what has been said so far?". Another way to hear from less talkative members is to end a focus group by asking all participants to write down the three most important pieces of feedback they came to share.

Sample Focus Group Protocol

Check out the resource section of this guide for a sample in-depth Focus Group Protocol Chapters can consider while planning to launch focus groups.

Bottom Line

Advantages	**Disadvantages**
• Ability to elicit nuanced, in-depth information and perceptions • Helpful when exploring a new issue and where all the answers or perspectives that people might bring to the conversation cannot be anticipated • Idea generation is created by participants hearing other focus group attendees' ideas • Low cost, particularly if done online • Efficient for getting feedback from several people in a pre-determined time and place	• These groups can be time-consuming to recruit and schedule, and expensive if done in person • Does not allow for anonymous participation and may generate less "honest" or critical feedback • At risk for generating "groupthink" and participants being swayed or biased by others' answers • Require the availability of a strong facilitator (Ideally two!) • Less generalizable – it is not always clear whether most people in a focus group agree with a particular statement, and therefore how widely held an opinion might be • Does not result in statistical data or quantification of people's responses

Assessment Analysis

To optimize the target audiences' interaction with the results, it is ideal to develop a summarized, digestible report of the information. When developing this report, it is important to make it possible for anyone not deeply involved in the info-gathering process to (quickly) process both the big picture and the most relevant details. It is also beneficial to pull in other relevant information to help the audience connect this current information to existing/projected work, make meaning of the results from the needs assessment, and more readily engage in constructive discussion.

Here are some ideas to consider:

- Use visuals, such as charts, for reporting quantitative data.
- Summarize qualitative feedback into themes and/or talking points.
- Tailor the report to the audience evaluating the information. For example, what may member CACs care about vs. the executive board/advisory partners?
- Pull in other information for comparison such as results from previous years, the Chapter's strategic plan, data about Chapter work/outputs in the last year, etc. to "anchor" partners in meaning-making with the new needs assessment information.

Debrief and Discussion with Partners and Stakeholders
There are multiple partners with which a Chapter may want to share results. Before sharing, consider how you would like that audience to interact with the information. Some partners, likely Chapter staff, the Chapter's governing board/advisory committee, and CAC membership, are more likely to be part of a deeper discussion about the results and inform the Chapter's response to the information. Other audiences may *only* need to receive the needs assessment results and a summary of the Chapter's planned next steps.

Below are questions to consider for guiding discussion with the partners being invited to inform the Chapter's response to the results of the needs assessment:

- What stands out as the most important takeaway based on this information?
- What remains unclear?
- Is there any information in the results that is surprising?
- Does anything seem like an outlier? What may explain it?
- In what ways does the Chapter's direction seem aligned with the needs identified here?
- Are there strategies the Chapter is pursuing that seem misaligned and/or wasteful?
- What other partners or resources may be needed to fill gaps?
- Are there any needs that are outside the Chapter's scope to address?
- Are there trends/patterns in the data from previous needs assessments? How has the Chapter impacted those over the years?

- What do the results indicate about the Chapter's relationship with member CACs? Other partners and stakeholders? What, if anything, might be needed to address with them?
- How does this information inform the current/upcoming strategic plan?
- How might the organizational budget need to change to accommodate the planned response?
- What concrete steps will be taken to respond to needs?

Where Can the Chapter Provide Transparency?
Chapters can benefit from including needs assessment information in their annual report, website, or at annual membership meetings. Thinking through opportunities for celebrations will allow the Chapter to demonstrate the quality work that has been accomplished in the past year, which should be considered when building programming or products.

Recommendations

While this guide provides a comprehensive approach to a statewide needs assessment process, it is important to note that Chapters of varying sizes and capacities can tailor these strategies to meet their needs. As with most new endeavors, begin by getting clear on the purpose of the process for the Chapter and start small. Chapters should consider data collection as a part of their annual work plan and set aside the appropriate amount of time. A Chapter's Regional Children's Advocacy Center is ready to support Chapters through all stages of this process. Some Chapters have been successful in partnering with local universities to develop their assessment, while others have grant-designated consultant funds for this process. Chapters may not have a data specialist on staff, but through using this guide and some creative thinking, they too can implement this process in their regular agency practices.

- Be strategic on how long it will take to develop a needs assessment for the information aimed to be evaluated.
- Chapters should lay the groundwork with their target audience about the expectations to complete and how it will benefit the network.
- Make use of the data collected and acknowledge the input that was received.
- Use the needs assessment to be a relationship and vision builder for the future.

Chapters looking to revamp their existing needs assessment or create a new one from scratch have numerous decisions to make. These include determining the purpose for collecting data, identifying the target audience, the frequency of assessment administration, determining the right questions to ask, selecting an appropriate assessment platform, and deciding whether to conduct focus groups. Navigating these nuances is essential for designing an effective assessment. Regional Children's Advocacy Centers can serve as a valuable resource, offering guidance to ensure the assessment is impactful and meets the objectives of the Chapter.

Sample Needs Assessments and Question Bank

Check out the [resource section] of this guide for [sample needs assessments] and [question bank] Chapters can consider while planning to launch a statewide needs assessment. These tools can be scaled up or scaled down based on the needs that Chapters are looking to identify with the resources that are available to them.

Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Timeline for Chapters Administering a Statewide Needs Assessment

Week 1-2: Planning and Preparation

Define Objectives

- Identify the desired outcome of the needs assessment.
- Identify the target groups of participants.

Develop a Project Plan

- Identify a leader for this project and identify any committee members.
- Determine what data the Chapter already has that could provide valuable insight.
- Create a detailed project timeline.
- Allocate resources and assign responsibilities.
- Determine a reporting schedule.

Week 3-4: Designing the Needs Assessment

Select Methods

- Choose appropriate data collection methods (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups).

Develop Instruments

- Create or customize assessment questionnaires, interview guides, and other data collection tools based on the purpose of collecting data.
- Run a pilot to test the instruments with colleagues to ensure clarity and reliability.

Week 5-6: Data Collection Preparation

Communication

- Notify participants about the assessment and/or any focus groups.
- Provide instructions including how long it will take to complete the assessment and when it should be completed by.

Week 7-9: Data Collection

Administer Surveys/Interviews

- Distribute surveys and conduct interviews/focus groups.
- Ensure consistent follow-up to maximize response rates. Provide 1-2 reminders.

Monitor Progress

- Track response rates and address any issues that arise during data collection.

Week 10-11: Data Analysis

Data Cleaning

- Clean the data to correct errors and handle missing values.
- Note and follow-up on any data outliers that need attention.

Data Analysis

- Analyze the data.
- Identify key findings and trends.
- List areas of need in order of importance.
- Hypothesize what is the catalysis of high-level themes.
- Identify factors that the Chapter can intervene in to respond to those themes.

Week 12: Interpretation and Reporting

Interpret Results

- Summarize the findings and any other relevant data within the scope of the assessment's desired outcomes.
- Consult with participants to validate interpretations.
- Set priority needs and select solution strategies.
- Propose an action plan.

Prepare Report

- Draft a detailed report outlining the methodology, findings, cause conclusions, and recommendations for future assessments.
- Create visual aids (charts, graphs) to support the findings.

Week 13: Dissemination and Follow-Up

Disseminate Findings

- Share the report with decision makers, policymakers, and stakeholders through presentations, meetings, annual reports, and written reports.

Gather Feedback

- Collect feedback on the findings and recommendations.
- Discuss the next steps and action plans based on the assessment.

Plan for Action

- Develop an implementation plan based on the assessment results.
- Schedule follow-up activities to track progress and outcomes.

Appendix B: Sample Focus Group Protocol developed by WithInsight with support from Midwest Regional CAC

CAC Medical Evaluation Review

MDT Focus Group Protocol

Date:
Time:
Facilitator:
Note-taker:

Focus Group Attendees

Name	Org	Email	Attended?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

Introduction

"Thanks again for taking the time to speak with us today. Before we start, I'd like to provide a little background and answer any questions you might have. The purpose of this focus group is specifically to learn more about access to medical evaluations.

We're particularly interested in hearing your perspectives on barriers to medical evaluations, and recommendations you have for overcoming those barriers.

This is *not* an evaluation of any individual. These focus groups are part of a much larger effort of collecting and analyzing data from many sources to create a composite picture of strengths to leverage, key challenges to address, and improvement strategies to prioritize.

Anything you share today will remain confidential, meaning your names will not be attached to any quotes used in reporting. The point of a focus group is to understand themes across the group. Everything shared will be de-identified and reported in summary form. Please respect the confidentiality of your peers by not sharing their comments outside this group.

If you'd like to give more detailed input, feel free to take notes in an email or Word doc and send them to us afterward.

Does anyone have any questions before we start?

We're going to start with round robin introductions. We'll go around in a clockwise circle so that each person can introduce themselves. Please share your name role and how long you have served on the MDT."

Focus Group Questions

1. What is the process for accessing a medical evaluation?
    a. What happens after a referral?
    b. Do you follow-up after the medical evaluation? With the medical provider? With the child and/or family?
2. How are medical evaluations currently utilized by your MDT?
    a. What medical expertise is available to you?
3. How valuable do you feel medical evaluations are in fulfilling your role?
    a. How does the medical evaluation impact your investigation/work? What role does medical information play in your work?
    b. What happens when you don't have the medical information you need?
4. What barriers exist that prevent you from referring to medical experts?
    a. Is there a gap between offering and receiving medical care?
5. What recommendations do you have to improve medical access?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Focus Group Closing

"Thank you for taking the time today to share your insights.

We will collate this input along with the other focus groups to create an overall summary that can be used to learn, improve and shape future work. Please, don't hesitate to be in touch if you have further feedback or questions.

We appreciate your time and partnership!

Focus Group Ground Rules

- Listen thoughtfully
- Limit distractions (please silence your cell phones)
- All responses are valid—there are no right or wrong answers Please respect the opinions of others, even if you don't agree
- Try to stay on topic; we may need to interrupt so that we can cover all our questions
- Speak as openly as you feel comfortable
- If you disagree, please offer another perspective
- It's all right to abstain from discussing specific topics if you are not comfortable
- Help protect others' privacy by not discussing details outside the group

Appendix C: Sample Needs Assessment

Directions: The Chapter is conducting this annual membership survey to seek input from CACs on Chapter services, operations, activities, and long-term plans. Your feedback will provide insight into the growth and needs within the state. We are interested in learning about your experience with the Chapter over the last year, MONTH, 20XX - MONTH, 20XX.

Please share your honest reflections. We will ask you to share your CAC name so we can see trends (e.g., across geographies, size) and follow-up with you if needed. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be shared in summary. Individual responses will only be seen by Chapter leadership staff and will not be shared externally. Thank you for your time and feedback!

Select your CAC: Add drop-down list of CACs.

Chapter Activities and Services

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Overall, I was satisfied with the services and support provided by the Chapter during the past year.				
This year's council meetings were a valuable use of my time.				
The training offered by the Chapter met the needs of our MDT.				
When I needed technical assistance on something, it was provided promptly (TA includes reaccreditation support, case review support, Collaborate support, etc.).				
The technical assistance I received met the needs of our CAC.				
We are better at using/navigating Collaborate than we were a year ago.				
We are better at implementing OMS than we were a year ago.				
I am satisfied with the Chapter's grant coordination for our CAC.				
My CAC is satisfied with the Chapter's financial support for our CAC.				
The Chapter kept me informed on the public policy/legislative work affecting my CAC.				
I felt connected to the Chapter over the past year.				

Share any comments you may have about your responses:

What services were most valuable to your CAC? Why?

What services could have been improved? How?

Chapter Communication and Responsiveness

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Chapter clearly communicates the services and supports available to my CAC.				
The Chapter responds to my inquiries.				
My inquiries are addressed in a timely fashion.				
I am satisfied with the amount of communication I receive from the Chapter.				
When I encountered challenges this year, the Chapter was able to help me work through them.				
Membership meetings answered the questions that I had.				
The Chapter's social media posts were high quality.				
The Chapter's social media posts were an effective way to enhance awareness of the CAC movement.				

Share any comments you may have about your responses:

Chapter Impact

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Chapter's work helped us work towards continuous meeting the accreditation standards.				
The Chapter's services/support increased my capacity this year				
The Chapter's services/support enhanced the professional skills of my staff				
The Chapter services/support improved my own leadership capabilities this year				
The Chapter's services/support helped our CAC effectively manage secondary traumatic stress				
The Chapter's services/support helped our MDT improve its response				

Share any comments you may have about your responses:

Future Needs

Below is a list of new training content that could be added to our training menu for 20XX. Select the top 5 content areas that would be most valuable to your CAC in XXXX

1. Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)
2. Mid-Level Management Training
3. Testifying Training
4. Beginning Advocacy Training
5. Advanced Advocacy Training
6. Continued Training on Equity Issues in CACs
7. Youth with Problematic Sexual Behavior
8. Secondary Trauma
9. Organizational Management (HR, Communication, Marketing)
10. MDT full team trainings
11. Advanced Forensic Interview Courses
12. MDT Leadership and Facilitation
13. Case Review Training
14. Prosecution Focused Trainings
15. Medical Professional Focused Trainings
16. Legislative Advocacy Training
17. Strategic Planning
18. Board Development
19. Meeting the 2023 Accreditation Standards
20. Increasing MDT Buy in Training
21. Other (please specify):

1. If the Chapter was able to provide more money to CACs, how would choose to spend it?
2. If there was a statewide project you would like to see made a priority, what would it be?
3. Is there anything else you would like us to know?

Appendix D: Sample Question Bank

Demographics

1. Role (only include a target population who has the information needed to meet the desired outcome.) Drop Down Box
   a. Administrative Staff
   b. Law Enforcement Professionals
   c. CAC Director
   d. MDT Facilitators
   e. Child Protection Professional
   f. Mental Health Providers
   g. Medical Professionals
   h. Prosecutors
   i. Educators
   j. Victim Advocates
   k. Forensic Interviewer

2. Age range. Drop Down Box
   a. Under 30
   b. 30-39
   c. 40-49
   d. 50-59
   e. 60-69
   f. 70 +

4. Race and ethnicity information. Drop Down Box, Allow for Multiple Selection, Smart Logic Available for Prefer to Self-Describe
   a. White
   b. Black/African American
   c. American Indian or Alaska Native
   d. Asian
   e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   f. Hispanic or Latino
   g. Prefer to Self-Describe

5. Type of program. Drop Down Box
   a. Rural
   b. Frontier
   c. Suburban
   d. Urban
   e. Other

Chapter Activities and Services

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
When I needed technical assistance with something it was provided in a timely manner.				

The technical assistance I received this year had a positive impact on my work.				
The program consultation provided by the Chapter met the needs of our CAC. (List examples of consultation.)				
I am satisfied with the technical assistance I received to assist the CAC with growth and development.				
I am overall satisfied with the services and support provided by the Chapter this past year.				
The professional development opportunities offered by the Chapter met the needs of our CAC/MDTs/etc. (Choose 1) (Provide examples of those opportunities)				
The Chapter helped my center utilize Outcome Measurement System (OMS) data at a local level.				
Membership meetings helped me stay better connected with my colleagues across the state.				
I am satisfied with the statewide growth of CAC service coverage.				
I am satisfied with the grant coordination provided by the Chapter.				
I am satisfied with the training opportunities the Chapter provided to the local CAC board.				
The Chapter offered sufficient volunteer leadership opportunities. (List committees and workgroups here.)				

Chapter Policy and Advocacy

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Chapter keeps me informed on the public policy work affecting my CAC.				
The public awareness efforts offered by the Chapter increased community understanding about child abuse.				
The Chapter effectively incorporates member feedback into its public policy work.				
The Chapter has supported my growth in my local advocacy work.				
I am satisfied with the opportunities I have had to become more involved in public policy and advocacy at a statewide level.				

Chapter Communication

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My inquiries are addressed promptly.				
I am satisfied with the amount of communication I receive from the Chapter.				
When I needed information from the Chapter it was easily accessible on the Director's Corner platform.				
I am satisfied with the communication that I received about the work of the Chapter board.				
The monthly newsletter from the Chapter kept my CAC informed of information needed for direct service professionals.				
Information about the Chapter's activities have a professional appearance.				

Chapter Impact

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Chapter helped me maintain accreditation this year through statewide offerings.				
I trust that the Chapter has my CAC's best interest in mind.				
The Chapter's support increased my capacity this year.				
The Chapter's support improved my leadership capabilities this year.				
The Chapter was a leader in inclusion efforts in our field. (List examples of services offered.)				
I am satisfied with the Chapter's efforts in increasing state and/or federal funding.				
I am satisfied with the Chapter's efforts in diversifying funding for local CACs throughout the state.				
The statewide awareness event increased awareness for my CAC.				
The benefits I receive from the Chapter are worth the costs.				

In efforts to best meet the evolving needs and time of executive directors, please let us know how you would prefer to receive ongoing training relevant to your profession.

Training Delivery and Accessibility

	Do Not Prefer	Somewhat Prefer	Strongly Prefer
In-person training.			
Webinar presentations.			
Distance education that can be completed at your own pace.			
A combination of in-person instruction and distance education.			

Open Ended Questions

a. What factors make it easily accessible for you to participate in training or technical assistance opportunities?
b. What factors make it challenging for you to participate in training and technical assistance opportunities?
c. What skills would you need to develop to improve your capacity in your role?
d. What resource or structural barriers prevent you from operating in your role at full capacity?
e. What are the primary challenges facing your organization at the time of survey distribution?
f. What opportunities for fund development would you like to see your Chapter take advantage of in the coming years?
g. What are the critical opportunities in front of your organization at the time of survey distribution?
h. What services were most valuable to your CAC and why?
i. What services could have improved and how?

Drop Down Selection

What is the most important support you would like to receive to be effective in your role? (Select one)

a. Training opportunities
b. Research that informs my work
c. Support from my colleagues
d. Support from partner organizations
e. Support from management

Below are training topics that the Chapter is considering offering, select the content that would be most relevant for your CAC. (Select 3)

a. Responding to child physical abuse
b. Answering media inquiries
c. Preparing for the NCA Accreditation site visit
d. The role of the MDT in responding to child sexual exploitation cases
e. Law enforcement first responder training
f. Victim empowerment
g. Mid-level management training
h. MDT leadership

How do you identify the training that the CAC staff need to be effective in their role? (Select all that apply)

a. NCA Accreditation Standards
b. State or county requirements
c. Licensure requirements
d. Feedback from management
e. The MDT
f. Personal preference

What Chapter workgroups would you have staff participate in if offered by the Chapter as a professional development leadership opportunity? (Select all that apply)

a. Fundraising
b. Data
c. Communication
d. Statewide conference planning
e. Finance