

CHAPTER LEADER RESOURCE GUIDE

This guide is designed to provide Chapter leaders with information and resources, empowering them in both state-level work and the day-to-day support for Children’s Advocacy Centers (CACs).

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Contributors

The Regional CACs and National Children’s Alliance would like to thank the following individuals for developing this guide.

Midwest Regional Children’s Advocacy Center

Corey Brodsky, Program Manager for Chapter Development and Partnerships

Northeast Regional Children’s Advocacy Center

Myia Hill, Communications Manager

Michele Mullen, Training Specialist

Southern Regional Children’s Advocacy Center

Kori Stephens, Senior Program Manager, Chapter Development

Western Regional Children’s Advocacy Center

Lana Lo, Training and Communications Coordinator

Amelia Siders, Chapter Specialist — Mental Health

National Children’s Alliance

Kim Hamm, Director of Member Services

Welcome

Welcome, State Chapter Leaders! Whether you are new to the CAC field or a seasoned CAC professional, we hope this guide serves as a helpful reference throughout your Chapter career. We are excited to support your work and connect you with colleagues nationwide.

The Chapter Leader Resource Guide provides Chapter leaders with information on:

- [Funding history](#)
- [National landscape of CACs and Chapters](#)
- Details about the four [Regional Children's Advocacy Centers](#) (RCACs), [Tribal CAC](#), and [National Children's Alliance](#) (NCA)

RCACs, Tribal CAC, and NCA work together to support Chapter growth and development. This guide highlights the areas where we partner or coordinate to provide excellent service to Chapters and identifies the areas where we specialize or work independently. We strive to support Chapter leaders and share knowledge, tools, and resources.

Like any other field, CACs have their own set of acronyms and terms. You will notice these being used throughout the guide, and we encourage you to see the [RCAC Acronym and Terminology List](#) on the RCAC website.

Lastly, we hope you will find the resources highlighted throughout the guide helpful in your work at the state level and in the day-to-day work supporting CACs.

You're invited!

Join the exclusive forum for updates and shared expertise for State Chapters twice a month (2nd and 4th Tuesdays). Chapter Huddles are attended by Chapter leaders across the country and NCA's Director of Member Services. They provide a place to connect with other Chapter leaders, get updates on national initiatives, and hear about trends and upcoming events. For more information, contact NCA's Director of Member Services, Kim Hamm, at khamm@nca-online.org.

Click the video thumbnail below to watch the RCAC video.



State Chapters

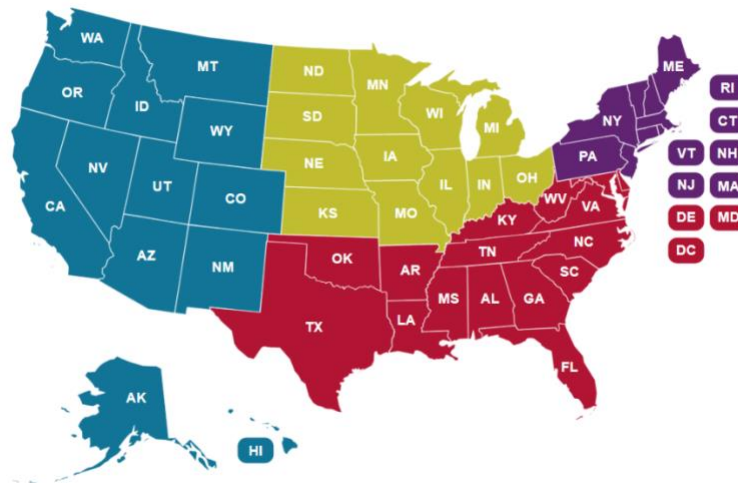
Chapters are membership organizations comprising CACs (and, at times, other members) within a given state. Chapters serve as the leading resource for CACs within the state. The four Regional Children’s Advocacy Centers (RCACs) work primarily with the Chapters in their respective region. However, many resources and training provided by RCACs are available to all. As of 2017, all states have a Chapter organization with one or more staff.

Chapters vary greatly in staff size and structure. Chapters also vary in the programs and services they offer the CACs and MDTs in their state, either driven by resources or by the unique needs of their state. One thing all Chapters have in common is that they serve as critical connectors and unifiers for CACs within their state. In addition, Chapters must meet the [Accreditation Standards](#) set forth by the National Children’s Alliance (NCA), which identify five areas of key Chapter programming and capacity.

Each RCAC has an ongoing relationship with its Chapter directors, including Chapter meetings, statewide training efforts, and other collaborative projects. Due to the vital role Chapters play in connecting professionals within their states, each RCAC acknowledges Chapters as essential partners, serving as a bridge between our work and both the individual CACs within their states and the broader national network. Some RCACs have staff oriented specifically toward identifying the needs of and supporting the development of Chapters.

NCA hosts a National Chapter Summit every two years with a national agenda. Regional forums are typically planned in each region every year or every other year to discuss current issues and trends.

Interested in learning more about each Chapter? Scroll down to the map on the homepage of the [RCACs website](#) and click on a state to view the Chapter’s website.



Evolution of CACs and Chapters

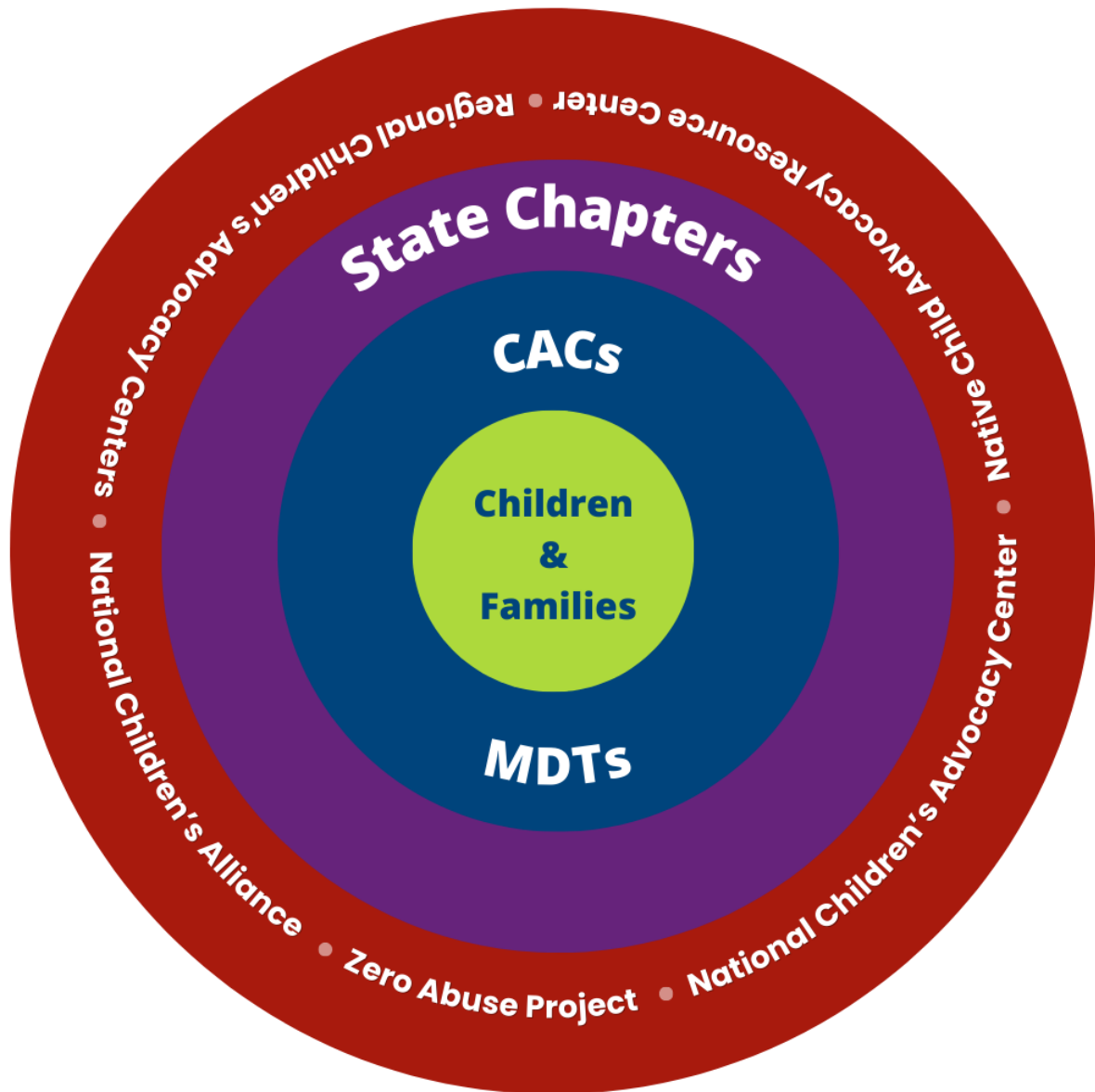
1985	First Children’s Advocacy Center opened in Huntsville, Alabama, the National Children’s Advocacy Center (NCAC)
1988	National Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers was established as a membership network (now the National Children’s Alliance)
1990	Victims of Child Abuse Act (VOCAA) passed, authorizing cooperative agreements to develop and implement multidisciplinary child abuse investigation and prosecution programs
1992	VOCAA was amended, establishing the Regional Children’s Advocacy Center program in statute; authorization increased to \$15,000,000 (reauthorization typically occurs every 5 years)
1993	NCA was first federally funded to develop and sustain a national membership organization for Children’s Advocacy Centers, multi-disciplinary teams, and related professionals – first federal appropriation was \$250,000 to support VOCAA; earmarks were also established for National District Attorney’s Association (NDAA) and NCAC to fund programming for prosecutors and child abuse professionals
Late 1990s /Early 2000s	Networks of CACs (later formalized as Chapters) proliferate around the country
1996	NCA began granting membership to State Chapters
2000	NCA established Standards for Accredited Members (CACs), which are currently revised every 5 years
2008	NCA started directing funds to CACs through subgrants to Chapters, increased amount of funding for each Chapter; established first Standards for Accredited Chapter Members (3 standards: Organizational Capacity, Membership, Training and Technical Assistance)
2008	Conference Cost Reporting requirements established in the Department of Justice Appropriations Act for conferences when the cost to the government is more than \$20,000, among other things
2009	NDAA and NCAC earmarks became part the competitively awarded funding of VOCAA, formally establishing the TTA for Prosecutors and TTA for Child Abuse Professionals programs
2011	First commission and publication of <i>Annotated Bibliography of the Empirical and Scholarly Literature Supporting the Standards for Accredited CAC Members</i> , significant focus on empirical evidence for CAC practice
2013	Significant Chapter Accreditation Standards revisions, with two additional standards added (Advocacy, Growth and Development)

Evolution of CACs and Chapters

2021	A TTA provider for Tribal CAC programs was established through VOCAA on 10/1/21.
2022	Launch of the All-Regional CAC website (regionalcacs.org)
2022	RCAC subawards to Chapters ended as of 9/30/22 at the direction of the Department of Justice; Chapter subaward funding consolidated under NCA
2022	OJJDP created a solicitation for a Tribal TTA provider and made its first award to the Native Child Advocacy Resource Center, housed at the National Native Children's Trauma Center at the University of Montana
2023	NCA's <i>Standards for Accredited Members</i> 2023 edition went into effect; major revisions (among other changes) included the addition of a training requirement for MDT Facilitators, new optional standards for 1) Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, 2) Child Abuse Prevention, and 3) Physical Abuse

National Landscape of CACs & VOCAA Partners

The graphic below illustrates the network of support provided to CACs across the country as they work with and for children and families. CACs have support from their State Chapter as well as the Victims of Child Abuse Act (VOCAA) partners (in the red ring). The VOCAA partners work independently and collaboratively to serve State Chapters, CACs, and MDTs.



National Landscape of CACs & VOCAA Partners

The Victims of Child Abuse Act (VOCAA) authorizes funding to support key training, technical assistance, and other efforts through six major initiatives as described below. The awardees are referred to collectively as the VOCAA partners. Each VOCAA partner agency works collaboratively and strategically with all other VOCAA TTA partners to provide strategic leadership, resource maximization, and capacity building nationwide.

VOCAA Funding Administrator

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) | www.ojjdp.gov
 Juveniles in crisis—from those who commit serious and violent offenses to victims of abuse and neglect—pose a challenge to the nation. Charged by Congress to meet this challenge, OJJDP collaborates with professionals from diverse disciplines to improve juvenile justice policies and practices. OJJDP administers funds to support Children’s Advocacy Centers (CACs) as authorized by the Victims of Child Abuse Act (VOCAA).

VOCAA Partners

OJJDP Award(s)	Program Info
Regional Children’s Advocacy Centers <i>(one award for each region)</i>	Awarded Agency: Midwest Children’s Resource Center, Children’s Minnesota to operate the Midwest Regional Children’s Advocacy Center (MRCAC) Location: St. Paul, MN Website: www.mrcac.org
	Awarded Agency: Philadelphia Children’s Alliance (PCA) to operate the Northeast Regional Children’s Advocacy Center (NRCAC) Location: Philadelphia, PA Website: www.nrcac.org
	Awarded Agency: National Children’s Advocacy Center (NCAC) to operate the Southern Regional Children’s Advocacy Center (SRCAC) Location: Huntsville, AL Website: www.srcac.org
	Awarded Agency: Chadwick Center for Children and Families, Rady Children’s Hospital – San Diego (RCHSD) to operate the Western Regional Children’s Advocacy Center (WRCAC) Location: San Diego, CA Website: www.westernregionalcac.org

VOCAA Partners

OJJDP Award(s)	Program Info
<p>TTA for Child Abuse Professionals</p>	<p>Awarded Agency: National Children’s Advocacy Center (NCAC) Location: Huntsville, AL Website: www.nationalcac.org Description: NCAC provides training, prevention, and treatment services to fight child abuse and neglect. They also host the Child Abuse Library Online (CALiO). See CALiO in the Additional Resources section for more information.</p>
<p>Children’s Advocacy Centers Membership and Accreditation National Subgrants Program</p>	<p>Awarded Agency: National Children’s Alliance (NCA) Location: Washington, DC Website: www.nationalchildrensalliance.org Description: NCA is the national association and accrediting body for Children’s Advocacy Centers (CACs). <i>NCA also manages the American Indian and Alaska Native Subgrant Program and National Military and CAC Partnership Program.</i></p>
<p>TTA for Child Abuse Prosecutors</p>	<p>Awarded Agency: Zero Abuse Project (ZAP) Location: St. Paul, MN Website: www.zeroabuseproject.org Description: The mission of ZAP is to protect children from abuse and sexual assault, by engaging people and resources through a trauma-informed approach of education, research, advocacy, and advanced technology.</p>
<p>TTA Project to Expand Children’s Advocacy Centers Serving American Indian/Alaska Native Communities</p> <p>Tribal Children’s Advocacy Centers TTA</p>	<p>Awarded Agency: Native Child Advocacy Resource Center (NCARC), National Native Children’s Trauma Center (NNCTC), University of Montana to operate the Tribal Children’s Advocacy Center (TCAC) Location: Missoula, MT Website: www.nativecac.org Description: The focus of the NCARC is networking and providing training and technical assistance to increase the number of Tribal Children’s Advocacy Centers, enhance Tribal multidisciplinary teams, and develop relevant products and resources to enhance services for Native children, families, and communities.</p>

Regional Children’s Advocacy Centers

Regional Children’s Advocacy Centers model, champion, and support the multidisciplinary response to child abuse intervention by providing expertise, training, and resources to improve outcomes for children and families affected by abuse.

The four **Regional Children’s Advocacy Centers** (RCACs) were established in the Victims of Child Abuse Act (VOCAA) legislation in 1992 to provide training and technical assistance to child abuse professionals in each region. Funding is managed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), a component of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) within the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Request for Proposals are released for competitive applications every 3 years. RCACs may currently apply for \$1.25 million annually.

Each RCAC provides national programming, region-specific trainings, technical assistance, and information services for developing and establishing multidisciplinary teams, local Children’s Advocacy Centers, and State Chapters.

The four RCACs work collaboratively on multiple projects, including support for:

- State Chapters
- Multidisciplinary teams
- Medical professionals
- Mental health professionals
- Victim advocates
- Organizational capacity
- Secondary traumatic stress & resiliency
- CAC and MDT leadership
- Cultural considerations
- Collaborative workgroups

Visit the **[RCACs website](https://www.regionalcacs.org)** to access nationwide trainings and resources.

If you need any technical assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at <https://www.regionalcacs.org/contact-us/>. Alternatively, you can also find a list of regional websites with more information on [Page 8](#).



Tribal Children’s Advocacy Center

The [Native Child Advocacy Resource Center](#) (NCARC) is a division of the [National Native Children’s Trauma Center](#) (NNCTC) at the University of Montana in Missoula, MT. NCARC began serving as the OJJDP Tribal Children’s Advocacy Centers Training and Technical Assistance provider in 2022.

NCARC promotes the expansion and enhancement of accredited Child Advocacy Centers serving American Indian and Alaska Native children, families, and communities.

What does that involve?

- Outreach to Native Nations about the value of accredited CACs
- Tailored training and technical assistance to Tribal CACs and to Tribal stakeholders interested in developing CACs
- Training and technical assistance to non-Tribal CACs that serve AI/AN communities, with the goal of supporting increased cultural responsiveness and the integration of Tribal values and practices
- The development of new trainings, curricula, practice briefs, and other products to advance the CAC movement in Tribal communities and expand the reach and effectiveness of CACs serving AI/AN communities
- Facilitation of collaboration among existing Tribal CACs, MDTs, and stakeholders who are in the process of developing CACs and MDTs in Tribal communities
- Other services to support Tribes and CACs in their work on behalf of child victims of abuse

Visit the [NCARC website](#) to learn more.



National Children's Alliance

National Children's Alliance (NCA) is a professional membership organization on a mission to make one big difference, one child at a time. Reaching everyone with a voice in eradicating abuse—families, advocates, partner agencies, communities, researchers, and all the way to Capitol Hill—NCA members power a national movement to keep children safe. Featuring the largest network of care centers supporting child abuse victims in the country, NCA is a model in outcome-driven collaboration.

NCA is the national association and accrediting body for CACs. There are four levels of NCA membership:

- Accredited
- Associate/Developing
- Affiliate
- Satellite

Each membership level has different requirements. [Click here](#) to view NCA's National Standards of Accreditation.

RCACs and NCA always work together to get you where you need to go.
[Learn more about how we support Chapters.](#)



**National
Children's
Alliance®**

*The Force Behind
Children's Advocacy Centers*

NCA Membership Benefits and Opportunities

As a member of NCA, you have access to many great benefits and opportunities! Use the checklist below to help you explore and make the most of all the support and resources available to you.

- NCA Engage:** A professional networking and learning tool designed to connect NCA members and partners. NCA Engage provides instant access to a community of your peers, useful and informative document libraries, access to online training, and allows users to engage in focused online discussions.
 - **To get started on NCA Engage,** complete the new user registration form. The account request form will include a field that asks for an Organization ID number. If you need your Organizational ID, please email membership@nca-online.org.
 - Join the Chapter Community on NCA Engage (you must be logged in to NCA Engage to access)

- NCA's National Standards for Accreditation:** To ensure that all children across the U.S. served by CACs receive consistent, evidence-based services that help them heal from abuse, CACs become Accredited by meeting NCA's National Standards of Accreditation, and State Chapters meet the Standards for Accredited Chapter Members. If you have questions about Accreditation, please email accreditation@nca-online.org.

- One-Stop Shop for Membership Resources:** This is your home for the most frequently accessed and requested resources exclusively for NCA members.
 - **Resources for State Chapters on NCA Learning Center:** Access important resources, online trainings, and reports to support your role as a Chapter leader.

- Chapter Huddle:** Join the exclusive forum for updates and shared expertise for State Chapters twice a month (2nd and 4th Tuesdays). Chapter Huddles are attended by Chapter leaders across the country and NCA's Director of Member Services. For more information, contact NCA's Director of Member Services, Kim Hamm, at khamm@nca-online.org.

- NCA Collaborative Work Groups:** Join NCA's national, peer-led Collaborative Work Groups (CWGs) to work alongside your peers and other experts to develop innovative projects that uplift the entire CAC movement.

- NCA Census Resources:** NCA provides comprehensive snapshots of CAC services, funding, and growth through its Member and Chapter Censuses. Done every two years, these surveys and corresponding reports provide information about strengths and trends in the field over time. If you have questions about the NCA Member CAC Census or State Chapter Census, please email omscoordinator@nca-online.org.

- CAC Statistics:** Learn more about the work done by NCA's Member CACs each year, including the total number of children served, the types of abuse those children experienced, client demographics, the types of services CACs provided, and more. Data can be browsed by state, region, or nationally.

- [Funding for CACs and Chapters](#): Discover funding opportunities available by NCA for CACs and Chapters.
- [Legislative Advocacy for CACs](#): NCA is a powerful advocacy voice on Capitol Hill fighting for the dollars and policies kids deserve. Browse benefits and resources available to NCA members that help improve practice, from gaining and maintaining the accreditation that speaks to funders and lawmakers to tools to benchmark your programs.
- [Communications & Marketing](#): Discover resources, templates, and webinars to support your communications and marketing efforts.
 - [NCA's Communications Toolkit](#): CACs and Chapters do more than serve kids; they're also the leading experts in their communities and states on how to respond to child abuse and heal the hurt. Browse resources for CAC and Chapter communicators that you can use to tell your story to the press, the online audiences around you, and even the world.
 - Access the **Brand Folder** and your Accredited Member Badge by emailing membership@nca-online.org to get your dedicated login.
 - [Check out NCA's Style Guide](#) online or download a PDF version. This guide is intended to clarify for the CAC movement and related fields NCA preferred terminology and usage of language to describe child maltreatment-field specific concepts.
- [NCAtrak](#): A case management tool designed by CACs for CACs.
- [Outcome Measurement System \(OMS\)](#): OMS provides the opportunity for each CAC to not only measure their performance but also benchmark themselves against the field through local, state, regional, and national reports.

Support for Chapters

To support the network of State Chapter organizations around the country, the RCACs and NCA offer several services. To be efficient and non-duplicative with our resources, all five organizations work together and independently in service of Chapter growth and development.

Click on the [Support for Chapters](#) document below to learn more about how NCA and the RCACs work independently and collaboratively to support Chapters.

SUPPORT for Chapters

Programs and resources for State Chapters

To support the network of State Chapter organizations around the country, Regional Children's Advocacy Centers (Regional CACs) and National Children's Alliance (NCA) offer a number of services. To be efficient and non-duplicative with our resources, all five organizations work both together and independently in service of Chapter growth and development. This document highlights the areas in which we partner or coordinate to provide excellent service to Chapters and identifies the areas where we specialize or work independently. Regional CACs and NCA always work together to get you where you need to go!

What we share

Here's where we unite and build. Contact either NCA or your Regional CAC, and we will collaborate to get you the services you need!

Quality Assurance and Improvement

- Understanding minimum practice
- Defining best practices
- Developing outcome measures
- Defining and improving access
- Delivering education on emerging trends

Organizational Capacity Building

- Policy and procedure development
- Facilitating networking opportunities
- Orienting and onboarding new Chapter leaders
- Peer support

Where we specialize

Regional CACs are brokers of many support services to Chapters. NCA also provides a range of services including grants and federal advocacy. Here's a list of the services each offers.

Get started

Reach out to your Regional CAC for help navigating to the services you need to help your Chapter succeed!

Learn more and connect at regionalcacs.org

Here is what all Regional CACs provide:

- Individualized strategic planning
- Board development
- Chapter leader development
- Assistance with Chapter statewide and Regional trainings and meetings
- Chapter staff retreat/planning facilitation
- Customized training/technical assistance
- Executive transition support & succession planning
- Multidisciplinary team leadership development & support
- Partnership with Chapters in working with local CACs

And here is where each Regional CAC specializes:

- **Midwest Regional CAC:** Medical technical assistance and resources
- **Northeast Regional CAC:** Leadership Exchange and Coaching (LEC) Program
- **Southern Regional CAC:** Secondary traumatic stress
- **Western Regional CAC:** Rural and tele-mental health technical assistance and resources

Here is what National Children's Alliance provides:

- Grants for Chapters
- Mentor match for Chapter leaders
- Branding, messaging, and crisis communications support*
- Federal policymaker education and issue advocacy*
- Consultation on state advocacy & appropriations*
- Train-the-trainer support for CAC accreditation
- Support for Chapter accreditation
- Statewide mental health training projects and consultation
- National training opportunities for Chapters
- National data collection and outcome measurement
- National partnerships to advance the movement

* These activities are not supported with federal funds, as federal requirements strictly prohibit lobbying, advocacy, and fundraising including the use of staff time to conduct such activities.

This project was supported by Grants #2019-CI-FX-K002, #2019-CI-FX-K003, #2019-CI-FX-K004, #2019-CI-FX-K005, and #15P-JDF-21-GK-00034-JVO awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

Additional Resources

Below are some useful resources to further support you in your role as a Chapter leader and in your day-to-day work supporting CACs.

How the CAC Model Works

A CAC is a child-focused, facility-based program where representatives from many disciplines collaborate to make decisions about investigation, treatment, intervention, and prosecution of child abuse cases. The CAC's multidisciplinary team comprises all the professionals and agencies needed to offer comprehensive services to child victims and their families, including law enforcement, child protective services, prosecution, mental health, medical, and victim advocacy.

Click the video thumbnail below to learn more about how CACs work.



New CAC Director Video

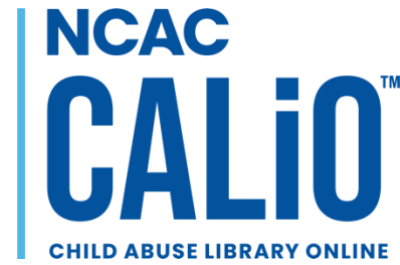
Did a new CAC director start in your state? Share with them NCA's [New CAC Director: We're Here For You](#) video! This video will help them get started in their journey as a new CAC director.

Click the video thumbnail below to watch the new CAC director video.



Child Abuse Library Online (CALiO)

The [Child Abuse Library Online™ \(CALiO™\)](#) is one of the largest professional child maltreatment resource collections available and which provides access to published knowledge, educational materials, and resources.



Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) staff and multidisciplinary team members, State Chapter staff, and Regional Children's Advocacy Centers' (RCAC) staff have access to over 26 million peer-reviewed publications, 2,000 peer-reviewed journals, and the *Special Collections* created especially for professionals working in CACs. Included within the *Special Collections* are *CAC Management and Practices*, *CACs-the Literature*, *The Literature Supporting the Chapter Standards for Accreditation*, and much more. Patrons also have access to technical assistance from the CALiO™ Digital Information Librarian.

Each CAC, State Chapter, and RCAC are assigned login credentials for CALiO™.

- [Access information about CALiO™ registration](#)
- [Requests for forgotten credentials can be submitted here](#)

National Annual Conferences

The chart below highlights professional development and networking opportunities, offering a platform to stay current on trends and best practices while fostering valuable connections with peers and leaders from across the country.

Conference Name	Month when conferences are typically held
<p><i>The Annual San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment</i></p> <p>Overview: This conference promotes collaboration and knowledge-sharing among professionals from different fields to enhance their skills in preventing, recognizing, investigating, and treating all types of child and family maltreatment using best practices.</p> <p>Hosted by: Chadwick Center for Children and Families at Rady Children’s Hospital-San Diego</p> <p>Location: San Diego, CA</p> <p>Website: https://www.chadwickcenter.org/conference/</p>	January
<p><i>International Symposium on Child Abuse</i></p> <p>Overview: This conference is unique in addressing all aspects of child maltreatment, including but not limited to, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, exposure to violence, poly-victimization, exploitation, intervention, trafficking, and prevention.</p> <p>Hosted by: National Children’s Advocacy Center</p> <p>Location: Huntsville, AL</p> <p>Website: https://web.cvent.com/event/eaba3836-7dbd-41df-8eb3-140198263184/summary</p>	March
<p><i>Annual Protecting Our Children Conference</i></p> <p>Overview: This conference is the largest national gathering on AI/AN child advocacy issues. It addresses tribal child welfare and well-being and features keynote speakers from high-ranking federal officials to youth with lived experience in child welfare systems.</p> <p>Hosted by: The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA)</p> <p>Location: Varies</p> <p>Website: https://www.nicwa.org/conference/</p>	April

National Annual Conferences, continued

The chart below highlights professional development and networking opportunities, offering a platform to stay current on trends and best practices while fostering valuable connections with peers and leaders from across the country.

Conference Name	Month when conferences are typically held
<p><i>NCA Leadership Conference</i> Overview: This conference is designed for leaders in the CAC movement providing education, networking, and advocacy opportunities. <i>**Note: State Chapter-specific track and activities involved**</i> Hosted by: National Children’s Alliance Location: Washington, DC Website: https://learn.nationalchildrensalliance.org</p>	<p>June</p>
<p><i>Crimes Against Children Conference</i> Overview: This conference provides practical and interactive instruction to those fighting crimes against children and helping children heal. Hosted by: Dallas Children’s Advocacy Center Location: Dallas, TX Website: https://cacconference.org/</p>	<p>August</p>

This project was supported by 15PJDP-21-GK-00034-JJVO, 15PJDP-22-GK-03059-JJVO, 15PJDP-22-GK-03060-JJVO, 15PJDP-22-03061-JJVO, and 15PJDP-22-GK-03062-JJVO awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.