

# **National Children's Alliance Standards for Accredited Chapter Members Including Guidelines for Achievement of Standards**

## **Chapter definition:**

A Chapter of National Children's Alliance is a recognized entity that:

- Represents a collaborative effort among membership, staff and its governing entity
- Provides support services to emerging and existing children's advocacy centers (CACs) and multidisciplinary teams (MDTs)
- Assists with the development, continuation, and enhancement of the CAC model throughout the state
- Facilitates a collaborative statewide network dedicated to a coordinated and comprehensive response to child abuse
- Serves as a leading resource within the state in regard to child abuse issues and the children's advocacy center model

The following components are necessary for accredited chapter membership in National Children's Alliance:

1. **Organizational Capacity:** The Chapter operates as a membership organization, has established and maintains a designated legal entity responsible for organizational, programmatic and fiscal operations, and employs sound administrative and financial practices.
2. **Membership:** The Chapter has defined membership categories, eligibility criteria, organizational authority and a process for application and renewal of membership status. Membership categories and eligibility requirements are congruent with and inclusive of NCA membership categories and recognize and reflect the evolving levels of development among children's advocacy centers and multidisciplinary teams. The Chapter facilitates ongoing networking opportunities among its membership statewide.
3. **Growth and Development:** The Chapter conducts an annual assessment of served, under-served and un-served areas within its state boundaries, including but not limited to NCA Gap Analysis, and addresses the ongoing establishment and sustainability of children's advocacy centers equipped to provide the full array of evidence-based CAC services for children and families throughout the entire state.
4. **Training and Technical Assistance:** The Chapter identifies and addresses the evolving training and technical assistance needs of existing and emerging children's advocacy centers throughout the state.
5. **Awareness and Education:** The Chapter serves as a leading resource throughout the state by supporting efforts to (1) Increase awareness about child abuse and the children's advocacy center model; and (2) Reform systems to ensure improved opportunities and outcomes for child abuse victims.

This document is intended to provide detailed information about the NCA Chapter Accreditation Standards as well as guidelines to assist Chapters in determining how they might best reach these Standards and how they might demonstrate compliance with the various essential components related to each Standard. Included in this publication you will find:

### **NCA CHAPTER ACCREDITATION STANDARDS:**

**STANDARD:** This is the broad statement of the Standard that all Chapters will be expected to be able to demonstrate. (GOALS)

**RATIONALE:** The Rationale narrative is intended to provide background information that outlines *why* this Standard is important and how it relates to effective functioning and mission realization for Chapters.

**ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS:** The components of the Standard represent the “how” for Chapters striving to achieve the more general, broader Standard.

### **RELATED GUIDELINES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INFORMATION:**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:** This is a brief narrative intended to outline “*why*” each individual component is important and helpful for a Chapter. NCA’s hope is that there is clear benefit to the Chapter, beyond meeting an NCA Accreditation Standard, in striving to fulfill each of these essential components.

**SAMPLE STRATEGIES:** These represent *examples* of how Chapters, with different structures and at different stages of development, might demonstrate compliance with the Components of each Standard. While these examples are not intended to include every possible strategy a Chapter might employ, it should provide a broad and diverse spectrum of strategies that reflect the majority of our NCA Chapters at this time and in the years ahead.

**NOTE:** *Fulfillment of the Essential Components related to the first Standard – Organizational Capacity – look markedly different, depending on whether a Chapter is an independent 501c3, operates under the authority of a government agency, or operates under the authority of an umbrella/parent 501c3 organization. While the basic Organizational Standard is consistent for all three of these models, you will find that some of the Essential Components and related Statements of Intent and most of the Sample Strategies) for each of these three recognized structures have been presented separately for this particular Standard. This format is intended to minimize confusion and provide clarity about expectations for each of the unique Chapter structures.*

**Organizational Capacity materials for each of the three structures can be found as follows:**

<b>501c3 Independent Chapter:</b>	<b>Pages 3 to 11</b>
<b>Government Based Chapter:</b>	<b>Pages 12 to 20</b>
<b>Umbrella/Parent Organization Chapter:</b>	<b>Pages 21 to 29</b>

## Organizational Capacity Independent 501c3 Model

**Standard:** The Chapter operates as a membership organization, has established and maintains a designated legal entity responsible for organizational, programmatic and fiscal operations and employs sound administrative and financial practices.

**Rationale:** Every Chapter must have a designated legal entity responsible for the governance of its operations. The role of this entity is to protect the mission, vision, security, stability and longevity of the Chapter. In that capacity, the governing entity is charged with overseeing the business practices of the Chapter, including setting and implementing administrative policies, hiring and managing personnel, overseeing contracts, obtaining funding, ensuring adequate capacity to fulfill all functions, supervising programmatic and fiscal operations and long-term planning.

There are a number of options for Chapter organizational structure depending upon the unique needs and the developmental stage of its state's CAC/MDT movement. Chapters may be (1) Independent non-profit agencies, (2) Affiliated with an umbrella or parent 501c3 organization (i.e., a not-for-profit hospital, a local CAC and/or another not-for profit human service agency), or (3) Part of a statewide government agency. Each of these options has its own unique strengths and challenges and each dictates equally unique approaches to collaboration, planning, governance, partnerships and resource development. Ultimate success requires that, regardless of the Chapter's governance structure, all member centers and teams represented by the Chapter feel equal investment in and ownership of the organization and its activities.

### Essential Components

**A. Chapter operates as a membership organization and currently holds non-profit corporation status within its state, 501(c)3 tax exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service, and has a governing Board of Directors that assumes legal and fiscal responsibility for the Chapter.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:** Having a clearly identified governing entity ensures the Chapter is positioned to legally perform the duties, fulfill the responsibilities and seize the opportunities that are now expected of and available to NCA Chapters.

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter is governed by a Board of Directors made up of representatives from its member centers.
2. The Chapter is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of a mix of representatives from its member centers and community-at-large members. The Chapter may also have an advisory Board or Committee comprised of its member center directors or other representatives of its member centers that are positioned to serve as a resource to the governing Board of Directors and are able to make recommendations to the governing Board of Directors.
3. The Chapter is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of community-at-large representatives. The Chapter may also have an Advisory Board or Committee comprised of its member center directors or other representatives of its member centers that are positioned to serve as a resource to the governing Board of Directors and are able to make recommendations to the governing Board of Directors. There may be a

representative from the Member Center Advisory Board/Committee that serves on the governing Board of Directors in a voting or non-voting capacity.

- B. The Chapter has adopted and maintains compliance with bylaws that address, at a minimum:**
- 1. Mission and purpose (consistent with NCA mission and purpose and with NCA definition of Chapters)**
  - 2. Status as a membership association/organization (*consistent with relevant state law pertaining to non-profit membership organizations*).**
  - 3. Membership: Categories, eligibility criteria, application process, voting authority and process, meeting frequency, manner of acting and quorum for official membership action**
  - 4. Authority to assess membership dues**
  - 5. Board of Directors: Size and composition, eligibility criteria, terms of service, election process, officers, committee and advisory board/council structures, general powers and voting authority and process, meeting frequency, manner of acting and quorum for official action**
  - 6. Board authority to hire staff/engage contract personnel, responsibility for supervision, staff/contractor areas of authority**
  - 7. Conflict of interest and confidentiality requirements**
  - 8. Non-Discrimination practices**
  - 9. Indemnity and Insurance**
  - 10. Process for Amendments**
  - 11. Dissolution Requirements**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:** For non-profit corporations, bylaws are a critically important document that outline the rules established and adopted by the Board of Directors and/or the members, in the case of a membership corporation; and that specify the overall structure, function and method of operation of the organization. Regular review and amendment of the bylaws is critical to ensure that, as the organization evolves and changes, the bylaws remain an accurate reflection of the actual organizational structure and method of operation for the Chapter. Having comprehensive, current bylaws help a chapter avoid undue conflict and confusion among its Board and its membership and protect the organization from random shifts that might otherwise occur during routine leadership changes within Board-governed organizations. Non-profit bylaws are governed by state law, so each state has its own regulations as to what must be addressed within an organization's bylaws.

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has comprehensive, adopted bylaws that comply with state law and accurately reflect the current structure and operation of the Chapter. The bylaws address all of the specific items listed in Essential Component B (above).
2. The Chapter has comprehensive, adopted bylaws that comply with state law and accurately reflect the current structure and operation of the Chapter. The bylaws address all of the specific items listed in Essential Component B (above) as well as additional detail about the activities, structure, operation, etc. of the organization. The governing Board of Directors of the Chapter reviews and, as needed, amends the Chapter bylaws on a regularly scheduled basis.

**C. The Chapter has one or more dedicated staff and/or contract personnel with appropriate knowledge and skills for overseeing all day-to-day programmatic and administrative operations and activities of the Chapter.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:** The basic activities of a state Chapter are diverse and comprehensive and, therefore, require that there be a minimum of one individual – paid staff, contract/consultant, or volunteer – who serves as the primary contact for the Chapter and who is responsible for ensuring effective oversight of all Chapter activity, as outlined in a current, detailed job description. Ensuring that the individual(s) responsible for oversight of the Chapter's operations have relevant, current

**and complete knowledge and experience to fulfill that responsibility is critical for the success and protection of the organization.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has a volunteer who serves in a leadership role on the Chapter Board, overseeing the activity of the Chapter, supporting its Board of Directors and responsible for its day-to-day operations, as outlined in the position's job description. That individual has knowledge of and experience working with a local CAC/MDT. In addition, the Chapter contracts with an individual who conducts basic administrative and grant-related activities for the Chapter, as outlined in that position's job description. Both of these individuals have taken advantage of Chapter-specific training opportunities provided by NCA, RCACs and other relevant providers.

2. The Chapter has a paid consultant on contract who serves as its Chapter Director/Coordinator, as outlined in the position's job description, and answers directly to the Chapter Board. That individual has recent experience with a CAC/MDT and/or is knowledgeable about the CAC/MDT model. As part of his/her orientation upon assuming the position as Chapter Director/Coordinator, this individual has received training on financial management and grant administration, equipping him/her to also effectively oversee the administrative and financial responsibilities of the Chapter. This individual has taken advantage of Chapter-specific training opportunities provided by NCA, RCACs and other relevant providers.

3. The Chapter has a paid Chapter Director/Coordinator who is an employee of the Chapter, as outlined in the position's job description, and who answers to the Chapter Board. That individual has prior non-profit management and grant management experience. As part of his/her orientation upon assuming the Chapter position, the individual has received extensive opportunities to learn about the CAC/MDT model through formal trainings/conferences and visits with the member CACs/MDTs throughout the state. This individual has taken advantage of Chapter-specific training opportunities provided by NCA, RCACs and other relevant providers.

4. The Chapter has multiple staff and/or contract positions, including that of Chapter Director/Coordinator. Each of these positions has specific areas of responsibility within the Chapter, as outlined in their respective job descriptions. Each individual has received relevant training, knowledge and experience related to the duties and responsibilities to which they are assigned. The Chapter has taken advantage of Chapter-specific training opportunities provided by NCA, RCACs and other relevant providers as appropriate for each of its individual staff positions.

**D. The Chapter has adopted and maintains compliance with written personnel policies and procedures relevant to its staff structure, capacity and activities. In the event Chapter staff operates on a contract basis, a current, executed contract is in place that, at a minimum, defines terms, expectations and compensation.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Comprehensive employee/personnel policies relevant to all paid staff positions can protect the security and stability of the Chapter. Those policies should clarify expectations of the organization in regard to its employees and expectations of its employees related to their responsibilities to the organization. For Chapters that utilize contract positions, comprehensive, current and executed contracts are in place to ensure the same level of understanding between both parties as to the expectations and conditions of the working relationship. Ensuring that all employee policies and contracts are in compliance with relevant state and federal laws, and formally adopted by the Chapter's governing Board of Directors, further protects the Chapter and its employees/consultants.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has employee/personnel policies, adopted by its Board or governing entity and consistent with state and federal laws and requirements. The Chapter can demonstrate that the policies have been provided to its employee(s) in a timely fashion and that they are reviewed and, as needed, revised by the governing Board of Directors on a regular basis.

2. The Chapter has current, executed contracts with all personnel that perform functions for the Chapter on a contract and/or consulting basis. Those contracts clearly outline, at a minimum, the conditions of the relationship, terms of the contract, performance and compensation expectations. The contracts are consistent with related state and federal laws and requirements.

**E. The Chapter has adopted and maintains a records storage, retention and destruction policy appropriate to its structure, assets and activities.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Protecting the Chapter includes protecting its organizational, financial and programmatic records, documents and files. For this reason, it is critical that Chapters have adopted policies that direct how and where records and files are stored and protected, how long they are to be retained, and what the process and timeline is for destruction of organizational records. In this way, the Chapter can ensure they are in compliance with state and/or federal requirements as well as funder requirements related to grant records. In addition, establishing and adopting a comprehensive records policy protects the organization during staff and leadership transitions as well as natural disasters.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has a basic policy that identifies what records – physical and electronic versions – are included in the policy conditions, where and how those records are stored and backed up, how long specific records are to be retained by the Chapter and the timeline and process for destruction of Chapter records. The policy has been adopted by the Chapter’s governing Board of Directors.

2. The Chapter has a comprehensive records retention policy specific to the Chapter that directs what records – physical and electronic versions – the Chapter maintains, how and where those records are stored, how electronic records are backed up for protection, who has access to those documents and files, how long specific records are retained by the Chapter and the timelines and process for destruction of Chapter records. In addition, the policy outlines the Chapter’s standard response in the event a subpoena or Open Records Request is served on the Chapter, pertinent to any or all of its records. The policy has been adopted by its governing Board of Directors.

**F. The Chapter has insurance appropriate to its organizational structure, assets and activities.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Protecting the security of the Chapter as an organization and its Board, staff and volunteers as individuals, requires that the Chapter both minimize risk and manage inherent risk by retaining insurance coverage that protects it from undue claims or liabilities.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter maintains basic Directors and Officers (D&O) Liability insurance, which covers its Board, staff and volunteers. That policy adequately covers the organization for the specific day-to-day operations and activities the Chapter engages in. The Chapter does not rent or own office space, nor does it provide any direct professional services to clients that would warrant either general commercial liability or professional liability insurance, separate and apart from its D&O Policy.

2. The Chapter maintains Directors and Officers Liability insurance that specifically protects its Board, staff and volunteers. That policy adequately covers the organization for the specific day-to-day operations and activities the Chapter engages in. The Chapter rents office space where its staff and/or contract consultants conduct Chapter business and, therefore, the Chapter also maintains a general commercial liability policy.

3. The Chapter maintains Directors and Officers Liability insurance that specifically protects its Board, staff and volunteers and includes provisions for professional liability coverage for its staff. In addition, the Chapter owns its own office and training facilities and, therefore, maintains an insurance policy that covers the facility itself and a general commercial liability policy that protects staff, volunteers, training participants and guests to the facility, in the event of an accident.

4. The Chapter maintains Directors and Officer Liability, General Commercial Liability Insurance that protect its Board, staff and volunteers as well as its current facility space. In addition, the Chapter also provides employee health and/or life insurance for its staff members.

**G. The Chapter has adopted and maintains compliance with written financial management policies and procedures that reflect all Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), including accrual-based accounting, and documented review of financial reports conducted on a regularly scheduled basis.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: As the recipient of federal and, in some cases, state or other government funds, Chapters – and/or their governing agency or organization – must maintain compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, including accrual-based accounting, in order to maintain eligibility as a recipient of such funds. In addition, adopting and implementing comprehensive, organization-specific financial management policies and procedures demonstrates compliance with GAAP and provides important direction to staff, contractors and Board members related to responsibilities and expectations regarding all financial matters. Because the governing Board of Directors of the bears all fiscal responsibility and liability for the organization, the Board must routinely review and approve financial reports to ensure compliance with organizational financial policies and procedures and to assess the financial status and stability of the organization. Financial reports should include, at a minimum, a detailed summary of revenues and expenditures for the reporting period. It is highly recommended that regular financial reports also include a balance sheet and a comparison of revenues and expenditures to budget.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter maintains current Board-adopted financial management policies and procedures that reflect GAAP, including accrual-based accounting. Those policies address, at a minimum, how revenues are received, deposited and recorded; how budgets are developed and adopted; who has authority to make expenditures and in what manner; how bank accounts are opened and closed; who has authority to access funds in organizational bank accounts; development and review of financial reports; and the process for engagement of an auditor. The Chapter Board reviews and approves the Chapter financial reports during regular Board meetings on a quarterly, or more frequent, basis. Those reports include a detailed summary of all revenues and expenditures for the relevant reporting period.

2. The Chapter maintains current Board-adopted financial management policies and procedures that reflect GAAP, including accrual-based accounting. Those policies address, at a minimum, how revenues are received, deposited and recorded; how budgets are developed and adopted; who has authority to make expenditures and in what manner; how bank accounts are opened and closed; who has authority to access funds in organizational bank accounts; development and review of financial reports; and the process for engagement of an auditor. The Executive or Finance Committee of the Board reviews and approves the financial reports on a monthly basis and presents the reports, along with recommendations as needed, to the full Chapter Board for review and approval during regular Board meetings on a quarterly, or more frequent, basis. Those reports include a balance sheet and a detailed summary of all revenues and expenditures, as compared to budget, for the relevant reporting period.

**H. The Chapter has implemented grant management procedures consistent with NCA grant requirements.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: As the administrator of NCA sub-award grants and, in some cases, the administrator of other federal, state or private grant dollars, for its member CACs/MDTs, adopting and implementing clear and comprehensive grant management procedures protects the Chapter legally and helps to ensure its continued eligibility as a grant-making organization.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has implemented basic procedures related to its administration of the NCA sub-award grant funds for its member CACs. Those procedures are routinely shared with the sub-award recipients and they

are consistent with all provisions of NCA's sub-award grant requirements and guidelines. The Chapter can demonstrate it is in good standing with NCA in regard to its own Chapter support grant and administration of the sub-award grants.

2. The Chapter has implemented procedures related to its administration of the NCA sub-award grant dollars and other federal, state and/or private sub-award grant dollars for its member CACs and/or MDTs. Those procedures are routinely shared with the sub-award recipients and are consistent with all provisions of the relevant funding agency's grant guidelines. The Chapter can demonstrate it is in good standing with NCA and its other funding agencies in regard to administration of the sub-award grants.

**I. The Chapter engages in an annual independent financial audit process that includes delivery of an official audit report to the Chapter's governing entity as well as review of and documented response to any auditor-issued management letter produced by the Chapter's governing Board of Directors. The Chapter has confirmation from NCA that it has submitted its most recent independent financial audit to NCA electronically, as per NCA requirements and timelines.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: As the recipient of federal, and in some cases state and/or private grants and contributions, the Chapter must demonstrate its fiscal operations are in keeping with GAAP, all related federal and state laws and requirements, and donor/grantor restrictions. Serving as the administrator of sub-award grants for its member CACs, elevates the need for the Chapter to demonstrate compliance and ensure transparency in its fiscal operations. An independent financial audit, conducted on an annual basis, can provide the appropriate oversight needed to reassure funders and protect staff and Board of the Chapter.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter engages an independent audit firm which conducts a thorough, independent financial audit of the Chapter fiscal records, policies and operations on an annual basis. A written audit report, and any related Management Letter, is provided to the Chapter Director/Coordinator and the Board of Directors. Review of the report and, if applicable, the Management Letter, is documented in the official meeting minutes of the Board. The annual financial audit and the subsequent audit report are completed and provided electronically to NCA within nine months of the end of the Chapter's fiscal year.

2. The Chapter engages an independent audit firm which conducts a thorough, independent financial audit of the Chapter fiscal records, policies and operations on an annual basis. A written audit report is provided to the Chapter Director/Coordinator and the Board. A representative of the audit firm meets personally or by conference call with the Chapter Board or Board Executive Committee to provide a detailed review of the report and respond to questions the Board might have related to the audit report and/or the audit process. In the event a Management Letter is included with the audit report, Board leadership reviews the content of the Management Letter and prepares a written plan that outlines the Chapter's intended actions related to addressing the recommendations included in the Management Letter. That plan is shared with the full Board and relevant staff/consultants and related changes are incorporated into fiscal policies and procedures, as appropriate. The annual financial audit and the subsequent audit report are completed and provided to NCA and any other requisite funding agencies within nine months of the end of the Chapter's fiscal year.

**J. The Chapter is actively engaged and in good standing with NCA as demonstrated through its active participation in Chapter-related activities and timely fulfillment of activities outlined in Chapter grant guidelines.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: NCA, often in conjunction with the RCACs, conducts a myriad of activities and events – including trainings, webinars, conferences, summits, legislative initiatives. The purpose of these activities and events is to (1) Provide Chapter leadership and membership with ready access to information, ideas, strategies and opportunities intended to strengthen Chapters; and (2) Ensure exposure to trends, challenges and developments relevant to the evolving Chapter model.**



**In addition, the Chapter, as the recipient of support-grant dollars and in its role as the administrator of NCA sub-award grant dollars, must protect the continued flow of those monies by maintaining full compliance with all grant submission and reporting requirements.**

Sample Strategies:

1. Appropriate Chapter representatives attend all requisite NCA conferences and participate in mandatory webinars and conference calls. The Chapter has knowledge of and is in compliance with all grant and sub-award guidelines as demonstrated by the timely, accurate submission of all requisite reports and related back up documentation. The Chapter is responsive to requests for additional information or documentation from NCA grants staff.
2. Appropriate Chapter representatives routinely attend and actively participate in a variety of requisite and optional NCA and RCAC training, networking, technical assistance and advocacy initiatives throughout the year. The Chapter has knowledge of and is in compliance with all grants and sub-award guidelines as demonstrated by the timely, accurate submission of all requisite reports and related back up documentation. The Chapter is responsive to requests for additional information or documentation from NCA grants staff.

**K. The Chapter has a current Strategic Plan, developed during a process that included input from member centers/teams related to organizational priorities and activities.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Any effort to ensure the longevity of an organization and to effectively and responsibly invest its resources, requires that the organization's leadership engage in an intentional, comprehensive planning process. This process provides an opportunity to establish a shared vision for the organization, identify the priorities of its membership, and chart a course for future activity aligned with that vision, those priorities and relevant resources.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has a Strategic Plan, based on informal input from its membership, which outlines goals, objectives and planned activities for a period of one or more years.
2. The Chapter has a Strategic Plan developed as the result of a comprehensive process that included an extensive, facilitated gathering of information and direction from its membership, related to their priorities, needs and concerns. The development of the Plan also included a process whereby the governing Board of Directors engaged in an assessment of its resources and resource gaps. The Plan includes goals and objectives as well as general timelines and assignments for planned activities to be engaged in over the course of one or more years.
3. The Chapter has a Strategic Plan developed as the result of a comprehensive process that included an extensive, facilitated gathering of information and direction from its membership related to their priorities, needs and concerns. The development of the Plan also included a process whereby the governing Board of Directors engaged in an assessment of its resources and resource gaps. The Plan includes goals and objectives as well as timelines and assignments for planned activities to be engaged in over the course of one or more years. The Strategic Plan is routinely revisited by the Chapter staff and its governing Board to determine if timelines are being met, benchmarks reached and goals realized. Status and progress reports related to Strategic Plan initiatives are routinely shared with Chapter membership.

**L. The Chapter has a written Critical Incident Communications Plan(s) that clearly defines a critical incident and outlines expectations of membership for notification to Chapter and expectations of the Chapter for notification of NCA (consistent with NCA's critical incident reporting policy), and Chapter membership. The Plan addresses, at a minimum:**

1. **Chapter role and communications procedures in the event of a critical incident or natural disaster involving one of its member centers/teams;**
2. **Chapter communications procedures in the event of a critical incident or natural disaster involving the Chapter (*must align with requirements of Chapters as per NCA critical incidence reporting policy*);**

**3. Chapter communications procedures in the event of a temporary or permanent transition of leadership at the Chapter.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Crises and critical incidents – be they human or nature driven – are inherent in the work CACs and, therefore, Chapters do every day. In order to protect the security, stability and longevity of the entire statewide movement of CACs/MDTs, Chapters that proactively prepare for when and how they will respond and how they will communicate with NCA and with their membership (and visa-versa) in the event of a critical incident, can effectively minimize risks and maximize positive opportunities for an individual CAC/MDT, for CACs/MDTs collectively across the state, for the Chapter itself, and for NCA. Chapters can provide vital support, referrals, direction and communication relevant to the circumstances of the crisis or natural disaster. A comprehensive crisis response/communications plan can outline for membership what they can and should expect from the Chapter in the event of a critical incident or natural disaster and what the Chapter expects of its membership when those events occur as well. Because Chapter leadership transition impacts its entire membership and may interfere with the ability of the Chapter to fulfill its obligations, the plan should address, at a minimum, basic communications procedures to be followed for informing membership and NCA regarding Chapter leadership and staff transitions.**

**Sample Strategies:**

1. The Chapter Board of Directors has established and adopted a Critical Incident Communications Plan that clearly defines “critical incident” – to include man-made crises and natural disasters – and outlines the Chapter role and communications procedures in the event of such a critical incident involving one or more of its member CACs/MDTs and/or the Chapter. In addition, the Plan addresses basic, immediate procedures and communication strategies that can and will be implemented in the event of a temporary and/or permanent transition of the lead staff person at the Chapter. The Plan is consistent with NCA’s critical incident reporting policy for both Chapters and for NCA member centers.
2. The Chapter has established and adopted a Critical Incident Communications Plan that clearly defines “critical incident” – to include man-made crises and natural disasters – and outlines the Chapter role and communications procedures in the event of such a critical incident involving one or more of its member CACs/MDTs and/or the Chapter. In addition, the Plan provides a succession/transition communications and action plan that can and will be implemented in the event there is a temporary and/or permanent transition of the lead staff person at the Chapter. A component of the plan includes procedures for assigning responsibility for short-term activities and duties to one or more staff, consultants and/or volunteers and notification of membership and major funders. The Plan is consistent with NCA’s critical incident reporting policy for both Chapters and for NCA member centers.
3. The Chapter has established and adopted a Critical Incident Communications Plan that clearly defines “critical incident” – to include man-made crises and natural disasters – and outlines the Chapter role and communications procedures in the event of such a critical incident involving one or more of its member CACs/MDTs and/or the Chapter. The Plan is consistent with NCA’s critical incident reporting policy for both Chapters and for NCA member centers. In addition, a separate but related policy or plan has been established and adopted to provide a comprehensive succession/transition plan that can and will be implemented in the event there is a short-term and/or long-term, temporary and/or permanent transition of the lead staff person at the Chapter. That plan includes procedures for assigning responsibility for short-term and long-term activities and duties to one or more staff, consultants and/or volunteers; notification to key stakeholders, including but not limited to membership and funders; and implementation of a search process, if applicable, for an interim or permanent successor for the lead chapter staff position impacted. The plan may also include succession planning for other key Chapter staff positions and/or Chapter Board leadership positions.

**M. The Chapter’s current organizational budget reflects a diversity of revenue sources.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Protecting the stability and security of the Chapter requires that adequate cash flow and stable revenues be routinely and readily available to support Chapter activities necessary to meet the needs of its member CACs/MDTs. Dependence on a single source of revenue – particularly given that every revenue source has *some* level of vulnerability – puts the organization at risk. If the single source of revenue for the Chapter is delayed, reduced or even eliminated altogether, the Chapter may be unable to conduct its activities and, thereby, fulfill its mission. In addition, if the primary source of revenue for the Chapter is a government grant that functions on a reimbursement basis, the Chapter may find itself with inadequate cash flow to continue meeting its financial obligations, including payment of salaries and contracts, overhead costs, etc., effectively shutting the organization down. For this reason, ensuring diversity of funding sources is critical for maintaining its operations and for ensuring its ability to meet its financial obligations in a timely manner.**

*Sample Strategies:*

1. The Chapter receives an NCA Chapter Support Grant, an RCAC Chapter Support Grant and has the ability to collect dues as needed to meet any unrestricted funding needs the Chapter might have.
2. The Chapter receives NCA and RCAC Chapter Support Grants, collects dues from its membership, and receives other federal and/or state government grants/funding to support its needs.
3. The Chapter receives NCA and RCAC Chapter Support Grants, collects dues from its membership, receives other federal or state government grants, conducts one or more fundraising initiatives each year and/or receives corporate sponsorships or contributions to support its needs.
4. The Chapter receives NCA and RCAC Chapter Support Grants, collects dues from its membership, receives other federal or state government grants, conducts one or more fundraising initiatives each year and/or receives corporate sponsorships or contributions to support its needs. In addition, the Chapter has created a reserve fund available to cover temporary funding interruptions or shortfalls.

## **Organizational Capacity Government Agency-Based Model**

**Standard:** The Chapter operates as a membership organization, has established and maintains a designated legal entity responsible for organizational, programmatic and fiscal operations and employs sound administrative and financial practices.

**Rationale:** Every Chapter must have a designated legal entity responsible for the governance of its operations. The role of this entity is to protect the mission, vision, security, stability and longevity of the Chapter. In that capacity, the governing entity is charged with overseeing the business practices of the Chapter, including setting and implementing administrative policies, hiring and managing personnel, overseeing contracts, obtaining funding, ensuring adequate capacity to fulfill all functions, supervising programmatic and fiscal operations and long-term planning.

There are a number of options for Chapter organizational structure depending upon the unique needs and the developmental stage of its state's CAC/MDT movement. Chapters may be (1) Independent non-profit agencies, (2) Affiliated with an umbrella or parent 501c3 organization (i.e., a not-for-profit hospital, a local CAC and/or another not-for profit human service agency), or (3) Part of a statewide government agency. Each of these options has its own unique strengths and challenges and each dictates equally unique approaches to collaboration, planning, governance, partnerships and resource development. Ultimate success requires that, regardless of the Chapter's governance structure, all member centers and teams represented by the Chapter feel equal investment in and ownership of the organization and its activities.

### **ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS**

**A. The Chapter operates as a program of a state government agency which assumes legal and fiscal responsibility for the Chapter. The Chapter has a member center Advisory Board. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the governing agency and the Chapter Advisory Board has been executed and contains, at a minimum, the following:**

- 1. Detailed description of relationship between the governing agency and the Chapter membership and its Advisory Board;**
- 2. Process and authority for Chapter decision-making, communication with membership, conflict resolution;**
- 3. Explanation of staff/contract personnel supervision (task and overall management);**
- 4. Provision for payroll/personnel contract, benefits, office space, rent, liability coverage;**
- 5. Provision for detailed separate budgets, financial reporting, auditing and grant reporting mechanisms as well as an accounting system that allows for transparent tracking of Chapter revenues and expenditures separate and apart from those of the fiscal agency.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:** Having a clearly identified governing entity ensures the Chapter is positioned to legally perform the duties, fulfill the responsibilities and seize the opportunities that are now expected of and available to NCA Chapters. A current MOU can help ensure a shared understanding related to areas of authority and responsibility, thereby minimizing undue confusion and conflict between the Chapter membership and the governing agency. The existence of a member center Advisory Board ensures there is a vehicle in place for healthy communication and decision-making between the membership of the Chapter and the governing agency.

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter operates under the authority of a state government agency. An executed MOU is in place and that addresses, at a minimum, those items listed in Component A above, between the Chapter and the state agency. The agency is the legal governing entity of the Chapter, although it may have – through the MOU – relinquished some of its authority and/or responsibility to the Chapter via its Chapter Advisory Board or Council made up of member center directors.

2. The Chapter operates under the authority of a state government agency. An executed MOU is in place (which addresses, at a minimum, those items listed above) between the Chapter and the state agency. The agency is the legal governing entity of the Chapter, although it may have – through the MOU – relinquished some of its authority and/or responsibility to the Chapter via a Chapter Advisory Board or Council made up of a combination of member center directors, partner agency representatives and/or community-at-large members.

**B. The Chapter has adopted and maintains guidelines that have been affirmed by its governing agency and that address, at a minimum:**

- 1. Chapter mission, purpose and primary activities (consistent with NCA mission, purpose and definition of NCA Chapters)**
- 2. Status as a membership association/organization/network**
- 3. Membership categories, eligibility criteria, application process, voting authority and process, meeting frequency, manner of acting and quorum for official membership action**
- 4. Authority to assess membership dues**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Chapter guidelines that clearly detail the structure and operation of the Chapter, under the governance of the agency, serve much the same purpose as bylaws serve for non-profit model Chapters. Guidelines can provide documentation of the agreed upon structure and method of acting for the Chapter and can help to minimize confusion and conflict about areas of authority, responsibilities and activity.**

Sample Strategy:

1. The Chapter operates under the authority of a state agency and, therefore, does not operate under the direction of organizational bylaws. The Chapter, through its Advisory Board/Council, has established and adopted a comprehensive set of Guidelines that, at a minimum, addresses the items listed in Essential Component B (above). Those Guidelines have been affirmed by the governing state agency of the Chapter. The Guidelines are routinely reviewed and, as needed amended by the Chapter through its Advisory Board.

**C. The Chapter has one or more dedicated staff and/or contract personnel with appropriate knowledge and skills for overseeing all day-to-day programmatic and administrative operations and activities of the Chapter.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: The basic activities of a state Chapter are diverse and comprehensive and, therefore, require that there be a minimum of one individual – paid staff, contract/consultant, or volunteer – who serves as the primary contact for the Chapter and who is responsible for ensuring effective oversight of all Chapter activity, as outlined in a current, detailed job description. Ensuring that the individual(s) responsible for oversight of the Chapter’s operations have relevant, current and complete knowledge and experience to fulfill that responsibility is critical for the success and protection of the organization.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has a volunteer who serves in a leadership role on the Chapter Advisory Board/Council overseeing the activity of the Chapter, supporting its Advisory Board and responsible for its day-to-day operations, as outlined in the position’s job description. That individual has knowledge of and experience working with a local CAC/MDT. In addition, the state agency that governs the Chapter contracts with and/or employs an individual who conducts basic administrative and grant-related activities for the Chapter, as

outlined in that position's job description. Both of these individuals have taken advantage of Chapter-specific training opportunities provided by NCA, RCACs and other relevant providers.

2. The Chapter has a paid consultant on contract who serves as its Chapter Director/Coordinator, as outlined in the position's job description, and answers directly to the state agency that governs the Chapter, as outlined in the MOU between the Chapter Advisory Board/Council and the state agency. That individual has recent experience with a CAC/MDT and/or is knowledgeable about the CAC/MDT model. Upon assuming the position as Chapter Director/Coordinator, this individual has received training on financial management and grant administration, equipping him/her to also effectively oversee the administrative and financial responsibilities of the Chapter. This individual has taken advantage of Chapter-specific training opportunities provided by NCA, RCACs and other relevant providers.

3. The Chapter has a paid Chapter Director/Coordinator who is an employee of the Chapter's governing state agency, as outlined in the position's job description, and who answers to the Chapter's governing state agency, as per the MOU between the Chapter Advisory Board and the state agency. That individual has prior non-profit management and grant management experience. Upon assuming the position as Chapter Director/Coordinator, this individual has acquired knowledge and understanding about the CAC/MDT model through formal trainings/conferences and visits with the member CACs/MDTs throughout the state. This individual has taken advantage of Chapter-specific training opportunities provided by NCA, RCACs and other relevant providers.

4. The Chapter's governing state agency has multiple staff and/or contract positions, including that of Chapter Director/Coordinator, assigned to perform duties specific to the operation of the Chapter, as outlined in the MOU between the Chapter Advisory Board and the state agency. Each of these positions has specific areas of responsibility within the Chapter, as outlined in their respective job descriptions. Each individual has training, knowledge and experience related to the duties and responsibilities to which they are assigned. These individuals have taken advantage of Chapter-specific training opportunities provided by NCA, RCACs and other relevant providers as appropriate for each of its individual staff positions.

**D. The Chapter and its governing state agency maintain compliance with written personnel policies and procedures relevant to its structure, capacity and activities. In the event Chapter staff operates on a contract basis, a current, executed contract is in place that defines, at a minimum, terms, expectations and compensation.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Comprehensive employee/personnel policies relevant to all paid staff positions can protect the security and stability of the Chapter as well as its governing state agency, Those policies clarify expectations of the governing agency and the Chapter in regard to its employees and the expectations of its employees related to their responsibilities to the state agency and the Chapter. For Chapters/State Agencies that utilize contract positions, comprehensive, current and executed contracts can ensure the same level of understanding between both parties as to the expectations and conditions of the working relationship. Ensuring that all employee policies and contracts are in compliance with relevant state and federal laws further protects the Chapter, its governing state agency and all relevant staff and consultants.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter's governing state agency has employee/personnel policies consistent with state and federal laws and requirements. The governing entity can demonstrate that the policies have been provided to its Chapter employee(s). Relevant sections of the Chapter MOU with the state agency are consistent with the state agency personnel/employee policies.

2. The Chapter's governing state agency has executed and current contracts with all individuals that perform functions for the Chapter on a contract and/or consulting basis. Those contracts clearly outline, at a minimum, the conditions of the relationship, terms of the contract, performance and compensation expectations. The contracts are consistent with related state and federal laws and requirements. The

relevant sections of the Chapter MOU with the state agency are consistent with the state agency consultant contracts.

**E. The Chapter has adopted and maintains a records storage, retention and destruction policy appropriate to its structure, assets and activities.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Protecting the Chapter includes protecting its organizational, financial and programmatic records, documents and files. For this reason, it is critical that Chapters have adopted policies that direct how and where records and files are stored and protected, how long they are to be retained, and what the process and timeline is for destruction of organizational records. In this way, the Chapter can ensure they are in compliance with state and/or federal requirements as well as funder requirements related to grant records. In addition, establishing and adopting a comprehensive records policy protects the organization during staff and leadership transitions as well as natural disasters.**

*Sample Strategies:*

1. The Chapter operates under the authority of a government state agency and the Chapter's records, documents and files – physical and electronic – are stored, retained and destroyed in accordance with the policies of that state agency. Those policies address, at a minimum, what records are maintained, where and how records are stored and backed up, how long specific records are to be retained and the timelines and process for destruction of Chapter records. The policy(ies) has been adopted by the governing agency and has been affirmed by the Chapter through its Chapter Advisory Board and/or its membership. The policy is routinely reviewed and, as needed, revised.

2. The Chapter has a comprehensive records retention policy specific to the Chapter that directs what records – electronic and hard copies – the Chapter maintains, how and where those records are stored, how electronic records are backed up for protection, who has access to those documents and files, how long specific records are retained by the Chapter and the timelines and process for destruction of Chapter records. The policy has been adopted by its Advisory Board and has been approved by the governing state agency. The policy is routinely reviewed and, as needed, revised.

**F. The Chapter has insurance appropriate to its organizational structure, assets and activities.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Protecting the security of the Chapter as an organization and its staff and volunteers as individuals, requires that the Chapter minimize risk and manage inherent risk by retaining insurance coverage that protects it from undue claims or liabilities.**

*Sample Strategy:*

1. The Chapter is governed by a state agency and is covered under the liability coverage of that agency. The Chapter can demonstrate that those policies adequately protect the Chapter, its staff, and/or its volunteers.

**G. The Chapter's governing entity has adopted and maintains compliance with written financial management policies and procedures that reflect all Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), including accrual-based accounting, and documented review of financial reports conducted on a regularly scheduled basis.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: As the recipient of federal and, in some cases, state or other government funds, Chapters and/or their governing agency must maintain compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, including accrual-based accounting, in order to maintain eligibility as a recipient of such funds. In addition, adopting and implementing comprehensive financial management policies and procedures demonstrates compliance with GAAP and provides important direction to staff, contractors and Board members related to responsibilities and expectations in regard to all financial matters. Because the governing entity of the Chapter bears all fiscal**

responsibility and liability for the organization, the governing entity must routinely review and approve financial reports to ensure compliance with organizational financial policies and procedures and to assess the financial status and stability of the organization. Financial reports should include, at a minimum, a detailed summary of revenues and expenditures for the reporting period. It is highly recommended that regular financial reports also include a balance sheet and a comparison of revenues and expenditures to budget.

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter's fiscal operations are directed by its governing state agency and follow the financial management policies of that entity. Those policies are reflective of GAAP and the reports clearly indicate the specific revenues and expenditures of the Chapter. A process for review of these reports is in place and being followed. Financial Reports, reflective of Chapter revenues and expenditures, are shared with the Chapter's Advisory Board, on a quarterly, or more frequent, basis. The MOU between the government agency and the Chapter addresses how Chapter finances will be managed, monitored and reviewed.

2. The Chapter's fiscal operations are directed by its governing state agency and follow the financial management policies of that entity. Those policies are reflective of GAAP and the reports clearly indicate the specific revenues and expenditures of the Chapter. A process for review of these reports is in place and being followed. Financial Reports, reflective of Chapter revenues and expenditures, are shared with the Chapter through its Advisory Board, on a quarterly, or more frequent, basis. The MOU between the government agency and the Chapter addresses how Chapter finances will be managed, monitored and reviewed. Those reports include a detailed summary of all revenues and expenditures as compared to budget and a current balance sheet for the relevant reporting period.

**H. The Chapter has implemented grant management procedures consistent with NCA grant requirements.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: As the administrator of NCA sub-award grants and, in some cases, the administrator of other federal, state or private grant dollars for its member CACs/MDTs, adopting and implementing clear and comprehensive grant management procedures protects the Chapter legally and helps to ensure its continued eligibility as a grant-making organization.**

Sample Strategy:

1. The Chapter and its governing state agency have implemented basic procedures related to the administration of the NCA sub-award grants for its member CACs. Those procedures are routinely shared with the sub-award recipients and they are consistent with all provisions of NCA's grant requirements. The Chapter can demonstrate it is in good standing with NCA in regard to its own Chapter support grant and administration of the sub-award grants.

**I. The Chapter engages in an annual financial audit process that includes delivery of an official audit report to the Chapter's governing agency as well as review of and documented response to any auditor-issued management letter produced by the Chapter's governing agency. The Chapter has confirmation from NCA that it has submitted its most recent financial audit report to NCA electronically, as per NCA requirements and timelines.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: As the recipient of federal, and in some cases state, funds, the Chapter must demonstrate its fiscal operations are in keeping with GAAP as well as all related federal and state laws and requirements. Serving as the administrator of sub-award grants for its member CACs, elevates the need for the Chapter to demonstrate compliance and ensure transparency in its fiscal operations. A financial audit, conducted on an annual basis, can provide the appropriate oversight needed to reassure funders and protect staff and the governing entity of the Chapter.**

Sample Strategy:

1. The Chapter's fiscal operations and activities are included in the annual audit process of that governing agency and can be identified within the audit report produced by/for that agency. The relevant portions of



that audit report are shared with the Chapter Advisory Board and lead Chapter staff. The governing agency's annual financial audit and the subsequent audit report, or relevant sections of such, are completed and provided to NCA within nine months of the end of the Chapter's fiscal year.

**J. The Chapter is actively engaged and in good standing with NCA as demonstrated through its active participation in Chapter-related activities and timely fulfillment of activities outlined in Chapter grant guidelines.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: NCA, often in conjunction with the RCACs, conducts a myriad of activities and events – including trainings, webinars, conferences, summits, legislative initiatives and more. The purpose of these activities and events is to (1) Provide Chapter leadership with information, ideas, strategies and opportunities intended to strengthen Chapters; and (2) Ensure exposure to trends, challenges and developments relevant to the evolving Chapter model.**

**In addition, the Chapter, as the recipient of support-grant dollars and in its role as the administrator of NCA sub-award grant dollars, must protect the continued flow of those monies by maintaining full compliance with all grant submission and reporting requirements.**

Sample Strategies:

1. Appropriate Chapter representatives attend all requisite NCA conferences and participate in mandatory webinars and conference calls The Chapter has knowledge of and is in compliance with all grant and sub-award guidelines as demonstrated by the timely, accurate submission of all requisite reports and related back up documentation. The Chapter is responsive to requests for additional information or documentation from NCA grants staff.

2. Appropriate Chapter representatives routinely attend and actively participate in a variety of requisite and optional NCA and RCAC training, networking, technical assistance and advocacy initiatives throughout the year. The Chapter has knowledge of and is in compliance with all grant and sub-award guidelines as demonstrated by the timely, accurate submission of tall requisite reports and related back up documentation. The Chapter is responsive to requests for additional information or information from NCA grants staff.

**K. The Chapter has a current Strategic Plan, developed during a process that included input from member centers/teams related to organizational priorities and activities.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Any effort to ensure the longevity of an organization and to effectively and responsibly invest that organization's resources requires that the organization's leadership engage in an intentional, comprehensive planning process. This process provides an opportunity to establish a shared vision for the organization, identify the priorities of its membership, and chart a course for future activity aligned with that vision, those priorities and relevant resources.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has a Strategic Plan, based on informal input from its membership, which outlines goals, objectives and planned activities for a period of one or more years.

2. The Chapter has a Strategic Plan developed as the result of a comprehensive process that included an extensive, facilitated gathering of information and direction from its membership, related to their priorities, needs and concerns. The Plan includes goals and objectives as well as general timelines and assignments for planned activities to be engaged in over the course of one or more years. The state agency that governs the Chapter has endorsed the Strategic Plan of the Chapter.

3. The Chapter has a Strategic Plan developed as the result of a comprehensive process that included an extensive, facilitated gathering of information and direction from its membership related to their priorities, needs and concerns. The Plan includes goals and objectives as well as specific timelines and assignments for planned activities to be engaged in over the course of one or more years. The state agency that governs the Chapter has endorsed the Strategic Plan of the Chapter. The Strategic Plan is routinely revisited by the

Chapter staff, its Advisory Board and/or its governing state agency to determine if timelines are being met, benchmarks reached and goals realized.

**L. The Chapter has a written Critical Incident Communications Plan(s) that clearly defines a critical incident and outlines expectations of membership for notification to Chapter and expectations of the Chapter for notification of NCA (consistent with NCA’s critical incident reporting policy) and Chapter membership. The Plan addresses, at a minimum,:**

- 1. Chapter role and communications procedures in the event of a critical incident or natural disaster involving one of its member centers/teams;**
- 2. Chapter communications procedures in the event of a critical incident or natural disaster involving the Chapter and/or its governing entity (*must align with Chapter requirements in NCA’s critical incidence reporting policy*);**
- 3. Chapter communications procedures in the event of a temporary or permanent transition of leadership at the Chapter.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Crises and critical incidents – be they human or nature driven – are inherent in the work CACs and, therefore, Chapters do every day. In order to protect the security, stability and longevity of the entire statewide movement of CACs/MDTs, Chapters that proactively prepare for when and how they will respond and how they will communicate with NCA and with their membership (and visa-versa) in the event of a critical incident, can effectively minimize risks and maximize positive opportunities for an individual CAC/MDT, for CACs/MDTs collectively across the state, for the Chapter itself, and for NCA. Chapters can provide vital support, referrals, direction and communication relevant to the circumstances of the crisis or natural disaster. A comprehensive crisis response/communications plan can outline for membership what they can and should expect from the Chapter in the event of a critical incident or natural disaster and what the Chapter expects of its membership when those events occur as well. Because Chapter leadership transition impacts its entire membership and may interfere with the ability of the Chapter to fulfill its obligations, the plan should address, at a minimum, basic communications procedures to be followed for informing membership and NCA regarding Chapter leadership and staff transitions.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has established and adopted a Critical Incident Communications Plan that clearly defines “critical incident” – to include man-made crises and natural disasters – and outlines the Chapter role and communications procedures in the event of such a critical incident involving one or more of its member CACs/MDTs and/or the Chapter. In addition, the Plan addresses basic, immediate procedures and communication strategies that can and will be implemented in the event of a temporary and/or permanent transition of the lead staff person at the Chapter. The Plan is consistent with NCA’s critical incident reporting policy for both Chapters and for NCA member centers. The Plan is also consistent with any crisis management/communications plan of the governing state agency.
2. The Chapter has established and adopted a Critical Incident Communications Plan that clearly defines “critical incident” – to include man-made crises and natural disasters – and outlines the Chapter role and communications procedures in the event of such a critical incident involving one or more of its member CACs/MDTs and/or the Chapter. In addition, the Plan provides a succession/transition communications and action plan that can and will be implemented in the event there is a temporary and/or permanent transition of the lead staff person at the Chapter. A component of the plan includes procedures for assigning responsibility for short-term activities and duties to one or more staff, consultants and/or volunteers and notification of Chapter membership. The Plan is consistent with NCA’s critical incident reporting policy for both Chapters and for NCA member centers. The Plan is also consistent with any crisis management/communications plan of the governing state agency.
3. The Chapter has established and adopted a Critical Incident Communications Plan that clearly defines “critical incident” – to include man-made crises and natural disasters – and outlines the Chapter role and communications procedures in the event of such a critical incident involving one or more of its member

CACs/MDTs and/or the Chapter. The Plan is consistent with NCA's critical incident reporting policy for both Chapters and for NCA member centers. In addition, a separate but related policy or plan has been established and adopted, by the Chapter and/or the state agency, to provide a comprehensive succession/transition plan that can and will be implemented in the event there is a short-term and/or long-term, temporary and/or permanent transition of the lead Chapter staff person. That plan includes procedures for assigning responsibility for short-term and long-term activities and duties to one or more staff, consultants and/or volunteers; notification to key stakeholders, including but not limited to membership and funders; and implementation of a search process, if applicable, for an interim or permanent successor for the lead chapter staff position impacted. The plan may also include succession planning for other key Chapter-related staff positions and/or Chapter Advisory Board leadership positions. The Plan is also consistent with any crisis management/communications plan of the governing state agency.

**M. The Chapter's current organizational budget reflects a diversity of revenue sources.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Protecting the stability and security of the Chapter requires that adequate cash flow and stable revenues be routinely and readily available to support Chapter activities necessary to meet the needs of its member CACs/MDTs. Dependence on a single source of revenue – particularly given that every revenue source has *some* level of vulnerability – puts the organization at risk. If the single source of revenue for the Chapter is delayed, reduced or even eliminated altogether, the Chapter may be unable to conduct its activities and, thereby, fulfill its mission. In addition, if the primary source of revenue for the Chapter is a government grant that functions on a reimbursement basis, the Chapter may find itself with inadequate cash flow to continue meeting its financial obligations, including payment of salaries and contracts, overhead costs, etc., effectively shutting the organization down. For this reason, ensuring diversity of funding sources is critical for maintaining its operations and for ensuring its ability to meet its financial obligations in a timely manner.**

*Sample Strategies:*

1. The Chapter receives an NCA Chapter Support Grant, an RCAC Chapter Support Grant and has the ability to collect dues as needed to meet any unrestricted funding needs the Chapter might have.
2. The Chapter receives NCA and RCAC Chapter Support Grants, collects dues from its membership, and receives other federal and/or state government grants/appropriations to support its needs.
3. The Chapter receives NCA and RCAC Chapter Support Grants, collects dues from its membership, receives other federal or state government grants/appropriations, conducts one or more fundraising initiatives each year and/or receives corporate sponsorships or contributions to support its needs. (As permitted by state law and/or policy governing the state agency).
4. The Chapter receives NCA and RCAC Chapter Support Grants, collects dues from its membership, receives other federal or state government grants/appropriations, conducts one or more fundraising initiatives each year and/or receives corporate sponsorships or contributions to support its needs. In addition, the Chapter has created a reserve fund available to cover temporary funding interruptions or shortfalls. (As permitted by state law and/or policy governing the state agency).

## Organizational Capacity Umbrella/Parent 501c3 Model

**Standard:** The Chapter operates as a membership organization, has established and maintains a designated legal entity responsible for organizational, programmatic and fiscal operations and employs sound administrative and financial practices.

**Rationale:** Every Chapter must have a designated legal entity responsible for the governance of its operations. The role of this entity is to protect the mission, vision, security, stability and longevity of the Chapter. In that capacity, the governing entity is charged with overseeing the business practices of the Chapter, including setting and implementing administrative policies, hiring and managing personnel, overseeing contracts, obtaining funding, ensuring adequate capacity to fulfill all functions, supervising programmatic and fiscal operations and long-term planning.

There are a number of options for Chapter organizational structure depending upon the unique needs and the developmental stage of its state's CAC/MDT movement. Chapters may be (1) Independent non-profit agencies, (2) Affiliated with an umbrella or parent 501c3 organization (i.e., a not-for-profit hospital, a local CAC and/or another not-for profit human service agency), or (3) Part of a statewide government agency. Each of these options has its own unique strengths and challenges and each dictates equally unique approaches to collaboration, planning, governance, partnerships and resource development. Ultimate success requires that, regardless of the Chapter's governance structure, all member centers and teams represented by the Chapter feel equal investment in and ownership of the organization and its activities.

### ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

**A. The Chapter operates as a program or component of a separate 501c3 non-profit organization whose mission is compatible with that of an NCA Chapter, that assumes legal and fiscal responsibility for the Chapter. The Chapter has a member center Advisory Board/Council. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the governing umbrella/parent entity and the Chapter Advisory Board/Council has been executed and addresses, at a minimum, the following:**

- Detailed description of relationship between the governing entity and the Chapter;
- Process and authority for Chapter decision-making, communication with membership, conflict resolution;
- Explanation of staff/contract personnel supervision (task and overall management);
- Provision for payroll, benefits, office space, rent, liability coverage;
- Provision for detailed separate budgets, financial reporting, auditing and grant reporting mechanisms as well as an accounting system that allows for transparent tracking of Chapter revenues and expenditures separate and apart from those of the fiscal agency.

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:** Having a clearly identified governing entity ensures the Chapter is positioned to legally perform the duties, fulfill the responsibilities and seize the opportunities that are now expected of and available to NCA Chapters. A current MOU can help ensure a shared understanding related to areas of authority and responsibility, thereby minimizing undue confusion and conflict between the Chapter membership and the governing umbrella/parent organization. The existence of a member center Advisory Board ensures there is a vehicle in place for healthy communication between the membership of the Chapter and the governing agency.

Sample Strategy:

1. The Chapter operates under the governance and authority of an umbrella/parent organization that is a 501c3 non-profit organization (a not-for-profit hospital, a local non-profit CAC that holds membership with the Chapter, or another social service organization that includes other compatible programs in addition to the Chapter). An MOU is in place (which addresses, at a minimum, those items listed in the Component A above) between the Chapter and the umbrella/parent organization's governing entity. The umbrella/parent organization is the legal governing entity of the Chapter, although it may have – through the MOU – relinquished some of its authority and/or responsibility to the Chapter via a Chapter Advisory Board or Council made up of member center directors.

2. The Chapter operates under the governance and authority of an umbrella/parent organization that is a 501c3 non-profit organization (a not-for-profit hospital, a local non-profit CAC that holds membership with the Chapter, or another social service organization that includes other compatible programs in addition to the Chapter). An MOU is in place (which addresses, at a minimum, those items listed in the Component A above) between the Chapter and the umbrella/parent organization's governing entity. The umbrella/parent organization is the legal governing entity of the Chapter, although it may have – through the MOU – relinquished some of its authority and/or responsibility to the Chapter via a Chapter Advisory Board or Council made up of member center directors, partner agency representatives and/or community-at-large representatives.

**B. The Chapter's governing umbrella/parent organization has adopted and maintains compliance with bylaws that address, at a minimum:**

- 1. Umbrella/parent organization's mission and purpose (compatible with mission, purpose and activities of NCA and the Chapter)**
- 2. Umbrella/parent organization Board of Directors: Size and composition, eligibility criteria, terms of service, election process, officers, committee and advisory board/council structures, general powers and voting authority and process, meeting frequency, manner of acting and quorum for official action**
- 3. Board authority to hire staff/engage contract personnel, responsibility for supervision, staff/contractor areas of authority**
- 4. Staff and Board conflict of interest and confidentiality requirements**
- 5. Non-Discrimination practices**
- 6. Indemnity and Insurance**
- 7. Process for Amendments**
- 8. Dissolution Requirements**

In addition, the following Chapter-specific items are included in the umbrella/parent organization's bylaws OR in separate guidelines adopted by the Chapter and affirmed by the governing Board of the umbrella/parent organization:

- 9. Chapter's mission and purpose (consistent with NCA mission and purpose and with NCA definition of Chapters)**
- 10. Status as a membership association/organization (*consistent with relevant state law pertaining to non-profit membership organizations*).**
- 11. Membership: Categories, eligibility criteria, application process, voting authority and process, meeting frequency, manner of acting and quorum for official action**
- 12. Authority to assess Chapter membership dues**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:** For non-profit corporations, bylaws are a critically important document that outlines the rules established and adopted by the Board of Directors and/or the members, in the case of a membership organization, and that specify the overall structure, function and method of operation of the organization. Regular review and amendment of the bylaws is critical to ensure that, as the organization evolves and changes, the bylaws remain an accurate reflection of the actual organizational structure and method of operation for the umbrella/parent organization and for the Chapter. The organization's bylaws provide the "rules" for that organization and outline how/where the Chapter fits into the organizational structure. The umbrella organization bylaws should reflect the inclusion of and the relationship between the umbrella organization and the

**Chapter (as well as its other programs or components) and must include Items #1-8, listed in Component B above. In addition, a separate set of guidelines may be needed to provide the specific level of detail needed to effectively clarify Chapter structure and operation, avoiding undue confusion and conflict related to authority, responsibilities and activity (including Items 9-12 in Component B, listed above).**

Sample Strategy:

1. The Chapter operates under the governance of an umbrella/parent organization that is a 501c3 – a not-for-profit hospital, a member CAC, or another compatible social services organization. That umbrella/parent organization has comprehensive, adopted bylaws that address the requisite items #1-8 listed in Component B above and that identify and allows for the inclusion of the Chapter as a program or component of that organization. In the event the bylaws of the umbrella/parent organization do not address the additional items (#9-12 in Component B) listed above, the Chapter has established and adopted a set of guidelines that further spell out those Chapter-specific items. The bylaws and, if applicable, the guidelines are routinely reviewed and, as needed, amended by the governing Board of Directors of the umbrella/parent organization and/or the Chapter Advisory Board.

**C. The Chapter has one or more dedicated staff and/or contract personnel with appropriate knowledge and skills for overseeing all day-to-day programmatic and administrative operations and activities of the Chapter.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: The basic activities of a state Chapter are diverse and comprehensive and, therefore, require that there be a minimum of one individual – paid staff, contract/consultant, or volunteer – who serves as the primary contact for the Chapter and who is responsible for ensuring effective oversight of all Chapter activity, as outlined in a current, detailed job description. Ensuring that the individual(s) responsible for oversight of the Chapter’s operations have relevant, current and complete knowledge and experience to fulfill that responsibility is critical for the success and protection of the organization.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has a volunteer who serves in a leadership role, overseeing the activity of the Chapter, supporting its Advisory Board and responsible for its day-to-day operations, as outlined in the position’s job description. That individual has knowledge of and experience working with a local CAC/MDT. In addition, the Chapter’s governing umbrella organization employs or contracts with an individual who conducts basic administrative and grant-related activities for the Chapter, as outlined in that position’s job description. Both of these individuals have taken advantage of Chapter-specific training opportunities provided by NCA, RCACs and other relevant providers.

2. The Chapter’s governing umbrella organization has a paid consultant on contract who serves as the Chapter Director/Coordinator, as outlined in the position’s job description, and answers directly to appropriate personnel within the governing umbrella organization and/or the Chapter Advisory Board, as outlined in the MOU between the umbrella organization and the Chapter Advisory Board. That individual has recent experience with a CAC/MDT and/or is knowledgeable about the CAC/MDT model. Upon assuming the position as Chapter Director/Coordinator, this individual has received training on financial management and grant administration, equipping him/her to also effectively oversee the administrative and financial responsibilities of the Chapter. This individual has taken advantage of Chapter-specific training opportunities provided by NCA, RCACs and other relevant providers.

3. The Chapter has a paid Chapter Director/Coordinator who is an employee of the governing umbrella organization, as outlined in the position’s job description, and who answers to appropriate personnel within the umbrella governing organization and/or the Chapter Advisory Board, as outlined in the MOU between the governing umbrella organization and the Chapter Advisory Board. That individual has prior non-profit management and grant management experience. Upon assuming the position as Chapter Director/Coordinator, this individual has received extensive opportunities to learn about the CAC/MDT model through formal trainings/conferences and visits with the member CACs/MDTs throughout the state.

This individual has taken advantage of Chapter-specific training opportunities provided by NCA, RCACs and other relevant providers.

**D. The Chapter has adopted and maintains compliance with written personnel policies and procedures relevant to its staff structure, capacity and activities. In the event Chapter staff operates on a contract basis, a current, executed contract is in place that defines, at a minimum, terms, expectations and compensation.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Comprehensive employee/personnel policies relevant to all paid staff positions protect the security and stability of the umbrella/parent organization and the Chapter. Those policies clarify expectations of the umbrella organization and the Chapter in regard to its employees and expectations of its employees related to their responsibilities to the organization and the Chapter. For umbrella organizations that utilize contract positions for Chapter activities, comprehensive, current and executed contracts can ensure the same level of understanding between both parties as to the expectations and conditions of the working relationship. Ensuring that all employee policies and contracts are in compliance with relevant state and federal laws further protects the umbrella organization and the Chapter as well as all relevant staff and consultants.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter's umbrella/parent organization has employee/personnel policies consistent with state and federal law and requirements. The umbrella/parent organization can demonstrate that the policies have been provided to its Chapter employees. Relevant sections of the MOU between the Chapter and the umbrella/parent organization are consistent with the personnel/employee policies of the umbrella organization.
2. The Chapter's umbrella/parent organization has current, executed contracts with all individuals that perform functions for the Chapter on a contract and/or consulting basis. Those contracts clearly outline, at a minimum, the conditions of the relationship, terms of the contract, performance and compensation expectations. The contracts are consistent with related state and federal laws and requirements. Relevant sections of the MOU between the Chapter and the umbrella organization are consistent with the umbrella organization's consultant contracts.

**E. The Chapter has adopted and maintains a records storage, retention and destruction policy appropriate to its structure, assets and activities.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Protecting the Chapter includes protecting its organizational, financial and programmatic records, documents and files. For this reason, it is critical that Chapters have adopted policies that direct how and where records and files are stored and protected, how long they are to be retained, and what the process and timeline is for destruction of organizational records. In this way, the Chapter can ensure they are in compliance with state and/or federal requirements as well as funder requirements related to grant records. In addition, establishing and adopting a comprehensive records policy protects the organization during staff and leadership transitions as well as natural disasters.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter's records, documents and files – physical and electronic versions – are stored, retained and destroyed in accordance with the policies of the umbrella/parent organization. Those policies address, at a minimum, what records are maintained, where and how those records are stored and backed up, how long specific records are to be retained by the Chapter and the timeline and process for destruction of Chapter records. The policy has been adopted by the governing entity of the umbrella organization and has been affirmed by the Chapter through its Chapter Advisory Board.
2. The Chapter has a comprehensive records retention policy specific to the Chapter that directs what records – electronic and hard copies – the Chapter maintains, how and where those records are stored,

how electronic records are backed up for protection, who has access to those documents and files, how long specific records are retained by the Chapter and the timelines and process for destruction of Chapter records. The policy has been adopted by the Chapter Advisory Board and has been approved by the governing entity of the umbrella organization. The policy is routinely reviewed and, as needed, revised.

3. The Chapter has a comprehensive records retention policy specific to the Chapter that directs what records – electronic and hard copies – the Chapter maintains, how and where those records are stored, how electronic records are backed up for protection, who has access to those documents and files, how long specific records are retained by the Chapter and the timelines and process for destruction of Chapter records. In addition, the policy outlines the Chapter’s standard response in the event a subpoena or Open Records Request is served on the Chapter, pertinent to any and all of its records. The policy has been adopted by the Chapter Advisory Board and has been approved by the governing entity of the umbrella organization. The policy is routinely reviewed and, as needed, revised.

**F. The Chapter has insurance appropriate to its organizational structure, assets and activities.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Protecting the security of both the Chapter and the umbrella/parent entity as organizations, and its Board, staff and volunteers as individuals, requires that the Chapter minimize risk and manage inherent risk by retaining insurance coverage that protects it from undue claims or liabilities.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The umbrella/parent organization that governs the Chapter maintains Directors and Officer Liability Insurance coverage that includes protection for Chapter staff, volunteers and Advisory Board members.

2. The umbrella/parent organization that governs the Chapter maintains Directors and Officer Liability and General Commercial Liability Insurance that protect its Board, staff and volunteers as well as the facility space occupied by the Chapter. In addition, the umbrella organization provides employee health and/or life insurance for its staff members.

**G. The Chapter’s governing umbrella organization has adopted and maintains compliance with written financial management policies and procedures that reflect all Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), including accrual-based accounting, and documented review of financial reports conducted on a regularly scheduled basis.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: As the recipient of federal and, in some cases, state or other government funds, Chapters – and/or their governing umbrella/parent organization – must maintain compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, including accrual-based accounting, in order to maintain eligibility as a recipient of such funds. In addition, adopting and implementing comprehensive financial management policies and procedures demonstrates compliance with GAAP and provides important direction to staff, contractors and Board members related to responsibilities and expectations regarding all financial matters. Because the Board of Directors, as the governing entity of the Chapter, bears all fiscal responsibility and liability for the organization, the Board and/or governing entity must routinely review and approve financial reports to ensure compliance with organizational financial policies and procedures and to assess the financial status and stability of the organization. Financial reports should include, at a minimum, a detailed summary of revenues and expenditures for the reporting period. It is highly recommended that regular financial reports also include a balance sheet and a comparison of revenues and expenditures to budget.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter operates under the financial management policies of its umbrella/parent organization. Those policies are reflective of GAAP and the reports clearly indicate the specific revenues and expenditures of the Chapter. A process for regular review of these reports is in place and being followed. Financial Reports, reflective of Chapter revenues and expenditures are shared with the Chapter through its Advisory Board on



a quarterly, or more frequent, basis. The MOU between the umbrella organization and the Chapter addresses how Chapter finances will be managed, monitored and reviewed.

2. The Chapter operates under the financial management policies of its umbrella/parent organization. Those policies are reflective of GAAP and the reports clearly indicate the specific revenues and expenditures of the Chapter. A process for regular review of these reports is in place and being followed. Financial Reports, reflective of Chapter revenues and expenditures are shared with the Chapter through its Advisory Board on a quarterly, or more frequent, basis. The MOU between the umbrella organization and the Chapter addresses how Chapter finances will be managed, monitored and reviewed. The financial reports include a detailed summary of all revenues and expenditures as compared to budget and a current balance sheet for relevant reporting period.

**H. The Chapter has implemented grant management procedures consistent with NCA grant requirements.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: As the administrator of NCA sub-award grants and, in some cases, the administrator of other federal, state or private grant dollars, for its member CACs/MDTs, adopting and implementing clear and comprehensive grant management procedures protects the Chapter and the umbrella organization legally and helps to ensure its continued eligibility as a grant-making organization.**

*Sample Strategy:*

1. The Chapter and its governing umbrella organization have implemented basic procedures related to its administration of the NCA sub-award grant dollars for its member CACs. Those procedures are routinely shared with the sub-award recipients and they are consistent with all provisions of NCA's grant requirements. The Chapter can demonstrate it is in good standing with NCA in regard to its own Chapter support grant and administration of the sub-award grants.

**I. The Chapter's umbrella/parent organization engages in an annual independent financial audit process that includes delivery of an official audit report to the Chapter's governing entity as well as review of and documented response to any auditor-issued management letter produced by the Chapter's governing entity.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: As the recipient of federal, and in some cases state and/or private grants and contributions, the Chapter and its governing umbrella/parent organization must demonstrate that its fiscal operations are in keeping with GAAP, all related federal and state laws and requirements, and all donor/grantor restrictions. Serving as the administrator of sub-award grants for its member CACs, elevates the need for the Chapter to demonstrate compliance and ensure transparency in its fiscal operations. An independent financial audit, conducted on an annual basis, can provide the appropriate oversight needed to assure funders and protect staff, Board and/or the governing entities of the Chapter.**

*Sample Strategy:*

1. The Chapter's fiscal operations and activities are included in the annual audit process of its governing umbrella organization and can be identified within the audit report produced by that agency/organization. The relevant portions of that audit report are shared with the Chapter's Advisory Board and lead Chapter staff. The governing entity's annual financial audit and the subsequent audit report, or relevant sections of such, are completed and provided to NCA within nine months of the end of the Chapter's fiscal year.

**J. The Chapter is actively engaged and in good standing with NCA as demonstrated through its active participation in Chapter-related activities and timely fulfillment of activities outlined in Chapter grant guidelines.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: NCA, often in conjunction with the RCACs, conducts a myriad of activities and events – including trainings, webinars, conferences, summits, legislative initiatives and more.**

**The purpose of these activities and events is to (1) Provide Chapter leadership with information, ideas, strategies and opportunities intended to strengthen Chapters; and (2) Ensure exposure to trends, challenges and developments irrelevant to the evolving Chapter model.**

**In addition, the Chapter, as the recipient of support-grant dollars and in its role as the administrator of NCA sub-award grant dollars, must protect the continued flow of those monies by maintaining full compliance with all grant submission and reporting requirements.**

*Sample Strategies:*

1. Appropriate Chapter representatives attend all requisite NCA conferences and participate in mandatory webinars and conference calls. The Chapter has knowledge of and is in compliance with all grant and sub-award guidelines as demonstrated by the timely, accurate submission of all requisite reports and related back up documentation. The Chapter is responsive to requests for additional information or information from NCA grants staff.

2. Appropriate Chapter representatives attend and actively participate in a variety of requisite and optional NCA and RCAC training, networking, technical assistance and advocacy initiatives throughout the year. The Chapter routinely has knowledge of and is in compliance with all grant and sub-award guidelines as demonstrated by the timely, accurate submission of all requisite reports and related back up documentation. The Chapter is responsive to requests for additional information or information from NCA grants staff.

**K. The Chapter has a current Strategic Plan, developed during a process that included input from member centers/teams related to organizational priorities and activities.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Any effort to ensure the longevity of an organization and to effectively and responsibly invest that organization's resources requires that the organization's leadership engage in an intentional, comprehensive planning process. This process provides an opportunity to establish a shared vision for the organization, identify the priorities of its membership, and chart a course for future activity aligned with that vision, those priorities and relevant resources.**

*Sample Strategies:*

1. The Chapter has a Strategic Plan, based on informal input from its membership, which outlines goals, objectives and planned activities for a period of one or more years.

2. The Chapter has a Strategic Plan developed as the result of a comprehensive process that included an extensive, facilitated gathering of information and direction from its membership, related to their priorities, needs and concerns. The development of the Plan also included a process whereby the Board and/or other governing entity engaged in an assessment of its resources and resource gaps. The Plan includes not only goals and objectives, but specific timelines and assignments for planned activities, to be engaged in over the course of one or more years. The umbrella organization that governs the Chapter, endorses the Strategic Plan of the Chapter.

3. The Chapter has a Strategic Plan developed as the result of a comprehensive process that included an extensive, facilitated gathering of information and direction from its membership related to their priorities, needs and concerns. The development of the Plan also included a process whereby the Board and/or other governing entity engaged in an assessment of its resources and resource gaps. The Plan includes not only goals and objectives, but specific timelines and assignments for planned activities to be engaged in over the course of one or more years. The Strategic Plan is routinely revisited by the Chapter staff, its Advisory Board and/or the umbrella organization's governing entity to determine if timelines are being met, benchmarks reached and goals realized. The umbrella organization that governs the Chapter, endorses the Strategic Plan of the Chapter.

**L. The Chapter has a written Critical Incident Communications Plan(s) that clearly defines a critical incident and outlines expectations of membership for notification to Chapter and expectations of**

the Chapter for notification of NCA (consistent with NCA's critical incident reporting policy) and Chapter membership. The Plan addresses, at a minimum:

1. Chapter role and communications procedures in the event of a critical incident or natural disaster involving one of its member centers/teams;
2. Chapter communications procedures in the event of a critical incident or natural disaster involving the Chapter and/or its governing entity (*must align with Chapter requirements in NCA's critical incidence reporting policy*);
3. Chapter communications procedures in the event of a temporary or permanent transition of leadership at the Chapter.

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:** Crises and critical incidents – be they human or nature driven – are inherent in the work CACs and, therefore, Chapters do every day. In order to protect the security, stability and longevity of the entire statewide movement of CACs/MDTs, Chapters that proactively prepare for when and how they will respond and how they will communicate with NCA and with their membership (and visa-versa) in the event of a critical incident, can effectively minimize risks and maximize positive opportunities for an individual CAC/MDT, for CACs/MDTs collectively across the state, for the Chapter itself, and for NCA. Chapters can provide vital support, referrals, direction and communication relevant to the circumstances of the crisis or natural disaster. A comprehensive crisis response/communications plan can outline for membership what they can and should expect from the Chapter in the event of a critical incident or natural disaster and what the Chapter expects of its membership when those events occur as well. Because Chapter leadership transition impacts its entire membership and may interfere with the ability of the Chapter to fulfill its obligations, the plan should address, at a minimum, basic communications procedures to be followed for informing membership and NCA regarding Chapter leadership and staff transitions.

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has established and adopted a Critical Incident Communications Plan that clearly defines "critical incident" – to include man-made crises and natural disasters – and outlines the Chapter role and communications procedures in the event of such a critical incident involving one or more of its member CACs/MDTs and/or the Chapter. In addition, the Plan addresses basic, immediate procedures and communication strategies that can and will be implemented in the event of a temporary and/or permanent transition of the lead staff person at the Chapter. The Plan is consistent with NCA's critical incident reporting policy for both Chapters and for NCA member centers. The Plan is also consistent with any crisis management/communications plan of the governing umbrella organization.
2. The Chapter has established and adopted a Critical Incident Communications Plan that clearly defines "critical incident" – to include man-made crises and natural disasters – and outlines the Chapter role and communications procedures in the event of such a critical incident involving one or more of its member CACs/MDTs and/or the Chapter. In addition, the Plan provides a succession/transition communications and action plan that can and will be implemented in the event there is a temporary and/or permanent transition of the lead staff person at the Chapter. A component of the plan includes procedures for assigning responsibility for short-term activities and duties to one or more staff, consultants and/or volunteers and notification of Chapter membership. The Plan is consistent with NCA's critical incident reporting policy for both Chapters and for NCA member centers. The Plan is also consistent with any crisis management/communications plan of the governing umbrella organization.
3. The Chapter has established and adopted a Critical Incident Communications Plan that clearly defines "critical incident" – to include man-made crises and natural disasters – and outlines the Chapter role and communications procedures in the event of such a critical incident involving one or more of its member CACs/MDTs and/or the Chapter. The Plan is consistent with NCA's critical incident reporting policy for both Chapters and for NCA member centers. In addition, a separate but related policy or plan has been established and adopted, by the Chapter and/or the state agency, to provide a comprehensive succession/transition plan that can and will be implemented in the event there is a short-term and/or long-term, temporary and/or permanent transition of the lead Chapter staff person. That plan includes

procedures for assigning responsibility for short-term and long-term activities and duties to one or more staff, consultants and/or volunteers; notification to key stakeholders, including but not limited to membership and funders; and implementation of a search process, if applicable, for an interim or permanent successor for the lead chapter staff position impacted. The plan may also include succession planning for other key Chapter-related staff positions and/or Chapter Advisory Board leadership positions. The Plan is also consistent with any crisis management/communications plan of the governing umbrella organization.

**M. The Chapter’s current organizational budget reflects a diversity of revenue sources.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Protecting the stability and security of the Chapter requires that adequate cash flow and stable revenues be routinely and readily available to support Chapter activities necessary to meet the needs of its member CACs/MDTs. Dependence on a single source of revenue – particularly given that every revenue source has *some* level of vulnerability – puts the organization at risk. If the single source of revenue for the Chapter is delayed, reduced or even eliminated altogether, the Chapter may be unable to conduct its activities and, thereby, fulfill its mission. In addition, if the primary source of revenue for the Chapter is a government grant that functions on a reimbursement basis, the Chapter may find itself with inadequate cash flow to continue meeting its financial obligations, including payment of salaries and contracts, overhead costs, etc., effectively shutting the organization down. For this reason, ensuring diversity of funding sources is critical for maintaining its operations and for ensuring its ability to meet its financial obligations in a timely manner.**

*Sample Strategies:*

1. The Chapter receives an NCA Chapter Support Grant, an RCAC Chapter Support Grant and has the ability to collect dues as needed to meet any unrestricted funding needs the Chapter might have.
2. The Chapter receives NCA and RCAC Chapter Support Grants, collects dues from its membership, and receives other federal and/or state government grants/appropriations to support its needs.
3. The Chapter receives NCA and RCAC Chapter Support Grants, collects dues from its membership, receives other federal or state government grants/appropriations, conducts one or more fundraising initiatives each year and/or receives corporate sponsorships or contributions to support its needs.
4. The Chapter receives NCA and RCAC Chapter Support Grants, collects dues from its membership, receives other federal or state government grants/appropriations, conducts one or more fundraising initiatives each year and/or receives corporate sponsorships or contributions to support its needs. In addition, the Chapter has created a reserve fund available to cover temporary funding interruptions or shortfalls.

## Membership

**Standard:** The Chapter has defined membership categories, eligibility criteria, organizational authority and a process for application and renewal of membership status. Membership categories and eligibility requirements are congruent with and inclusive of NCA membership categories and recognize and reflect the evolving levels of development among children’s advocacy centers and multidisciplinary teams. The Chapter facilitates ongoing networking opportunities among its membership statewide.

**Rationale:** While each Chapter is unique to the specific needs and resources of the state it represents, all Chapters share a common purpose: To support the development, continuation and enhancement of the children’s advocacy center model throughout their state by providing relevant support services to emerging and existing local children’s advocacy centers and multidisciplinary teams.

Like NCA, Chapters are membership organizations and, therefore, must develop and sustain a structure that ensures its member centers and teams maintain a strong voice in setting the priorities and goals and determining the services and activities of the organization. By creating and maintaining clearly defined membership categories and eligibility criteria, Chapters ensure that their membership reflects the current and evolving levels of CAC/MDT development specific to their state and that entities throughout that developmental spectrum have appropriate roles in charting the course of the Chapter.

Serving as the leading resource for children’s advocacy centers and multidisciplinary teams within their state, Chapters are positioned to facilitate statewide networking opportunities for their membership. Through these networking opportunities, the Chapter provides for the effective sharing of ideas and information and the collaboration of efforts instrumental in ensuring the continued enhancement of the model and evolution of the movement throughout the entire state.

### ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

**A. The Chapter has defined membership categories that are congruent with and inclusive of NCA’s membership categories and reflective of the evolving levels of center and/or team development.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:** Having specific categories of membership – clearly defined within their bylaws and/or guidelines and in other appropriate documents – allow a Chapter to demonstrate its recognition of and support for the diversity of CACs/MDTs and its commitment to being fully inclusive of CACs/MDTs affiliated with NCA, and with CACs and MDTs in all the various stages of development inherent in the establishment of the model.

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has one or two basic categories of membership, which allow for inclusion of both emerging and existing CACs/MDTs, defined in their organizational bylaws or guidelines.
2. The Chapter has multiple categories of membership, which allow for inclusion of emerging, developing and existing CACs/MDTs, defined in their organizational bylaws or guidelines and in other appropriate documents.

3. The Chapter has multiple categories of membership that align directly with NCA's categories and related definitions of membership – Accredited, Associate/Developing and Affiliate. These categories are clearly defined in the Chapter's organizational bylaws or guidelines.

**B. The Chapter has an adopted procedure for eligible entities wishing to apply for membership with the Chapter and engages in an annual process with its membership whereby it collects basic information allowing for (1) Effective communication; and (2) Compilation of a current, comprehensive profile of CACs in that State.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: In order to ensure effective, timely and ongoing communication with its membership, the Chapter must maintain current and accurate records for each of its member centers/teams. In addition, in order to effectively represent and serve its collective membership and to advocate on behalf of its CACs/MDTs, the Chapter must maintain accurate, current records that allow it to create a detailed profile of CACs/MDTs within the state. A membership application process ensures the Chapter has routine access to this information and that there is an open, equitable process for eligible entities to apply for membership with the Chapter.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has a basic membership application for all entities wishing to apply for membership that includes current contact information, organizational structure (501c3, umbrella or government-based), governing authority contact information (board, umbrella agency, government agency contact info), CAC total revenue/expenditure budget for current year, identification of official service area (county, city, judicial district, etc. with which it maintains current interagency agreements), description of services provided on site and off site (through linkage agreements) and current status with NCA (accredited, associate/developing, affiliate, none). In addition, the Chapter provides a mechanism for an annual renewal process for existing members that includes an update of all information provided in the initial application.

2. The Chapter has a comprehensive membership application that includes all of the information indicated in #1 above as well as more detailed information about the center, its structure and capacity, its clients and/or its services/activities.

3. The Chapter's annual membership application and renewal process includes the information listed in #1 above and also includes execution of a memorandum of understanding or other agreement/resolution documenting the member CAC/MDTs understanding of membership benefits, qualifications and requirements and demonstrating its commitment to fulfilling those membership expectations.

**C. The Chapter has a minimum of two (2) members – at least one (1) of which is an accredited member of NCA. A majority of Chapter members with voting authority\* are accredited or associate members of NCA.**

*\* On matters over which membership has voting authority, as per the organization's bylaws or guidelines.*

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: To exist as a Chapter – a collaborative effort among multiple CACs and/or MDTs – there must be multiple eligible entities that hold membership with the organization. Requiring that a majority of a Chapter's members maintain accredited or associate membership with NCA, demonstrates vital alignment and affiliation between NCA and the Chapter and underscores the importance of centers achieving NCA Accreditation status.**

Sample Strategies:

1. Fifty percent of the Chapter's member centers are accredited or associate members of NCA and at least one of its members hold accredited member status with NCA.

2. A significant majority of the Chapter member centers are accredited or associate members of NCA and a majority of them hold accreditation status.

3. All member centers of the Chapter are accredited with NCA or currently hold associate member status with NCA. All associate NCA member centers are required to achieve NCA accreditation within a period of five years or less.

**D. The Chapter provides ongoing communication with membership regarding available membership services, opportunities and activities provided by the Chapter as well as those provided by NCA and RCAC.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:** In order for member centers, teams and – in some cases – individuals, to reap the greatest benefit from their affiliation with the Chapter, develop a sincere appreciation for that affiliation, and commit to active participation with the Chapter, the Chapter must clearly and routinely communicate the membership opportunities that exist and the services, activities and benefits that membership affords. In addition, Chapters further demonstrate their commitment to strengthening CAC services throughout their state by serving as a vehicle for ensuring CACs and MDTs are informed and in tune with the activities of and services available to them from NCA and the RCACs.

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter routinely makes phone calls or sends emails to its member centers and teams to alert them of relevant upcoming opportunities for training, technical assistance, meetings, etc. offered by the Chapter, NCA and the RCACs.

2. The Chapter maintains and routinely distributes publications (flyer, brochure, newsletter, etc.) and/or electronic web postings that outline all Chapter member services and benefits. In addition, the Chapter routinely sends emails, newsletters and/or posts to its website regarding upcoming activities of the Chapter, NCA, RCAC and other appropriate local, state and/or national agencies or organizations.

3. The Chapter routinely conducts on-site visits at its member centers/teams during which it shares information about Chapter activities and other relevant statewide, regional or national activities, and assesses possible needs among local centers and teams that the Chapter, NCA, RCACs or other relevant agencies or organizations might be positioned to assist with.

**E. The Chapter facilitates networking opportunities for member centers/teams to connect with one another for purposes of information sharing, exchange of ideas, collaboration of efforts and/or enhancement of service delivery.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:** The extensive evolution of the children’s advocacy center model and movement is due in great part to the generous sharing of information, ideas and strategies that has occurred among CACs and MDTs over decades. That networking has ensured accountability and encouraged experimentation that has resulted in a continual improvement of practice. Chapters can provide effective connections among CACs and MDTs within their state by taking a proactive approach to ensuring the effective sharing of ideas, information, experiences and resources among CACs/ MDTs throughout the state.

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter regularly distributes a current membership roster to all member centers/teams that includes contact information for each, and hosts at least one membership meeting annually which provides networking opportunities among member center directors either regionally or from throughout the state.

2. The Chapter hosts multiple membership meetings throughout the year that bring member center directors and other member center representatives (staff, board members, team members, etc.) together for purposes of networking.

3. The Chapter hosts a list email group or a ListServ for its Chapter members whereby membership can post questions, share challenges and strategies, and participate in an exchange of ideas and information.
4. The Chapter coordinates a Mentor Program whereby emerging centers and/or teams are paired with existing centers and/or teams to provide support and direction for the emerging program.

**F. The Chapter routinely provides opportunities for membership to evaluate Chapter services and activities and provide input related to evolving needs of member centers and/or teams.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: As membership organizations, the primary “clients” or “customers” of the Chapter are its member centers and teams. Therefore, member input provides Chapters vital information for use in evaluating the effectiveness of its efforts on their behalf. Requesting objective input relative to the structure of the Chapter, its priorities and its activities, ensures the Chapter remains relevant to the evolving needs of its diverse member centers and teams and provides a roadmap for the Chapter’s governing entity as it sets a course for future activity.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter includes, as an agenda item at one meeting each year, a discussion focused on the value of current Chapter services, Chapter performance, etc. The input received during that discussion is utilized by the Chapter director/coordinator and its Board (or governing entity) to direct future Chapter operations and initiatives.
2. The Chapter conducts an annual “satisfaction survey” for purposes of inviting its member centers/teams to evaluate its services, operations, activities, etc. The information gathered through the survey is analyzed by the Chapter leadership and used to direct future Chapter operations and activities.
3. The Chapter has a written grievance policy whereby member centers/teams can submit to Chapter leadership any grievances related to Chapter operation.
4. The Chapter hosts a membership retreat, as part of its strategic planning process, during which membership is provided an opportunity to provide input as to which current services and activities should be continued, which should be discontinued or modified, and/or what the Chapter’s priorities should be in the year(s) ahead.



## Growth and Development

**Standard:** The Chapter conducts an annual assessment of served, under-served and un-served areas within its state boundaries, including but not limited to the NCA Gap Analysis, and addresses the ongoing establishment and sustainability of children’s advocacy centers equipped to provide the full array of evidence-based CAC services for children and families throughout the entire state.

**Rationale:** In keeping with the mission and vision of NCA, every Chapter plays a vital role in striving to ensure that eventually every child within its state borders will have reasonable access to the full array of unique services only a children’s advocacy center can provide. In order to do this, Chapters must maintain accurate and current assessments of which areas within their state boundaries are receiving the full array of services, which areas are receiving some but not all of the core CAC services, and which areas might not be receiving services at all. The NCA Gap Analysis, required of all Chapters, provides a basic assessment approach for Chapters that captures this information.

The Chapter’s annual assessment should serve as the foundation for an evolving strategy aimed at supporting the growth and development of new CACs and MDTs in unserved areas, the development of enhanced services by existing or emerging CACs and MDTs in underserved areas, and the ongoing support for sustaining comprehensive, quality services in currently served areas. The Chapter’s strategy for growth and development will and should evolve over time – often based on the availability of resources. However, the Chapter has a responsibility to ensure that the absence of growth and development within the state is not the result of a failure to educate and inform child abuse professionals and the general public about the need for and benefits of the CAC/MDT model nor the result of a failure to seek resources to support such growth and development.

### ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

**A. The Chapter conducts the annual NCA Gap Analysis to identify served, under-served and un-served areas of the state as well as other requisite data included in the Gap Analysis instructions.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:** By maintaining an accurate, current and comprehensive picture of whether and to what extent all children across the state have access to the services of a children’s advocacy center, the Chapter is poised to implement a strategic approach to ongoing growth and development and to provide a solid basis for any related resource solicitation efforts. By including current demographic data in the statewide assessment, Chapters can better ensure that efforts to establish, expand or enhance CAC services throughout the state represent a reasonably sustainable investment of resources.

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter completes the required NCA Gap Analysis annually, reflective of the service coverage area of MDTs, Affiliate NCA Member CACs, Facility-based Non-NCA-Member CACs, Associate/Developing NCA Member CACs, and Accredited NCA member CACs.
2. The Chapter completes the required NCA Gap Analysis annually and includes in its overall assessment (1) Current statewide census/census projection data reflective of total population, child population, racial and ethnic population data, and socio-economic data relevant to all unserved, underserved and served

areas throughout the state; and (2) Current data from its state child protection agency related to reports of child abuse, number of child abuse investigations and/or child abuse investigation disposition information is included in the Chapter's assessment process. This information is readily available in response to requests from public or private stakeholders.

3. The Chapter completes the required NCA Gap Analysis annually and includes in its overall assessment (1) Current statewide census/census projection data reflective of total population, child population, racial and ethnic population data, and socio-economic data relevant to all unserved, underserved and served areas throughout the state; and (2) Current statewide child protection agency *and* law enforcement, prosecution, medical and/or other relevant data related to reports of child abuse, number of child abuse investigations and/or child abuse case disposition information is included in the Chapter's assessment process. This information is readily available in response to requests from public or private stakeholders.

4. In addition to completing the required NCA Gap Analysis project annually, and including (1) current statewide census/census projection population and demographic data as well as incidence of child abuse reports to CPS and law enforcement, the Chapter has developed and maintains strategic projections reflective of what eventual total state coverage might look like: number of independent CACs, related Satellites, MDTs, etc. This information is readily available in response to requests from public or private stakeholders.

**B. The Chapter routinely collects service delivery data from its member centers and/or teams that includes, at a minimum, number and type of services provided as well as basic client demographic data.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Developing a comprehensive growth and development strategy that identifies served, underserved and unserved areas of the state requires that the Chapter maintains a current and accurate picture of the type, quantity and, to the extent possible, the quality of CAC services currently being provided to children and families by existing CACs/MDTs throughout the state. In addition, an effective growth and development strategy is dependent on having an accurate picture reflective of the demographics of those clients that are currently being served.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter collects from its member centers, copies of the statistical reports accredited and associate members are required to submit to NCA every six months. In addition, the Chapter collects this same information from its member centers that do not have an affiliation, and related reporting responsibility, with NCA.

2. The Chapter has agreed upon definitions for and collects from its member centers and team, at least twice each year, basic information that includes: (1) # Children Served; (2) # Forensic Interviews; (3) Mental Health Services; (4) Medical Services; (5) MDT Case Reviews; (6) Ages of Children Served; (7) Ethnicity of Children Served; and (8) Category of Victimization of Children served.

3. The Chapter has agreed upon definitions for and collects from its member MDTs and CACs, more frequently than twice each year, information that includes but is not limited to: (1) # Children Served; (2) # Forensic Interviews; (3) Mental Health Services; (4) Medical Services; (5) MDT Case Reviews; (6) Ages of Children Served; (7) Ethnicity of Children Served; and (8) Category of Victimization of Children served. The Chapter routinely compiles the collected information and, upon request, distributes it to the member MDTs and CACs.

4. The Chapter has agreed upon definitions for and collects from its member MDTs and CACs, more frequently than every six months, an extensive array of data that not only includes but exceeds: (1) # Children Served; (2) # Forensic Interviews; (3) Mental Health Services; (4) Medical Services; (5) MDT Case Reviews; (6) Ages of Children Served; (7) Ethnicity of Children Served; and (8) Category of Victimization of Children served. The information collected is routinely compiled and distributed to member CACs/MDTs as well as public and private state-level stakeholders.

5. The Chapter is actively involved in providing its CACs/MDTS with access to NCAtrak or another comparable electronic data collection and tracking system through which an extensive array of data (based on agreed upon definitions) is routinely collected from its member CACs/MDTs relative to service provision and clients served. The information collected is routinely compiled and distributed to member CACs/MDTs as well as public and private state-level stakeholders.

6. The statewide data collected and compiled by the Chapter is utilized by Chapter leadership to help inform its future training and technical assistance offerings and/or its resource development efforts.

**C. The Chapter has the capacity and an adopted process for responding to requests for information and referrals from communities exploring establishment of a children’s advocacy center and/or multidisciplinary team, consistent with any Chapter-adopted growth and development plan and with NCA’s policies related to service coverage areas.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: One of the strengths of the CAC movement has been the fact that it is a true grassroots effort – with the impetus and motivation for development of CACs coming from the child abuse professionals and the citizens of individual communities that recognize the value of adopting a multidisciplinary approach to child abuse investigation, intervention and prosecution. The Chapter has a responsibility to ensure that when communities decide to explore the establishment of a CAC and/or MDT, they have reasonable access to the information and other appropriate resources needed to successfully pursue this course of action. Communities should be able to easily identify and connect with the Chapter as such a resource. The Chapter should be equipped and prepared for such requests and have basic information, resources and referrals readily available to ensure an appropriate response, consistent with any Chapter-adopted growth and development plan.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has a published telephone number and an email address that is readily accessible via a simple internet search. The Chapter also has agreed-upon response procedures in place for how requests for information from interested communities/entities will be handled. Those procedures include verbally responding to basic questions about the CAC/MDT model and the CAC movement in the state, Chapter membership benefits and opportunities, and referrals to the RCAC, NCA and/or a nearby CAC within the state that has the capacity to serve as a resource.

2. The Chapter has established response procedures in place for how requests for information from interested communities/entities will be handled and has developed a specific packet of published or electronic information that is routinely provided to the requesting party. That packet addresses the CAC/MDT model and the CAC movement in the state, Chapter membership benefits and opportunities, referrals for accessing more information and resources, including contact information for the RCAC and NCA, and an offer of specific follow up by a Chapter representative to provide subsequent assistance.

3. The Chapter markets itself by (1) Making brochures or other printed materials available in public spaces, at conferences and events, etc.; and/or (2) Proactively ensuring its web link appears on related statewide stakeholder websites as an available resource for those interested in learning more about CACs within the state.

4. The Chapter’s follow up procedures – after providing basic information verbally or in writing or electronically – routinely include sending a Chapter representative to visit/meet with the interested community/entity, ongoing communications and support designed to assist with the development of the CAC/MDT, and may include provision of a mentor relationship with a nearby established CAC/MDT.

5. The Chapter has dedicated program staff who routinely make in person visits to communities/entities that have expressed interest in exploring establishment of a CAC/MDT and who are available to provide ongoing support services throughout that development process.

**D. The Chapter has the capacity and an adopted process for responding to requests for information and referrals from existing children’s advocacy centers and/or multidisciplinary teams exploring expansion of services areas, establishment of satellite facilities and/or enhancement of core CAC services, consistent with NCA policies and procedures related to service coverage areas and satellite facility guidelines.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: While assisting communities interested in the establishment of a CAC or MDT is a key role for NCA Chapters, ensuring that existing CACs and MDTs have relevant information and support services available when they opt to explore expansion of their existing service area and/or enhancement of the services they provide to children and families, is an equally vital role for Chapters. The Chapter should be equipped and prepared for such requests and have basic information, resources and referrals readily available to ensure an appropriate response, consistent with any Chapter-adopted growth and development plan and with NCA policies related to service coverage areas and satellite centers.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has the staff and/or volunteer capacity to verbally respond, in a consistent and timely manner, to requests from existing CACs and MDTs in regard to expansion or enhancement efforts. The Chapter is able to verbally provide the requesting CAC/MDT with relevant resources referrals that include, but may not be restricted to, the RCAC, NCA and/or nearby CAC/MDT programs within the state that are capable of assisting with the specific area of interest.
2. The Chapter maintains a physical and/or electronic resource library of sample materials related to expansion and/or enhancement of services. In addition Chapter staff and/or consultants have basic knowledge of, and an ability to readily share with the requesting CAC/MDT, information and relevant resource referrals specific to their request that include, but may not be limited to, the RCAC, NCA and/or other CAC/MDTs within the state that are capable of assisting with the specific area of interest.
3. The Chapter has dedicated program staff that routinely work with existing CACs/MDTs and are capable of consistently assisting them with expansion and service enhancement initiatives, through the provision of specific, relevant training and/or technical assistance.

## Training and Technical Assistance

**Standard:** The Chapter identifies and addresses the evolving training and technical assistance needs of existing and emerging children’s advocacy centers throughout the state.

**Rationale:** Providing consistent, effective, evidence-based services to children and families involved in the child abuse arena, requires ongoing training of the professionals authorized to conduct the investigations, assessments, interventions and prosecutions involved in these challenging cases as well as those individuals responsible for ensuring the necessary resources are available to support those services. Consequently, Chapters must continually assess the training needs of its member centers and teams and, in conjunction with NCA and the RCACs, strive to ensure relevant training and technical assistance is available and accessible for those professionals.

Chapters are uniquely positioned to assess statewide training and technical assistance trends among CACs and MDTs and to identify and access shared resources available to address those common needs. In identifying and addressing relevant gaps in the ability of local centers and teams to effectively ensure ongoing evidence-based practice, Chapters can encourage and assist those striving to meet the national accreditation standards for children’s advocacy centers.

### ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

**A. The Chapter conducts an annual assessment of the training and technical assistance needs of its membership.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:** The training and technical assistance needs among CACs and MDTs across an entire state can be extremely diverse and are always changing as those CACs and MDTs, and the child abuse field itself, continue to evolve over time. For this reason, an annual assessment – formal or informal – of training and technical assistance needs allows the Chapter to plan strategically for how to best invest its resources to provide and facilitate training and technical assistance that is relevant, current and effective in addressing those common needs.

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter informally invites feedback from its member center directors via email or during in-person or conference call membership meetings regarding training and technical assistance needs of centers, including their staff, teams and Boards.
2. The Chapter includes in its annual membership satisfaction survey, one or more questions specific to the evaluation of training and technical assistance services and/or referrals currently provided as well as one or more questions related to training and/or technical assistance not currently offered that membership would find valuable.
3. At least once each year, the Chapter conducts a comprehensive evaluation of existing training and technical assistance offerings to determine effectiveness, relevance and value of those offerings. In addition, the Chapter specifically solicits feedback from its membership regarding current or emerging training and/or technical assistance needs from the field. The information garnered from this evaluation

process is utilized by the Chapter leadership in setting organizational priorities and determining how and where the Chapter will invest its resources in the future.

**B. The Chapter has the capacity and an adopted process for facilitating and/or providing training and technical assistance related to the CAC model and the multidisciplinary team approach.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Because the CAC/MDT model is inherently complex and comprehensive, having access to affordable, relevant training and technical assistance in regard to the model is critical for the success of CACs and MDTs. Providing training and technical assistance, or identifying other resources that provide these services (including but not limited to NCA and the RCACs) in a cost effective, accessible manner, that is cross-discipline in nature, promotes the multidisciplinary team approach and enhances the skills of the various MDT members is a core role for Chapters.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter maintains and routinely makes available to its membership, a current calendar of relevant upcoming CAC/MDT trainings that align with the diverse, evolving training needs of its membership. In addition, the Chapter maintains and routinely shares with its membership, a current listing of resources available for addressing common technical assistance needs of CACs/MDTs, including but not necessarily limited to NCA and the RCACs.
2. The Chapter participates, solely or in partnership with other stakeholders, in the delivery of specific CAC/MDT trainings that align with some or all of the diverse, evolving training and technical assistance needs of its membership and responds directly to inquiries that require delivery of technical assistance information and/or materials.
3. The Chapter has staff and/or access to consultants dedicated to the delivery of training and technical assistance related to the CAC/MDT model. Trainings are provided on a routine basis statewide or regionally and, upon request, trainings and technical assistance can be delivered locally for one or more CACs/MDTs. Trainings and technical assistance provided might include one or more of the following:
  - a. Annual statewide child abuse conference
  - b. Ongoing forensic interview training
  - c. Forensic interview professional peer review
  - d. Multidisciplinary team training
  - e. Medical or mental health assessment and /or treatment training
  - f. Medical or mental health professional peer review
  - g. Victim/child advocacy training
  - h. Child abuse prevention training
  - i. CAC management training

**C. The Chapter has the capacity and an adopted process for facilitating and/or providing training and technical assistance related to the NCA accreditation standards and the accreditation and membership application process.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: The NCA Accreditation Standards reflect minimum standards for evidence-based practice that is proven to be in the best interest of child abuse victims as they proceed through the civil and criminal justice systems and seek therapeutic services that will allow them to heal. NCA State Chapters are obvious resources for CACs wishing to learn about those Standards and striving to apply for accreditation or re-accreditation with NCA. In order to fulfill that role, Chapter representatives should have a thorough understanding of the NCA Accreditation Standards and the accreditation process and be able to directly deliver or provide appropriate referrals for delivery of relevant training and technical assistance related to the NCA Accreditation Standards and the accreditation process.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter staff has basic knowledge and understanding of NCA Standards of Accreditation and the NCA accreditation process. The Chapter maintains and makes available to its membership, physical and/or electronic copies of the NCA Accreditation Standards and links to the NCA and RCAC websites so they can access additional information about and assistance with the accreditation process.
2. The Chapter coordinates a mentoring process among its membership whereby CACs applying for accreditation or re-accreditation are connected with other CACs in the state that have successfully attained accreditation or re-accreditation and that are willing to provide direction and support in this process.
3. The Chapter Director/Coordinator has attended Accreditation Boot Camp so as to be better positioned to provide direct technical assistance to its member centers as they go through the accreditation or re-accreditation process.
4. The Chapter conducts routine in-person or conference call training and technical assistance sessions with CACs across the state currently applying for accreditation or re-accreditation in the coming months.

**D. The Chapter communicates and coordinates its training activities with its RCAC and, if applicable, relevant statewide agencies or organizations charged with and/or funded to provide training and technical assistance to CACs/MDTs within the state.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: The four Regional CACs are dedicated to providing training and technical assistance to MDTs, CACs and Chapters in their respective regions across the country. In addition, in many states there are state agencies or other state-level organizations charged with and funded to provide similar services. Effectively coordinating Chapter efforts in the delivery of training and technical assistance to CACs and MDTs is critical. Effective communication can help to avoid duplication of services that wastes vital resources and can result in conflict and confusion for the emerging and existing CACs/MDTs that rely on all of these entities for support and direction. For this reason, it is important that Chapters are intentional and proactive in ensuring clear, ongoing communication with their RCAC and any state-level organizations or agencies involved in this same work, routinely seeking collaborative opportunities that allow for an effective investment of resources, minimal undue duplication, and maximum delivery of effective, accessible training and technical assistance that aligns with the identified needs of the CACs/MDTs within the state.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter has a current Memorandum of Understanding with its RCAC that clearly outlines roles and responsibilities and methods of communication each will follow in regard to the provision of training and technical assistance for CACs/MDTs within its state. If relevant, the Chapter maintains an MOU or other agreements and/or guidelines with one or more state agencies or organizations that also provide training and technical assistance specifically to CACs/MDTs within its state.
2. The Chapter routinely participates on RCAC Chapter conference calls for purposes of hearing about RCAC training and technical assistance plans and sharing information about upcoming Chapter training and technical assistance plans. If applicable, the Chapter serves on task forces, councils or boards of state-level agencies or organizations that provide training and/or technical assistance to CACs/MDTs so as to maximize communication and collaborative opportunities with those entities.

3. The Chapter partners with its RCAC and, if applicable, relevant state-level agencies or organizations to provide trainings or technical assistance that might include:

- j. Annual statewide child abuse conference
- k. Ongoing forensic interview training
- l. Forensic interview professional peer review
- m. Multidisciplinary team training
- n. Medical or mental health assessment and /or treatment training
- o. Medical or mental health professional peer review
- p. Victim/child advocacy training
- q. Child abuse prevention training
- r. CAC management training



## Awareness and Education

**Standard:** The Chapter serves as a leading resource throughout the state by supporting efforts to (1) Increase awareness about child abuse and the children’s advocacy center model; and (2) Reform systems to ensure improved opportunities and outcomes for child abuse victims.

**Rationale:** The Chapter represents the collective mission and work of the emerging and existing CACs and MDTs within its state borders. Therefore, the Chapter must have the capacity and the resources to serve as a voice for that collective effort with both the general public and with relevant, statewide stakeholders. Truly protecting children from abuse and neglect requires ongoing activity to:

- Increase awareness about the widespread incidence of child abuse
- Increase awareness about the consequences of failing to effectively intervene when abuse or neglect is suspected or witnessed
- Increase efforts to identify gaps and flaws in the current child protection and criminal justice systems
- Increase efforts to support effective reform of those systems

While individual CACs routinely conduct awareness and advocacy efforts within their respective communities, it is the Chapter’s responsibility to ensure similar efforts are occurring at the state level so that the myriad of vital resources needed to support the continued work of children’s advocacy centers is provided. A consistent, shared message being communicated across an entire state can amplify the impact of that message and a Chapter is in the unique position to facilitate the development and dissemination of such messaging.

### ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

**A. The Chapter facilitates development of and/or access to education and awareness materials, including those provided by NCA, for use by its member centers and teams in enhancing public knowledge and understanding of the incidence of child abuse and the existence and benefits of the children’s advocacy center and multidisciplinary team model.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:** Lack of knowledge and awareness about child abuse and about children’s advocacy centers directly and indirectly fuels the re-victimization of children and families, making education and awareness a core responsibility for CACs. An effective Chapter routinely assesses and addresses the evolving needs of its membership, as they strive to fulfill this core responsibility. By proactively working to identify barriers that might preclude member centers from engaging in effective education and awareness efforts, the Chapter can assist its CACs in accessing resources for use in increasing awareness and providing education about child abuse (incidence of, signs and symptoms of, how to report, etc.) and about the children’s advocacy centers (mission, purpose, structure, needs, opportunities for public and private involvement, etc.) in their respective communities. The Chapter also serves as a state-level liaison with NCA and the RCACs, ensuring consistent messaging across the nation.

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter maintains and makes available to its membership a list of accessible resources, including but not necessarily limited to those provided by NCA and RCACs, where CACs can find relevant education and awareness information and materials to assist them in education and awareness efforts related to child abuse and children's advocacy centers.

2. The Chapter develops and distributes sample materials or templates that membership can utilize in producing their own education and awareness materials for use in local efforts to increase awareness and provide education related to child abuse and children's advocacy centers. The samples/templates provided include sample language, talking points, data, etc. relevant and applicable to all CACs within the state, thus supporting consistent, shared messaging across the state that is also consistent with messaging developed and provided by NCA.

3. The Chapter develops, produces and distributes education materials (brochures, reports, videos, facts sheets, PSAs, etc.) for use by membership in their efforts to increase awareness and provide education about child abuse and children's advocacy centers throughout their respective communities that is consistent with the messaging and materials provided by NCA.

**B. The Chapter has the capacity and an adopted process for responding to public and private source requests for information and statewide data related to (1) child abuse maltreatment; and (2) the existence, activities and benefits of children's advocacy centers throughout the state.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: While individual CACs engage in education and awareness efforts related to child abuse (incidence of, signs and symptoms of, how to report, etc.) and about the children's advocacy centers (mission, purpose, structure, needs, opportunities for community involvement, etc.) in their respective communities, Chapters can position themselves to engage in similar efforts at the state level. An effective Chapter needs to ensure it has the capacity and ability to serve as a resource for those private and public entities seeking collective information about child abuse (incidence of, signs and symptoms of, how to report, etc.) and about children's advocacy centers (mission, purpose, structure, needs, opportunities for community involvement, etc.) across the state.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter is able, when asked, to gather data and related information about child abuse and about children's advocacy centers statewide in response to requests by both private (individuals, foundations, corporations, civic organizations, etc.) and public (state agencies, state lawmakers, etc.) audiences.

2. The Chapter routinely collects and compiles accurate, current data about the incidence of child abuse and the activities/services provided by children's advocacy centers across the state and is positioned to provide that data in response to requests by both private (individuals, foundations, corporations, civic organizations, etc.) and public (state agencies, state lawmakers, etc.) audiences.

3. The Chapter produces and proactively distributes an annual report or other publication/production that summarizes the incidence of child abuse and the activities/services provided by children's advocacy centers for child abuse victims throughout the state. The distribution of these materials is widespread and includes both private (individuals, foundations, corporations, civic organizations, etc.) and public (state agencies, state lawmakers, etc.) audiences.

4. The Chapter maintains a public website that showcases current, comprehensive, statewide information about child abuse (incidence of, signs and symptoms of, how to report, etc.) and about children's advocacy centers (mission, purpose, structure, needs, opportunities for community involvement, etc.) across the state. The website is routinely updated and includes resources where public and private audiences can find additional information.

**C. The Chapter conducts or participates in one or more media-related event or opportunity annually that focus attention on the issue of child abuse, the process for reporting and/or the work of children’s advocacy centers throughout the state.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: The media is a powerful vehicle for communicating information to both public and private audiences. Just as local CACs routinely tap their local media to assist in their efforts to educate the local community about child abuse and the services and needs of the local center, so should Chapters tap media at the state level to assist with disseminating the shared messages of its centers related to child abuse and the CAC movement statewide.**

*Sample Strategies:*

1. The Chapter writes and publishes a Letter to the Editor addressing child abuse and/or the services of CACs – perhaps during Child Abuse Prevention Month – and submits it to all major news outlets across the state for simultaneous publication.
2. The Chapter solicits development of, and provides its member centers with, a guest editorial written by a state leader (Governor, Attorney General, etc.) addressing the issue of child abuse and/or the services of CACs – perhaps during Child Abuse Prevention Month - and asks them all to request publication in their local newspapers during a specific time of the year.
3. The Chapter conducts one or more media interviews with major market media outlets, addressing child abuse issues and/or the children’s advocacy center movement statewide.
4. The Chapter meets with editorial boards of major state newspapers and other media outlets to provide information and offer its services as a resource in regard to issues related to child abuse.
5. The Chapter invites media to attend and cover one or more event (statewide awards ceremony, Capitol Day activities, awareness or fundraising event, etc.) that portrays the collective, statewide efforts of children’s advocacy centers throughout the state.
6. The Chapter engages in development and/or delivery of a statewide media campaign addressing child abuse issues and/or children’s advocacy centers.

**D. The Chapter coordinates one or more education events or opportunities annually that provide information for state policymakers on the issue of child abuse and/or the work of children’s advocacy centers throughout the state.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: Ensuring that policy makers at the state level have an accurate, comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the issue of child abuse and or the children’s advocacy center model – including the benefits it provides – is critical to ensuring adequate and effective (1) Statutes and policies impacting the investigation, assessment, intervention, prosecution and prevention of child abuse; and (2) Resources available to support all of those activities. The Chapter, serving as the voice for the collective CAC movement across the state, is positioned to coordinate/facilitate efforts to ensure an effective education effort for state policymakers.**

*Sample Strategies:*

1. The Chapter produces a newsletter, annual report or simple fact sheet outlining the incidence of child abuse and the activities/services of children’s advocacy centers annually and provides it to state legislators and other statewide leaders.
2. The Chapter coordinates and supports a collective effort to have state legislators and other statewide leaders visit local children’s advocacy centers in their home districts.

3. The Chapter coordinates and facilitates a state “Capitol Day” event that includes facilitation of visits by local children’s advocacy center representatives with elected state officials at the Capitol for purposes of providing educational materials related to child abuse and CACs.
4. The Chapter plays a leadership role by coordinating and facilitating the active participation of its centers in the NCA Hill Day event in Washington, D.C. each year in June.
5. The Chapter publicly recognizes one or more state officials who have played a significant role in support of the CAC model/movement through presentation of an award on behalf of CACs statewide.
6. The Chapter has engaged a volunteer, contract or staff professional to oversee public policy initiatives on behalf of the Chapter and the statewide movement. This individual is available as an ongoing resource for state officials in regard to questions/issues related to child abuse and children’s advocacy centers, and assists in tracking relevant legislative activity for the Chapter and its membership.

**E. The Chapter has adopted public policy communication guidelines that outline the role and expectations of the Chapter and of the member centers/teams in regard to state-level legislative and public policy activities and communications. The guidelines also address the Chapter’s role, consistent with NCA guidelines, related to federal legislative and public policy activities and communications.**

**STATEMENT OF INTENT: To ensure the Chapter serves as the collective voice of its diverse membership, ongoing and effective communication between the Chapter and its membership is critical to ensuring that public policy efforts and initiatives are well coordinated and that messaging on behalf of CACs is consistent and in the best interest of the statewide movement as a whole. Without this kind of communication, statutes, appropriations or agency policies that might serve one center well but impede the ability of another to effectively provide for its children might inadvertently be enacted. Agreed upon protocols that outline the role and expectations of the Chapter and the role and expectations of its centers in all matters related to public policy initiatives can serve to minimize damaging cross-purpose activities. A Chapter that is knowledgeable about and following NCA guidelines related to federal legislative and public policy activities ensures a consistent, coordinated approach nationally.**

Sample Strategies:

1. The Chapter conducts a discussion among membership for purposes of reaching consensus on the role of Chapter staff, board, volunteers and membership in regard to upcoming public policy communications and activities. That discussion and the resulting consensus decision are captured in a document that is distributed to all relevant parties.
2. The Chapter has adopted and implemented Public Policy Protocols that clearly outline the roles and expectations of all relevant parties (i.e. Chapter Board, Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and/or Membership) as they relate to public policy communications and activities.
3. The Chapter has adopted and implemented Public Policy Protocols that clearly outline the roles and expectations of all relevant parties (i.e. Chapter Board, Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and/or Membership) as they relate to public policy communications and activities. The adopted Protocols are routinely reviewed, revised as needed, and endorsed by the Chapter. Adherence to the Protocols is a condition of membership with the Chapter.