



ACCREDITATION PROCESS & APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

PREPARING TO APPLY

The National Children's Alliance (NCA) *Standards for Accredited Members and Putting Standards Into Practice* should be closely consulted when completing the Application for Accredited Membership. The application is designed to elicit information from the applicant that will enable the reviewer to determine the extent to which a center meets each standard.

Consultation with your Regional Children's Advocacy Center and/or State Chapter is strongly encouraged before applying for accredited membership. For more information on the Regional Children's Advocacy Centers and State Chapters including Accreditation Boot Camps, please visit the NCA website at: www.nca-online.org

Organizations offering the services of a Children's Advocacy Center may use other program names such as Children's Justice Centers, Multidisciplinary Interview Centers, or something else. The terms "Children's Advocacy Center" and "CAC" will be used generically throughout this document.

Due to the in-depth review that will place during the accreditation process, the duration of the application cycle could take up to twelve months from the time of submission of the application until the initial recommendation form is voted on by the NCA Board. During this cycle, NCA strongly encourages applicants to refrain from any major changes in the organizational/governance structure. Such changes may result in the need for reevaluating the full application, the processes of service provision and the way the CAC meets the accreditation standards. If the requirement for provision for this additional evidence cannot be fulfilled during the allotted accreditation cycle, the accreditation request may be declined.

For questions or information regarding NCA Accreditation, including the application process, contact the Accreditation team at accreditation@nca-online.org.



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ACCREDITATION PROCESS

1. Initial Application (Online)
2. Site Review
3. Decision Making
4. Compliance

ONLINE APPLICATION

The application process is completed in an online application system and will require demonstration of compliance with all essential components of the ten Accreditation Standards. This will include completed responses to all online questions for each of the ten standards, the required attachments, signed licensing and accreditation agreements and the confirmation for the mailed application processing fee (see below for fees).

Applications (both for initial and re-accreditation) typically are submitted a minimum of six months prior to the scheduled site visit.

New Accreditation: To obtain additional information for your center's eligibility, please email Accreditation at accreditation@nca-online.org prior to beginning the submission process.

Re-Accreditation: Members must participate in the re-evaluation process every five years. In the year prior to a center's scheduled evaluation year, accredited members will be notified by NCA that their agency is required to undergo re-evaluation. Applications must be submitted by the date agreed upon with the NCA Director of Accreditation or his designee. Centers may also email the Accreditation team at accreditation@nca-online.org prior to beginning the submission process and request information/link to begin the online application.

Organizational Information Page: The information will be filled out in an online form once you obtain your log in for the online application system. The online form also contains fields for an electronic signature for the authorized agency representative and board president of the CAC.

Application Question Sections: There is a separate section for each of the ten standards with questions relating to all essential components.

Required Attachments: Saved as ".pdf" Adobe format. Attachments will be uploaded in the provided space following the related essential component.

- Documents may be referred to many times throughout the application. Documents only need to be submitted one time and referred to as needed.



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Signed NCA Accreditation Agreement: The signed and scanned NCA Accreditation Agreement will be uploaded and attached, saved as “.pdf” Adobe format. To obtain electronic copies of the agreements, please log in to your online application system account and download the documents under the “Resources” tab.

Signed NCA License Agreement: The signed and scanned NCA License Agreement will be uploaded and attached, saved as “.pdf” Adobe format. To obtain electronic copies of the agreements, please log in to your online application system account and download the documents under the “Resources” tab.

Payment Confirmation: Completion of this section will confirm the application fee has been remitted to NCA. To obtain the Payment Remittance Form, please log in to your online application system account and download the document under the “Resources” tab. Use this form to submit payment by check and mail to NCA, or [CLICK HERE](#) to pay by credit card.

Fees cover all costs associated with the accreditation application.

Programs/CACs with annual budgets less than \$1 million	\$3,000
Programs/CACs with annual budgets of \$1 million to \$2 million	\$4,000
Programs/CACs with annual budgets more than \$2 million	\$5,000

Submission – The online application system allows the applicant to view, edit and delete all, or any portion of, the application sections or attachments up until the time “Submit application” is selected. We suggest you begin the online application process no less than two months from the date the application is due.

SITE REVIEW

After successful initial review of the application, the site will be visited by two NCA site reviewers. During that process the site reviewers will spend an entire day observing the operational process of the CAC, including attendance at a case review meeting, interviews with CAC staff, MDT members, and members of the CAC Board.

- Site reviewers conduct interviews with each of the MDT disciplines during the site visit. This will include MDT members and staff fulfilling roles as Forensic Interviewers, Law Enforcement, Prosecutors, Mental Health providers, Victim Advocates, Medical providers and others deemed appropriate by the site reviewers. These interviews are confidential and will be conducted out of the presence of CAC management, supervisory representatives, and chapter representatives. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in the termination of the site visit, which may result in the loss of the CAC’s accreditation.



DECISION MAKING

The site reviewers will complete an evaluation process that includes review of the written documentation and on-site visit. Once the review of documentation and the site visit have been completed, the reviewer's recommendation will be evaluated by the Accreditation team and presented for approval at the next scheduled NCA Board of Directors meeting which occurs three times each year; January, June and October.

There are different recommendations the site reviewers can make; however, the final decision rests with the NCA Board of Directors.

Possible Recommendations for Accreditation (New): The site reviewers will make a recommendation to the NCA Board of Directors which may include:

- Accredited membership status
- Not recommended for membership at this time (e.g. one or more essential components have not been met). Centers applying for new accreditation, yet do not meet the standards after review, will maintain their current membership status for one year. The center will have one year to correct deficiencies outlined in the site review process. If the center does not correct the deficiencies within the year allotted, the center will have to reapply for accreditation (including fees).
- Accreditation membership denied (e.g. core service is not provided).

Possible Recommendations for Re-Accreditation: The site reviewers will make a recommendation to the NCA Board of Directors which may include:

- No change to membership status.
- Membership status pending improvement (one or more essential components have not been met)
- Membership denied (e.g. core service is not provided).

Pending Status: A pending status is an opportunity for a center to improve and become compliant with the deficient standard(s). A center's accreditation status does not change during the time (up to one year) they are pending.

Corrective Action: The CAC will create an Action Plan outlining the steps they will take to resolve the cited components not meeting the standard(s). Within twelve months from the original NCA Board decision, the CAC will submit proof of compliance with the previously labeled deficient standards. At the discretion of NCA, the need for another on site review will depend upon the corrections or changes necessary. The CAC is responsible for the full cost of the second in-person review.

Technical Assistance: CACs will be encouraged to take advantage of the numerous forms of technical assistance currently available through the Regional Children's Advocacy Centers, NCA Chapters, and National Children's Alliance.



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COMPLIANCE

Accreditation should be considered an ongoing process. Centers are required to maintain compliance of the standards at all times. If the standards are revised in the middle of a center's accreditation cycle, the center must be compliant with the newly revised standards. A signed affidavit indicating compliance is required of all accredited members on an annual basis. NCA will contact all accredited centers on an annual basis to complete this affidavit.

As a requirement for ongoing membership, all Accredited, Associate/Developing and Satellite members are required every six months to submit statistical data to NCA indicating the number of children seen, their demographics and services provided. The deadlines for submissions are July 15th and January 15th. Forms to submit this information are provided by NCA.

To obtain detailed instructions on how to submit this data and complete this membership requirement, [CLICK HERE](#).