

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

Standards for Accredited Chapter Members

Including Guidelines for Achievement of Standards

2020 Edition



NATIONAL
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ALLIANCE®

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CHAPTER DEFINITION AND ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

A Chapter of National Children’s Alliance is a recognized entity that serves the following roles:

- Represents a collaborative effort among members, 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; and
- Serves as a leading resource within the state in regard to child abuse issues and the Children’s Advocacy Center model.

Accredited Chapter membership of the National Children’s Alliance requires compliance with the following Accreditation Standards:

- 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, and 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 ongoing development processes 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, underserved, and unserved areas within its state boundaries. Assessment includes but is 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 improve opportunities and outcomes for child abuse victims.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This document is intended to provide detailed information about the NCA Standards for Accredited Chapters—referred to in this document as the “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 the following information organized into the following sections:

STANDARD: The Standard section includes the broad Accreditation Standard that all Chapters are expected to demonstrate.

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

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS: The Essential Components of the Standard detail the specific expectations for how a Chapter can achieve the broader Standard.

STATEMENT OF INTENT: The Statements of Intent outline why each individual component is important and helpful to 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: Sample Strategies are 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, they should provide a broad and diverse spectrum of strategies that reflect the needs and capacities of the majority of our NCA Chapters at this time and in the years ahead.



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.



1. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

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 this capacity, the governing entity is charged with overseeing the business practices of the Chapter. This includes 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 strategic planning.

There are options for Chapter organizational structure depending upon the unique needs and the developmental stage of the state's CAC/MDT movement. Chapters may be (1) independent nonprofit agencies, (2) affiliated with an umbrella or parent 501(c)(3) organization (i.e., a nonprofit hospital, a local CAC, and/or another nonprofit 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 membership organization and is an incorporated, private nonprofit organization, a government-based entity, or a component of such entities.

STATEMENT OF INTENT: A clearly identified governing entity ensures the Chapter is positioned to legally perform the duties, fulfill the responsibilities, mitigate fiscal and legal liabilities, and seize the opportunities available to NCA Chapters. Should the Chapter be part of a government-based or umbrella agency, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the governing agency and the Chapter has been executed and contains, at a minimum, the following items:

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; and
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.

1. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

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 comprising a mix of representatives from its Member centers and community-at-large members. The Chapter may also have an Advisory Board or Committee comprising its Member center directors or representatives who are positioned to serve as a resource to the governing Board of Directors and who are able to make recommendations to the governing Board of Directors.
3. The Chapter is governed by a Board of Directors comprising community-at-large representatives. The Chapter may also have an Advisory Board or Committee comprising 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.
4. The Chapter has developed and implemented a Board recruitment and retention plan that takes into account relevant professional diversity as well as demographic diversity representative of its state.
5. 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 in the Statement of Intent) between the Chapter and the state agency. The agency is the legal governing entity of the Chapter; although, through the MOU, it may have 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 compliance with bylaws or guidelines that are annually reviewed and updated as needed and which address the following items:

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 nonprofit membership organizations),**
3. **Membership (includes 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/Advisory Board (includes 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),**

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6. **Board authority (includes stipulations for hiring staff and engaging contract personnel, responsibility of supervision, and staff/contractor areas of authority),**
7. **Conflict of interest and confidentiality requirements,**
8. **Non-discrimination practices,**
9. **Indemnity and insurance,**
10. **Process for amendments, and**
11. **Dissolution requirements.**

STATEMENT OF INTENT: The Chapter bylaws or guidelines document is a critically important document that outlines the rules established and adopted by the Board of Directors/Advisory Board and/or Chapter Members, and specifies the overall structure, function, and method of operation of the organization. Annual review and amendment as needed of the bylaws/guidelines is critical to ensure that, as the organization evolves and changes, the bylaws/guidelines remain an accurate reflection of the actual organizational structure and method of operation for the Chapter. Having comprehensive, current bylaws/guidelines helps a chapter avoid undue conflict and confusion among its governing Board/agency and its membership, and protects the organization from random shifts that might otherwise occur during routine leadership changes within the organization. Nonprofit 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/guidelines that comply with state law and accurately reflect the current structure and operation of the Chapter. The bylaws/guidelines address all the specific items listed in Essential Component B (above).
 2. The Chapter has comprehensive, adopted bylaws/guidelines that comply with state law and accurately reflect the current structure and operation of the Chapter. The bylaws/guidelines address all 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/Advisory Board of the Chapter reviews and, as needed, amends the Chapter bylaws/guidelines 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 require there be a minimum of one staff member who serves as the primary contact for the Chapter. This person(s) is (are) responsible for ensuring effective oversight of all Chapter activity, as outlined in a current and detailed job description. It is critical for the success and protection of the organization to ensure that the

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individual(s) responsible for oversight of the Chapter's operations has (have) relevant, current, and complete knowledge and experience to fulfill that responsibility.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. 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. This identified person 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 attended Chapter-specific training opportunities provided by NCA, RCACs, and other relevant providers.
2. 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. This identified person has prior nonprofit management and grant management experience. As part of his/her orientation upon assuming the Chapter position, the individual has received extensive education on the CAC/MDT model through formal trainings/conferences and visits with the Member CACs/MDTs throughout the state. This individual has attended Chapter-specific training opportunities provided by NCA, RCACs, and other relevant providers.
3. 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 his/her respective job description. All staff/personnel have received relevant training, knowledge, and experience related to the duties and responsibilities to which they are assigned. Staff/personnel have attended Chapter-specific training opportunities provided by NCA, RCACs, and other relevant providers as appropriate for each individual staff position.

D. The Chapter has adopted and maintains compliance with written personnel policies and procedures relevant to its staff structure, capacity, and activities. These policies address all state and federal Equal Employment Opportunity regulations. 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, and addresses state and federal regulations related to contract employment.

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 regarding 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. In addition, all relevant state and federal Equal Employment Opportunity regulations should be addressed within the Chapter's written personnel policies to protect the Chapter as well as its employees/consultants.

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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 employees/personnel in a timely fashion and that the policies are reviewed on a regular basis and revised as needed by the governing Board of Directors.
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, and performance and compensation expectations. The contracts are consistent with related state and federal laws and requirements.
3. In addition to having employee/personnel policies, the Chapter has developed and implemented a hiring plan that includes building staff competencies to address and remove biases; diversity recruitment strategies to expand the recruiting pool; and support and services to retain new recruits, including but not limited to mentorship opportunities.

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 it follows 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 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 timeline 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 its records. The policy has been adopted by its governing Board of Directors.

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F. The Chapter has at a minimum, directors and officers liability coverage and/or 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, contracted personnel, and volunteers as individuals requires that the Chapter both minimizes risk and manages 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 its specific day-to-day operations and activities. 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 umbrella/parent organization that governs the Chapter maintains directors and officers liability and general commercial liability insurance that protects 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.
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. The Chapter rents or owns its own office and training facilities and, therefore, maintains an insurance policy that covers the facility itself. Additionally, the Chapter maintains 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 officers liability and 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.
5. 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 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 at a minimum on a quarterly 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 GAAP, including accrual-based accounting and documented review of financial reports, to maintain eligibility as a recipient of such funds. In addition, Chapters should adopt and implement comprehensive, organization-specific financial management policies and procedures to demonstrate compliance with GAAP and provide

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important direction to staff, contractors, and Board members related to responsibilities and expectations regarding all financial matters. The Board must review and approve financial reports on a quarterly basis 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, as well as a balance sheet and a comparison of revenues and expenditures to the 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; the 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; the 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 the budget, for the relevant reporting period.
3. 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. 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.
4. 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

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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 the budget and a current balance sheet, for the relevant reporting period.

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

STATEMENT OF INTENT: The Chapter is the administrator of NCA grants and, in some cases, 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 grant funds for its Member CACs. Those procedures are routinely shared with the subaward recipients and they are consistent with all provisions of NCA's grant requirements and guidelines. The Chapter can demonstrate it is in good standing with NCA regarding the stipulations of its Chapter support grant and of the administration of the grants.
2. The Chapter and its governing agency have implemented basic procedures related to the administration of NCA grants for its Member CACs. Those procedures are routinely shared with the recipients and they are consistent with all provisions of NCA's and DOJ's grant requirements. The Chapter can demonstrate it is in good standing with NCA regarding the stipulations of its Chapter support grant and administration of the subaward grants if applicable.

I. The Chapter and/or its governing agency 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 provides its annual audit, and any accompanying management letter, to NCA on an annual basis per NCA requirements and timelines.

STATEMENT OF INTENT: As the recipient of federal, state, and/or private grants and contributions, the Chapter must demonstrate that its fiscal operations are in keeping with GAAP, all related federal and state laws and requirements, and donor/grantor restrictions. An independent financial audit, conducted on an annual basis, can provide the appropriate oversight needed to reassure funders, as well as protect Chapter staff and Board members.

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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 in person or by conference call with the Chapter Board or Board Executive Committee to provide a detailed review of the report and respond to potential questions from the Board 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 to address 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.
3. 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 engaged and in good standing with NCA and demonstrates active participation in Chapter-related activities and timely fulfillment of activities outlined in NCA Chapter "Good Standing" policies and grant guidelines.

STATEMENT OF INTENT: NCA conducts a myriad of activities and events—including but not limited to trainings, webinars, conferences, summits, and 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 order to continue access to NCA Chapter Member benefits and services, the Chapter must continue to maintain status as a Member "in good standing" with NCA.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. Appropriate Chapter representatives attend all requisite NCA conferences and participate in mandatory webinars and conference calls to continue access to NCA Chapter Member benefits and services. The

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Chapter must continue to maintain status as a Member “in good standing” with NCA. In addition, the Chapter, as the recipient of support-grant dollars and in its role as the administrator of NCA grant dollars, must protect the continued flow of those monies by maintaining full compliance with all grant submission and reporting requirements. 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 trainings, networking, technical assistance, and advocacy initiatives throughout the year. The Chapter is current with payment of annual membership dues and submission of reporting requirements and can demonstrate successful completion of all license and/or accreditation agreements. The Chapter is responsive to requests for additional information or documentation from NCA grants staff.

K. The Chapter has a current Strategic Plan, with evidence of implementation, developed through a process that includes input from Member centers/teams related to organizational priorities and activities. The Strategic Plan aligns with the Chapter’s growth and development strategies.

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 the vision, priorities, and relevant resources. The Strategic Plan aligns with the Chapter’s growth and development strategies.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. The Chapter has a Strategic Plan developed as the result an extensive facilitated gathering of information and direction from its membership related to their priorities, needs, and concerns. The development of the plan also includes a process whereby the governing Board of Directors/Advisory Board engages 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 over the course of one or more years.
2. The Chapter has a Strategic Plan developed as the result of an extensive, facilitated gathering of information and direction from its membership related to their priorities, needs, and concerns. The development of the plan also includes a process whereby the governing Board of Directors/Advisory Board engages in an assessment of its resources and resource gaps. The plan includes goals and objectives as well as timelines and assignments for planned activities 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, benchmarks, and goals are being met. Status and progress reports related to Strategic Plan initiatives are routinely shared with Chapter membership.

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L. The Chapter has a written Critical Incident Plan that clearly defines a critical incident and outlines expectations of membership for notification to the Chapter as well as expectations of the Chapter for notifying its membership and NCA (consistent with NCA’s critical incident reporting policy). The plan addresses, at a minimum the following roles and procedures:

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

STATEMENT OF INTENT: Crises and critical incidents are inherent in the work of CACs. 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 communicate with NCA and with their membership 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.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. The Chapter has established and adopted a Critical Incident Communications Plan that clearly defines “critical incident.” The plan 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.
2. The Chapter has established and adopted a comprehensive Critical Incident Plan that clearly defines “critical incident.” The plan 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. It also includes Chapter technical assistance materials for local Member centers involved in critical incidents (e.g. sample press releases, temporary facility/staffing practices, etc.).

M. The Chapter’s current organizational budget reflects a diversity of revenue sources, including more than one funding source, and reflects the priorities of the Chapter’s Strategic Plan.

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 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. If the primary source of

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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. Ensuring diversity of funding sources is critical for maintaining operations and for ensuring the Chapter's ability to meet its financial obligations in a timely manner.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. The Chapter receives an NCA Chapter Support Grant and can collect dues as needed to meet any unrestricted funding needs the Chapter might have. The Chapter's funding structure is addressed in and aligns with its Strategic Plan.
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. The Chapter's funding structure is addressed in and aligns with its Strategic Plan.
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. The Chapter's funding structure is addressed in and aligns with its Strategic Plan.
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. The Chapter's funding structure is addressed in and aligns with its Strategic Plan.

N. The Chapter has a written Succession Plan to ensure the orderly transition and continuance of operations during any leadership transition.

STATEMENT OF INTENT: A Succession Plan assists in safeguarding the Chapter against unplanned or unexpected change. This kind of plan is equally helpful in facilitating a smooth transition when leadership change is predictable and planned. A Succession Plan outlines a leadership development and emergency succession plan for the Chapter and reflects its commitment to sustaining a healthy functioning organization. The plan should be developed specific to the uniqueness of the chapter, and include, at a minimum:

- Temporary staffing strategies,
- Long-term and/or permanent leadership replacement procedures,
- Cross-training plans,
- Financial considerations, and
- Communication plans.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. The Chapter's Succession Plan provides basic, immediate procedures and communication strategies to be implemented in the event of a temporary and/or permanent transition of the lead staff person at the Chapter.

1. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

2. The Chapter's Succession Plan provides a succession/transition communications and action plan to be implemented in the event of 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 members, consultants, and/or volunteers, as well as for notifying membership and major funders.
3. The Chapter has adopted a comprehensive Succession/Transition Plan to be implemented in the event of a short-term and/or long-term, temporary, and/or permanent transition of the lead staff person at the Chapter. The plan includes procedures for assigning responsibility for short-term and long-term activities and duties to one or more staff members, consultants, and/or volunteers; notifying key stakeholders, including but not limited to membership and funders; and implementing 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.

O. The Chapter has adopted an organizational policy designed and intended to minimize the impact of potential conflicts of interest and/or of loyalty.

STATEMENT OF INTENT: Potential conflicts of interest may arise when Advisory Board members are also Member center directors. Often, these conflicts have more to do with a “duality of interests” than a financial conflict. A Conflict Policy serves to raise awareness, encourage disclosure and discussion of anything that may be a conflict, and constantly encourage a “culture of candor.” An open discussion of potential conflicts should occur when necessary and a process should be established to minimize conflicts when possible.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. The Chapter's Conflict Policy addresses basic, immediate procedures for addressing and managing conflicts of interest. A component of the policy may include examples (e.g., a Board member may abstain from voting on a specific issue if that member's personal interests, or those of a respective CAC, will conflict with those of the Chapter).
2. The Chapter's Conflict Policy provides comprehensive policies and procedures for managing conflicts of interest. These policies include the documentation of conflicts of interest at meetings, voting procedures when conflicts arise, the duty to disclose conflicts, identification of outside interest conflicts, identification of financial conflicts, and identification of other potential conflicts as they arise. This policy is signed by all Board members with voting/influencing authority.



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 inclusive of NCA membership categories and recognize and reflect varying levels of development among Children’s Advocacy Centers and multidisciplinary teams. The Chapter facilitates ongoing networking opportunities among its membership statewide.



2. MEMBERSHIP

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 their Member centers and teams maintain a strong voice in setting the priorities and goals and in 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 within their state.

Serving as the leading resource for Children's Advocacy Centers and multidisciplinary teams within their states, Chapters are positioned to facilitate statewide networking opportunities for their membership. Through these networking opportunities, Chapters provide 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, at a minimum, 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 its bylaws and/or appropriate documents signifies a Chapter's recognition of, and support for, the diversity of CACs/MDTs. It also demonstrates a Chapter's commitment to being fully inclusive of CACs/MDTs affiliated with NCA, and with CACs and MDTs in each of the various stages of development inherent in the establishment of the model.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. The Chapter has basic categories of membership, which allow for inclusion of both emerging and existing CACs/MDTs. These categories are clearly defined in the Chapter's organizational bylaws or guidelines.
2. The Chapter has multiple categories of membership, which allow for inclusion of emerging, developing, and existing CACs/MDTs. These categories are clearly defined in the Chapter's 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. These categories are clearly defined in the Chapter's organizational bylaws or guidelines.

2. MEMBERSHIP

4. The Chapter has identified and adopted, in addition to NCA categories, additional membership categories intended to be inclusive and respectful of unique populations, such as tribal programs, within their state.

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 and 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. 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 (501(c)(3), umbrella, or government-based), governing authority contact information (Board, umbrella agency, or government agency contact information), CAC total revenue/expenditure budget for the 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, or 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 and renewal process that includes all of the information indicated in Sample Strategy #1, as well as more detailed information about the center, its structure and capacity, its clients, and/or its services/activities.
3. The Chapter has a comprehensive membership application and renewal process that include all of the information listed in Sample Strategy #1 and also includes execution of a memorandum of understanding or other agreement/resolution documenting the Member CAC/MDT's understanding of membership benefits, qualifications, and requirements, as well as its commitment to fulfilling those membership expectations.

2. MEMBERSHIP

C. The Chapter has a minimum of two Members—at least one of which is an Accredited Member of NCA. A majority of Chapter Members with voting authority have membership status with NCA.

STATEMENT OF INTENT: To exist as a Chapter—a collaborative network 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 membership with NCA demonstrates vital alignment and affiliation between NCA and the Chapter and underscores the importance of centers achieving NCA membership status.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. At least 50 percent of the Chapter’s Member centers are Members of NCA.
2. A significant majority of the Chapter Member centers are Members of NCA, and a majority of them hold accreditation status.
3. All Member centers of the Chapter are Members of NCA.

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: Chapters must clearly and routinely communicate membership opportunities services, activities, and benefits that membership affords in order for Member CACs/MDTs to reap the greatest benefit from their affiliation with the Chapter. 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 up to date with the activities and services available to them from NCA and the RCACs.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. The Chapter routinely makes phone calls and/or sends emails to its Member CACs/MDTs 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 updates 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 CACs/MDTs during which it shares information regarding 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.

2. MEMBERSHIP

E. The Chapter facilitates networking opportunities for its Members 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 annually distributes a current membership roster and contact information sheet to all Member centers/teams, and hosts at least one annual membership meeting 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 annually provides opportunities for membership to evaluate Chapter services and activities and provide input related to the evolving needs of Member centers and/or teams.

STATEMENT OF INTENT: As a membership organization, the primary “clients” or “customers” of a Chapter are its Members. Member feedback provides a Chapter with vital information for use in evaluating the effectiveness of its efforts on the behalf of Member centers/teams. Requesting objective input ensures a 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. MEMBERSHIP

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

The Chapter develops, adopts, and implements a formal, comprehensive, statewide Growth and Development Strategy that includes establishment, development, and sustainability of Children's Advocacy Centers equipped to provide the full array of evidence-informed CAC services for children and families throughout the entire state.



3. GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Rationale

In keeping with the mission and vision of NCA, every Chapter plays a vital role in striving to ensure that every child within its state has reasonable access to the full array of unique services that only a Children's Advocacy Center can provide. Chapters must maintain accurate and current assessments of which areas within their state 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 that captures this information.

The Chapter's Growth and Development Strategy should serve as the foundation for supporting (1) the growth and development of new CACs and MDTs in unserved areas, (2) the development of enhanced services by existing or emerging CACs and MDTs in underserved areas, (3) the ongoing, comprehensive, quality services in currently served areas, and (4) the identification and inclusion of demographic populations in all areas to increase access to quality CAC services. The Chapter's Strategy for growth and development will, and should, evolve over time based on the availability of resources. Moreover, 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 child abuse professionals and/or the public about the need for and benefits of the CAC/MDT model, nor is it the result of a failure to seek resources to support such growth and development.

Essential Components

- A. The Chapter conducts an annual assessment of gaps in CAC/MDT service coverage within the state which includes relevant state-specific statistics and data relative to local demographics and child welfare. This assessment is inclusive of the requisite NCA Gap Analysis.**

STATEMENT OF INTENT: By maintaining an accurate, current, and comprehensive assessment of the extent to which all children across the state have access to the full array of CAC services, 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 the full array CAC services throughout the state represent a reasonably sustainable investment of resources.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. The Chapter completes the required NCA Gap Analysis annually based upon 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 socioeconomic data relevant to all unserved, underserved, and served areas throughout the state; and (2) current data from its statewide child protection agency

3. GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

related to reports of child abuse, number of child abuse investigations, and/or child abuse investigation disposition information. This information is readily available in response to requests from public or private stakeholders.

3. The Chapter completes the required NCA Gap Analysis project annually and includes in its overall assessment all census/census projection data and relevant data from CPS identified in Sample Strategy #2. Additionally, the Chapter has compiled 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. This information is readily available in response to requests from public or private stakeholders.
4. The Chapter completes the required NCA Gap Analysis project annually and includes in its overall assessment all census/census projection data and relevant data from CPS identified in Sample Strategy #2. Additionally, the Chapter has developed and maintains strategic projections reflective of what future total state coverage might look like, including 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 collects service delivery data from its members twice a year to include, at a minimum, number and type of services provided as well as basic client demographic data. The Chapter utilizes this data to inform its Growth and Development Strategy.

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 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 that Accredited and Associate Members are required to submit to NCA every six months as part of their grant requirements. Moreover, the Chapter collects this same information from its Member centers that do not have affiliation or reporting responsibility with NCA.
2. The Chapter has agreed upon definitions for, and collects from its Member centers and teams, basic information that includes (1) number of children served, (2) number of forensic interviews, (3) mental health services provided, (4) medical services provided, (5) MDT case reviews, (6) ages of children served, (7) ethnicity of children served, and (8) category of victimization of children served. Information is collected every six months.

3. GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

3. The Chapter has agreed upon definitions for, and collects from its Member centers and teams, information that includes, but is not limited to, (1) number of children served, (2) number of forensic interviews, (3) mental health services provided, (4) medical services provided, (5) MDT case reviews, (6) ages of children served, (7) ethnicity of children served, and (8) category of victimization of children served. Information is collected at a minimum of every six months. 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 centers and teams, an extensive array of information that not only includes, but exceeds, (1) number of children served, (2) number of forensic interviews, (3) mental health services provided, (4) medical services provided, (5) MDT case reviews, (6) ages of children served, (7) ethnicity of children served, and (8) category of victimization of children served. Information is collected at a minimum of every six months. The Chapter routinely compiles and distributes the collected information to Member CACs/MDTs and 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 and public and private state-level stakeholders.
6. The Chapter has developed and adopted specific definitions for a CAC's designated service area to identify the geographic area for which it has responsibility to provide the full array of CAC services versus individual services provided on a case-by-case basis, upon request.
7. The Chapter has developed and implemented methodology for collecting and compiling (1) data reflective of service delivery and client demographic information, and (2) contextual data that indicates what percentage of the children within a center's designated service area—and who meet the center's specific case criteria—actually have access to, and are being provided with, the full array of recommended services relevant to their needs and their case.
8. 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 an adopted growth and development plan which outlines the following processes and policies:

1. **Processes and policies for the Chapter response to the needs of communities exploring the establishment of a Children's Advocacy Center and/or multidisciplinary team; and**
2. **Processes and policies for the chapter response to the needs of existing Children's Advocacy Centers and/or multidisciplinary teams exploring expansion of service areas, the establishment of satellite facilities, and/or enhancement of core CAC services.**

3. GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

STATEMENT OF INTENT: 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 that is consistent with any Chapter-adopted growth and development plan.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. The Chapter has response procedures in place for how requests for information from interested communities/entities are to be handled. Those procedures include verbally responding to basic inquiries regarding the CAC/MDT model, the CAC movement in the state, and Chapter membership benefits and opportunities, as well as providing 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 are to 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, the CAC movement in the state, and Chapter membership benefits and opportunities and provides referrals for accessing more information and resources, including contact information for the RCAC and NCA. Beyond the routinely provided packet, a specific offer is made by a designated Chapter representative to provide subsequent assistance.
3. The Chapter markets itself by making brochures or other printed materials available in public spaces, at conferences and events, etc. and/or by 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, electronically, or in writing—routinely include sending a Chapter representative to visit or meet with the interested community/entity, as well as providing ongoing communication and support designed to assist with the development of the CAC/MDT. Follow-up procedures may include provision of a mentor relationship with a nearby established CAC/MDT.
5. The Chapter has dedicated program staff who routinely visit 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.
6. The Chapter has developed and implemented a Readiness Assessment for those communities expressing interest in establishing a CAC and/or MDT, that includes evaluating resource capacity as well as efforts to avoid duplication of services currently being provided by an existing MDT or CAC. The Chapter has the capacity and is available to assist these communities with conducting the Readiness Assessment.

3. GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- D. The Chapter has (1) the capacity and an adopted process to respond to the needs of 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; and (2) a Chapter-adopted Growth and Development Strategy 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 an existing service area and/or enhancement of the services provided 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 Strategy 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 regarding expansion or enhancement efforts. The Chapter can verbally provide the requesting CAC/MDT with relevant resource 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 the request 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.
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.
4. The Chapter has established and implemented a method for existing CACs to assess and address sustainability issues—as they currently exist and/or in the face of potential expansion and enhancement efforts. The Chapter is equipped to assist its Member centers in conducting such assessments and evaluations.



TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Chapter identifies and addresses the evolving training and technical assistance needs of existing and emerging Children's Advocacy Centers and multidisciplinary teams throughout the state.



4. TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Rationale

Providing consistent, effective, evidence-informed services to children and families involved in the child abuse arena requires ongoing training of the professionals authorized to conduct 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. In conjunction with NCA and the RCACs, Chapters should 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 across 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 CACs and MDTs to effectively ensure ongoing evidence-based practice, Chapters are to encourage and assist CACs/MDTs striving to meet the National Standards for Accredited Members.

Essential Components

A. The Chapter ensures a formal annual assessment of the training and technical assistance needs of its membership is conducted.

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/MDTs—and the child abuse field itself—continue to evolve over time. For this reason, an annual assessment 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 obtains feedback from its Member center directors during in-person membership meetings regarding the training and technical assistance needs of Centers, including those of their staff, teams, and Boards. The Chapter documents responses obtained during this process.
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

4. TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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

B. The Chapter has the capacity and an adopted process in alignment with its Annual Needs Assessment findings for facilitating and/or providing training and technical assistance related to the CAC model and the multidisciplinary team approach. The Chapter also assists Member centers in expanding services provided to children and families by area CACs/MDTs.

STATEMENT OF INTENT: 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 (and are cost-effective and cross-discipline in nature) is vital to ensuring staff and personnel are prepared to effectively and appropriately deliver CAC/MDT services aligned to the CAC model and MDT approach. CACs are encouraged to address any possible disparity of service delivery while promoting the multidisciplinary team approach.

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 and 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 NCA and 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 and 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. Upon request, trainings and technical assistance can be delivered locally to one or more of its CACs/MDTs. Trainings and technical assistance might include:
 - Reducing disparities in service delivery,
 - Annual statewide child abuse conference,
 - Ongoing forensic interview training,
 - Forensic interview professional peer review,
 - Multidisciplinary team training,
 - Medical or mental health assessment and/or treatment training,
 - Medical or mental health professional peer review,
 - Victim/child advocacy training,
 - Child abuse prevention training,
 - CAC management training,
 - Resiliency training,
 - Vicarious trauma training, or
 - Equity and inclusion training.

4. TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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

STATEMENT OF INTENT: The NCA Standards for Accredited Members reflect minimum standards for evidence-based practice for CAC/MDT response to child maltreatment. NCA State Chapters are critical resources for CACs wishing to learn about those Standards and striving to gain accreditation or re-accreditation with NCA. To fulfill that role, Chapter representatives should have a thorough understanding of the NCA Standards for Accredited Members 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 Standards for Accredited Members and the accreditation process.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. The Chapter staff has basic knowledge and understanding of NCA Standards for Accredited Members and the NCA accreditation process. The Chapter maintains and makes available to its membership physical and/or electronic copies of the NCA Standards for Accredited Members and links to the NCA and RCAC websites so they can access additional information and assistance regarding 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 accessed and attended the Accreditation Boot Camp 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 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, with 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: Regional CACs are dedicated to providing training and technical assistance to MDTs, CACs, and Chapters in their respective regions across the country. 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

4. TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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, as well as 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 agency(ies) or organization(s) that also provide(s) training and technical assistance specifically to CACs/MDTs within its state.
2. The Chapter routinely participates in 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:
 - Annual statewide child abuse conference,
 - Ongoing forensic interview training,
 - Forensic interview professional peer review,
 - Multidisciplinary team training,
 - Medical or mental health assessment and/or treatment training,
 - Medical or mental health professional peer review,
 - Victim/child advocacy training,
 - Child abuse prevention training, or
 - CAC management training.



AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

The Chapter serves as a leading resource throughout the state by supporting efforts to increase awareness about child abuse and the Children's Advocacy Center model and reform systems to ensure improved outcomes for child abuse victims.



5. AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

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, and
- Increase efforts to support systems-level change that reduces disparities in access to quality services.

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. 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 limited to those provided by NCA and RCACs, where CACs can find relevant education and awareness information and materials to assist in education and awareness efforts related to child abuse and Children's Advocacy Centers.

5. AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

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 provided samples/templates 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, fact 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 also consistent with the messaging and materials provided by NCA.
4. The Chapter proactively identifies barriers that preclude its Member centers from engaging in awareness and education efforts. It then develops a strategy targeted to overcome those barriers and engaging centers in a coordinated effort by producing and distributing customized materials.

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 child abuse maltreatment and the existence, activities, and benefits of Children’s Advocacy Centers and MDTs.

STATEMENT OF INTENT: Chapters are inherently positioned and uniquely situated to collect and provide statewide information regarding child abuse and the CAC/MDT response. In addition, Chapters often play a role in influencing and collaborating with statewide stakeholders. By serving as an objective, reliable resource for private and public requests for information, Chapters have the potential to unlock resources and affect positive outcomes for victims of child maltreatment.

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 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.

5. AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

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 through which public and private audiences can find additional information.

C. The Chapter conducts or participates in communication strategies aimed to increase public engagement on the issue of child abuse and/or the work of Children's Advocacy Centers throughout the state.

STATEMENT OF INTENT: Engaged communities and stakeholders are powerful change agents in the response to child maltreatment. Ensuring communities and stakeholders have compelling and accurate information is critical to marshalling their influence. By engaging in strategic communication strategies, Chapters can effectively increase community awareness about child maltreatment and the CAC/MDT response.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. The Chapter writes and publishes a Letter to the Editor addressing child abuse and/or the services of CACs—potentially during National Child Abuse Prevention Month—and submits it to all major news outlets across the state for simultaneous publication.
2. The Chapter conducts a social media campaign during National Child Abuse Prevention Month to raise awareness about CAC services and the MDT approach.
3. 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 National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and asks Member centers to request publication in their local newspapers.
4. The Chapter conducts one or more media interview(s) with major market media outlets, addressing child abuse issues and/or the Children's Advocacy Center movement statewide.
5. 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.
6. The Chapter invites media to attend and cover one or more event(s) (e.g., statewide awards ceremonies, Capitol Day activities, awareness or fundraising events, etc.) that portray(s) the collective efforts of Children's Advocacy Centers throughout the state.
7. The Chapter engages in development and/or delivery of a statewide media campaign addressing child abuse issues and/or Children's Advocacy Centers.

5. AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

- D. The Chapter coordinates one or more education event(s) or opportunity(ies) 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 policymakers at the state level have an accurate, comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the issue of child abuse and the benefits of the Children’s Advocacy Center model 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 effective education for state policymakers.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES:

1. The Chapter produces an annual newsletter, report, or simple fact sheet outlining the incidence of child abuse and the activities/services of Children’s Advocacy Centers 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 in 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 official(s) who has/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.

5. AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

- E. The Chapter has adopted public policy communication guidelines that outline the role and expectations of the Chapter and of membership 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. Protocols should outline the role and expectations of the Chapter and the role and expectations of its centers in all matters related to public policy initiatives. This can serve to minimize damaging cross-purpose activities. Chapters that are knowledgeable about and following NCA guidelines related to federal legislative and public policy activities ensure 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 regarding 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.



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