**Sample Chapter Critical Incident Policy**

**Definition of Critical Incident**

For this purpose, a critical incident has been defined as follows:

* Serious Violations of Law or Regulations, namely, credible preliminary findings involving significant issues that may place the member organization and/or the Chapter and/or its membership, at risk or may result in civil or criminal penalties or other serious violations of either local, state, or federal law.
* Significant Changes in Operation resulting in (1) Non-compliance with the NCA Standards for Accredited Members or Chapter Membership, as per Chapter Bylaws and/or State Statute and/or Standards; (2) Inability to provide services (temporarily or permanently) to children and families in official service area or inability of Chapter to provide services (temporarily or permanently) to member centers.
* External Impact Incidents - Any other significant situation that could possibly generate (1) Negative print, television, or radio coverage (not including letters to editors, blogs, or personal correspondence); (2) Negative legislative or regulatory attention; or (3) Other such situation that could impact NCA, the Chapter and its membership, and their respective brands, reputations or operations.

**Reporting Procedures**

**Critical Incidents involving member programs** should be reported to the Chapter Coordinator/Director as soon as is reasonably possible but within 48 hours of becoming aware of the incident. The Chapter Coordinator/Director will notify the Chapter Board President or Governing Agency head(s) immediately and, depending on the nature of the incident and at the discretion of the Chapter Board President or Governing Agency head(s), the Executive Committee of the Chapter Board (or relevant individuals or entities with the Governing Agency) will be notified as well.

The member program will provide updates to the Chapter, as needed, regarding ensuing developments related to the incident for as long as the incident continues to fit the definition of “critical incident” as outlined above.

The local CAC program, if an Accredited or Associate Member of NCA, is responsible for notifying NCA, as per NCA policy. The Chapter may, upon request, assist the local member program in complying with the NCA policy in this regard and participate in communications with NCA and the member program as needed.

**Critical Incidents involving the Chapter** should be reported by the Chapter Coordinator/Director to the Chapter Board President or Governing Agency head(s) and then to the full Chapter Board of Directors or relevant Governing Agency entities as soon as possible and within 48 hours of the emergence of the incident.

The Chapter Board of Directors or Governing Agency head(s) will notify Chapter member centers, as deemed appropriate, as soon as possible, including the provision of specific assistance and/or support in the event there is a potential need for a local response.

The Chapter Coordinator/Director and/or Chapter Board President or Governing Agency head(s) is responsible for notifying NCA, as per NCA policy. The Chapter will provide updates to its member centers, as needed, regarding ensuing developments related to the incident for as long as the incident continues to fit the definition of “crucial incident” as outline above.

**Chapter Response**

**For Critical Incidents involving member programs**, the Chapter Coordinator/Director and the Chapter Executive Committee (or relevant Governing Agency entity) will develop a strategy for addressing the critical incident, including but not limited to, (1) An offer of technical assistance and support to the member program regarding appropriate media responses and/or the organization’s options related to appropriate courses of action; (2) If appropriate, a plan and timeline for notifying relevant stakeholders, other impacted member programs, funders, etc.

If the Chapter deems it necessary to notify one or more of its member programs due to concerns about possible impact on those other programs or other stakeholders, the member program reporting the incident will be notified of the planned action in advance. In addition, every effort will be made by the Chapter to coordinate with the local program reporting the critical incident the timing and content of any communications with other member programs or other stakeholders.

**For Critical Incidents involving the Chapter,** the Chapter Coordinator/Director and the Chapter Executive Committee (or relevant Governing Agency entity) will develop a strategy for addressing the critical incident including, but not limited to, (1) A plan to seek appropriate technical assistance and/or legal advice; (2) A communications plan and timeline for notifying its membership, funders and other stakeholders as appropriate; and (3) If applicable, a plan for ensuring vital Chapter services and operations are continued.