

State Funding Support for Children's Advocacy Centers

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South Carolina Network
OF
CHILDREN'S
ADVOCACY CENTERS

The state of South Carolina is currently home to 17 Primary Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) located throughout the state and serving all 46 counties. CACs help abused children by providing a single-stop for forensic interviews and coordinating trauma-informed treatment response for those children. CACs reduce the trauma on children by eliminating the need for children to relive their trauma through multiple interviews with multidisciplinary team professionals, or others, while improving collaboration among all agencies involved in the response to child abuse.

Over the past 5 years, CACs in South Carolina have provided services to 49,917 children. The 11,117 children served in 2021 represent a 31% increase over the 5-year period. To meet increased demand, the South Carolina Network of Children's Advocacy Centers (SCNCAC) conducted a needs assessment and implemented a CAC development plan which added 11 Satellite CACs to the 17 primary CACs in the state. There are currently 28 CACs offering services in South Carolina with an additional 4 CACs in development.

QUICK FACTS

- CACs reduce trauma and improve outcomes for abused and neglected children, while reducing costs for the state agencies they support.
- CACs play a primary role in the response to child abuse in South Carolina by providing forensic interviews of children for law enforcement agencies and the Department of Social Services (DSS), conducting forensic medical examinations, offering mental health therapy for child abuse victims and caregivers, and more.
- SCNCAC and local CACs coordinate and support the Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) in each county that consists of professionals who provide a first response to child abuse, ongoing investigations, and prosecution services.
- The SC Child Abuse Response Protocol Act formalizes the use of CACs in the statewide response to child abuse and mandates that SCNCAC and the SC CJA Task Force provide training on the protocol for CAC and MDT professionals across South Carolina.
- **CAC state funding is eligible to be used as match dollars for CAC Victims of Crimes Act (VOCA) funding. The funds are collected from criminal fines and require a non-federal match source, meaning that state dollars can be leveraged to apply for additional grant funding for operation of SC CACs as VOCA funding is restored through recent federal legislation.**

RECOMMENDATION

In 2018, the SC General Assembly allocated \$170,000 in state funding to support the work of SCNCAC and CACs in the statewide response to child abuse. With the exception of the continuing resolution state budget during the onset of the pandemic, this funding has been reallocated annually since 2018. The funding was increased to 1,080,000 for the state fiscal year 2022-2023 with \$80,000 being recurring funding.

Child maltreatment in South Carolina is on the rise and the demand for CAC services continues to increase. Public awareness efforts have also increased the reporting of child abuse cases that were previously unreported. **SCNCAC and the CACs in SC respectfully request the General Assembly consider continuing CAC state funding at \$1,080,000 for the state fiscal year 2023-2024 and to consider making this funding recurring to support the statewide response to child abuse in South Carolina.**



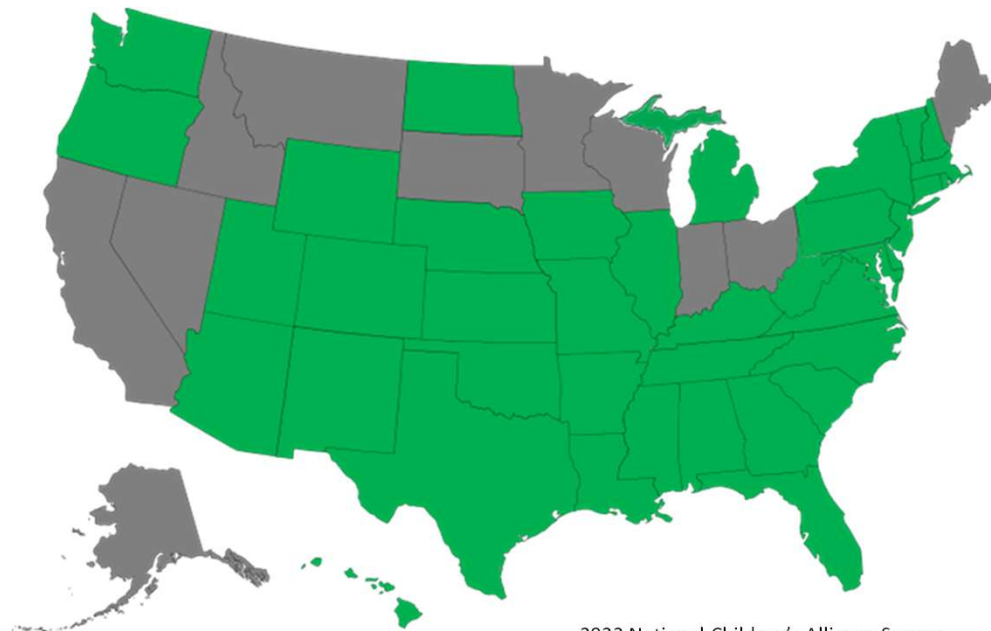
South Carolina Network OF CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS

- SC CACs provide services in all 46 counties
- There are 17 primary and 11 satellite CACs in the state
- Over the past 5 years, SC CACs provided services for 49,917 children

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CACs SUPPORTED by state funding

CACs NOT supported by state funding



2022 National Children's Alliance Survey

State Funding Support for CACs

State	2020 Census Population	Yearly CAC State Funding
Alabama	5,024,279	\$1,526,500
Florida	21,538,187	\$5,773,500
Georgia	10,711,908	\$1,500,000*
North Carolina	10,439,388	\$5,793,000
South Carolina	5,118,425	\$1,080,000
Kentucky	4,505,836	\$10,000,000
Tennessee	6,910,840	\$2,600,000
Virginia	8,631,393	\$1,231,000

*State TANF funding

Updated 9/16/22

