



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Commission on Youth



Review Funding and Support for Virginia's Children's Advocacy Centers



Will Egen

September 22, 2026



Commission mandate

The Commission on Youth shall convene a work group of stakeholders and develop recommendations to respond to funding gaps for Virginia's Children's Advocacy Centers.

The work group should examine Children's Advocacy Centers and identify funding models that support continued access to services.

The work group should consider incentives for local governments to draw down funding in addition to existing state, federal, and private funding sources.

Appropriation Act direction

The Commission on Youth shall develop recommendations, working with stakeholders, to incentivize local governments to draw down additional funding (above a base allocation) to support Child Advocacy Centers through partnership arrangements that may include the allocation of space, administrative support, or other supports.

These recommendations shall also include potential access to funding through various court fees or other revenue options.

The Commission shall report to relevant legislative committees by November 1, 2026.



Stakeholder engagement

- Convene an Advisory Group of relevant stakeholders
- Gather state and local agency perspectives
- Present to local government leaders at VML Human Development & Education Policy Committee
- Attend CACVA virtual financial discussion townhalls

Site Visits and Interviews

- Organize and attend site visits
- Attend National Children's Alliance Conference
- Interview Children's Advocacy Centers' directors from other states
- Attend a Children's Advocacy Center multidisciplinary team (MDT) meeting

Law and funding review

- Review Virginia laws on Children's Advocacy Centers
- Review current and historical state and federal funding sources

Survey and needs assessment

- Survey Children's Advocacy Centers on funding and needs
- Receive and analyze service volume information and CPS and Prosecution Dispositions data



Advisory Group

Met on
August 18, 2026

Advisory Group members presented perspectives on:

- Multidisciplinary Team
- Child Protective Services
- Police & Law Enforcement
- Commonwealth's Attorney
- Medical & Mental Health
- Lived Experience

Membership

- Children's Advocacy Centers
- Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia (CACVA)
- Commonwealth's Attorneys
- Community Services Boards
- Department of Criminal Justice Services
- Local Law Enforcement Perspective
- Medical Perspective
- Office of the Executive Secretary, Supreme Court of Virginia
- Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources
- Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee
- Virginia Association of Counties (VaCo)
- Victim Advocates / Lived Experience
- Virginia Commission on Youth
- Virginia Department of Social Services
- Virginia Indigent Defense Commission
- Virginia League of Social Services Executives
- Virginia Municipal League (VML)



7

site visits

Commission staff and members visited Children's Advocacy Centers across multiple regions and operating models.

Children's Advocacy Center of Highlands Community Services

Bristol

Foothills Child Advocacy Center

Charlottesville

Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters Child Advocacy Center

Norfolk

Children's Trust Roanoke Valley

Roanoke

Valley Children's Advocacy Center

Staunton

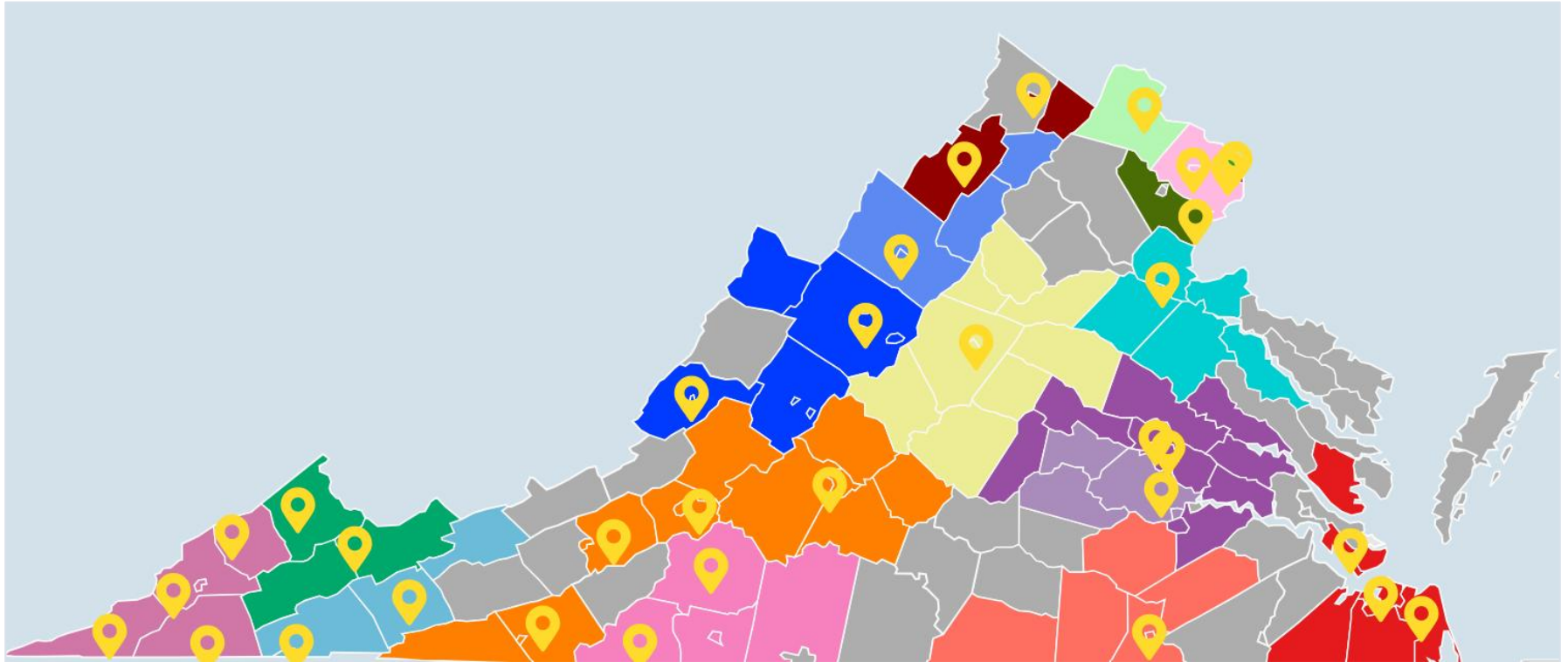
Greater Richmond SCAN Children's Advocacy Center

Richmond

Prince William County Child Advocacy Center

Woodbridge

VIRGINIA'S CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS



There are 19 Children's Advocacy Centers in Virginia, 10 of which have satellites. 14 are non-profit based, 4 are Government based, and 1 is hospital based.

75% of localities are covered by Children's Advocacy Centers.



Children's Advocacy Center

"Children's advocacy center" means a child-friendly facility that

- (i) enables law enforcement, child protection, prosecution, mental health, medical, and victim advocacy professionals to work together to investigate child abuse, help children heal from abuse, and hold offenders accountable;
- (ii) has completed, or is in the process of completing, certain accreditation obligations and requires any forensic interview conducted at such facility to only be conducted by a trained child forensic interviewer in a multidisciplinary team collaborative effort; and
- (iii) is a member in good standing of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia.

Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia

"Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia" means the organizing entity for children's advocacy centers in Virginia.

Multidisciplinary response team

§ 15.2-1627.5 of the *Code of Virginia* also requires the attorney for the Commonwealth in each jurisdiction to establish a multidisciplinary child sexual abuse response team, which may be an existing multidisciplinary team. A representative of a children's advocacy center serving the jurisdiction is listed as a member of this team.

CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS



Children's Advocacy Centers provide specialized services, including forensic interviews, family advocacy, mental health treatment & coordination, medical referrals, and multidisciplinary case coordination to support children and strengthen investigations of crimes against children.



Report

Concerns about possible abuse are reported to Child Protective Services or law enforcement.

Multidisciplinary Team Coordination

Children's Advocacy Centers coordinate law enforcement, child protective services, medical professionals, prosecutors, mental health providers, and victim advocates into a unified, trauma-informed response designed to protect children while strengthening investigations.

FY26 STATEWIDE CAC SNAPSHOT



Virginia's Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) reported substantial service volume across core investigative, advocacy, and treatment functions.

7,390

New cases

New alleged child victims referred to and served

10,880

Alleged victims served

Forensic interview, medical, mental health, multi disciplinary team (MDT) and/or advocacy

26,635

MDT cases reviewed

Across 944 MDT case-review meetings

8,941

Forensic interviews

Conducted by Virginia's CACs

47,867

Victim-service contacts

Support, advocacy, and case management

15,753

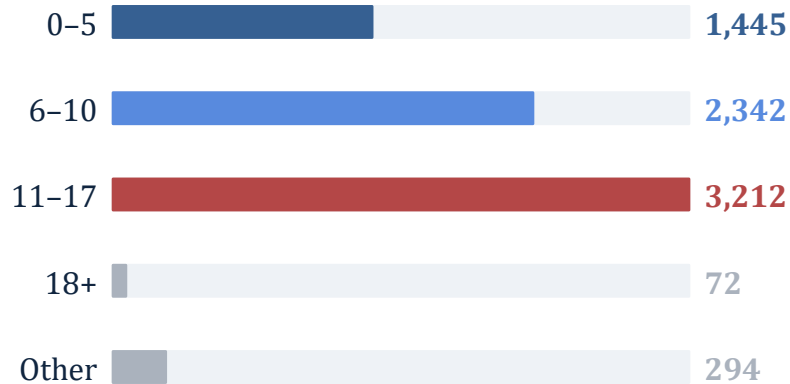
Mental health contacts

Treatment/counseling provided by CACs

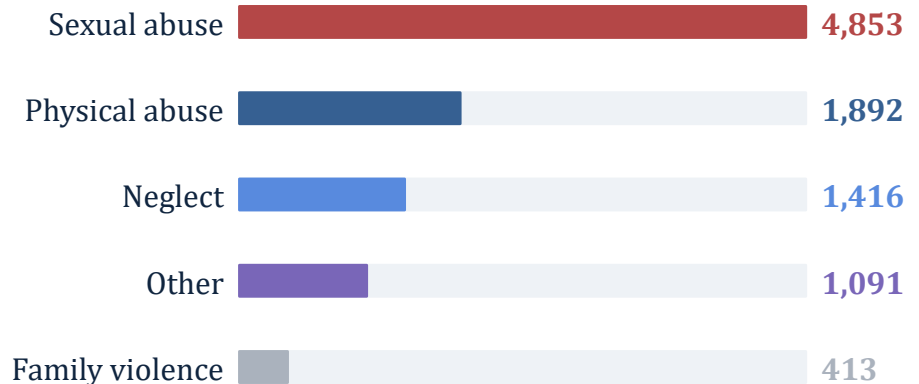
WHO CACs SERVED & THE TYPES OF CASES REPORTED



Age of new alleged child victims



Reported/suspected victimization types



Additional FY26 indicators

282

310

A child may have more than one reported/suspected victimization type.

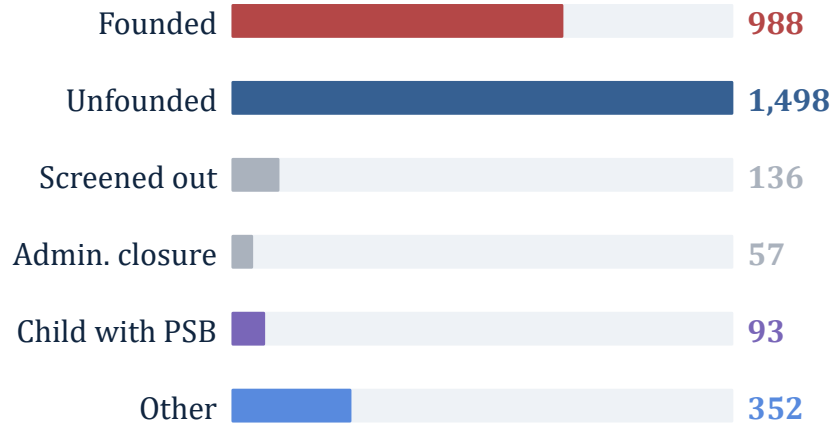
Problematic Sexual Behavior (PSB)
suspected or identified

Sexual exploitation or sex trafficking
suspected or identified

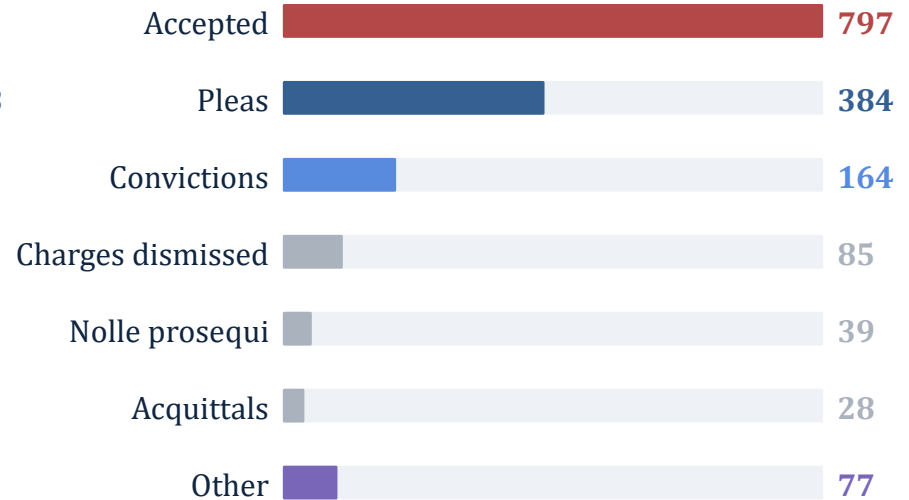
FY26 CPS AND PROSECUTION DISPOSITIONS



Child Protective Services dispositions



Prosecution dispositions



Source: FY26 CAC Statistical/Narrative Reports submitted to Virginia Department of Social Services – 18 reporting CACs.
Prosecution disposition data excludes Fairfax (SafeSpot CAC).



Commission on Youth Children's Advocacy Center Survey on Funding

FY26 FUNDING SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS



16
CAC
responses

Self-reported
FY26
funding shares
and
operating
expenses

12 of 16

**reported FY26
operating expenses
under \$1 million**

2 were between \$1
million and \$2 million
2 were above \$2
million

Reported range: about
\$342K to \$4.59M
Median ≈ \$660K

9 of 16

**received more than
half of FY26 funding
from state sources**

6 reported a state
share of 70% or more
7 reported a state
share below 50%
Includes General
Fund/TANF direct
state funding

12 of 16

**received less than
25% of FY26 funding
from local
government**

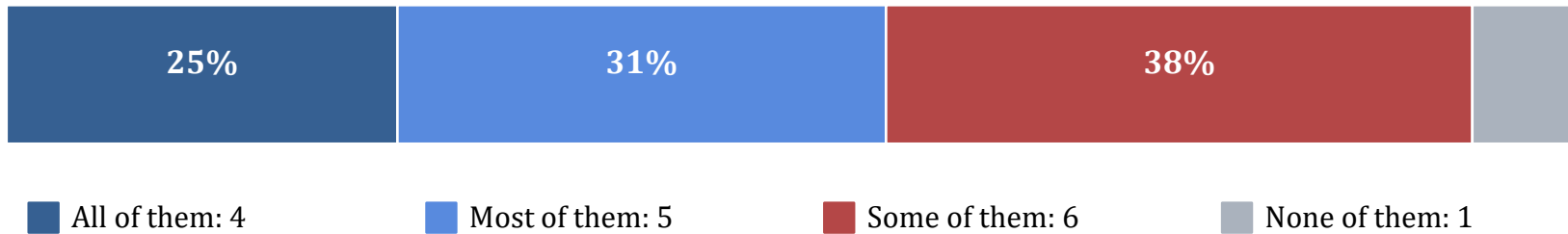
10 received less than
10% locally
Only 2 reported local
shares of 50% or more
Includes direct local
appropriations and
grants

- Most responding Children's Advocacy Centers are relatively small entities, with operating expenses below \$1 million.
- State support is the largest funding source for a majority of Children's Advocacy Centers .
- Local funding varies substantially, but most Children's Advocacy Centers reported relatively small local-government shares.

DIRECT LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT



Of the local governments/jurisdictions in your service area, how many provided direct financial funding in FY26?



7 of 16

responding Children's Advocacy Centers reported that only some or none of the localities in their service area provided direct financial support.

LOCAL FUNDING VARIATIONS



A NON-PROFIT CAC

7

localities served

1,247

alleged child victims
served in FY26

\$35,381

total direct local
government
funding in FY26

≈6%

of FY26 funding came from
local government

Three of the seven localities
provided \$4,000 or less,
totaling \$5,383.

A GOVERNMENT-BASED CAC

67%

of FY26 funding reported as
direct local government
support

Local structures can look very
different where the CAC is
housed within local
government.

AN IN-KIND PARTNERSHIP

≈ \$72K

reported value of donated
office/facility space for one
non-profit CAC

Cash-only measures may
understate local support
where space, personnel,
utilities, or administrative
services are provided.

Anonymized examples from FY26 CAC survey responses



5 of 12
42%

**non-government CACs
reported receiving in-kind or
non-monetary support from a
local government in FY26**

Examples reported by Children's Advocacy Centers



Facility space / rent

Donated or co-located space; some centers reported no rent expense.



Utilities and operations

Utilities, phones, technology, and related operating support.



Personnel / administrative support

Co-located staff, part-time administrative support, or county-provided services.



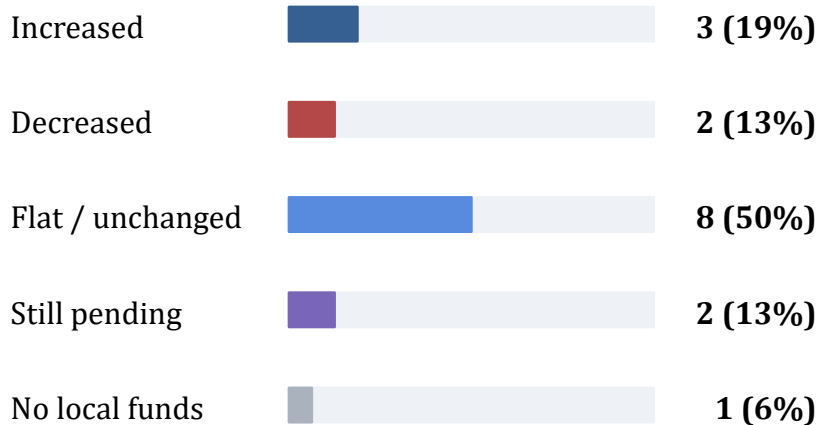
Legal and other government services

One respondent reported use of county attorney services in addition to facility support.

FY27 LOCAL FUNDING OUTLOOK



How committed local government funding compares with FY26?



What is the primary barrier to consistent, robust local funding?

6 of 15 cited a lack of available funds in local budgets.

2 of 15 said localities lack a clear understanding of the CAC's financial value/savings.

The remaining responses described varied circumstances, including budget processes, formal funding relationships/MOUs, and multiple overlapping barriers.

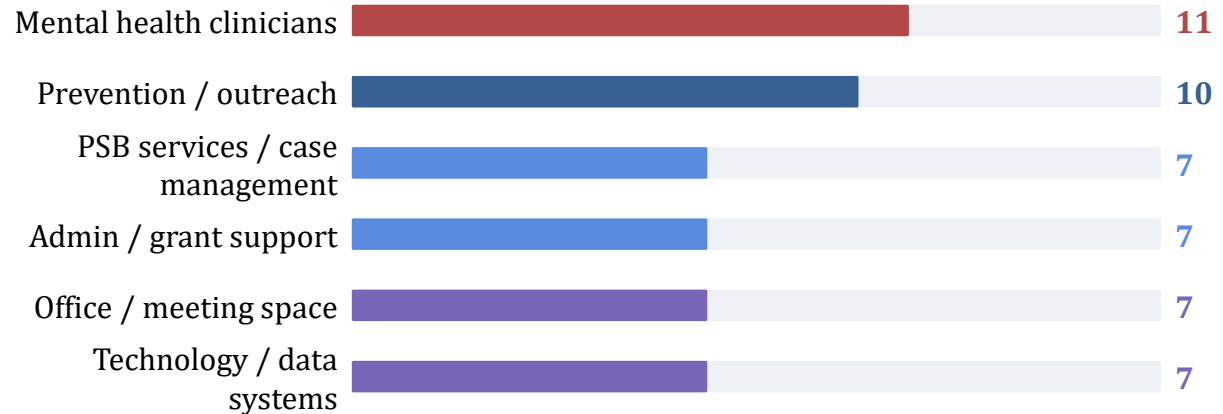
REPORTED UNMET NEEDS



15 of 16

CACs reported unmet staffing, program, facility, or operational needs due to insufficient funding or resources.

Most frequently selected unmet-need categories?



Why needs remain unmet?

75% unreliable/insufficient ongoing funding
69% insufficient local funding
50% short-term/temporary funding

Reported service impacts?

81% existing staff perform multiple roles
63% referrals made to outside providers
63% workload/burnout/turnover

STATE AND VOCA FUNDING HISTORY FY16-FY28



Virginia's Children's Advocacy Centers Funding by Source, FY16–FY28



Source: Virginia Appropriation Acts, FY16–FY28; DCJS VOCA VDSS–CAC award amounts

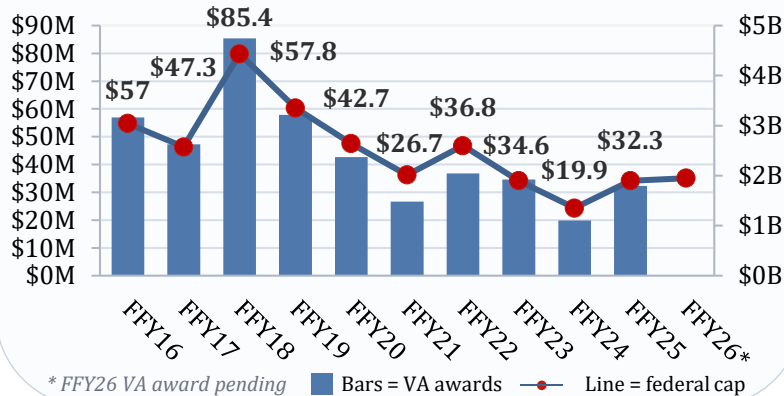
DCJS AND VOCA FUNDING CONTEXT



Dedicated Children's Advocacy Center Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding declined sharply while the federal VOCA distribution cap also fell.

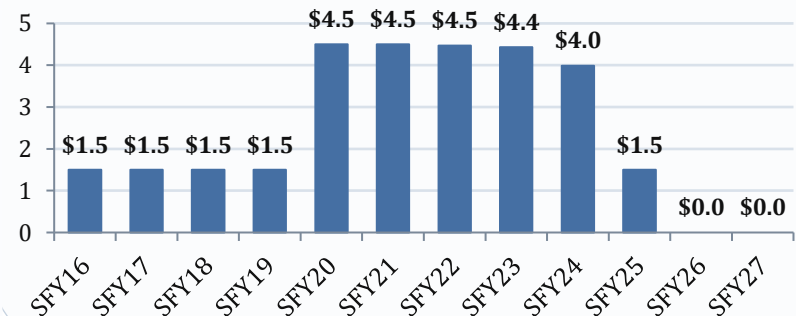
VA VOCA awards & Federal VOCA cap

Virginia awards (\$ millions) and federal cap (\$ billions), FFY16–FFY26



Dedicated Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) VOCA funding for CACs

Virginia pass-through amounts, SFY16–SFY27 (\$ millions)



Note: This slide addresses the dedicated statewide CAC VOCA pass-through; individual CACs have separately reported other federal or project-specific grants.

Dedicated Children's Advocacy Center VOCA funding fell from \$4.5 million in SFY20 to \$0 in SFY26.

CURRENT STATE FUNDING FORMULA



\$2.7M

General Fund

FY27 and FY28 – each year

\$6.2M

TANF

FY27 and FY28 – each year

\$8.95M

Total state allocation

FY27 and FY28 – each year

Item 335 allocation formula – Adopted in 2015

4%

to CACVA

chapter support,
development,
continuation, and
sustainability

Remaining 96%

65% baseline allocation

Developing / associate: 100% of
base
Accredited: 150% of base
Accredited + satellite: 175% of
base

**35% needs/service
criteria**

25% child abuse rate per 1,000
25% child population
50% counties & cities served
through MOUs

ADVISORY GROUP: POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES



Sources discussed by the Advisory Group for potential recommendation development.



**State and local
funds**



**Victims of
Crime Act
(VOCA) funds**



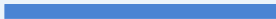
**Courts fines
and fees**



**Opioid abatement
and remediation
funds**



**Other federal
funds**



**Locality in-kind
contributions**



**State agency
training
and partnerships**



Draft Recommendations



Address State General Fund and TANF Support

Recommendation 1: Introduce a budget amendment to Item 335 of the Appropriation Act to increase the General Fund (GF) appropriation and ensure a certain funding baseline going forward for Children's Advocacy Centers. In addition to increasing the General Fund allotment, the General Assembly should prioritize balancing the current General Fund and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding structure.



Incentivize Local Government Support

Recommendation 2: Introduce a budget amendment to Item 335 of the Appropriation Act to establish a state matching incentive, above base allocations, for Children's Advocacy Centers that receive direct local appropriations or eligible in-kind support from the localities they serve, with local support representing at least a minimum percentage of combined state and local public support, as established by the Virginia Department of Social Services.

Direct the Virginia Department of Social Services, in coordination with the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) and the Virginia Municipal League (VML), to establish a formula for distributing the available matching funds to eligible Children's Advocacy Centers that encourages new and increased local investment while recognizing existing local support. The Department shall report on this incentive structure to the Commission on Youth and to the Chairs of the House Appropriations Committee and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee by November 1, 2027.



Outcomes and Performance Reporting

Recommendation 3: Introduce a budget amendment to Item 335 of the Appropriation Act directing the Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia (CACVA) to work with Children's Advocacy Centers to collect and report standardized annual performance and outcome metrics to the Virginia Department of Social Services, which shall report the information annually to the Chairs of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee and the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services and the House Health and Human Services.

Metrics should include system efficiency and outcome measures, such as the average time from referral to forensic interview, average wait time for connection to mental health services, and case disposition outcomes, including plea agreements. This recommendation would formalize the current Children's Advocacy Centers reporting process while placing greater emphasis on measuring outcomes and system performance.



Court Fines and Fees Allocations

Recommendation 4: Introduce a budget amendment to Item 40 of the Appropriation Act directing the Indigent Defense Commission, as part of its current two-year study, to review: (i) the potential establishment of an additional fee upon conviction for certain felony sex offenses, crimes against children, or sexual exploitation offenses, with proceeds deposited into a dedicated Children's Advocacy Center operational fund; and (ii) the potential increase of existing fixed court costs and reallocation of a fractional share of those costs to support Children's Advocacy Centers.



Funding Formula Modernization and Flexibility

Recommendation 5: Introduce a budget amendment to Item 335 of the Appropriation Act directing the Virginia Department of Social Services, in direct partnership with Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia (CACVA), to convene a Children's Advocacy Centers formula review committee. Currently, Virginia's funding distribution formula is codified in Item 335, establishing fixed percentages.

The Committee shall evaluate the current funding distribution model to address:

- Recommendations to update formula metrics to better reflect core service demands, including unduplicated children served, forensic interview volume, mental health therapy hours provided, active military MOUs, and geographical/rural coverage challenges.
- Recommendations to permit more flexibility in updating the formula while promoting continuity and oversight.



Recommendation 5 (cont.): Included in this recommendation is one-time funding for the Department to staff and support the formula review committee. The Committee shall submit recommendations to the Commission on Youth and to the Chairs of the House Appropriations Committee and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee by November 1, 2027.



Commonwealth Opioid Abatement and Remediation (COAR) Fund

Recommendation 6: Introduce a budget amendment to Item 492 of the Appropriation Act to allocate Commonwealth Opioid Abatement Remediation (COAR) Fund dollars to the Department of Social Services on behalf of Children's Advocacy Centers to provide forensic interviews, trauma-informed mental health treatment, and family advocacy services for children and families impacted by parental substance use disorder and child drug endangerment from the fallout of the opioid epidemic.

Meta Settlement Funds

Recommendation 7: Request that the Governor include Children's Advocacy Centers as eligible recipients of Meta settlement funds to support a statewide initiative addressing child victimization, technology-facilitated sexual harm, and problematic sexual behaviors.



Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) Funding

Recommendation 8: Request that the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) review state and federal grant opportunities and state victim assistance funding streams, such as VOCA funding and grants related to sexual assault services, for opportunities to support Children's Advocacy Centers.



Title IV-E Funding

Recommendation 9: Request that the Virginia Department of Social Services explore whether training, service, or administrative costs related to the Children's Advocacy Center model are eligible for federal Title IV-E reimbursement, and work with Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia (CACVA) to provide guidance to Children's Advocacy Centers in drawing down available funds.

Problematic Sexual Behavior (PSB)

Recommendation 10: Request that the Virginia Department of Social Services encourage and find ways to support the Family and Children's Trust Fund of Virginia (FACT) in partnering with Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia (CACVA) to expand opportunities for multidisciplinary teams to participate in training on responding to children with problematic sexual behavior. Currently FACT is piloting a train-the-trainer model and toolkit to increase access to consistent guidance, training, and evidence-based practices for PSB.



Medicaid Billing Guidance

Recommendation 11: Request that the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) work with Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia (CACVA) to provide technical assistance, training opportunities, and guidance on Medicaid billing for eligible clinical and mental health services to Children's Advocacy Centers. Guidance should include information on applicable provider enrollment, licensure, credentialing, and billing requirements for medical and behavioral health services.



Service Expansion in Unserved Areas

Recommendation 12: Request the Virginia Commission on Youth to convene a stakeholder work group to examine models for expanding Children's Advocacy Centers' access to Virginia's underserved and rural areas. The work group should look at how to establish a state-administered Seed and Expansion Grant Program to cover initial start-up costs, to establish satellite centers, or new Children's Advocacy Centers in unserved jurisdictions.

Child Victim and Witness Testimony Laws

Recommendation 13: Request the Virginia Commission on Youth to study § 18.2-67.9 of the *Code of Virginia* regarding testimony by child victims and witnesses using two-way closed-circuit television to evaluate age restrictions and potential barriers to its effectiveness in being used in situations where a child has been impacted by trauma.



The Commission will accept written and in-person public comment before final action on draft recommendations.

Written public comment deadline

The Commission will be accepting public comment through October 14 at 5:00 p.m.

Submission directions:
Posted on the Commission's website

<https://vcoy.virginia.gov>

Next Commission meeting

October 20 at 1:30 p.m.
at the General Assembly
Building

The Commission will receive in person public comment and vote on draft recommendations at this meeting

The Commission will receive in-person public comment and vote on draft recommendations at the October 20 Commission meeting