Adopted Recommendations

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

Recommendation to 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.

Recommendation to 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), and Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia (CACVA) 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.

Recommendation Regarding 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. The Virginia Department of Social Services and Children's Advocacy Centers of Virginia (CACVA) shall work together to establish the annual performance and outcome metrics to include in this report. This recommendation would formalize the current Children's Advocacy Centers reporting process while placing greater emphasis on measuring outcomes and system performance.

The Virginia Department of Social Services 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.

Recommendation on Funding Formula Modernization and Flexibility

Recommendation 4: 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.

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.

Recommendation on Commonwealth Opioid Abatement and Remediation (COAR) Fund

Recommendation 5: 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.

Recommendation regarding Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) Funding

Recommendation 6: 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.

Recommendation regarding Title IV-E Funding

Recommendation 7: 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.

Recommendation on Problematic Sexual Behavior (PSB)

Recommendation 8: 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.

Recommendation related to Medicaid Billing Guidance

Recommendation 9: 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.

Recommendation on Service Expansion in Unserved Areas

Recommendation 10: 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.

Recommendation on Child Victim and Witness Testimony Laws

Recommendation 11: 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.