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## **Building Partnerships Project Request for Letters of Interest**

**The National Resource Center on Reaching Victims of Crime in partnership with the National Children's Advocacy Center is requesting letters of interest for technical assistance to develop and enhance partnerships between state VOCA Administrators, state Chapters of Children's Advocacy Centers and other state-level child victim service providers.**

Letters of Interest are due by 11:59 PM PST on March 8, 2019. Applications should be submitted online via the following link: <https://www.tfaforms.com/4720770>

Our Letter of Interest online application process allows you to upload and attach files in Word, plain text, and PDF formats.

We can provide the application in a Word, plain text, and large print electronic formats by request. If you prefer to complete a paper application, we will accept applications in the mail.

Please use the following address to submit applications by mail:

Meredith Wilkes  
National Children's Advocacy Center  
210 Pratt Ave. NE  
Huntsville, AL 35801

If you need this application in an alternative format or language, if you would like to request a virtual meeting in ASL, or if you have any other questions about this solicitation, please contact Greg Flett. He can be reached at [greg@nationalcac.org](mailto:greg@nationalcac.org) or 720-272-5945.

## **Project Overview**

Through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), the National Resource Center for Reaching Victims (NRC) – a collaborative effort to bring healing services and justice to more survivors of crime in the United States – in collaboration with the National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC), is soliciting letters of interest from Chapters of Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC) and Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Administrators to participate in a pilot project to improve partnership and collaboration among stakeholders at the state level working to serve child victims of crime.

The intent of the *Building Partnerships Project* is to develop and disseminate strategies for building strong collaborative relationships between state Chapters of Children's Advocacy Centers, state VOCA Administrators and other state-based child victim services partners. Improved partnerships among stakeholders at the state level offer enhanced opportunities for innovative and collaborative engagement strategies for reaching and effectively serving all child victims.

The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims will select one state to participate in a pilot project, throughout which technical assistance will be provided by the National Children's Advocacy Center to the CAC Chapter and VOCA Administrator, as well as any corresponding partners providing services to child victims of crime within the state. Additional partners may include Children's Services agencies, state Law Enforcement representatives, state Child Advocacy agencies, state or regional training and technical assistance providers and other relevant entities. The provided technical assistance will be aimed at building partnerships, improving collaboration, and developing a plan to effectively deliver enhanced services to child victims of crime.

To apply, prospective VOCA Administrators and state Chapters must submit an application along with letters of interest demonstrating their commitment to the project.

## Background

Child maltreatment and children's exposure to violence continue to be pervasive problems in the United States that can negatively affect children and youth, their families, and communities. Child protective service agencies across the country received 4.1 million reports of alleged child abuse or neglect involving 7.4 million children in 2016. Approximately 676,000 children were determined to be victims of maltreatment and an estimated 1,750 died at the hands of their abuser.<sup>1</sup> Research suggests a significant percentage of children are exposed to many different forms of violence. Researchers found that "80% of children were exposed to at least one form of victimization, 66% were exposed to more than one type, 30% experienced five or more forms, and 10% experienced 11 or more forms of victimizations in their lifetimes" (p. 325).<sup>2</sup> How children respond to these traumas has the potential to negatively impact them in both the near and longer terms and creates unique challenges for child abuse investigators. The need for effective and accessible services for child victims of crime is clear.

With recent increases in funding made available to states there are more resources available for programs serving child victims of crime than ever before. Some states have found collaborative and innovative ways to put these funds to effective use by improving access and quality of services available to children and youth victims. However, many states have reported, or anticipate, challenges to effectively utilizing funds in meaningful ways.

Over 800 Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) across the country currently deliver high quality services to children and youth victims of crime. CACs serve to facilitate a child focused, multidisciplinary response to allegations of victimization of children and youth. State Chapters for Children's Advocacy Centers exist in all 50 states, providing an array of services often including training and technical assistance, legislative advocacy, networking opportunities and assistance with the development of new CACs.

With over 30 years of growth and development as a best practice model for serving child victims, Children's Advocacy Centers play an instrumental role in addressing the growing need for victims' services for children and youth. However, CACs are often overlooked at the state level, with only a limited number of states involving representation from Child Advocacy Centers in the decision-making process when allocating funding for victims of crime. Opportunities exist for stronger partnerships between state CAC Chapters, VOCA Administrators and other state level partners engaged in victim services.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2016). Child maltreatment 2016. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cm2016.pdf>, retrieved December 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Turner, H., Finkelhor, D., & Ormrod, R. (2010). Poly-victimization in a national sample of children and youth. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 38(3), 323-330.

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### **Project Detail**

This pilot project will focus on developing a strong partnership for collaboration between representatives from the state Chapter of Children's Advocacy Centers, the state administering agency for the Victims of Crime Act and other state-level agencies serving children and youth victims as identified. Representatives from participating agencies will convene as a workgroup, with facilitation from NCAC staff, to engage in an ongoing process of intentional relationship building and the formation of a collaborative partnership with the expressed goal of improving access to services for children and youth victims of crime.

*Goals and objectives of this project include:*

- Improved collaboration between state level stakeholders, including VOCA Administrators, CAC Chapters and other state level children and youth victim service agencies
- Create a foundation for partnership and an ongoing plan for future engagement activities amongst project partners
- Develop a shared understanding of goals and priorities at a state level for serving child and youth victims of crime
- To identify and develop innovative solutions for improving access and quality of services available to children and youth victims of crime
- Improved ability to effectively identify and target under-represented and underserved child victims on a state-wide level
- Increased numbers of children and youth served via Children's Advocacy Centers

## **Project Activities**

The site selected for this initiative will receive no-cost technical assistance from the National Children's Advocacy Center staff and consultants. No direct grant funding of any kind will be provided. The NCAC team will work with the selected site to develop a collaborative process amongst participating agencies and design a strategy for ongoing partnership. Within the overarching goals of enhancing quality and increasing access to services for children and youth victims of crime, the specific goals of the project will depend on the level existing partnership as well as the needs, interests and strengths of the selected site.

### *Specific activities of the project include:*

- Development of a workgroup consisting of VOCA staff, CAC Chapter leadership, and other key stakeholders included in the project
- Convene 3 in-person workgroup meetings over the course of a 4-month engagement
- Conduct 3 workgroup conference calls over the course of a 4-month engagement
- Explore existing statewide services for child and youth victims
- Identify statewide needs and opportunities for enhanced access and quality of services to children and youth victims of crime

All partner agencies involved in this project are expected to fully participate in the activities outlined above. In addition, involved partner agencies are responsible for identifying and providing meeting space to convene each of the three in person workgroup meetings. Funds will be made available on a reimbursement basis to assist with transportation and lodging for each of the in-person workgroup meetings as required.

## **Timeline**

March 8, 2019	Deadline for submissions
March 22, 2018	Notification of selected site
March 2019	Introductory conference call with state partners
April 2019	First in-person workgroup meeting and conference call
May 2019	Second in-person workgroup meeting
June 2019	Second conference call and third in-person workgroup meeting
July 2019	Third conference call

## **Eligibility**

*Eligible applicants will meet the following criteria:*

- Demonstrated commitment from a state Chapter of Children's Advocacy Centers and state Administrator for Victims of Crime Act
- Ability to participate in all project activities including 3 in-person meetings and 3 conference calls
- An expressed interest in improving collaboration, information sharing, and partnership

While we invite either a state Children's Advocacy Center Chapters or a state VOCA Administrator to serve as lead when applying, participation in this project is required by both entities and must be demonstrated as such by a letter of commitment.

## **How to apply**

Applications to participate in this pilot project must originate from either the CAC Chapter or state VOCA Administrator. To apply please visit the following link:

<https://www.tfaforms.com/4720770>

## *Application Questions*

1. State Name:
2. Chapter Name and Director Contact Info:
3. VOCA Admin Name and Contact Info:
4. Additional state level partners that might participate in this project:
5. Describe the current level of partnership and collaboration between the Chapter and the VOCA Administering Agency. Please included any existing collaborative projects, programs or shared support.
6. What do you hope to achieve as a result of your participation in this project? How might these efforts translate to improved services for children and youth victims of crime?
7. Please describe your state's strengths and achievements in responding to the needs of children and youth victims of crime.
8. What if any needs and/or opportunities have you identified in your state that would improve access to services for children and youth victims of crime?
9. Describe any challenges or obstacle you might anticipate encountering throughout such a partnership building process.
10. Please upload a signed letter of interest expressing a commitment to fully participate in this project from the CAC Chapter, VOCA Administrator and any additional partners that might be included in the project.

## **Deadline for Applications**

Applications will be accepted until 11:59 PST on March 8, 2019. After reviewing submissions, NCAC staff may conduct phone interviews with candidates prior to selecting the pilot site. Final site selection will be made by March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## **Selection Criteria**

Evaluation of submitted applications will be based on the following criteria.

- Existing level of collaboration between CAC Chapter, state VOCA Administrator and other partners as relevant. This will be assessed by the number and duration of collective projects, programs, or exchange of support these entities have been engaged in. The project is aimed at building collaboration between partners, and while some degree of existing collaboration is of benefit, the intent is to develop a foundation for collaboration where little or none currently exist.
- Capacity of all participating state level partners to remain engaged and committed to this project for the full duration (4 months) and participate in all project activities, including 3 in-person meetings and 3 conference calls.
- A clear demonstration of how improved collaboration between the CAC Chapter and the VOCA Administrator might translate to improved services for children and youth victims of crime.
- The existing capacity at a state level to effect positive outcomes for children and youth victims of crime, as determined by highlighted strengths and achievements.

Follow-up phone conversations with prospective participants will supplement application information and provide deeper insight into how well suited an applying state meets the criteria state above.