



Regional Crimes Against Children Task Force - Pilot Project Request for Applications

Overview

Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas (CACTX) orchestrates Texas' response to incidents of child abuse and victimization and leads the way to ending child sexual abuse in Texas. Our dual approach safeguards children, building a future in which Texas children can thrive and grow to reach their full potential. This dual approach includes 1) responding to crimes against children to ensure justice and healing for every child victim of crime and 2) ending child sexual abuse through detection and prevention to create a Texas free from child sexual abuse. Last year CACTX published an RFA to fund a Regional Crimes Against Children Task Force (RCACTF). The preliminary pilot results have been promising and CACTX is pleased to make funds available through this Request for Applications (RFA) to continue to support this model. CACTX, in partnership with its Statewide Multidisciplinary Task Force (SMDTF), seeks to support programs or projects that improve the administrative, investigative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse, in a manner that creates systemic change and prevents additional trauma to child victims. This RFA seeks to support 1) existing, early-stage RCACTF programs that may need additional funding to ensure long-term stability and/or 2) piloting an additional RCACTF program to test the viability of the model in other communities. The purpose of this RFA is to strengthen crimes against children investigations by increasing the expertise of law enforcement investigators involved in the handling of these cases.

Background and Program Description

It was brought to the attention of the CACTX Statewide Multidisciplinary Team (SMDTF) that many Texas law enforcement jurisdictions, particularly those in more rural areas, struggle to find ample resources (people, money, training, time, etc.) for child abuse investigations. The SMDTF continues to report that in rural areas with smaller law enforcement agencies, investigators must be “generalists” by nature, and agencies often lack the resources (and volume of cases) to dedicate investigators with specialized training to specific types of criminal investigations, including child abuse.

The SMDTF identified a potential strategy to address this challenge through the exploration and establishment of RCACTFs. As preliminary data from the initial pilot appears to show, RCACTFs might hold promise in specifically addressing the unique challenges of smaller, more rural law enforcement agencies that – for a variety of reasons – may struggle to consistently ensure an effective, coordinated approach to child abuse criminal investigations. Ideally, these multi-jurisdictional collaborations allow law enforcement entities to share resources and thereby invest in dedicated investigators with current, relevant expertise and experience in the child abuse field.

Although the SMDTF has discussed RCACTFs as a strategy to support the unique challenges of rural agencies, there may be similarly designed programs that could help address challenges of more populated jurisdictions. There may also be communities exploring alternatively structured RCACTFs, such as one based out of a district or county attorney’s office. There is also an interest in funding a multi-county pilot. CACTX is willing to consider any RCACTF application that meets the overall goal of strengthening child maltreatment investigations by increasing the expertise of law enforcement investigators involved in the handling of these cases.

The SMDTF and CACTX wish to continue to support the piloting of RCACTF programs through funding, technical assistance, and assistance in program evaluation. Additional support to pilot projects will provide insights into the potential development of a model for RCACTFs that could be replicated throughout the state or a toolkit that would allow communities to review key discovery and lessons learned when developing programs unique to their communities, depending on the outcomes of the project.

CACTX will utilize funds from the Children’s Justice Act (CJA) grant Assistance Listing Numbers (ALN) 93.643 to fund high impact projects that meet eligibility criteria.

Funding Eligibility

CACTX is interested in supporting one or more RCACTF(s) for a period of one year. Communities/jurisdictions interested in applying must be positioned to begin the project in early 2024. For most applicants, this will mean that the jurisdictions and partner agencies involved in the project have already come to an agreement as to the scope of the project and how the RCACTF will operate. Note that additional funding opportunities might be available in the future for continued support and/or to support communities who are not yet ready to apply at this time.

CACTX has \$200,000 total available to fund RCACTF proposals in this grant cycle. Funded projects may receive full or partial amounts based on their application, budget needs and funds available. Projects outside this range may be considered if all other criteria are met and demonstrated through a strong application. This is a pilot project; thus, applicants must agree to tracking and sharing data in order to inform future efforts. Data tracking requirements may vary based on the selected applicant’s specific project and desired outcomes and will be discussed during the contracting period.

CJA funds should be used for programs to reform State systems and improve the processes by which States respond to cases of child abuse and neglect. CJA funds may not be used for prevention programs or treatment services. Additionally, CJA funds cannot be used to provide direct services to victims of abuse and neglect or to their families.

Projects that are selected through the RFA process will be funded on a cost reimbursement basis that can be executed monthly or quarterly.

Grant Administration Regulations

The regulations which apply to the administration of these grants are contained in 45 CFR Part 75, "Uniform administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements for HHS (Health and Human Services) awards."

This program has no matching or cost sharing requirements. Each entity receiving sums made available for administrative purposes shall certify that such sums will not be used to supplant State or local funds but will be used to increase the amount of such funds that would, in the absence of Federal funds, be made available for these purposes.

Purchase, construction, and major renovation of real property are not an allowable activity or expenditure under this grant.

Applicant Eligibility

Only applicants from within the state of Texas may apply. Again, CACTX seeks to fund a community that has already begun initial steps toward the creation of a RCACTF. The following Texas entities are eligible to apply:

- Children's Advocacy Centers
- District Attorney's Office or County Attorney's Office
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- Local, county, or state government entities
- Native American Tribal Organizations
- Any partnership of the above-listed organizations (a fiscal agent must be designated)

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and Texas Identification Number (TIN)

Along with meeting funding and applicant eligibility criteria, the applicant must be registered in System for Award Management (SAM) and include their associated UEI and TIN.

Attestation Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters--Primary Covered Transactions

Applicants must certify to the best of their knowledge and belief that they are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded by any Federal department or agency.

Application Instructions

Please submit applications by emailing the Program Initiatives Principal, Hannah Gibson-Moore at hmoore@cactx.org with the title “RCACTF Application.” Applications must be submitted by 5pm CST (Central Standard Time) on November 30, 2023. Late and/or incomplete applications will not be accepted. Questions regarding the intent of this RFA or application submission guidelines may also be directed at hmoore@cactx.org. If a paper copy of the application is needed, one can be requested. Paper application submissions can be mailed to Hannah Gibson-Moore at CACTX 1501 W. Anderson Ln. #B1, Austin, TX 78757. Applications should be no more than 5-10 pages, single spaced, and in Times New Roman or Calibri font with standard 1-inch margins.

The following information should be covered in the application:

- **UEI and TIN number**
- **Attestation Statement**
- **Organization Information**
Please give a brief description of your entity and all partners who have formally committed to participating in the project.
- **Statement of Need**
Identify the need that this project seeks to address.
- **Project Summary**
Define and describe the RCACTF your community/agency/jurisdiction has envisioned. Explain how it will operate and who will be involved. Describe the current status of the project. Please indicate if a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is already in place with partner agencies. Explain the potential for this project to have a high impact on workforce expertise and the handling of child abuse investigations.
- **Target Population**
Describe the target population and the geographic area served by the program or project, including demographic characteristics, risk factors, etc.
- **Goals**
Please describe at least 3 goals and corresponding objectives you plan to achieve through this program or project. Applicants are requested to provide information on how success will be measured. Include any potential methods for tracking and evaluating data from beginning to end of the one-year funding period. CACTX

will work alongside the funded project(s) to create an evaluation plan to include refining goals and objectives as needed.

- **Budget**

Provide an overall budget for the proposed project, including a budget narrative. The following is a non-exhaustive list of activities/expenses eligible for funding: salaries, benefits, training, travel, and indirect costs (must include negotiated indirect cost rate agreement). Please provide your total anticipated project budget and describe what portion of that budget would ideally be covered by this grant and how it will be allocated. Please include all expenses and line items for any subcontractors.

Please use the following guidelines to prepare a budget showing the total cost of the project for one year and the percentage of each line item you would like covered by this grant.

- List of employee salaries and wages
 - Include the employees' title.
 - Include fringe benefits.
- Training costs
 - List workshops, training, and conferences, total number of participants and cost of registration.
 - For out-of-area training, please include travel costs including the total number of travelers; travel destination; duration of trip; per diem; mileage allowances.
- Contractual Costs
 - Cost of all contracts and subawards (include budget detail for all subawards with secondary recipients). Contracts are subject to procurement requirements at 45 CFR 75.326-.340 and subawards are subject to the requirements at 45 CFR 75.351-.353.
 - Costs related to individual consultants should be listed on the "other" line.
- Other
 - Please include other allowable expenses related to the project such as supplies, equipment, consultation, etc.

Pass Through

Please note that any subcontractors must be listed within the application along with statements regarding all above-listed requirements. Subcontractors must also reside in Texas, provide a UEI and TIN, and state that they have never been debarred from receiving federal funding.

Financial and Performance Reporting

Expenditure reports will be due monthly for reimbursement. Additionally, quarterly performance reports will be due. The final expenditure report must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of each Federal Fiscal Year.

- **Sustainability**

CACTX will fund one-year grants. In certain cases, there is a possibility that a second RFA may be published to provide partial support for a second year. CACTX is looking to support projects that will have long-term impacts and will continue to be sustained by the local community. Please describe a plan for stability and sustainability beyond the pilot funding period. Details can include plans to continue and/or build upon positive outcomes and funding.

- **Key Personnel and Responsibilities**

Describe which staff are responsible for this project and what their roles will be. Please also describe the reporting structure and who will be accountable for the project. Please describe how staff will be selected, including what expertise or experience is required. Attach job descriptions as addendums to the application (please note that job descriptions will not count towards your page limit).

- **Project Activities and Implementation Timeline**

Identify activities that will be included in the proposed project and anticipated dates for completion (if exact dates are unknown, you can use M1, M2, etc. to indicate which month).

Application Review Information

Criteria Review and Selection Process

Applications will be screened for eligibility. Eligible applications that include all required information will be reviewed by a committee based on the following equally weighted criteria:

1. Overall vision for the proposed RCACTF
2. The proposed project's potential to have a high impact on improving the systems' response to child abuse cases
3. Anticipated outcomes; proposed plan for and commitment to program evaluation
4. Reasonableness of budget and timeline for first year pilot activities

During the review process, applicants may be contacted to clarify the information submitted.

Applications are due by November 30, 2023, by 5pm CST. Applicants will be informed by December 15, 2023, if they have been selected for funding.