



Law Enforcement Assessment & Planning Pilot Program Request for Proposals

Overview

Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) in Texas are responsible for ensuring an effective multidisciplinary response to crimes against children through the facilitation of Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) of child abuse professionals from diverse disciplines actively engaged and authorized within the criminal justice and child protection systems.

Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas (CACTX) is pleased to make funds available through this Request for Proposals (RFP) to launch a **Law Enforcement Assessment and Planning (LEAP) Pilot Program** designed to elevate law enforcement engagement and participation on MDTs and thereby improve outcomes for child crime victims. CACTX, in partnership with its Statewide Multidisciplinary Task Force (SMDTF), seeks to support efforts led by local children's advocacy centers – working collaboratively with their local law enforcement partners and other community stakeholders – to:

- (1) Assess the core challenges impacting local law enforcement's ongoing ability to fully and consistently participate in the multidisciplinary response at the heart of the CAC model; and
- (2) Develop a community-informed and embraced plan for addressing and eliminating gaps in the effective and timely criminal investigation of crimes against children as part of the overall MDT response.

Program Background

For more than three decades, CACs have demonstrated that a consistent MDT response to crimes against children results in better case outcomes in our criminal justice and child protection systems, and more importantly, better overall outcomes for child victims and their families. The successful operation of these multidisciplinary teams, at the heart of the CAC model, relies heavily on criminal justice investigative expertise, authority, and availability that only trained law enforcement professionals can provide.

Unfortunately, many law enforcement agencies throughout Texas are struggling to secure and maintain the level of resources (people, money, training, time, etc.) needed for consistently ensuring effective, timely investigative efforts involving crimes against children. When that critical expertise and involvement by local law enforcement is not readily and consistently available, the overall multidisciplinary response to crimes against children can be significantly hampered and successful outcomes for child crime victims seriously jeopardized.

Program Description

In an effort to address this challenge, CACTX is striving to provide funding and technical assistance to local CACs and their law enforcement partners through its Law Enforcement Assessment & Planning Pilot Program. This pilot is intended to provide funding and technical assistance for local initiatives designed to identify specific law enforcement capacity and engagement challenges and develop a community-based plan for addressing those challenges, thereby allowing more child crime victims to receive the known benefits of a consistent, effective multidisciplinary response and the positive outcomes associated with that approach.

In addition, while we recognize that no two Texas communities are exactly alike and that each faces its own unique challenges in this regard, the pilot project is also intended to provide insights and direction for the potential development of one or more effective models for improving law enforcement engagement and capacity that might someday be replicated throughout the state.

During this FY25 grant period (11/1/24 – 9/30/25), the grantee will work to:

- Partner with their law enforcement and other MDT partner agencies to conduct a comprehensive assessment of current law enforcement engagement and participation levels and identify existing hurdles and challenges impacting the capacity and engagement of law enforcement participation in the MDT response to all crimes against children; and
- Engage local law enforcement agencies and other community stakeholders in the development of strategies, structures, practices, and/or resources that, when implemented, offer the promise of increased law enforcement capacity and overall engagement with the multidisciplinary response to crimes against children.

This grant will fund resources needed to conduct such assessments and develop such collaborative community plans.

Assessments might include but are not limited to: data collection and evaluation, agency and MDT policy and practice reviews, stakeholder round tables and community leadership forums intended to explore law enforcement capacity related to crimes against children and cultivate commitment and buy-in to solutions intended to improve law enforcement response capabilities and strengthen the MDT model. Areas that *might*

require exploration during the various components of the assessment process *may* include:

- Current/Recent % of child crimes meeting MDT criteria (as per MDT Working Protocols) referred to the MDT/CAC
- Current/Recent % of child crimes meeting MDT criteria (as per MDT Working Protocols) receiving an MDT response and relevant CAC services
- Percentage of child crime cases meeting MDT criteria but *not* receiving MDT response as a result of law enforcement response challenges
- Local law enforcement methods for identifying, classifying, and tracking reports of crimes against children within their jurisdiction
- Local law enforcement policies and procedures for responding to reports of alleged crimes against children when DFPS-CPI is also involved in the investigation and may have jurisdiction
- Local law enforcement policies and procedures for responding to reports of alleged crimes against children when DFPS-CPI is *not* involved and does *not* have jurisdiction
- Local law enforcement policies and procedures for *assignment* of investigations involving alleged crimes against children
- CAC policies and procedures for notification and coordination of criminal justice and child protection responses to reports of alleged crimes against children
- Law enforcement levels of consistent attendance and participation at scheduled forensic interviews at CAC
- Law enforcement levels of consistent attendance and participation at MDT case review meetings
- Law enforcement levels of referrals for medical assessments on child crime cases meeting MDT criteria (as per MDT Working Protocols)
- Training practices, requirements, frequency for local law enforcement professionals assigned responsibility for investigation of crimes against children
- Current local law enforcement capacity and expertise related to investigation of digital/technology related crimes against children
- Current local law enforcement personnel capacity levels, gaps
- Tenure and retention trends related to law enforcement personnel assigned child abuse investigation duties
- Practices, requirements, availability of mental health resources/referrals intended to assess and address secondary trauma experienced by law enforcement professionals
- Practices, requirements, availability of peer support services for law enforcement professionals
- Recent trends in city/county budgets related to support of personnel, training, resources related to investigation of alleged crimes against children
- Community perceptions related to law enforcement's role in child abuse investigations

NOTE: Assessment efforts must include active participation by one or more local MDT law enforcement agency/agencies at all levels (agency heads, supervisory level, front line investigators, etc.)

Collaborative Community Plans might include, but are not limited to, recommendations such as:

- Changes to local law enforcement policy and practice for identifying, classifying, and tracking reported cases of alleged crimes against children
- Increased investment by city and/or county funding entities to ensure sufficient personnel and training budgets to address personnel capacity and retention needs for effectively responding to crimes against children
- Enhanced community awareness efforts designed to increase public interest and investment in support of local law enforcement involvement in crimes against children and active MDT participation
- Establishment of dedicated investigators within agencies - trained and assigned to participate on the MDT and work all cases of alleged crimes against children
- CAC co-location options for partner agencies to overcome geographic and travel time barriers to consistent participation
- Exploration/creation of a multi-agency, county-wide Crimes Against Children Investigative Task Force
- Exploration/creation of a multi-agency, multi-county Regional Crimes Against Children Task Force
- Enhancement of relevant, ongoing training opportunities for law enforcement personnel assigned investigations of alleged crimes against children
- Enhancement of relevant, ongoing mental health and peer support opportunities available to local law enforcement personnel
- Enhancement of relevant, ongoing training opportunities for law enforcement personnel assigned investigations involving digital/technology related crimes against children
- MDT Working Protocol and related practice shifts pertaining to reporting/intakes and coordination of investigative activity by CAC, other partner agencies
- MDT Working Protocol and related practice changes pertaining to scheduling, format, etc. of regular MDT Case Review meetings

NOTE: Community Plans must demonstrate input and support from MDT law enforcement agency/agencies as well as other relevant community leaders and stakeholders.

Funding Eligibility

CACTX is interested in supporting one or more CACs for a period of approximately one year. CACs interested in applying must be positioned to initiate, conduct and complete the project between **November 1, 2024 and September 30, 2025**. Note that, depending on the outcomes of this initial pilot, additional funding opportunities may be made available in the future for continued project implementation support.

CACTX is open to funding impactful projects with an overall budget between \$20,000 and \$400,000. 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. Applicants must agree to engage in consultation with CACTX representatives throughout the duration of the project period. Data tracking, reporting requirements, and consultation with CACTX will vary based on the selected applicant's specific project scope and desired outcomes and will be discussed during the contracting period.

Funding for this RFP is made available via the Children's Justice Act (CJA), ALN 96.643, passed through CACTX. 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 should not be used to provide direct services to victims of abuse and neglect or to their families.

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

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.

Funding Restrictions

Reimbursement of pre-award costs are not allowable. Pre-Award costs are those incurred prior to the effective date of the Federal award directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the Federal award where such costs are necessary for efficient and timely performance of the scope of work.

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

Law enforcement investigator and/or other direct-service law enforcement personnel costs are not an eligible use of these grant funds.

Applicant Eligibility

Only Children's Advocacy Centers within the state of Texas and in good standing with CACTX may apply.

Priority may be given to CACs demonstrating ongoing challenges to address below average sexual abuse breadth percentage performance – the ability to serve 70% or more of the child sexual abuse cases occurring within their service area and meeting the case criteria outlined in their unique MDT Working Protocols.

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 and Deadline

Please submit applications by emailing Trendy Sharp at tsharp@cactx.org with the title “Law Enforcement Assessment and Planning RFP.” Applications must be submitted by 5pm CST (Central Standard Time) on **October 16, 2024**. Late and/or incomplete applications will not be accepted. Questions regarding the intent of this RFP or application submission guidelines may be directed to Trendy Sharp at tsharp@cactx.org. If a paper copy of the RFP is needed, one can be requested from Trendy Sharp. Paper application submissions can be mailed to Trendy Sharp, care of 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 12 pt font with standard 1-inch margins.

The following information should be covered in the application:

- **UEI and TIN number**
- **Attestation Statement**
Please provide a signed letter or statement of support from heads of any law enforcement agencies identified in “Target Population” (below) and involved in the assessment and community planning activities outlined in the application. Statement/Letter should indicate agency’s knowledge of and willingness to support and participate in relevant activities outlined in proposal. A limited extension may be requested if signed statement(s) is not available for submission *with* the application. However, Attestation Statements must be submitted no later than **5 p.m. on October 23, 2024**. (Please note that Attestation Statements will not count towards your application page limits.)

- **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 specific need that this project seeks to address.

- **Project Summary**

Describe initial plans to address the stated need via this project. Explain the potential for this project to have a high impact on law enforcement capacity, engagement, participation and overall strengthening of the MDT response.

- **Target Population**

Describe the local law enforcement agency(ies) and the related geographic jurisdictions to be included in the proposed project, including demographic characteristics, average tenure of officers, unique risk factors, etc. Please note that, depending on the scope of the proposal, this may include one or more of the CAC's law enforcement partner agencies (as per MOU and Protocols). However, it is *not* required that ALL law enforcement partner agencies be involved in the assessment and community planning initiative if not relevant at this time.

- **Goals**

Please describe the desired change(s) or impact(s) you would like to achieve through this project. Provide information on how success will be measured. Include any potential methods for tracking and evaluating data from baseline throughout the project.

- **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, presentation and meeting costs, travel, consultant/contract fees, 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 the grant period 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.

- Community presentations/meetings and technology costs in direct support of conducting the assessment and development of a community plan based on findings from the assessment
- 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.
- Consultant Costs:
 - Costs related to engagement of consultants to assist with and/or oversee this project. Specify the activities, services consultant(s) to provide and reimbursement rates/basis.
- 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 and must be submitted by the 10th of the following month. Additionally, quarterly performance reports will be due. The final expenditure report must be submitted no later than 30 days following the end of the Federal Fiscal Year.

- **Sustainability**

CACTX will fund single year grants. In certain cases, there is a possibility that a second RFP will be published to provide support for a second year. Please describe your plan for stability and sustainability in funding.

- **Key Personnel and Responsibilities**

Describe which CAC staff are responsible for this project and what their roles will be. Please also describe the reporting structure and who will be accountable and serve as the primary contact 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 activities and process
2. The proposed project's potential to have a high impact on improving the law enforcement MDT engagement and overall response to child abuse cases
3. Anticipated outcomes; proposed plan for and commitment to program evaluation
4. Reasonableness of budget and timeline for grant period pilot activities

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

Federal Award Administration Information

- **Federal Award Notices**

Applications are due by **5 p.m. on October 16, 2024**. Applicants will be informed electronically by **October 28, 2024** if they have been selected for funding. The selection notice is not an authorization to begin performance. A Notice of Federal Award, signed by a CACTX grants officer, will be issued electronically to the individual identified in the application as the primary contact for the project (see P5 of this RFP) subsequent to the proposal selection notification. The Federal award notification is the official authorizing document.