

# Florida Network of Children's Advocacy Centers

## Chapter Growth and Development Action Plan

### Summary:

The FNCAC strives to ensure that every child within Florida has reasonable access to the full array of unique services that only a Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) can provide. This plan serves as the foundation for supporting:

- the ongoing, comprehensive, quality services in currently served areas,
- the development of enhanced services by existing or emerging CACs and MDTs in underserved areas,
- the growth and development of new CACs and MDTs in unserved areas, and
- the identification and inclusion of demographic population in all areas to increase access to quality CAC services.

The FNCAC annually conducts an assessment of gaps in CAC service coverage as part of the NCA Gap Map analysis and assesses the CACs' MDTs and their relationships and coordination within their jurisdiction.

FNCAC has contact with the CACs via regularly scheduled monthly calls as well as frequent contact with the FNCAC's Contract Manager and Statewide Strategic Planner and Quality Assurance Coordinator. The FNCAC employs several staff that have the capacity to work with existing CACs and MDTs who wish to expand or enhance their services. In 2018, the FNCAC's Membership Committee compiled a survey of the CACs which included identifying CACs that expressed an interest in mentoring CACs to assist with accreditation, increasing comprehensive, quality services, etc. The Membership Committee provided the results to each CAC for reference.

Annually, the FNCAC collects information from all CACs to identify the array of services offered to children in the community. State specific statistics and data relative to local demographics is reported by each CAC as a part of their required monthly reports to FNCAC as well as the mandatory bi-annual reports submitted to NCA. Each CAC is contacted and asked to describe their MDT, team members, and how their team operates. This information is captured in a document that is updated on an ongoing basis.

Florida is unique in that in addition to the CAC, Florida also has Child Protection Teams (CPT) within the Florida Department of Health/Children's Medical Services, which provide forensic interviews and medical exams/assessments for all 67 counties within Florida. Some CPTs also facilitate the sexual abuse treatment program (SATP), which is the therapeutic component for children and non-offending care givers/families. The majority of CPTs are also the CAC and therefore, work in partnership to ensure the full array of services are provided in the majority of counties in Florida.

By gathering this information and engaging regularly with the CACs, the FNCAC is aware of each CAC's operational status and can determine if there are any gaps in services.

The FNCAC recognizes that growth and development is not just about expanding services but includes professional development of CAC and MDT staff skills. The Chapter provides robust training opportunities on an ongoing basis, often at no cost to the participants, to facilitate the development of CAC and MDT staff skills and knowledge, in order to provide comprehensive, quality services. The Chapter also provides accessible resources from various sources including

the NCA and SRCAC and CACs can find relevant education and awareness information and materials related to child abuse on the FNCAC website. Additionally, the FNCAC has an annual Crimes Against Kids conference that provides seven training tracks for CACs and MDT partners.

## **Plan:**

### **Existing CACs**

To assist the CACs in their continued development, enhancement and growth of comprehensive and quality services in their areas as well as develop strong MDT and CPT coordination.

- FNCAC will continue to work with existing CACs in becoming associate and accredited members of NCA
- Conduct Coverage/Gap Analysis to include Military Installations and Tribal Communities in Florida
- Foster the mentorship program between the CACs
- CAC – CPT Alignment
  - Establish a shared understanding of CAC and CPT roles
  - Establish best practice guidelines
  - Recreate CAC/CPT workgroup
- The Executive Director (former Florida VOCA State Administrator) assists CACs with their VOCA applications to expand/enhance their services
- A list-serve group is being established to further foster communication and mentorship among the CACs and the Chapter (the list-serve group is a pilot program that is being facilitated jointly with NCA)
- FNCAC will continue to provide ongoing training opportunities to the CACs and MDTs for professional development to increase staff skills and knowledge as well as staying on the cutting-edge of child abuse service delivery.

### **Emerging CACs**

To work with communities that do not have a children's advocacy center or satellite facility in their area.

- FNCAC's website directs interested parties to contact the FNCAC for additional information
- FNCAC will continue to respond to communities that are interested in exploring the development of a CAC in their community
  - Initial inquiries are responded to by the Executive Director
  - Resources from NCA and the Regional CACs are provided to inquiring parties
  - Conference calls are scheduled with community leaders and potential MDT partners, as applicable
- FNCAC has an application process in place that can be provided to individuals or communities who wish to explore starting an advocacy in their community
- As part of the Department of Children and Families contract for trust fund dollars to FNCAC, the FNCAC sets aside \$13,000 annually to help a developing CAC with costs for children's services (advocacy, therapy, psychological evaluations, forensic and specialized interviews and medical examinations). A developing CAC would need to provide a dollar for dollar match to access the funds.

## **Military Installations**

To foster a working relationship between the CACs and military installations in their areas to provide comprehensive, quality and coordinated services to child victims and their non-offending family/caregivers.

- FNCAC staff is working to become familiar with military practices pertaining to child advocacy issues.
- Staff participation in NCA's Intro to DOD Family Advocacy Program Webinar
- Staff participation in NCA's Intro to Military Investigations Organizations webinar
- Staff participation in NCA's Intro to Military Health System and the Armed Forces Center for Child Protection Webinar
- Staff participation in NCA's Intro to Military Legal System Webinar
- FNCAC staff is working to identify the extent of child advocacy services coordination between the military and CACs
  - Identify CACs with bases in area
  - Contact CACs to discuss relationships and MOU's between CACs and neighboring military installations

## **Tribal Communities**

To foster a working relationship between the CACs and tribal communities in their areas to provide comprehensive, quality and coordinated services to child victims and their non-offending family/caregivers.

- FNCAC staff is working to identify CACs with tribal relationships and/or tribal territories near them
- Identify extent of child advocacy services coordination between Tribal communities and CACs
- Staff participation in NCA's Tribal listening sessions