



Maryland Children's Alliance, Inc.

Strategic Plan

EMPOWERING MARYLAND'S CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS

October 1, 2023 - September 30, 2026

Full Strategic Plan Approved by Board of Directors and adopted by
Member Centers of the Maryland Children's Alliance

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Maryland Children's Alliance (MCA) is the statewide leader in the response to child abuse. MCA, representing all 24 child advocacy centers (CACs) in Maryland, connects local CACs with the tools to provide a comprehensive response to child abuse, ensures all children in Maryland have access to trauma-informed, evidence-based services which puts their wellbeing at the center of care, and empowers Maryland's child advocacy centers to best serve their communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Maryland Children's Alliance and our local children's advocacy centers believe that every child victim of sexual violence, trauma or other maltreatment needs and deserves a safe, supportive environment to share their experiences and begin their healing process. Maryland Children's Alliance works with local CACs in every jurisdiction in Maryland to serve our most vulnerable citizens, our children.

The MCA Board of Directors gathered feedback and input from our member centers, our multidisciplinary (MDT) partners, our funders and other agencies working within this field and around our state. After careful consideration of these findings, the Board determined the need to focus Maryland Children's Alliance resources, skills and determination on three key areas over the next three years: Governance, Accreditation and Public Awareness.

1. **Governance:** Maryland Children's Alliance's organizational structure and capacity will provide resources to promote operational support and leadership to local Children's Advocacy Centers.
2. **Standards:** Every child in Maryland will have access to services that employ best practices per National Children's Alliance (NCA) standards and through the development of Maryland statewide standards.
3. **Public Awareness:** Maryland Children's Alliance is a voice of authority and expertise concerning issues of child maltreatment. Increased outreach and awareness efforts will positively impact our statewide movement and support of Maryland CACs.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

1. **Governance:** Maryland Children's Alliance's organizational structure and capacity will provide resources to promote operational support and leadership to local Children's Advocacy Centers.
 - 1.1. **Fund Development:** MCA will acquire sustainable funding to support existing programs and new initiatives. MCA will advocate for increased funds for CACs during the MD legislative session.
 - 1.2. **Oversight:** In order to better reflect the diversity of the service area, the Board will be diversified. The Board will include additional voices which will broaden the professional *and* personal experience reflected by the MCA Board of Directors.
 - 1.3. **Training:** MCA will provide training to child welfare professionals in MD. Training will be related to all core disciplines (law enforcement, child protective services, prosecution, medical services, mental health services, victim advocacy), as well as diversity, equity & inclusion, forensic interviewing, and multidisciplinary team training which is accessible to all jurisdictions within the state.

2. **Standards:** Every child in Maryland will have access to services that employ best practices per National Children’s Alliance standards. MCA will convene a task force comprised of CAC/MDT professionals as well as stakeholders with the support of key legislators to establish statewide standards for Maryland CACs. MD CACs will be accredited by NCA and also meet the MD standards for best practice services.
 - 2.1. Collaboration: MCA will explore opportunities for collaboration and/or regionalization for CAC care in underserved communities in order to assure equal access to services for all Maryland children.
 - 2.2. Access: MCA will support regulations and legislation which ensure that every child has access to an accredited Children’s Advocacy Center.
 - 2.3. Accreditation: All Maryland CACs will meet or exceed the current NCA standards for accreditation.
 - 2.4. Standardized Service Delivery: MCA will establish a task force to identify best practice service delivery, develop inclusive statewide CAC standards, and oversee the transition to government support of statewide standard of care.

3. **Public Awareness:** Maryland Children’s Alliance will be the voice of authority and expertise concerning issues of child maltreatment that impact our statewide movement and support of local Child Advocacy Centers.
 - 3.1. Outreach: MCA will increase prevention efforts by publishing content on various social media platforms. Postings will include outreach and safety information and resources.
 - 3.2. Training: MCA will establish a mandated reporter “train the trainer” program. Content will be specific to Maryland statute and be accessible for CAC leaders in order to educate local professionals.
 - 3.3. Expertise: MCA will advocate for government recognition of the expertise of MCA and leverage local CAC expertise in the field.

Strategic Priority 1: Governance: Maryland Children’s Alliance organizational structure and capacity will provide resources to promote operational support and leadership to local Children’s Advocacy Centers.

| Goals and Objectives: Governance | Measure | Start Date-End Date |
|---|--|---------------------|
| 1.1.1 Define continued need and advantages of stable funding for staff positions at MCA | Stable and consistent staff funding | 10/2023-6/2024 |
| 1.1.2 Engage in contractual partnership to build capacity for long term sustainability | Signed bill: Fully funded staff | 10/2023 |
| 1.1.3 Facilitate and maintain key community relationships and partnerships | Increased capacity and donor base. | ongoing |
| 1.2.1 Identify potential candidates to diversify MCA Board of Directors | Fully diversified board which is inclusive and reflective of the communities we serve. | 1/2024 - 12/2024 |
| 1.3.1 MCA will provide annual training for each discipline represented in MD CACs | A minimum of one training for each discipline annually. | ongoing |

Strategic Priority 2: Standards: Every child in Maryland will have access to services that employ best practices per National Children’s Alliance standards.

| Goals and Objectives: Standards | Measure | Start Date-End Date |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------------------|
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| 2.1.1 Design and administer stakeholder surveys regarding collaboration and regionalization | Inventory of services and needs through surveys and interviews and enhanced collaborative and/or regionalized relationships and services to children in underserved communities | 6/2024 - 6/2025 |
| 2.2.1 Statewide access to research-based and trauma-informed care | Legislation regarding NCA accreditation requirement in MD | 12/2025 - 6/2026 |
| 2.3.1 Every MD jurisdiction meets or exceeds the minimum NCA standards for accreditation | 24 accredited MD CACs | 10/2023 - 1/2026 |
| 2.4.1 MCA will establish a task force to identify and develop required statewide standards for CAC services | Comprehensive compilation of minimum standards of care for MD CACs | 1/ 2026 - 6/2026 |
| 2.4.2 Support government implementation of statewide standard of care | Legislative requirement for MCA to ensure and monitor statewide standards for CACS | 1/2026 - 9/2026 |

Strategic Priority 3: Public Awareness: Maryland Children’s Alliance will be a voice of authority and expertise concerning issues of child maltreatment that impact our statewide movement and support local CACs.

| Goals and Objectives: Public Awareness | Measure | Start Date-End Date |
|---|--|---------------------|
| 3.1.1 Contract with marketing specialist to increase public awareness of child abuse, prevention, and CAC services | Increased following and engagement on various social media platforms | 10/2023 - 9/2026 |
| 3.1.2 MCA website will be used as a community information resource for child maltreatment information | Increased traffic to the MCA website | 10/2023 - 9/2026 |
| 3.1.3 Develop standardized message regarding MCA and CACs | All CACs will use common language for outreach and prevention | 12/2025 |
| 3.1.4 Create press/media packets with expert information; create relationships with media as needed | Media will contact MCA for comments and information | 6/2025 |
| 3.2.1 MCA will establish a mandated reporter “train the trainer” program | MD CAC leaders will have access to resource for use to educate local professionals | 10/2023 - 6/2024 |
| 3.3.1 Identify opportunities to educate government leaders on effectiveness of CACs, MD network and NCA accreditation standards | Maintain key relationships with partners | 10/2023 - 9/2026 |
| 3.3.2 Continue to develop practices which incorporate | Maintain legislative advocacy, increase | 10/2023-9/2026 |

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| the use of a legislative advocate in order to advance the mission of MCA and MD CACs | partnership to drive mission | |
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APPROVED BY MCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS October 4, 2023