



Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024

Introduction

In July 2004, Children's Advocacy Center for Child Abuse Assessment and Treatment (CAC) opened its doors. The CAC functions to coordinate a Multi-Disciplinary Team that works together to investigate allegations of physical or sexual abuse or where the child is believed to have witnessed a serious crime.

The CAC follows guidelines set by the National Children's Alliance. It features a comprehensive, culturally competent, Multi-Disciplinary Team approach to respond to allegations of child abuse, including forensic interviews, medical examinations, therapeutic intervention, victim support advocacy, case review, and case tracking, all in one comfortable, child-friendly location.

The Children's Advocacy Center promotes a sense of safety, trauma reduction, and consistency of care to victims of abuse and non-offending family members.

Strategic Planning Process

In 2003, prior to the opening of the CAC, the Board developed a list of short and long-term objectives. The development of a more formalized strategic planning process by the Board was initiated in January 2007. The mission statement and vision were initially created in 2007. The extent of achievement of earlier objectives was reviewed. At that time, a SWOT analysis (an assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the CAC) was also undertaken. The SWOT analysis then provided a foundation for developing long-term strategies and objectives.

In 2010, the CAC Board reviewed the results from the 2007 plan and repeated the process to develop a new three-year plan. Improved information systems allowed for a more in-depth analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Strategies and objectives were crafted for the next three to five years.

In 2014, the CAC Board reviewed the prior Strategic Plan, celebrating achievements and identifying goals as well as weaknesses.

In May 2016, the CAC Board approved the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan.

In 2019, the CAC Board approved the 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan.

In 2020, the CAC Board and staff engaged in a review of the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan to ensure that it incorporates input from all perspectives so that the agency is committed to measurable goals and approving priorities for implementation as well as a SWOT analysis.

Evaluation of the 2014 – 2018 and 2019 - 2022 Strategic Plans

The CAC has achieved many of its goals and objectives set forth in the 2014 – 2018 and 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plans.

In March 2014, the CAC moved into a 5600 square foot home on the Masonic Home Campus. In addition to doubling the size of the prior office space, the new location is in a tranquil park-like setting. The home is very welcoming to children and adults and immediately sets children at ease. This new space allows the CAC to add a second interview room, increasing the number of children and families that can be provided services. In addition, the new location is in Covina and thus closer to downtown Los Angeles, thereby making access more convenient to several additional members of the Multi-Disciplinary Team.

In April 2014, the CAC hired a full time Executive Director.

The CAC continues to increase the number of children and families served. The total number of completed interviews is as follows:

2007 - 151
2008 - 183
2009 - 198
2010 - 273
2011 - 265
2012 - 291
2013 – 299
2014 – 378
2015 – 387
2016 – 443

2017 – 583
2018 – 682
2019 – 717
2020 – 544*

*Because of COVID-19 and quarantine, child abuse referrals were down by 50%. Consequently, forensic interview requests and actual interviews conducted were down by 24%.

The CAC continues to hold monthly Case Reviews with all MDT partner agencies and holds monthly Family Support and Victim Advocacy Team meetings.

The CAC maintains a database to capture information on the children seen as well as case updates from law enforcement, DCFS and the District Attorney's Office.

CAC forensic interviewers participate in monthly peer review meetings to ensure they provide high quality interviews that meet the standards of NCA accredited best practices.

The Executive Director continues to outreach to the community and has received several donations from local businesses.

We hold an annual Open House which is attended by our multi-disciplinary team partners as well as community members during April, National Child Abuse Prevention and Sexual Assault Awareness Months to highlight the work that we do.

Highlights by Year

2014: The CAC was reaccredited by the National Children's Alliance, and since then has held an annual "Be A Hero for Children" Gala which honors superheroes, increases our exposure to the community, and raises funds for the CAC.

2015: The CAC collaborated with Pet Prescription Team to provide therapy dogs to children and their families. The CAC initiated appropriate protocols for this collaboration and provided training to all dog handlers.

2016: The CAC amended its Mission Statement to include assisting adults with developmental disabilities.

The CAC entered a partnership with the Masonic Center for Youth and Families to provide mental health services to the children and families that come to the CAC. The Masonic Center for Youth and Families is co-located on the Masonic Homes campus making access easy for the children and their non-offending family members.

2017: The CAC received a grant to open a satellite office in Los Alamitos to assist children in the Long Beach/South Los Angeles area, at which. Forensic interviews began being conducted at the satellite office in March 2018.

2018: The CAC obtained a grant to fund to provide additional services and hire additional staff. With that funding, we have hired additional forensic interviewers, a Child Advocate, and a MultiDisciplinary Team Coordinator. We partnered with Source Nonprofit Consulting, a non-profit organization out of the Claremont McKenna Colleges, to assist in further developing our social media presence.

2019: We adopted a new logo and branding messages created by Innovation Protocol, a branding and marketing firm that generously donated its services.

2020: A recording system was installed in the downstairs waiting room which can be used to interview victims with mobility or physical disabilities who cannot use the stairs.

Our Operational Protocol was updated. Our case eligibility/criteria regarding receiving referrals from law enforcement and DCFS was updated, and after consultation with entire MDT, a tele-forensic protocol was adopted in response to COVID-19 to allow for remote viewing and participation.

We transitioned to a new data system, which includes case tracking, and assistance in creating and providing reports for grant and accreditation reporting and allows us to network with other agencies to ensure children are not reinterviewed.

2021: The CAC received reaccreditation from the National Children's Alliance and our positive reputation continues to grow in the community.

Mission

The CAC is committed to using a multi-disciplinary team approach to assist children who are victims of physical or sexual abuse, or who have witnessed acts of violence, as well as providing these services to people of any age with developmental disabilities. All services will be provided in a supportive environment by individuals trained in best practices to optimize positive outcomes and reduce trauma.

Vision

That children will have one, child-friendly, neutral, and professional forensic interview. All interviews are professionally digitally recorded for permanent evidence collection.

That all children who are served by the CAC have timely resources provided to them to ensure a healthy and productive future.

That all child abuse response agencies in our geographical service area use the Children's Advocacy Center.

That all involved agencies harmoniously work together for the sake of the children we serve.

Strategic Themes and Objectives

Strategic Theme #1: Expansion and improvement of services

Objective #1: The CAC will continue to increase the services we provide, and the number of children and families served by our agency.

Action Plan:

- 1.1.1 We will explore starting a "Child Abuse Forensic Center" with our MDT partners, which will be a forum to discuss allegations of crimes, appropriate responses, and investigations.
- 1.1.2 We will continue to expand remote viewing and virtual platforms to realize and increase in MDT participation.
- 1.1.3 We will identify and track services provided to children and adults with disabilities.
- 1.1.4 We will outreach to Regional Centers and Adult Protective Services

Objective #2: We want to see an increase in participation by all MDT partners.

Action Plan:

- 1.2.1 We will increase our outreach to law enforcement agencies, prosecutor's offices, child protection agencies, and other potential Multi-Disciplinary Team members.
- 1.2.2 We will develop relationships and agreements with additional partner agencies, including Los Angeles County Counsel and the Children's Law Center
- 1.2.3 We will meet with the Los Angeles DA's Office with the goal of having a DDA be assigned at our site.
- 1.2.4 We will provide access to training and information on vicarious trauma and building resiliency to MDT members.
- 1.2.5 We will host an annual Summit for all MDT partners with the goal of increasing communication and collaboration among the members of the MDT and to provide information on relevant topics.
- 1.2.6 We will enhance our outreach training program for all MDT members aiming to enhance our reputation in the field of child forensic interviewing.

Objective #3 The CAC will begin a prevention and intervention program.

Action Plan

- 1.3.1 We will work with our MDT partners to provide prevention and intervention training to local mandatory reporters (including school districts and administrators, faith communities, youth groups, educators, and other school staff), children and parents.
- 1.3.2 We will increase our outreach to local businesses and community/service groups to provide prevention and intervention training, which will result in increased awareness of our services in the communities we serve.

Strategic Theme #2: Maintain sufficient staffing to effectively implement the CAC's Mission and Vision.

Objective #1: The CAC will maintain staffing sufficient to effectively carry out the CAC's Mission and Vision.

Action Plan:

- 2.1.1 We will maintain a sufficient base of full and part-time interviewers to ensure timely responses to requests for services.
- 2.1.2 We will maintain a robust volunteer program.
- 2.1.3 We will hire a Program Development Coordinator whose goals will be to identify and secure resources to fully support the CAC.

Objective #2: The CAC will maintain and enhance the training we provide for all paid and volunteer staff.

Action Plan:

2.2.1 We will create training curriculums for newly hired employees. We will also maintain an on going training curriculum consistent with NCA accreditation standards which will include, but not be limited to the topics of vicarious trauma, cultural sensitivity, and advocate training.

2.2.2 We will also maintain and enhance the existing training programs we provide for our MDT partners.

Objective #3: The CAC will create and maintain a healthy work environment that fosters and supports high staff morale.

Action Plan:

2.3.1 We will foster an environment that supports staff resilience and creates opportunities for self care.

Strategic Theme #3: Sustainability

Objective #1 The CAC will maintain a robust governing body.

Action Plan:

3.1.1 We will expand the membership of our board of directors, with particular attention to: board diversity, candidates with a particular “skill base” identified as a need by the CAC Board of Directors and staff members. Those candidates for the Board of Directors will be representative of our local communities and will likely come from existing community partners and contacts.

3.1.2 We will create an orientation plan for new directors on the Board of Directors.

Objective #2 The CAC will implement systems to create, approve and maintain policies and procedures.

Action Plan

3.2.1 We will implement and maintain our plan for succession.

3.2.2 We will review, update, and maintain our Human Resources Manual

Objective #3: The CAC will increase its funding to support the growth of the organization.

Action Plan:

4.1.1 The CAC staff, with support from the Board of Directors, will maintain sufficient grant, foundation, and individual donor support.

4.1.2 Once a Program Development Coordinator is hired, that employee will focus on fund raising and grant writing to apply for the additional funding to support the growth of our organization.

4.1.3 The CAC will develop a robust donor relational database which integrates our bookkeeping program with our website, which will automatically generate thank you letters.

4.1.4 We will seek funding for prevention and intervention programs.

4.1.5 We will develop, cultivate, and strengthen relationships with existing and new donors.

4.1.6 We will continue to host fund-raising events, with one major Gala event per year.

4.1.7 We will develop an annual solicitation plan.