

Media Kit: Children’s Advocacy Center Services Funding Cuts

**Here is what you can do to help:**

* Identify media outlets in your area and send out the attached draft press release (modify with your program’s information).
* Identify journalists in your area who may be interested in reporting on issues involving Children’s Advocacy Centers. You can review recent news articles to find relevant reporting and contact information. Reach out to journalists with the attached draft pitch email (modify to personalize your message).
* Review the attached talking points to familiarize yourself with our key messages. You may also want to identify relevant stories from your program to share with media, such as increased requests for services and impacts of funding cuts.
* Review our [**2023 Legislative Session Guide**](https://www.canva.com/design/DAFYPYQQ2TY/4Gaa3eFlGE3voN3bv0-J0Q/view?utm_content=DAFYPYQQ2TY&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton) for background information on our bill (HB1439), budget request, and helpful advocacy tips.
* Watch for Weekly 2023 Legislative Session Updates and Action Alerts via email - Paula will be sending them throughout the session.

We will post a press release on the CACWA’s website on **Thursday, January 26th** in advance of CAC Advocacy Week (Jan 30-Feb 3) and our Day at the Capitol, February 1st. You can send your press release to your local media before then to give local reporters the first look. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to us for assistance with identifying media outlets, pitches to journalists, media interviews, or anything else.

Paula Reed

Executive Director

director@cacwa.org

# Sample Press Release

[REPLACE CONTACT INFORMATION WITH YOURS]

Paula Reed FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Children’s Advocacy Centers of Washington [DATE]

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director@cacwa.org

**Massive Funding Cuts to Children’s Advocacy Center Services**

**Will Directly and Negatively Impact Child Victims of Abuse**

Children’s Advocacy Center services across Washington State are facing a massive 34% to 38% cut in state funding contracts, that will go into effect July 1. CACs deliver a best practice model that brings together child protective services investigators, law enforcement, forensic interviewers, prosecutors, advocates, and medical and mental health professionals to provide a coordinated, comprehensive response to child victims and their caregivers. This approach reduces trauma, helps children heal, and lowers the risk of future abuse and other negative consequences.

**Studies show that communities that have a CAC experience many benefits, such as:**

* More immediate follow-up to child abuse reports.
* More efficient medical and mental health referrals.
* A reduction in the number of child interviews
* Increased successful prosecutions.
* Consistent support for child victims and their families.

The projected cuts in funding will dramatically impact the ability of CACs to maintain the level of intervention currently available to children and families at a time when demand for services has never been greater. Deep funding cuts will reduce programming and options available, putting children and our communities at risk.

Children’s Advocacy Centers and their services are supported by a combination of federal and state general funds. The primary federal fund source for all survivor and crime victim services in Washington State (funding from the Victims of Crime Act), has dropped by $50 million or 38% in recent years. At the same time, state general funding for all crime victim services has remained flat.

For Washington CACs, state dollars represent only a quarter of total CAC funding, with federal VOCA dollars disproportionately making up 75% of what CACs rely upon to support their work. This over-reliance on federal funds puts CACs in a particularly vulnerable position.

Replace the following with you own local quote:

*“Cutting funding for Children’s Advocacy Centers by as much as 38% will devastate these vital programs. CACs will struggle to maintain services, and some programs may close completely,” said Paula Reed, Executive Director for Children’s Advocacy Centers of Washington (CACWA). “Deep and sudden cut in services will delay the progress of child abuse investigations, continue to expose vulnerable children to their abusers, deprive children of necessary trauma-informed specialized mental health services, cause the closure of many rural CACs, and increase the burden on law enforcement. Survivors of abuse and their caregivers will be forced to navigate systemic barriers instead of having child-friendly, dedicated CACs to provide these critical services. We greatly appreciate that state lawmakers stepped up and did the right thing by adding short-term funding for the last two years, but we really need a long-term solution.”*

A snapshot of escalating need in recent years:

* Children's Advocacy Centers saw a double-digit increase in requests for services statewide, between 15-43%
* On a single day in 2020, 75% of Washington State domestic violence programs served 2,306 survivors; 603 requests for help went unmet.
* Sexual assault programs saw double-digit increase in requests for services statewide; King County increased by 19%.
* Survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault have experienced twice as many civil legal problems each year.

A network of coalitions, including the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, Office of Civil Legal Aid, Children's Advocacy Centers of Washington, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, and the Washington Sexual Assault Working Group, have come together to strategize how to strengthen the safety net for survivors. This group has spent three years pinpointing these funding gaps and identifying long-term solutions. They have just [issued a request](https://wscadv.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/One-pager-Crime-Victims-Request-2023-132.FINALpdf.pdf) to Washington State lawmakers for a support plan that will stabilize essential survivor services.

Trauma-informed advocacy services are proven to increase safety, reduce further victimization, and help survivors and their children heal. Our communities cannot afford cuts to these life-saving programs.

[MODIFY THE BOILERPLATE BELOW WITH YOUR PROGRAM’S INFORMATION]

 **About the Children’s Advocacy Centers of Washington**

*Established in 2007, Children’s Advocacy Centers of Washington (CACWA) is a nationally accredited membership organization that supports existing and developing Children’s Advocacy Centers (CACs) and Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) in Washington. CACWA provides training, technical assistance, outreach, fund development, and other supportive resources to both established CACs and communities wishing to establish CACs and is committed to the ongoing development, growth, and sustainability of CACs across the state, so that every child has access to a trained team of professionals at a local CAC.*

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# Sample Pitch Email

**Subject:** Interview Opportunity: Massive Funding Cuts Threaten to Slash Essential Children’s Advocacy Centers Services.

Good morning, [JOURNALIST],

I’ve appreciated your reporting on child abuse and other crimes in our community. [OR OTHER PERSONAL GREETING]

I’m [YOUR NAME] and I am the Executive Director at [PROGRAM]. The [CITY OR COUNTY] community depends on our children’s advocacy services, case management, and legal assistance for safety and healing after being a victim or witness violence.

[MEDIA OUTLET]’s [READERS/VIEWERS] need to be aware of funding cuts of 34% to 38% that will jeopardize community safety, scheduled to go into effect July 1 unless action is taken.

Every day, our program works around the clock to offer safe options and support healing for children. These cuts would have a devastating impact on our ability to meet the needs of survivors in our community.

Our state chapter, Children’s Advocacy Centers of Washington (CACWA), has just issued [this press release](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mUv4xQ2b-ZlD5n_oLI6IhhpLZbYwruw8/view?usp=share_link) warning of the impact of these massive funding cuts.

I would be happy to provide an interview to talk about the local implications of the cuts and/or connect you with our state contacts.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you,

[YOUR NAME]

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# Talking Points

Core messages:

* Children’s Advocacy Centers services across Washington are facing unprecedented and dangerous funding cuts of 34% to 38% starting July 1. These funding cuts threaten the safety and wellbeing of children and their families throughout our communities.
* We need state lawmakers to act now. Short-term stopgap funding has been provided over the last 2 years, but we need a long-term solution. $132 million is that solution.
* Here in [CITY OR COUNTY], this critical funding makes it possible for child victims to [YOUR PROGRAM’S SERVICES].

This is a really big ask. Why?

* State funding for crime victim services hasn’t changed for over several years, even though the cost of keeping the doors open, inflation, and need have risen dramatically.
* Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) deposits, which are braided with state and other funding sources, have dropped significantly. It has become clear that relying on a volatile, unpredictable, and declining source of funding is no longer working for Washington state. Child victims and our communities deserve consistent, predictable, reliable crisis services.
* *Use stories from your program to reflect increased need.*

What is the solution?

* A “coalition of coalitions” representing domestic violence and sexual assault services, children’s advocacy centers for child abuse survivors and their families, civil legal aid, civil legal assistance for immigrant victims, and crime victims have come together and over the past year, came up with a plan. This is for a $132 million proviso in the biennial budget ($65 million per year) to ensure baseline continuation of services.

# Media Contacts

*These are the representatives from the network advocating for this budget request. You are welcome to share these contacts with media.*

**Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence**

Elizabeth Montoya, Communications Coordinator

Phone: 206.389.2515 x307 Mobile: 425.765.2147 Email: elizabeth@wscadv.org

**Washington Sexual Assault Working Group**

Laurel Redden, Director of Policy and Communications, KCSARC

Phone: 425.282.0427 Mobile: 603.425.3855 Email: lredden@kcsarc.org

**Children's Advocacy Centers of Washington**

Paula Reed, Executive Director

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**Office of Civil Legal Aid**

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