



Children's Advocacy Centers
of Washington

PUBLIC POLICY & ADVOCACY TOOLKIT



August 2022

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Children's Advocacy Centers
of Washington

CACWA Mission

To promote a collaborative response to child abuse, reach all victims, and reduce trauma by advancing the work and mission of local Children's Advocacy Centers.

CACWA Vision

Every child has access to a trained team of professionals at a local Children's Advocacy Center. Children's Advocacy Centers are safe, child-friendly facilities where children and their families can get the help they need to stop abuse and begin the process of healing.

Our Purpose

CACWA's purpose is to:

- Gain statewide consistency in the investigation, prosecution and treatment of child abuse while acknowledging and supporting local diversity;
- Support the development, growth and continuation of Children's Advocacy Centers and multidisciplinary teams involved in the field of reported child abuse through the provision of technical assistance, training and networking opportunities;
- Coordinate efforts to statewide organizations and agencies involved in child abuse intervention;
- Promote the prevention of child abuse.

CACWA Public Policy/Advocacy Committee

The Public Policy/Advocacy Committee is responsible for:

- Proactively establishing priorities for bills for the upcoming year session in collaboration with the lobbyist;
- Cultivating support from legislative leaders; and
- Promoting engagement of CAC Directors in public policy.

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Section 1: The Importance of Public Policy

Public Policy is the means by which a governing body maintains order and addresses the needs of its citizens. It includes a collection of laws, rules, regulations, guidelines and the apportionment of shared resources and the appropriation of public funds.

Advocacy is the means by which we work to shape public policy to promote a cause or idea. Advocacy encompasses a wide range of activities designed to influence decision makers.

Advocacy may include but is not limited to: Educating the public, organizing a base of support; informing policy makers; and lobbying for the adoption or rejection of legislation. (Note: Lobbying refers to a specific activity designed to influence a specific piece of legislation. All lobbying is advocacy, but not all advocacy is lobbying.) It is important to note that while there are rules surrounding the ability of nonprofits to lobby, there are no restrictions on other advocacy efforts.

Why Advocate for Public Policy?

We must do everything we can to improve outcomes for the children and families. All of us play a vital role in the development and implementation of favorable policies, and the securitization of adequate resources. This includes motivating our constituency to get involved. Policy makers rely on those they represent to drive their decision-making process.

CAC staff and MDT members make excellent and effective advocates. The very nature of the CAC/MDT model brings together a wide range of disciplines with a common interest. Policy makers rely on us to keep them informed, make them aware of problems, and develop solutions. Through advocacy efforts, CACs and MDTs across the country have affected many positive developments.

Coordinating Public Policy is Key to Success

A coordinated strategic approach is vital to the success and effectiveness of public policy advocacy. The diverse disciplines of MDTs and the compassionate convictions of advocates and victims alike, combine to provide for a reasoned voice like no other. Local centers can strengthen their voices and maximize their efforts by leveraging the relationships and tapping into the policy expertise of their state chapters. A unified voice is essential to building and maintaining these relationships and developing a dedicated coalition of champions. The synergy created by combined advocacy efforts at all levels is powerful.

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a computer keyboard. The word 'Protocol' is printed in large, bold, black letters on a white key. A mouse cursor arrow is pointing at the key. The background shows other keys and a mouse button, all in soft focus.

Protocol

CACWA's Public Policy Protocol

CACWA's Governing Board of Directors (Board) recognizes that the public policy role of CACWA, as a membership driven association, shall be to develop and advocate for legislative initiatives, funding, and policy changes which represent the overall statewide interests of local CACs/MDTs, while also advancing the CAC movement in Washington. CACWA shall utilize input from local centers/teams in order to serve as a resource to the Washington State Legislature, Congress, other elected officials and government agencies on issues that pertain to child abuse, child abuse investigations, intervention, prosecution and prevention.

In order to effectively fulfill this mission, the Board recognizes that protocols are necessary to ensure that coordination, communication and trust exists between CACWA and its local member centers/teams. The Board further recognizes that a clear and consistent message is vital to successfully delivering public policy outcomes that will benefit the CAC movement and the ability of all member centers to more effectively serve children.

The intent of these protocols is not to stifle the independent voice, position or actions of local centers, but to ensure that CACWA is representing the best interests of the entire statewide membership as well as the overall CAC movement in Washington. Therefore, these protocols shall lay out requirements and expectations for both CACWA and member centers/teams.

Requirements and Expectations for CACWA:

The following protocols for CACWA serve to ensure that local centers are kept informed of developing CACWA statewide policy initiatives and are given an opportunity to provide input. It shall be the goal of CACWA to develop policy platforms that represent the best interests of the overall membership and sustainability of the movement.

1. Prior to each legislative session, CACWA's Public Policy Committee shall work with the Executive Director and Legislative Consultant/Lobbyist, Bob Cooper, to develop a legislative agenda that reflects the initiatives and plans the organization wishes to take forth to the legislature at this time. This plan will be presented and approved by CACWA's Governing Board of Directors and distributed to all member centers.
2. CACWA will consult the following groups when developing the policy positions discussed in item #1 above:
 - Member Centers
 - Relevant collaborative partners
 - Relevant state agencies
3. The Executive Director shall serve as the primary legislative liaison and spokesperson for CACWA in regard to the policy platform of the organization. The Executive Director shall be responsible for coordination and designation of additional spokespersons, as deemed appropriate, authorized to speak on behalf of CACWA in regard to the organization's platform. In the event additional spokespersons are designated, such persons will be authorized to attend and speak on behalf of CACWA at legislative committee meetings and hearings on approved and assigned issues. The Executive Director shall direct and coordinate such communications.
4. The Executive Director and Public Policy Committee, based on information provided by the Consultant/Lobbyist, shall track progress of the approved initiatives and determine all necessary attendance and/or presentations needed by spokespersons.
5. The Executive Director shall ensure that spokespersons include the following items in every testimony or legislative visit:
 - The current number of member CACs in Washington
 - The total number of children served by CACs in Washington in the previous fiscal year
7. The Executive Director is responsible for updating local member centers on the development of the CACWA's legislative agenda as well as current relevant legislative activity.
8. The Executive Director shall, to the extent possible, make local centers aware of legislative contacts made by CACWA with lawmakers representing their district. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that local centers know what level of involvement their respective legislator(s) has had in regard to the CACWA platform and the movement.

Local Member CAC/MDT Expectations and Protocols:

Local member CACs/MDTs, as part of their membership responsibilities and obligations, are requested and expected to:

1. Agree to support and promote the legislative agenda and policy statements of CACWA distributed prior to a legislative session
2. Agree to put the interests of the entire Washington State CAC movement before individual local interests in the event the two conflict. This requirement should take into consideration the legislative platform of CACWA and the consideration this platform is required to give to the overall success of the CAC movement in Washington State.
3. Agree to seek opportunities to visit with key legislators from their community about statewide initiatives and the local CAC program when requested.
4. Agree to notify the Executive Director of all legislative contacts, to the extent possible, in advance of such contact, recognizing that CACWA requires this information in order to facilitate coordination, to the extent possible, between the CACWA platform and any other agenda being presented by a local center. This notice also serves to give local centers an update on any prior dealings CACWA has had with that lawmaker on related issues and also allows CACWA to gauge the involvement of lawmakers relevant to specific issues. A legislative contact includes, but is not limited to, the following actions:
 - Testifying at a legislative hearing
 - Meeting with a legislator and/or legislative staff
 - Meeting with a statewide elected official
 - Inviting any of the above persons to a center
 - Inviting any of the above persons to speak at an event
5. When conducting a legislative contact, member CACs are requested to include the following points in their comments:
 - The current number of member CACs in Washington
 - The total number of children served by CACs in Washington State in the previous fiscal year
6. Agree to only contact members of their own legislative delegation unless prior notice is given to the local CAC affected and Executive Director.
7. Agree to notify CACWA of any local Board of Directors approved legislative agenda or policy initiatives prior to initiating contact with legislators or staff in regard to such initiatives. The Board of Directors recognizes that such communication is critical especially in the event local priorities are in any way contrary to CACWA statewide priorities as outlined in the CACWA agenda.

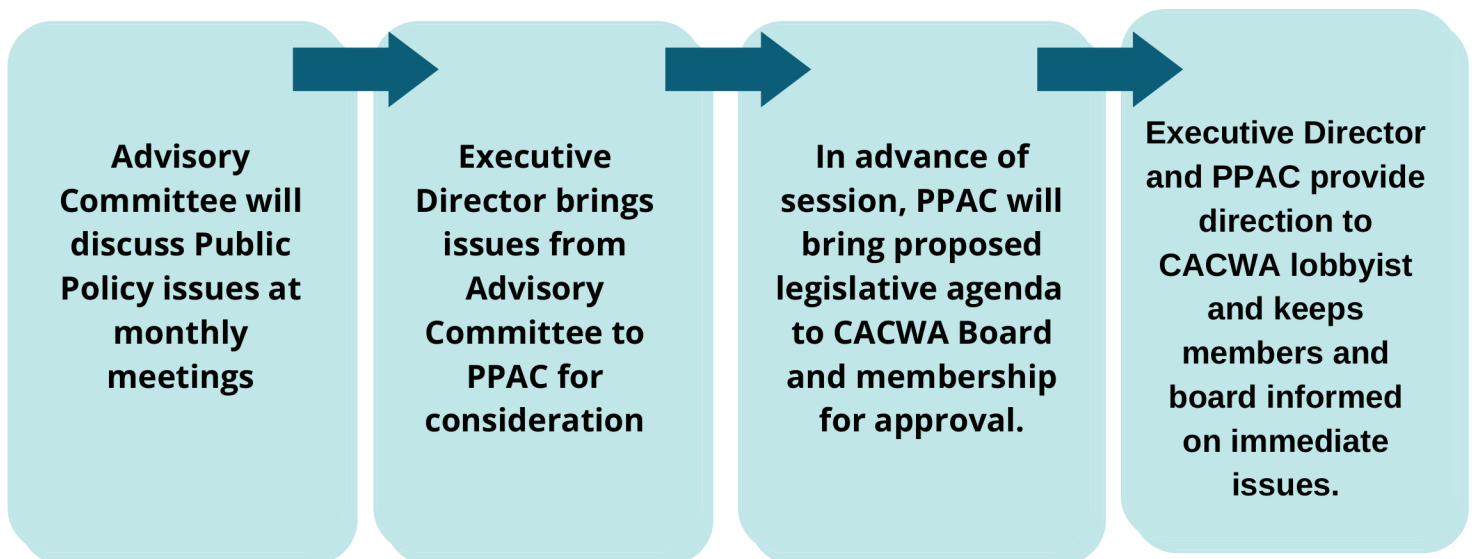
Local Member CAC/MDT Expectations and Protocols

8. In order for CACWA to support a local initiative or piece of legislation as part of the statewide platform, local centers shall submit such agenda to the Public Policy Committee, via the Chapter Director, where it will be approved through the same mechanism in CACWA requirement #1 listed above.
9. In the event that CACWA does not approve a local center's initiative as part of the statewide agenda, the local center may proceed but commits to (1) taking into consideration the best interests of CACs statewide; and (2) ensuring that in all related communications and actions, it is clearly stated that such action is being taken separate and apart from CACWA and its membership, avoiding any and all implication that the local initiative is being advanced by CACWA.
10. Agree to participate actively and to the fullest extent possible in CACWA and/or NCA Legislative/Capitol Day activities during session years. Such activity should include attendance and participation by local center directors, members of their local Boards and/or local partner agency representatives, as appropriate, at the Capitol Day event and related legislative visits.

How CACWA's Public Policy/Advocacy Committee Works

The Public Policy/Advocacy Committee (PPAC) is responsible for developing CACWA's legislative agenda with input from the Advisory Committee (made up of one representative from each full member Children's Advocacy Center) and final approval by the Governing Board.

- The Advisory Committee discusses public policy issues at its monthly meeting/s and the Executive Director forwards their priorities to the PPAC.
- The PPAC reviews key issues, establishes a prioritized agenda, and submits as a recommendation to the Governing Board.
- The Governing Board approves CACWA's legislative agenda.
- The Executive Director provides direction to the CACWA lobbyist and informs membership and the Governing Board on immediate issues.
- Public Policy/Advocacy Committee members assist as needed and may call upon Advisory Committee members periodically to lend additional support.
- Any time sensitive public policy issues should be brought to the attention of the Executive Director.



NOTE: Legislative issues of a time sensitive nature should be brought to the attention of the CACWA Executive Director immediately.

Section 2: Determining Our Advocacy Goals

The first step in Advocating for Public Policy is to determine our collective goals. What policies would we like to see developed or changed? It is helpful to determine which goals are achievable in the short-term, which are “intermediate goals” that will be continually worked on over a period of time, and which are your long-term or ultimate goals. For example:

- **Long-Term Goal:** Ensure statewide access to Children’s Advocacy Centers with adequate resources to provide a complete array of wrap-around services to provide justice and healing to child victims of abuse.
- **Intermediate Goal:** Develop a network of support by establishing relationships with influential policy makers, grassroots advocates, similarly aligned organizations and the community at large.
- **Short-Term Goal:** Adopt a statutory definition of Children’s Advocacy Centers and secure state funding to support their efforts.

Goals should take into consideration our collective needs, wants, and capacity to work towards achieving them.



Opportunity and the Policy/Political Environment

When developing priorities, there are many factors in the political environment to consider such as: the political leanings of a legislative body; the controversial nature of certain topics; the momentum of various issues; the budget climate; timing issues such as election years, etc. While there is often little appetite to address controversial issues in an election year, members often look for good things upon which to campaign.



Helping abused children is a strong issue for a candidate looking for something good to throw their support behind. The point is, while we may clearly establish our goals and priorities, we must also be flexible enough to realize when to back off on our top priorities and when an opportunity presents itself to pursue a goal of lesser priority.

We can also monitor the political and public environments for clues that will tell us when to act and when to back off. Some tips for monitoring the environment and recognizing opportunities include:

- Start with your own representative or members with whom you may have a personal relationship to get a sense of the current political environment and determine who may be willing to work on your issue, and what issues may be taboo to certain members;
- Identify committees that typically work on CAC related issues and talk to members and staff to get a feel for their leanings, priorities and willingness to take on your issues;
- Track the process: bills introduced, sponsors of related bills, committee agendas, etc.;
- Communicate with ally organizations and coalitions with similar policy concerns and objectives;
- Attend hearings, meetings and other events at which issues are discussed; and
- Monitor notices and publications for opportunities for public comment on issues.



Developing a Legislative/Public Policy Agenda

Taking into consideration identified goals and the current political/budgetary climate, a legislative and public policy agenda is developed. It is important to ensure that everyone is on the same page and speaking with one voice, as a disjointed approach is a recipe for failure and can be toxic to the movement as a whole.

The agenda will categorize policies we intend to pursue, policies we may support or oppose, and issues we will monitor as outlined in the following “Three Tiered” approach.

- **Tier 1** includes specific items we will actively pursue;
- **Tier 2** includes issues likely to come up during session that we may either support or oppose;
- **Tier 3** includes a general list of topics we will monitor but may or may not weigh in on.



Building a Framework for Future Opportunities

In an ideal world, we could identify good policy, push a button, and implement it. However, because of how our system is designed, even the best ideas may take years to come to fruition. In most instances, the timing of opportunities is beyond our control. There are however, a number of ways we can lay a solid foundation to be better positioned to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. This requires us to always maintain a focus on our long-term goals. To be ready for action when opportunities arise, it is wise to:

- Continuously build your network of support. Educate policy makers, staff and the public about who you are and what you do. Show them your results and earn their support.
- Identify/develop relationships with allies such as lawyers, judges, private sector professionals who may be able to assist in building support or connecting with policy makers.
- Continue to research problems and brainstorm potential solutions. Continuously collect, and analyze new data and statistics that will help you make your case.



CACWA's Legislative Endorsement Guidelines

Children's Advocacy Centers of Washington (CACWA) will be asked during the legislative cycle to endorse or oppose legislation. The following are the guides that CACWA will use to establish the level of endorsement for each legislative cycle. The final decision on endorsement will reside with CACWA membership which will be voted on during CACWA's board meetings.

Guiding Principles

When making recommendations on endorsement, the Public Policy Committee will consider the following:

- Does this support CACWA's goal of promoting the availability, accessibility, and quality of needed services to children and their families?
- Does this specifically pertain to CAC's, child abuse investigations, prosecution, treatment, or MDT's?
- Is CACWA the best group to move this forward? Is it our issue?
- Does this promote coordination with existing programs and systems to maximize use of funds and personnel?
- Does this enhance existing partnerships, not undermine those partnerships;
- Does this provide positive outcomes for the broad network of Child Advocacy Centers, rather than a single location?



CACWA's Legislative Endorsement Guidelines

Continued

Definitions

Levels of CACWA Endorsement

Tier One – Active Endorsement/Opposition

Tier 2 – Support (Name)

Tier 3 – Monitor

Tier 1 – CACWA actively endorses (or opposes) this legislation and is an active member supporting (opposing) this legislation with partners or coalitions

- CACWA works in partnership with a coalition or other organizations
- CACWA attends coalition meetings
- CACWA offers support in creating supporting documents, including action alerts
- CACWA testifies at committee hearings and/or creates a panel of CACWA members
- CACWA works together to strategize moving legislation throughout the process
- CACWA provides press support if necessary
- CACWA lists legislation on website with a link to the legislation and supporting documentation

Tier 2 – CACWA supports this legislation

- CACWA offers name to any supporting documents
- CACWA may provide written testimony to committee

Tier 3 – CACWA monitors the legislation

Legislative Endorsement Request Form (SAMPLE)

Email director@cacwa.org to request a form

This form will be used to inform the members of CACWA about endorsement requests, as well as, provide feedback from CACWA members on the level of endorsement the Chapter shall take. (Endorsement levels are outlined in CACWA's Legislative Endorsement Guidelines.)

The final decision on endorsement will reside with the CACWA Board of Directors which will be voted on during scheduled meetings. CACWA will strive to reflect the consensus of the membership when endorsing legislation, however in circumstances where that is not possible, a vote in accordance with CACWA by-laws will be taken. If at any time a request to endorse or oppose legislation comes to CACWA with an emergency timeline (less than 15 business days) the executive Committee will have the final decision.

Members will be reminded that when making their recommendation on endorsement that they keep CACWA's goal of promoting the availability, accessibility, and quality of needed services to children, youth, and their families.

Members are also encouraged to utilize CACWA's policy platform as a guide in making their decisions and the impact CACWA will have on the outcome of the proposed legislation.

CACWA will designate priority issues that they will lead the effort on. This will be on a continual basis with input from the membership and the public policy and advocacy committee. Members should submit a copy of the legislation to this form along with any supporting or opposing information and submit to Paula Reed at director@cacwa.org.

Name of Person Requesting: _____

Requester Email: _____ Requester Phone: _____

Date of Request: _____

Date Response Needed By: _____

Bill or Docket Number: _____ Bill or Policy Title: _____

Bill Sponsor or Promulgating Agency Name: _____

Current Status of Legislation: _____

Summary of Legislation/Need: (attach any section-by-section summaries):

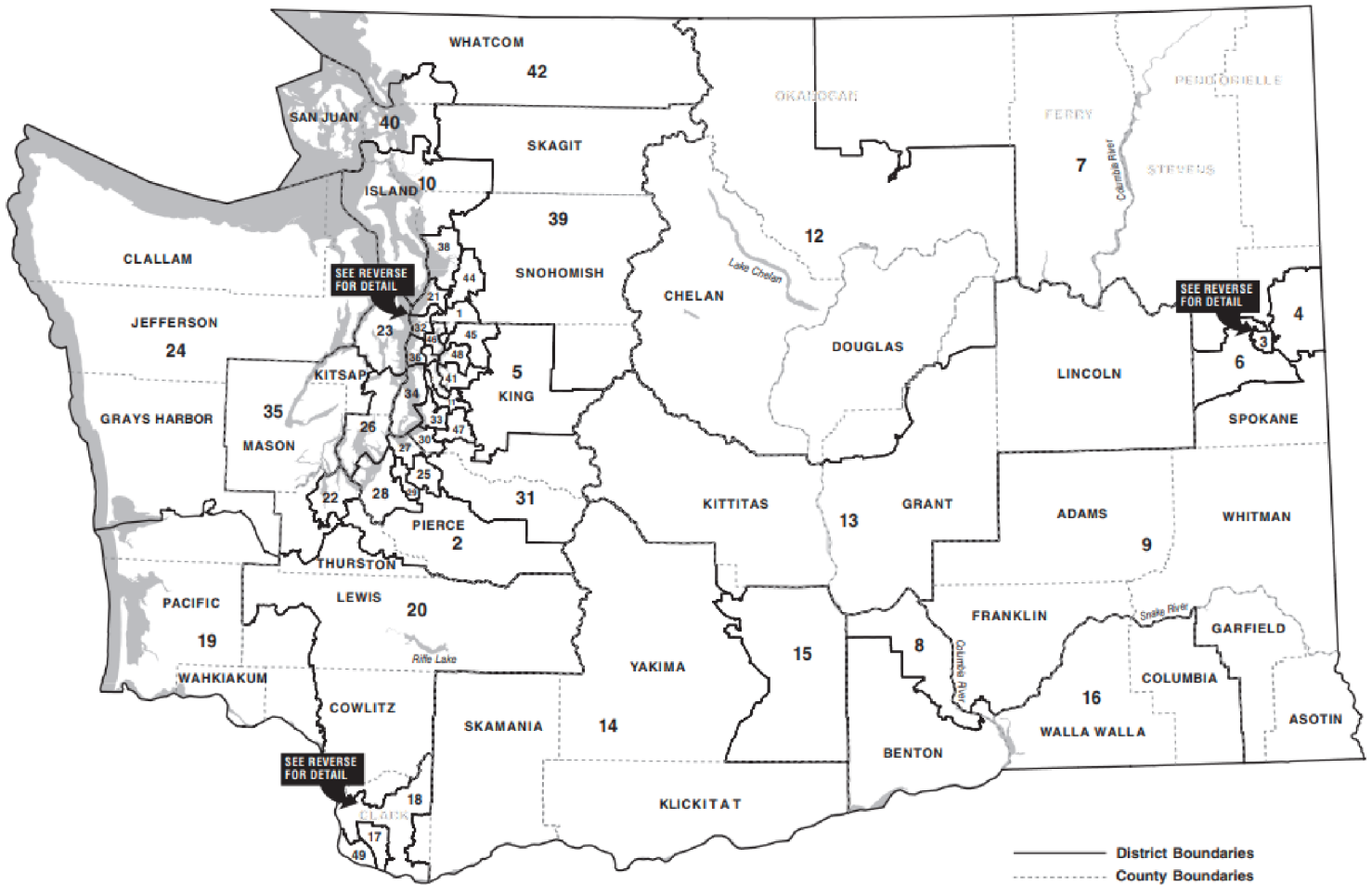
Purpose and Intention: _____

History and Background: Financial Implication (estimated); Known Support and/or Opposition:

Recommended Level of CACWA Endorsement:

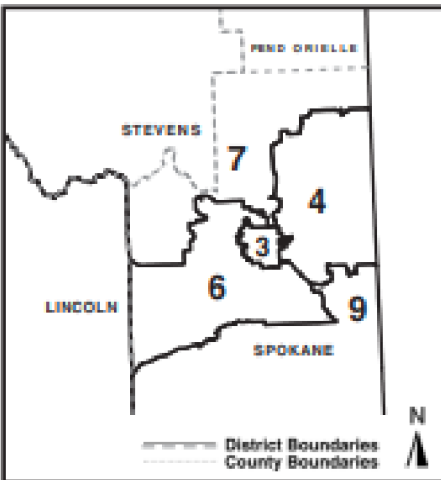
____ Tier 1 ____ Tier 2 ____ Tier 3

Section 3: WA State Legislative District Maps (2022)

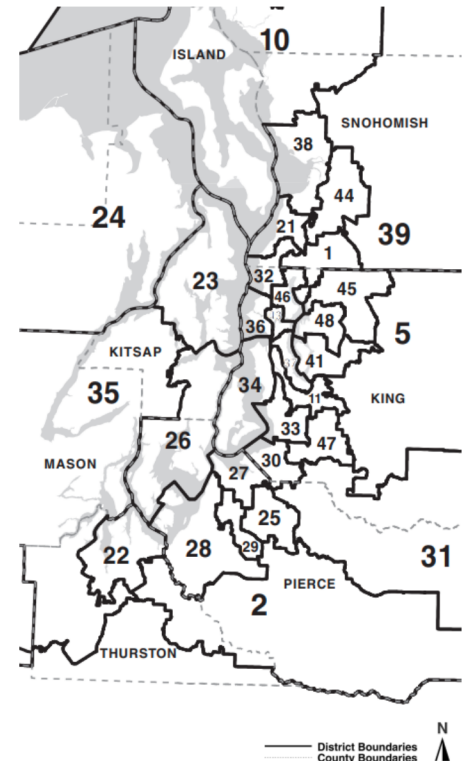
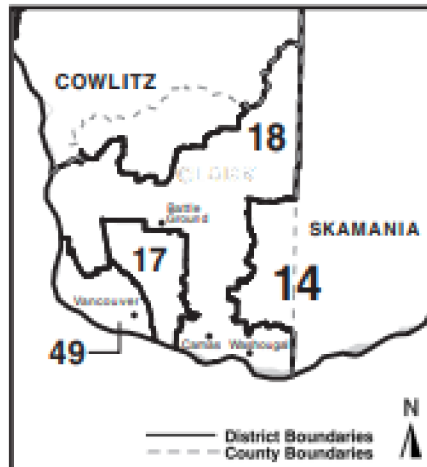


Breakout of Washington Area Legislative Districts

Spokane Area



Vancouver Area



Section 4: Counties & CAC service areas by District

District	CACs in District	Counties in District
1	King County CJC, Dawson Place	King (P), Snohomish (P)
2	Pierce County CAC, Monarch	Pierce (P), Thurston (P)
3	Partners with Families	Spokane (P)
4	Partners with Families	Spokane (P)
5	King County CJC	King (P)
6	Partners with Families	Spokane (P)
7	Rural Resources, Family Crisis Network, Partners with Families	Ferry, Okanogan (P), Pend Oreille, Spokane (P), Stevens
8	SARC	Benton (P)
9	Kids Hope, SARC, Partners with Families	Adams, Asotin, Franklin (P), Garfield, Spokane (P), Whitman
10	Skagit County CAC, Dawson Place	Island, Skagit (P), Snohomish (P)
11	King County CJC	King (P)
12	SAGE, Kids Hope	Chelan, Douglas, Grant (P), Okanogan (P)
13	Kids Hope, Partners with Families, Yakima County CAC	Grant (P), Kittitas, Lincoln, Yakima (P)
14	Arthur D. Curtis, Programs for Peaceful Living, Skamania DV & SA, Yakima County CAC	Clark (P), Klickitat, Skamania, Yakima (P)
15	Yakima County CAC	Yakima (P)
16	SARC, YWCA Walla Walla	Benton (P), Columbia, Franklin (P), Walla Walla
17	Arthur D. Curtis	Clark (P)
18	Arthur D. Curtis	Clark (P)
19	CJAC, Connections, Monarch, CSN	Cowlitz (P), Grays Harbor (P), Lewis (P), Pacific, Wahkiakum
20	Arthur D. Curtis, CJAC, Monarch	Clark (P), Cowlitz (P), Lewis (P), Thurston (P)
21	Dawson Place	Snohomish (P)
22	Monarch	Thurston(P)
23	Kitsap SAIVS	Kitsap (P)

Section 4: Counties & CAC service areas by District

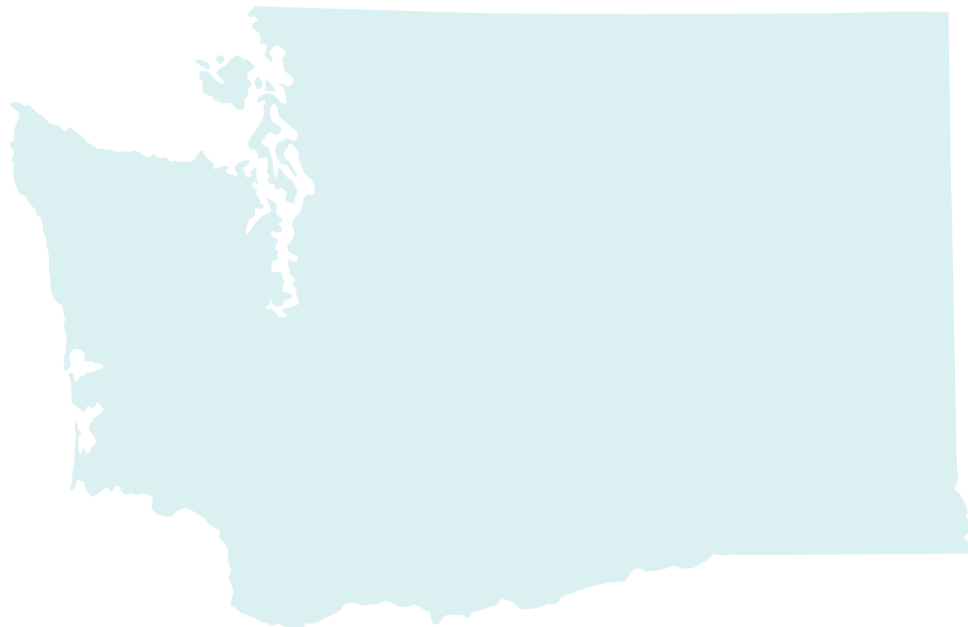
District	CACs in District	Counties in District
24	Healthy Families, Connections, YMCA	Clallam, Grays Harbor (P), Jefferson
25	Pierce County CAC	Pierce (P)
26	Kitsap SAIVS, Pierce County CAC	Kitsap (P), Pierce (P)
27	Pierce County CAC	Pierce (P)
28	Pierce County CAC	Pierce (P)
29	Pierce County CAC	Pierce (P)
30	King County CJC, Pierce County CAC	King (P), Pierce (P)
31	King County CJC, Pierce County CAC	King (P), Pierce (P)
32	King County CJC, Dawson Place	King (P), Snohomish (P)
33	King County CJC	King (P)
34	King County CJC	King (P)
35	Kitsap SAIVS, Monarch	Kitsap (P), Mason, Thurston (P)
36	King County CJC	King (P)
37	King County CJC	King (P)
38	Dawson Place	Snohomish (P)
39	King County CJC, Skagit County CAC, Dawson Place	King (P), Skagit (P), Snohomish (P)
40	Skagit County CAC, Whatcom County CAC	San Juan, Skagit (P), Whatcom (P)
41	King County CJC	King (P)
42	Whatcom County CAC	Whatcom (P)
43	King County CJC	King (P)
44	Dawson Place	Snohomish (P)
45	King County CJC	King (P)
46	King County CJC	King (P)
47	King County CJC	King (P)
48	King County CJC	King (P)
49	Arthur D. Curtis	Clark (P)

Section 5: Getting to Know Your Policy Makers

As a Constituent: The best place to start is with your own representatives. As their constituent, they were elected to represent you. They want to know the people in their district. They want to know their local organizations. And, they want to know the issues you face and how they can help address them. Afford them that opportunity. Reach out to them and request a meeting. Invite them to your center for a tour. Take every opportunity you can to connect with them and educate them about who you are and what you do. Developing this relationship first can set the table and open doors for opportunities to connect with other, perhaps more influential members.

As an Advocate: After first developing a relationship with your own representatives you may want to wade into the larger arena. The best place to start is to identify those members best positioned to help your cause. There is a power structure within each legislative body and getting to the right members can make all the difference. If you have an existing relationship with a member from your district or elsewhere, they can often help to point you in the right direction. And, don't be afraid to use any connections your MDT may have as well.

Remember: Support for Children's Advocacy Centers is often found to be a non-partisan, apolitical issue. No member who wants to show their support should be ignored. Remember, there is an election every couple of years. Today's back bench minority delegate could be tomorrow's Senate President, and today's minor committee intern could be tomorrow's Governor. Cast a wide net when building that network of support.



Section 6: Tips for Meeting with Policy Makers

DO YOUR RESEARCH

- Know exactly who you are meeting with, including their title and how to address them.
- When possible know their political leanings and policy priorities. (Be weary of voting records as they are often misleading.)
- When possible, get to know any staff they may have. At the state level, not all members will have staff, but most committees do. Staff can be your most important connections.

PREPARE IN ADVANCE

- Draft a set of talking points and rehearse them.
- If you are meeting as a group, know who is going to take the lead; who will address which issues; and who will answer anticipated questions.

ANTICIPATE QUESTIONS

- Members are generally going to want to know three things up front:
 - Who are you? What do you want? What do you want me to do about it?
- Additionally you should be prepared to answer
 - Who will oppose your proposal and why? What will it Cost?

SPEAK IN PLAIN TERMS

- Limit use of acronyms, lingo and jargon commonly used in the field.

BACKUP YOUR TALKING POINTS

- Have statistics and data to support your claims
- Local stories help lend a human face to the issue

BREVITY IS IMPORTANT

- Be prepared to summarize your issue in 2 to 3 minutes. That might be all you get.

NEVER GUESS OR EXAGGERATE FACTS

- This is easily seen through.
- Your integrity, once lost, is difficult to recover.
- It is okay to follow up with answers if you don't know on the spot. (Follow up promptly!)

AVOID PITFALLS

- Stick to your issue. Don't get sucked into a debate on other issues when you're there to discuss Children's Advocacy Centers.
- Recognize the privacy of your conversation. If you are made privy to inside information, don't be the one to spread it.

DRAW ON THEIR EXPERTISE

- Ask for advice on your next steps. What will be your hurdles? Who to meet with next etc.?

TREAT STAFF WITH EQUAL RESPECT

- Staff can be your best ally or your barrier to entry.

HAVE MATERIALS TO LEAVE BEHIND

- Staff relies heavily on this information when advising their members.
- Meetings routinely get cut short or even canceled. Summary documents are invaluable to members and staff.

ESTABLISH YOURSELF AS A RESOURCE

- Members and Staff rely on experts in the field to advise them on issues. When CAC-related issues arise, be sure that they know you and how to reach you.
- Encourage them to contact you when your issues arise. Make your position matter.
- Offer your expertise on facts and figures. They may use them to help write a speech.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

- Invite them to visit your center the next time they are in town.
- Follow up meetings with a thank you letter or additional materials.

EDUCATE, EDUCATE, EDUCATE

- Never assume that anyone knows who you are or exactly what you do. Even your biggest champions might not fully understand the CAC/MDT model.
- Get a sense for their general knowledge and walk them through it accordingly.



If you're asking them to do something, first thank them for something they've done. For example: "Mr. Chairman, we appreciate your support that helped us secure state funding last year, and we hope that you are as proud of your efforts as we are. With those funds, we were able to... We hope that you will now help us expand our efforts by supporting our request for an increase in the amount of... With these funds we will be able to..."

Section 7: Corresponding with Policy Makers

Aside from meeting in person with your policy makers, emails, phone calls, and letter writing can be effective ways to communicate your position or further develop your network of support. However, due to the sheer volume they receive, it is imperative that yours stand out. Polite, concise, well thought out and reasoned correspondence rises to the top.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE CORRESPONDENCE

- Properly address your target. Know their most prestigious title and use it.
- Clearly identify yourself. Make sure they know how to reach you if they need to.
- Be polite. There are very few exceptions to this rule. Think “more flies with honey.”
- Be brief and concise. Remember the “1-2 rule.” Keep Letters 1-2 pages; Emails 1-2 paragraphs; and Phone Calls 1-2 minutes.
- Personalization is preferred. Put it in your own words. Make a personal connection.
- Avoid jargon and acronyms. Don’t assume they know what you’re talking about.
- Stick to a single issue. If you have multiple issues multiple letters, emails or calls are preferred.
- Be upfront. Convey your purpose at the outset. Include bill numbers if relevant.
- Include an enclosure or attachment. Backup information is always appreciated.
- Show appreciation if possible. There are many great public servants who have done much to help our cause. It is a difficult and often thankless job. Give credit where credit is due.

Phone Calls: A direct phone call with a policy maker can be as valuable as a face-to-face meeting. However, more often than not a phone call will be fielded by a receptionist who will do little more than make note of your call. Phone calls are most useful as a means to show a strong stance on a position in a short period of time. The key to an effective phone campaign is a high volume of calls.

Letters: Letter writing, though considered old fashioned by some, remains the most effective alternative way to correspond with a policy maker. An actual letter is physically opened, usually read and often filed for future reference. A well-constructed thoughtfully-reasoned personal letter is a highly effective way to communicate with a policy maker.

Emails: Email is a quick and easy way for a network of support to engage a policy maker. Email is most frequently and effectively used to show a wide range of support in a short period of time. Use email when time is of the essence; it should not be your primary form of communication. The same rules that apply to letters should be observed through email. Concise brevity is the key to an effective email.

Personal Notes/Cards: A handwritten note on a personalized card, where appropriate, is a time-proven way to make a personal connection and build that network of support.

Section 7: Corresponding with Policy Makers

SAMPLE LETTER

(Month) (Day) (Year)

*Address your
legislator
properly*

--- The Honorable (First name) (Last name)
(Room Number), State Capitol
Sacramento, CA (Zip Code)

RE: (state the topic or include the bill number, author and subject if you are writing to support or oppose a particular legislative bill)

Dear (Senator/Representative) (Last name):

*State your
relationship
to the
legislator*

--- My name is (your first and last name) and I am _____ who works/resides in your district.

Be factual

--- State why you support or oppose the bill or other issue here. Choose up to three of the strongest points that support your position and state them clearly.)

Be personal

--- (Include a personal story. Tell your representative why the issue is important to you and how it affects you, your clients, and your community.)

*Request a
response*

Tell your representative how you want her or him to vote on this issue and ask for a response.

Be sure to include your name and address on both your letter and envelope.)

*INclude your
title*

--- Sincerely,
SIGN YOUR NAME
Name, Title, Insitution
Street address
City, State, Zip code

--- *Keep your letter
to one page*

Section 7: Corresponding with Policy Makers

Writing a letter to a legislator

- Use the proper salutation, for example:

The Honorable (first name) (last name)

Address

City, State, Zip code

Dear (Representativ/ Senator) (last name)

- Be courteous and informative in your communication.
- State the purpose of the letter in the opening sentence and if you are referring to a bill, include the bill number, author and topic. If you live/work/provide services in the elected official's district be sure to say this in the opening paragraph as well.
- Focus on the message and key points. Personalize the letter by including examples of how the legislation might impact you and your constituents. Keep the letter brief – not more than one page.
- Restate your request at the end of the letter, for example urging them to support or oppose the bill. Thank the legislator for his or her support and offer to address any questions that he or she might have. Be sure to include your contact information, and sign the letter.

Sending e-mail communication to a legislator

The same guidelines apply to e-mail as to written letters.

- Before sending an e-mail, you might want to call the legislator's office and ask if a letter sent by e-mail is effective. If you do send an e-mail, send it to the representative.
- Do not copy other representatives or send a mass e-mail.
- Make it a brief message with no special layouts or graphics.
- Do not include attachments.
- Include your full name and address so it is clear that you are a constituent, and ask for a response.
- You might also want to send a hard copy of your e-mail to the legislator.

Phone calls to a legislator

- State your name and address and identify yourself as the legislator's constituent. You will often be speaking with a secretary or aide.
- Briefly make known your position as they keep track of the issues that people call about to report to the legislator.
- Organize your thoughts in advance. This will help you keep the call brief and to the point.
- It is also very helpful to share how the issue affects you/your clients personally.
- Thank them for their support.