

Department for Children, Youth and Families

Authorization for Grant Acceptance from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services for funding the Children's Advocacy Center – Crime Victims Advocate

The Department respectfully requests Legislative authorization to accept grant funding from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (NYSOCFS) for the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC). The grant award is for the NYSOCFS contract Periods 3 & 4, for the term of October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2025, for a total value of \$266,788, with no County share for the term.

Since November of 2010, the Department for Children, Youth and Families – Children's Advocacy Center has been awarded funding from NYSOCFS specifically for Children's Advocacy Centers. Since that time, this funding has been utilized to offset salary and fringe of the clerical support person located at the CAC and a Family Advocate position that is staffed by the Albany County Crime Victims and Sexual Violence Center (CVSVC), as well as training for staff, and offsetting the County's cost for office supplies and general services expenditures.

The Mission of the Albany County Children's Advocacy Center is to minimize trauma to children while providing a coordinated approach to the investigation, prosecution and treatment of child sexual abuse and physical abuse cases and to maximize the effects of interventions for children and their families.

The Family Advocate's primary role is to offer support to non-offending caregivers in cases of alleged sexual and/physical abuse so that they can act responsibly to protect and support the alleged victim. According to the National Children's Advocacy Center, the non-offending caregiver is often overwhelmed by a wide range of emotions and pressures. If the child is to be protected and remain in their home, the non-offending caregiver must often choose to support the child in the face of their own denial, that of the alleged abuser, and the denial of family and friends. Combined with the emotional stress is the financial impact caused by sudden separations and the loneliness and isolation often resulting from them. Crime Victim Sexual Violence Center is a community partner with the CAC and this collaboration has enhanced the working relationship that previously existed.

The Family Advocate assists families to navigate the various systems involved during this crisis in their lives and assists in successful linkages to necessary services and supports.