

Child Protection Accountability Commission

**Fiscal Year 2025
Annual Report**

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025



About CPAC

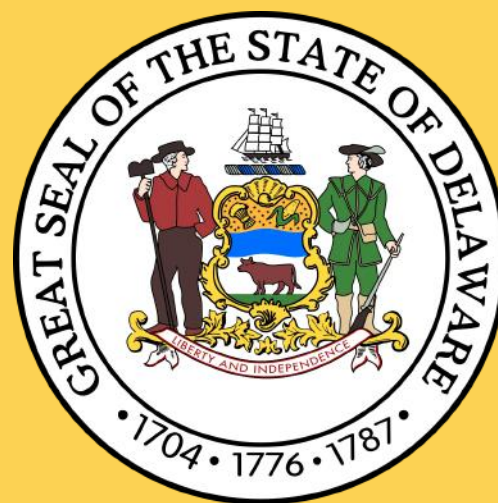
CPAC's mission is to monitor Delaware's child protection system to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of Delaware's abused, neglected and dependent children.

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**The Honorable
Matt Meyer, Governor
State of Delaware**

**Mary F. Dugan, Esquire, Chair
Child Protection
Accountability Commission**



CPAC Members

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ABIGAIL RODGERS, ESQUIRE STATE PROSECUTOR	Two Representatives from the Attorney General's Office 16 Del. C. §931(a)(3)
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THE HONORABLE JOELLE HITCH JUDGE	Two Members of the Family Court 16 Del. C. §931(a)(4)
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THE HONORABLE KYLE EVANS GAY STATE SENATOR	One Member of the Senate 16 Del. C. §931(a)(6)
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DR. AILEEN FINK DIRECTOR	Director of the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services 16 Del. C. §931(a)(8)
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CPAC Members

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VACANT FILLED IN FY 2026.	One Representative from Office of Defense Services 16 Del. C. §931(a)(14)
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COLONEL JOSEPH S. BLOCH, NEW CASTLE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT	At-large Public Member - Law Enforcement 16 Del. C. §931(a)(16)
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Executive Summary

During FY25, the Child Protection Accountability Commission (CPAC or the Commission) met quarterly to identify system challenges, advocate for system reform, evaluate and recommend changes in policy, and improve laws through legislative advocacy. CPAC's various committees and workgroups met multiple times throughout the year and engaged in substantive work, at the direction of the Commission, in a variety of areas, including:

- ongoing review of practices followed by various system partners in their response to reports of child abuse and neglect;
- implementation of coaching and training in best practices for frontline professionals who respond to reports of child abuse and neglect;
- monitoring serious child abuse cases and leading multidisciplinary team case reviews;
- monitoring legislative initiatives affecting dependent, neglected and abused children;
- ongoing work to support young adults who experienced foster care.

CPAC continued its service as Delaware's Citizen Review Panel (CRP) and Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force. CPAC and the Maternal and Child Death Review Commission (MCDRC) also continued their collaboration throughout the fiscal year. Highlights of CPAC's work in FY 25 include:

Trained 34 members of the multidisciplinary team on the ChildFirst® Forensic Interview Protocol.

Conducted retrospective reviews in 95 death and near death cases of abused and neglected children.

Trained over 41,000 educators, healthcare providers, and members of the public on their statutory child abuse mandatory reporting obligation.

Submitted the CJA Annual Progress Report to the Administration on Children, Youth and Families in June of 2025.

Received quarterly updates on the 1,641 cases involving child death, serious physical injury, sexual abuse, and sex trafficking of children that are monitored by the Office of the Investigation Coordinator.

Awarded 52 scholarships for the 2024-2025 school year to youth who have experienced foster care under the Ivyane D. F. Davis Memorial Scholarship Fund and Chafee Education and Training Vouchers Program.

Background and Purpose

Delaware's Child Protection Accountability Commission was established by the Delaware General Assembly in 1997 following the death of a 4-year-old boy named Bryan Martin. Bryan's death demonstrated the need for multidisciplinary collaboration and accountability in Delaware's child protection system. As a result, Delaware enacted the Child Abuse Prevention Act of 1997 (16 Del. C., Ch. 9), which made significant changes to the way in which Delaware investigates child abuse and neglect. The Act also established CPAC as an interdisciplinary forum for dialogue and reform. CPAC brings together key child welfare system leaders, who meet regularly with members of the public and others, to identify system shortcomings and the ongoing need for system reform. In June of 1999, the Office of the Child Advocate was tasked with staffing CPAC.



CPAC is charged with the following summarized statutory duties:

- Examine and evaluate the policies, procedures, and effectiveness of the child protection system and make recommendations for change.
- Advocate for legislation and make legislative recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly.
- Access, develop, and provide quality training .
- Review and make recommendations concerning the well-being of Delaware's abused, neglected, and dependent children including issues relating to foster care, adoption, mental health services, victim services, education, rehabilitation, substance abuse, and independent living.
- Investigate and review deaths or near deaths of abused or neglected children.
- Coordinate with the Maternal and Child Death Review Commission to provide statistics and other necessary information. Meet to discuss findings and recommendations.
- Administer the Ivyane D.F. Davis Scholarship Fund as required by § 3463 of Title 14 of the Delaware Code and the federal Chafee Educational and Training Vouchers as requested by the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families.

CPAC Priorities

FEDERAL MANDATES

CPAC is designated as Delaware's "citizen review panel" as required under the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), 42 U.S.C. § 5106a(c) and Delaware's "state task force" as required under the federal Children's Justice Act, 42 U.S.C. § 5106c(c).

CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

In Fiscal Year 2005, CPAC was first designated by the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, in its Child and Family Services Plan – Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR), to serve as Delaware's citizen review panel (CRP). Every year since, CPAC has been designated as the CRP. Federal law requires CPAC to evaluate the extent to which the State is effectively discharging its child protection responsibilities. CPAC does that in a variety of ways, including evaluating policies and procedures and reviewing child deaths and near deaths due to abuse or neglect. For more detail, please see the Reviews of Deaths and Near Deaths on page 12.

CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT TASK FORCE

In Fiscal Year 2008, CPAC became the CJA State Task Force, and in Fiscal Year 2013, OCA, as staff to CPAC, became the recipient of the CJA Grant with fiscal management and oversight by the Criminal Justice Council. The CJA provides grants to states to improve the investigation, prosecution and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner that limits additional trauma to the child victim. This also includes the handling of child death cases in which child abuse or neglect is suspected, along with some cases of children with disabilities and serious health problems who also are victims of abuse and neglect. To be eligible for CJA funds, states are required to establish and maintain a multidisciplinary task force (the State Task Force). The State Task Force is responsible for making policy and training recommendations to carry out the objectives of the grant, for conducting a comprehensive evaluation every three years of the state's child welfare system, and for making recommendations for improvement of those systems. For more detail, please see Pages 19, 23 and 26.

Multidisciplinary Training



As the CJA Task Force, CPAC provides regular training opportunities for child welfare professionals and multidisciplinary team members. Many of the training opportunities are facilitated by the CPAC Training Committee and staffed by the OCA Training Unit and include: Child Abuse Mandatory reporting training programs and supplemental trainings; training on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Response to Child Abuse and Neglect; ChildFirst® Forensic Interview Protocol Training; MDT scholarships to national child welfare conferences; and the Protecting Delaware's Children Conference.

During FY25, CPAC-approved trainers and online training delivered through the Delaware Learning Center, provided mandatory child abuse reporting and supplemental training to approximately 41,700 professionals. These programs were updated and expanded for medical professionals in preparation for the 2025–2026 relicensing period. The MDT Policy & Training Administrator developed and delivered formal training sessions to law enforcement agencies across the state, covering topics such as Understanding Delaware's MOU for the MDT Response to Child Abuse and Neglect, Best Practice Response to Drug Ingestion, and Juvenile Trafficking. Additionally, the Administrator created a self-paced, automated video training for the Delaware State Police annual in-service, which addressed the MOU and Missed Opportunities in Investigations. To support ongoing education, the Administrator partnered with the Delaware Police Officer Standards and Training Commission to provide regularly scheduled training on Impact of Trauma in Child Abuse, Sexual Assault, and Domestic Violence Investigations. In collaboration with the OCA Training Unit, the Administrator worked with a professional video-production service to produce a suite of training videos for law enforcement and DFS. In February 2025, CPAC co-facilitated a five-day, in-person training on the ChildFirst® Forensic Interview Protocol, certifying 34 members of Delaware's multidisciplinary team. The training covered effective interviewing, child abuse dynamics, the disclosure process, child development, questioning techniques, hearsay, courtroom testimony, MDT collaboration, and preparing children for court, along with in-depth instruction and exercises on the protocol. CPAC also awarded eleven scholarships to MDT members to attend national conferences, including the International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment, the National Conference on Juvenile Justice, and the International Symposium on Child Abuse.

Office of the Investigation Coordinator

The Office of the Investigation Coordinator (IC) was statutorily created in 2012 as a reformatory response to the Earl Bradley child sexual abuse tragedy in Delaware. The IC Office is housed within OCA. The IC is required to review and monitor all reported cases of child sexual abuse, juvenile trafficking, serious physical injury, and death of a child from inception to final criminal and civil disposition. The IC reviews and analyzes these cases to ensure an appropriate and timely criminal and civil legal response. In addition, the IC seeks to ensure compliance with the MOU for the MDT Response to Child Abuse and Neglect to achieve accountability for perpetrators and legal protections for victims, and conducts MDT case review meetings. The IC is also responsible for analyzing collected data and statistics, identifying child welfare system issues and trends, providing pertinent data to CPAC and members of the MDT and making recommendations for system improvement in accordance with State and Federal law. The IC is responsible for facilitating timely MDT meetings for all cases involving serious physical injury, drug ingestions, juvenile trafficking and child deaths, as well as monthly MDT case review meetings in each county and Special Case Reviews statewide as needed. Additionally, the IC maintains data on infants with prenatal substance exposure and facilitates meetings of the Juvenile Trafficking Oversight Team (JTOT).

In FY25, the IC office received 8,881 referrals involving serious physical injury, child death, child sexual abuse, or suspected juvenile trafficking from DFS, the Delaware Criminal Justice Information Center (DELJIS), and the Nemours Children at Risk Evaluation (CARE) Team. From those referrals, the IC office opened 1,641 cases for monitoring in FY25, including 1,382 cases alleging child sexual abuse, 168 cases involving serious physical injury to a child, 65 cases of suspected child sex trafficking, 26 child deaths, and 1 case involving physical abuse of a child.



IC facilitated 207 MDT meetings in FY25. Of those, 67 were for drug ingestion and 34 were for juvenile trafficking. The IC continued to facilitate monthly MDT case review meetings in each county and Special Case Reviews on a statewide basis when needed. IC also facilitated 49 initial reviews and 14 follow-up reviews by JTOT in FY25.

In addition to monitoring serious child abuse cases, the IC receives weekly data reports from DFS for any infants reported to DFS for suspected prenatal substance exposure. These cases are analyzed and monitored in an independent case tracking system. In FY25, the IC received approximately 245 referrals on substance-exposed infants.

CPAC Committees

CAN Steering Committee	12
Chair: Garrett Colmorgen, M.D.	
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Co-Chairs: Molly Shaw, Esq. & Mark Hudson, Esq.	
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Chair: Sophia Saikin	
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Chair: Melissa Palokas	



CAN Steering Committee

In FY25, the CAN Steering Committee met quarterly to review and approve the work of the CAN Panel. During this period, the Panel reviewed 95 cases – 61 initials and 56 finals. For the 61 cases reviewed for the first time, there were 51 near deaths and 10 deaths that occurred between December 2023 and March 2025, and the children ranged in age from one month to 17 years of age.

The children were victims of blunt force and abusive head trauma, poisoning via drug ingestion, bone fractures, burns and scalds, failure to thrive, medical neglect, rhabdomyolysis (muscle breakdown), unsafe sleep, stabbing, strangulation, and child torture. The 56 remaining cases had previously been reviewed and were awaiting the completion of prosecution. The result was 120 strengths and 100 findings across seven system areas. At each quarterly Commission meeting, CPAC Commissioners reviewed and approved the strengths and findings arising from the investigation and review of these 95 deaths and near deaths due to abuse or neglect. These reports were then submitted to the Governor, General Assembly, and the public, and are available on the OCA website at the following link: http://courts.delaware.gov/childadvocate/cpac/cpac_reports.aspx.

In addition to the review and release of findings related to these cases, CPAC is charged with making system-wide recommendations and meeting with MCDRC biennially to discuss the work of the CAN Panel. CPAC accomplishes this through a joint retreat, which is scheduled to be held in FY26. This retreat also serves as CPAC's three-year assessment for the CJA Grant. In its 2024-2025 Joint Action Plan, CPAC and MCDRC established 14 prioritized recommendations for system improvement. The 2024-2025 Action Plan was approved by CPAC on February 14, 2024, and by MCDRC on March 22, 2024. CPAC was tasked with addressing 13 of the 14 prioritized recommendations. CPAC tasked its Grants Oversight Committee with monitoring the recommendations and providing updates to CPAC and MCDRC at least annually. The full action plan is available on the OCA website at the following link: <https://courts.delaware.gov/Forms/Download.aspx?id=126368>.



Data Utilization Committee

During Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25), the Data Utilization Committee met quarterly to review data dashboards, analyze child welfare metrics, and discuss emerging trends. At each CPAC meeting, the Committee presented quarterly reports highlighting system-wide child welfare trends. The data presentations are hosted on Tableau, an interactive platform that allows users to filter data by dates, fields, and other identifiers. This upgrade has enabled a more dynamic and customizable data analysis experience, providing easy access to a comprehensive view of Delaware's child welfare system. The streamlined dashboard now includes four main sections: Section 1.0 - Responding to Child Abuse Cases, Section 2.0 - Processing Child Abuse Cases, Section 3.0 - Youth's Custody Outcomes, and Section 4.0 - Supporting Futures for Youth. Each section is further divided into subsections that present diverse data points from multiple agencies, offering a thorough overview of the child welfare system.

Section 1.1, Responding to Child Abuse Cases, provides an overview of average caseloads for DFS investigation, treatment, and permanency workers, highlighting the impact of caseload size on service quality. Since its inception in 1997, CPAC has closely monitored caseload standards as a key performance indicator. Statutory standards limit caseloads to 11 for investigation workers and 18 for treatment and permanency workers.

Section 2 provides a detailed overview of data from multiple child welfare agencies. This section includes reports from the DOJ Special Victims Unit (DOJ-SVU), the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), the Office of the Investigation Coordinator (IC), the Child Abuse and Neglect Panel (CAN Panel), and the Maternal Child Death Review Commission (MCDRC). It features data on the number of cases opened and the outcomes of civil and criminal cases closed by the IC, which coordinates responses to child deaths, near deaths, and sexual abuse to ensure a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach. The CAN Panel data includes the number of reviews conducted, along with strengths and findings identified during evaluations. The MCDRC provides annual data on child deaths, including cases reviewed in coordination with other agencies and the manner of death.



Data Utilization Committee

Section 3 offers a comprehensive profile of children in DSCYF custody. It includes data on the number of children represented by the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA), as well as the number of system entries and exits. This section reports on the proportion of youth with Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) and those under extended jurisdiction, which allows youth aged 18-21 to remain connected to Family Court and receive additional support during their transition to adulthood. Additionally, Section 3 highlights the involvement of youth aged 13-17 in both the DSCYF custody system and the juvenile justice system.

Section 4 summarizes various programs designed to support youth as they transition to adulthood. It includes data on participation in the Driver's License and Insurance Program (DLIP), as well as scholarship recipients of the Ivyane D. F. Davis Memorial Scholarship and Education and Training Vouchers. This section also reviews Department of Education graduation outcomes for youth in foster care, highlighting educational achievements and ongoing support efforts.



Education Committee

In FY25, the Education Committee met in September 2024, December 2024, and March 2025, to fulfill its charge of improving educational outcomes for abused, neglected and dependent students.

The Committee continued its focus on work supporting the implementation of Senate Bill 290. This act expands the education and curriculum requirements of Erin's Law which includes educational programming related to personal body safety, sexual abuse, and other forms of child abuse by changing the range of grades that Erin's Law applies to from Pre-K to grades 6 to Pre-K to grades 12. This act further expands Erin's law by requiring training for school employees on the prevention of inappropriate sexual misconduct, the establishment of appropriate adult and student interactions, and the warnings signs of suspected adult sexual misconduct including grooming.

The Adult Sexual Misconduct Workgroup was established under the Education Committee. A Student Educational Programming and Parent Resources Subgroup was also formed to focus on review of programming for 7-12 grades. During the last year, this subgroup reviewed three additional programs and approved one program as meeting the rubric standards for full Commission approval. There were several different subgroups and workgroups meeting under CPAC focused on programming for students and training for adults over the last year. The work of these groups started to overlap. In September 2024, the Education Subcommittee voted on the following changes: dissolve the Adult Sexual Misconduct Workgroup and transfer the members to the Training Committee's Mandatory Reporting Workgroup; dissolve the Adult Training Subgroup and transfer the members to the Training Committee's Mandatory Reporting Workgroup; and promote the Student and Parent Education Subgroup to a workgroup. These workgroup and subcommittee changes support the streamlining of meetings and the reduction of redundancy in committee tasks. Over the last year, the CPAC Education Subcommittee welcomed a new voting member, Kristen Pidgeon of the Beau Biden Foundation to the subcommittee.



Grants Oversight Committee

In FY25, the Grants Oversight Committee met bi-annually to provide measurable oversight of the Children's Justice Act Grant as well as to monitor and coordinate activities, strategic plans and reporting of grants received or administered by Committee members that relate to child protection. The Committee received regular grant program updates at its quarterly meetings and reviewed and approved the Children's Justice Act Annual Progress Report and Grant Application. The Committee was also charged with monitoring the recommendations for system improvement assigned to CPAC in the 2024-2025 Joint Action Plan. Those recommendations are included below. The next Joint Action Plan Retreat, scheduled for September 19, 2025, and will establish recommendations for 2026 and 2027.

Medical Response Recommendations (4)

Substantially and significantly improve the medical response to child poisoning via drug ingestion and exposure cases.	Continue improvements to the medical response training for child physical and sexual abuse cases.
Provide opportunities for medical professionals to consult with a child abuse medical expert and promote and secure resources for medical child abuse expertise downstate.	Improve education on infant deaths and near deaths associated with poisoning via drug ingestion or exposure that involve caregiver impairment.

MDT Response Recommendations (4)

Create and enhance regularly occurring training for the MDT on the MOU for the MDT Response to Child Abuse & Neglect.	Improve the MDT system response to juvenile trafficking cases.
Design and provide regularly occurring MDT training on child poisoning via drug ingestion or exposure investigations.	Utilize the CAN Best Practices Workgroup to update and integrate new laws related to child crimes and mandatory reporting into the MOU

Legislative Recommendations (2)

Review and update child sexual abuse laws and Delaware's sentencing guidelines regarding protecting students in school settings, enhancing crimes and penalties for child sexual abuse, and overseeing juvenile trafficking cases.	Continue reviewing and updating child physical abuse laws and Delaware's sentencing guidelines regarding criminal child physical abuse cases, including consideration of a crimes against children section in Delaware Code.
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Funding and Resource Recommendations (4)

Advocate for increased in funding and resources for the Department of Justice for the Special Victims Unit and the Juvenile Trafficking Unit.	Continue support of House Bill 86, establishing dedicated organizations to represent indigent parents in DSCYF custody proceedings.
Advocate for compensation and benefit modifications for all DFS employees.	Develop and maintain a statewide resource list for families and children.

Legislative Committee

In FY25, the CPAC Legislative Committee met once to review member agency legislative initiatives and other pending legislation potentially impacting Delaware's child welfare system and the children and families it serves.

As recommended by the Committee, CPAC sent letters of support to bill sponsors on 5 pieces of legislation, including House Substitute 1 for House Bill 47, which created a student services permit requirement for professionals who work closely with students in schools but do not require a license. This permit will allow for better oversight and action against misconduct by these professionals, and has been a CPAC priority for several years.

Additionally, CPAC's House Bill 42 successfully passed the General Assembly during FY25. HB 42 codifies suspected human trafficking of children as child abuse requiring a multidisciplinary team response and establishes a review panel and oversight committee within CPAC for these cases, with the same authority, subpoena power, and immunities provided to the system that reviews child abuse deaths and near deaths.



Services for Youth Advancement Committee

The Services for Youth Advancement (SYA) Committee is charged to "oversee the administration and efficacy of programs that provide opportunities for youth who have experienced foster care in Delaware to achieve positive outcomes and develop self-sufficiency skills as young adults."

The Committee accomplishes this by: administering the Driver's License and Insurance (DLI) and the Post-Secondary Scholarship (PSS) programs, working directly with eligible youth to navigate the system, collaborate with State agencies and community partners, coordinate with educational institutions, training programs, driver's education programs and insurance companies, record and maintain data on the workgroups, prepare and present data on the programs to youth, other state agencies and partnered organizations, and attend and supports Delaware youth advisory board known as Helping Our Peers Evolve (HOPE).

The PSS program administers the Ivyane D.F. Davis Memorial Scholarship Fund and the Chafee Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV) together with any other funding provided to the Office of the Child Advocate for the purposes of supporting young adults who have experienced foster care in Delaware

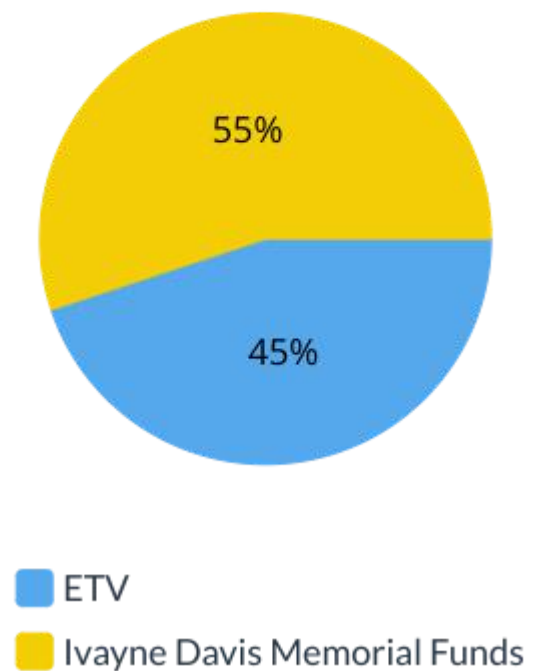
The DLI program provides youth who have experienced foster care support with obtaining a driver's license and assistance with finding auto insurance by overcoming legal barriers and provides funding for driver education, costs incidental to licensure and auto insurance.



Services for Youth Advancement Committee

The application for the PSS program is open year-round and interviews are held once a month. For the 2024-2025 school year 52 youth received an award. Youth attended in-state schools, out-of-state schools and vocation programs totaling to 15 different institutions or programs. These schools included, Delaware State University, University of Delaware, Delaware Technical Community College, Frostburg, University of Baltimore Law, West Georgia Technical College, Widener, Morgan State University, New York Institute of Technology, Macalester, Millersville and Polytech Trade Program. The maximum award was \$18,473 and the minimum award was \$888. The total amount in the Ivyane Davis Memorial Funds awarded was \$142,580.90 and the total amount in ETV awarded was \$116,279.83 totaling to \$258,860.73 in awards for the academic school year.

Funds Awarded
During the 2024-2025 Academic Year



The Tuition Waiver program affords youth who have experienced foster care as a teen in Delaware who attend Delaware Technical Community College, Delaware State University and University of Delaware the opportunity to have their tuition waived at these institutions, and where applicable, their room and board costs as well. The SYA Unit collaborates with the three public institutes of higher education to support youth who are in the program by connecting them to resources, coordinating services and oversight of eligibility. Twenty-two (22) youth utilized the Tuition Waiver Program at some point during the academic year.

Services for Youth Advancement Committee

The DLI program has been established and open for applicants since April of 2023. Youth who are in DSCYF custody as well as those who have exited under a variety of circumstances are eligible for the DLI program. The program provides services not only to the youth, but also the youth's team, including the foster family where applicable. Supports include coordination of enrollment in driver education in school, referrals and payment for alternative driver education classes, and funding for driving practice through driving schools. In addition, with partnership with the Division of Motor Vehicles, the DLI program provides a waiver letter, which establishes a youth's right to have fees waived when applying for a license and functions as one of the two required address verification documents. For minors, the program reimburses foster parents the cost to add a youth as a driver to the foster parent's auto insurance policy, including any increases in premium should the youth cause an accident. For youth who own a car and have an auto insurance policy, the program reimburses a portion of the premium; the amount the youth is responsible for paying will gradually increase each year that they participate in the program, to prepare them to accept full responsibility for the auto insurance bill once their eligibility for the program ends.

From July 2024 through June 2025, 35 youth and young adults were provided funds through the DLI program for one or more of the services and supports offered by the program. One youth received assistance with an alternative driver education class, and 5 were able to obtain driving instruction and practice through the Wilmington Driving School. Wilmington Driving School also offers a vehicle if needed for a youth to take the road test at the DMV. All 5 youth who obtained driving instruction from Wilmington Driving School took advantage of this offer. Five youth received funds to assist with car safety maintenance. A total of 27 youth have received funding for auto insurance (3 were minors whose foster parents were reimbursed the cost to add the youth to the foster parent's insurance). Additionally, 47 youth have received a fee waiver letter to take to the DMV to obtain a driver's license in the first year.



On average, the program paid \$1,996 per participant for driver education (including driving instruction through a driving school), \$749.86 per participant for costs incidental to licensure (including use of a driving school car to take the road test required for licensure and car safety maintenance), and \$1,991 per participant toward auto insurance. The total amount of funds disbursed in the FY25 was \$73,238. The Department of Children, Youth and Their Families contributed \$25,000 towards the program. The bulk of the funding went toward auto insurance, on which the program spent \$53,764. For driver education services, the program paid a total of \$11,975. For costs incidental to licensure, \$7,499 was disbursed.

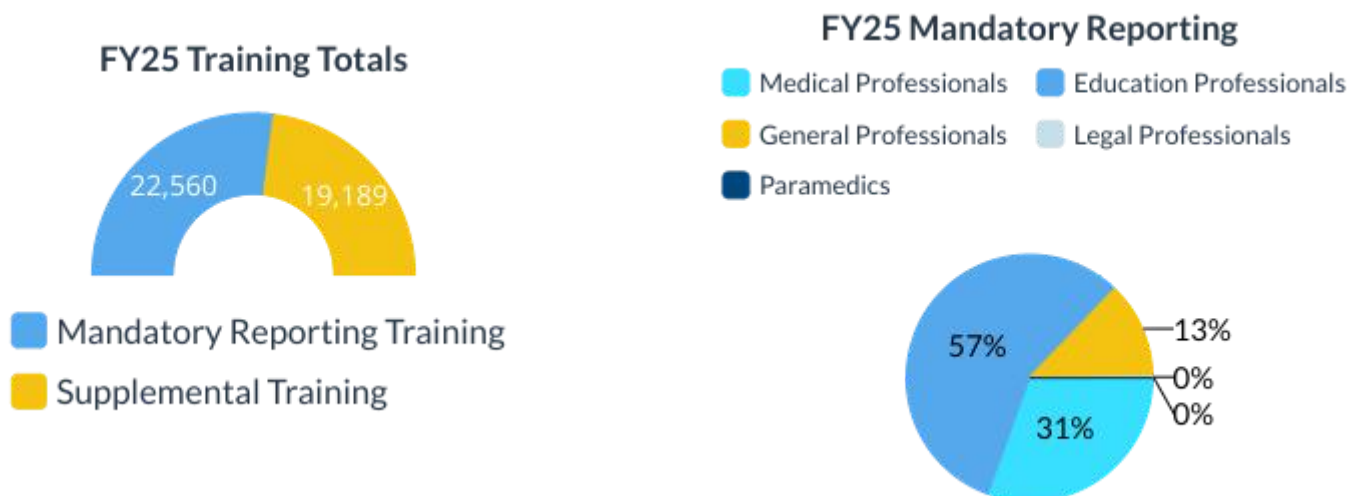
Training Committee

CPAC's statewide training initiatives are monitored and evaluated by 6 workgroups under the Training Committee: Child Abuse Medical Response; Mandatory Reporting; ChildFirst/Multidisciplinary Team; Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) Best Practices; Drug Ingestion Workgroup; and Protecting Delaware's Children Workgroup.

In FY25, the Child Abuse Medical Response Workgroup released a redesigned and revamped Mandatory Reporting Training suite for medical professionals in anticipation of the license renewal period for physicians, which began on January 1, 2025. To address the 2024-2025 Joint Action Plan recommendations to substantially and significantly improve the medical response to child poisoning via drug ingestion and exposure cases, information for medical professionals on how to respond to and accurately report these cases was added to the training. Six additional advanced, supplemental trainings were made available for medical professionals to take during the licensure period.

The Mandatory Reporting Workgroup is responsible for providing oversight of the mandatory reporting training programs for educators, medical professionals, general and professional audiences, law enforcement and the DOJ. With assistance from the OCA Training Unit, the Workgroup maintains data on the number of professionals trained, evaluates and revises training programs, and develops curricula for other disciplines as needed. During the fiscal year, the Training Unit continued its responsibility for coordinating mandatory reporting trainings for general/professional audiences and school personnel. The coordination process was streamlined by allowing training requests to be made through OCA's website: <https://courts.delaware.gov/childadvocate/training/MandatoryReporterAdditionalTraining.aspx> In FY25, 2,860 general professionals participated in the mandatory reporting training for general audiences, titled How to Identify and Report Child Abuse and Neglect in Delaware.

School employees are required to receive three hours of child abuse and child safety awareness, prevention, detection, and reporting every three years. New school employees must receive one hour within thirty days of employment. For this purpose, the Mandatory Reporting Workgroup is responsible for updating the school training annually. During FY25, 12,775 educators participated in the How to Identify and Report Child Abuse and Neglect in Delaware: School Training.



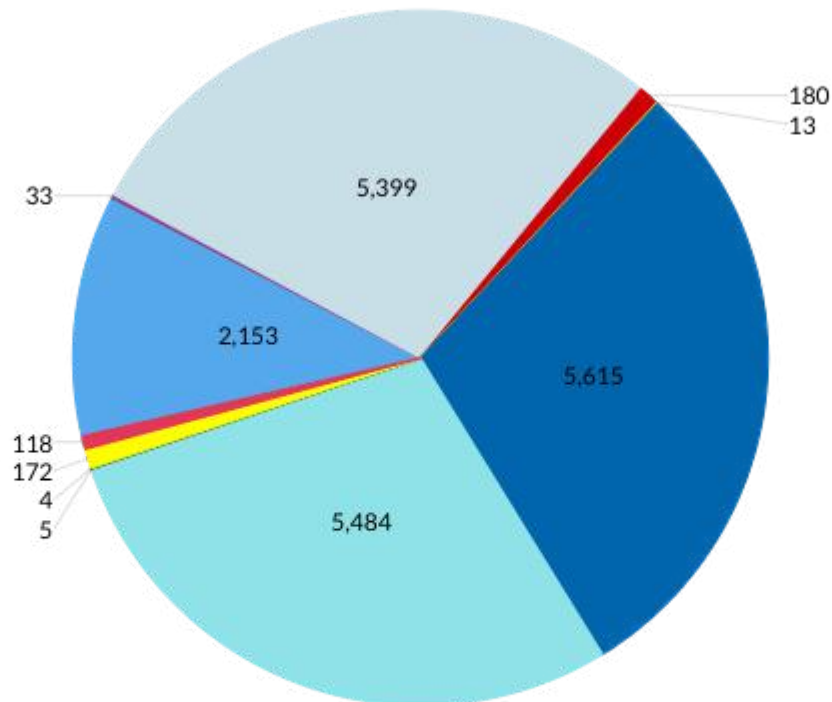
Training Committee

Since the statutory obligations to complete the training are unique for law enforcement and the DOJ, the CPAC-developed training programs are directly provided by CPAC trainers from law enforcement agencies, the DOJ or the Beau Biden Foundation. Police officers are obligated to complete the training as a requirement of initial employment per 11 Del. C. § 8404(a) and every Deputy Attorney General in the Criminal and Family Divisions is required to complete the training every three years per 29 Del. C. § 2511(a)(3).

In FY25, 19,189 professionals completed supplemental trainings offered by the Workgroup, including:

- Intersections of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse
- LGBTQ+ Youth Experiencing Abuse Foster Care and Homelessness
- Parental Substance Use Disorder and Its Effects on Children
- Recognizing and Reporting Sexual Violence
- Youth Caregivers: Understanding the Role
- Adult Sexual Misconduct in Schools
- Child Neglect
- Children with Disabilities
- Minimal Facts
- Protective Vs. Risk
- Mandatory Reporting Refresher

FY25 Supplemental Trainings



- | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| Adult Sexual Misconduct in Schools | Child Neglect | Children With Disabilities |
| Intersection of Domestic Violence & Child Abuse | LGBTQ+ Youth Experiencing Abuse Foster Care & Homelessness | Mandatory Reporting Refresher |
| Minimal Facts | Parental Substance Use Disorder and Its Affects on Children | Protective Vs. Risk |
| Recognizing and Reporting Sexual Violence | Youth Caregivers | |

Conduct retrospective reviews in 90-day and near death cases of abused and neglected children.

Training Committee

In FY25, the third workgroup under the Training Committee, ChildFirst/MDT, continued to partner with the Zero Abuse Project, the organization responsible for the ChildFirst® Forensic Interview Protocol and Program. In February 2025, the Task Force facilitated a five-day in-person training on the ChildFirst® Forensic Interview Protocol. Thirty-four members of Delaware's multidisciplinary team participated in the training and were certified in the ChildFirst® Forensic Interview Protocol. The training covered topics such as effective interviewing, dynamics in child abuse, the process of disclosure, child development, questioning children, hearsay, testifying in court, working as a multidisciplinary team, and preparing children for court, as well as in-depth explanations and exercises on the Forensic Interview Protocol. The next training is scheduled for fall 2025.

CAN Best Practices, the fourth workgroup under the Training Committee, directed its focus on two primary endeavors. The first was an effort to address recurring obstacles to effective MDT response to suspected child drug ingestion events. This effort was prompted by the increasing volume of such events. The workgroup discussed potential discrepancies between agency responses in order to identify solutions and remove obstacles. The second endeavor of the workgroup was to address the recommendations of the Joint Commissions' Action Plan, namely training initiatives to improve MDT response to child drug ingestions, MDT identification of and response to juvenile trafficking, and MDT compliance with the MOU for the MDT Response to Child Abuse and Neglect. Training initiatives were prioritized and measures implemented to address the training needs.



The Drug Ingestion Workgroup is responsible for working towards reducing and preventing toxic drug ingestions by children and promoting safe drug storage by caregivers and parents. The workgroup is achieving this by increasing awareness and education for parents, caregivers, first responders, and medical providers on early signs and symptoms of drug ingestion. The campaign was launched in FY 24 and has provided over 370 lockboxes to Medication-Assisted Treatment centers as well as the Division of Family Services to distribute to patients and families throughout the state who have young children and adolescents in their home. In FY 25, the workgroup was awarded an additional grant to continue the work of the Out of Reach Delaware campaign. This grant allows for a significant expansion of the campaign, allowing more families to access safe storage and education materials. The campaign has advertisements throughout the State aimed at increasing awareness of drug ingestions and includes messaging on how to properly store drugs and medications.

Training Committee

The last workgroup under the Training Committee is responsible for planning and organizing activities for Child Abuse Prevention Month and the Protecting Delaware's Children Conference. In FY25, the workgroup led a comprehensive statewide awareness campaign that included month-long advertisements at Christiana Mall and Tanger Outlets. The advertisements were designed to increase visibility and engagement around child abuse prevention. A coordinated social media initiative, "Go BLUE," featured members of the multi-disciplinary team sharing their own methods of child advocacy. To further extend outreach, the workgroup hosted a statewide resource fair, launched a collaborative library engagement project, and organized the first annual Race to Protect Delaware's Children 5k.

The Protecting Delaware's Children conference will be held in person, at the Hyatt Place - Dewey Beach on April 14th and 15th, 2026. The biennial conference is geared towards law enforcement officers, prosecutors, DFS caseworkers, and other professionals who regularly work in Delaware's child welfare system.



Children's Justice Act Task Force

BACKGROUND

The Children's Justice and Assistance Act of 1986 was enacted to encourage states to adopt reforms to improve the legal and administrative handling of child abuse cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse. The CJA amended the Victims of Crimes Act of 1984 to add to the funding available under the Crime Victim's Fund and required that specified portions of such funds be used for CJA Grants to states. CPAC became the CJA Task Force in Fiscal Year 2008.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The CJA provides grants to states to improve the investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation. This also includes the handling of child fatality cases in which child abuse or neglect is suspected, as well as some cases of children with disabilities and serious health problems. To be eligible for CJA funds, states are required to establish and maintain a multidisciplinary task force (the Task Force). The Task Force is responsible for making policy and training recommendations to carry out grant objectives, conducting a comprehensive evaluation every three years of the state's child welfare system, and making recommendations for improvement.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Renewed the contract with the MDT Training and Policy Administrator with significant law enforcement expertise to work with individual law enforcement jurisdictions on best practices, resources and compliance with the MOU. Contracted with one Training Specialist to improve existing trainings and develop new training initiatives.
- Trained approximately 22,560 educators, healthcare providers and members of the public on their mandatory reporting obligations, and another 19,189 through the CPAC supplemental trainings. Training was also provided to law enforcement agencies across the state on the MOU for MDT Response to Child Abuse and Neglect.
- Facilitated one training session in February 2025 on the ChildFirst® Forensic Interview Protocol for 34 multidisciplinary team members.
- Conducted retrospective reviews on 95 death and near-death cases of abused and neglected children, which resulted in 120 strengths and 100 findings across seven system areas.
- Monitored 1,641 cases throughout FY24 involving child death, serious physical injury, sexual abuse and sex trafficking of children from inception to final criminal and civil disposition to ensure a multidisciplinary team response.

Looking Ahead

In Fiscal Year 2025, the Child Protection Accountability Commission (CPAC) achieved significant progress in fulfilling its dual role as both Delaware's federally mandated Citizen Review Panel (CRP) and Children's Justice Act (CJA) State Task Force. In its capacity as the CRP, the Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) Steering Committee provided oversight of the CAN Panel reviews and submitted comprehensive findings, recommendations, and identified system strengths to the Governor, General Assembly, and the public. In its State Task Force role, CPAC submitted its CJA Annual Progress Report to the Administration on Children, Youth and Families. As we look to Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26), CPAC has many other projects on the horizon.

In FY26, the Training Committee will oversee the launch of a new Learning Management System (LMS) designed to significantly expand public access to training content. This platform will offer flexible, on-demand learning for professionals across sectors, removing barriers to participation and fostering continuous growth. The Committee will also continue to advance professional development opportunities by supporting scholarships for Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) members to attend state and national conferences and by hosting the biennial Protecting Delaware's Children Conference. Through the collaborative efforts of the Committee and its Workgroups—alongside the Training Director, Training Specialist, and MDT Training and Policy Administrator—Delaware's coordinated, multidisciplinary response to child victims of crime will continue to be strengthened.

The Drug Ingestion Workgroup will continue advancing its Out of Reach Campaign in FY26 by expanding partnerships with Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) members and allied agencies to ensure broader community access to safe storage resources. A newly established strategic focus on polysubstance use disorder will enable the campaign to reach and support a wider range of families and children affected by the complexities of substance use. To further its impact, the campaign will provide accessible, evidence-informed training for families and care teams, offering practical strategies to prevent pediatric drug ingestions and to promote safer home environments for children throughout Delaware.

The Services for Youth Advancement Committee will continue to evaluate and address the needs of youth participating in the Post-Secondary Scholarships Program, the Tuition Waiver Program, and the Driver's License and Insurance Program. The Committee will monitor program outcomes and provide feedback on their effectiveness in supporting youth with lived experience in foster care. This includes assistance with expenses such as driver education, auto insurance, and other costs associated with obtaining a driver's license, as well as the changing financial needs of those pursuing post-secondary education. The Committee will also explore strategies to increase youth participation in these programs and will continue to collaborate with community partners and key stakeholders to ensure that available resources and supports are responsive to the needs of participating youth.

The remaining CPAC Committees have identified future goals of their own. The Data Utilization Committee will continue to improve and expand the Child Welfare Dashboard on the OCA website. The Education Committee will review student educational programming for grades Pre-K through 12, expanding the work of Erin's Law to include Gavin's Law, to provide curriculum on adult sexual misconduct, personal body safety, and sextortion. The Legislative Committee will continue to monitor introduced legislation that affects children and families, while also drafting and reviewing legislation proposed by CPAC. The Grants Oversight Committee will continue to provide oversight in FY26 for the Joint Action Plan, and the Children's Justice Act Grant. The CAN Steering Committee will continue its critical work of supporting the CAN Panel and advocating for child welfare system improvements.

CPAC will prioritize these goals while maintaining its commitment to ongoing initiatives. The Commission will continue its collaborative partnership with the Maternal and Child Death Review Commission (MCDRC) by reviewing the FY24 Joint Action Plan and establishing new priorities during the CPAC/MCDRC Joint Retreat in September 2025. Following the joint retreat, CPAC will revise and implement a new joint action plan informed by the outcomes and priorities identified. Finally, CPAC will continue to foster strong, collaborative relationships among its child welfare partners to promote the safety, well-being, and permanency of Delaware's children.

Conducted retrospective reviews in 93 death and near death cases of abused and neglected children

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