

The Children's Justice Act (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 fatality cases in which child abuse or neglect is suspected and some cases of children with disabilities and serious health problems who also are victims of abuse and neglect. States must apply for the funds and meet certain eligibility requirements, including receipt of the CAPTA State Grant and establishment of a CJA Task Force as outlined in the legislation. Funds are allocated in the amount of \$50,000 per State, plus an additional amount based on the population of children under 18 years of age in the applicant's jurisdiction. Funding comes from the Crime Victims' Fund, which collects fines and fees charged to persons convicted of Federal crimes. The Fund is administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Victims of Crime (OVC) and the grants are awarded by the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, as outlined in Section 107 of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), as amended, by the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003. Kansas receives \$176,000 annually.

Program Eligibility

To be eligible for CJA funds, States must be eligible for the CAPTA Basic State Grant and are required to establish and maintain a multidisciplinary Task Force on children's justice. The Task Force is to be comprised of representatives from selected disciplines involved in handling child abuse and neglect cases. The Task Force makes policy and training recommendations regarding methods to better handle these cases, with the expectation that it will result in reduced trauma to the child victim and the victim's family, while ensuring fairness to the accused. Every three years after the initial award, the Task Force is required by legislation to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the State's systems related to the investigative, administrative and judicial handling of child abuse, neglect and exploitation cases and child maltreatment-related fatalities and make recommendations for improvements to those systems.

Purpose, Goals & Objectives

The purpose of this program is to provide CJA funding to agencies from the State of Kansas; not-for-profit organizations may include faith-based organizations; associations; universities and colleges that are able to provide programs or services Statewide to implement improvement of the assessment, investigation and prosecution of suspected child abuse and neglect cases, including child abuse/neglect related fatalities and cases involving children with disabilities or serious health-related problems. The goal of this program is to improve the systemic handling of cases of child abuse or neglect. This grant will be awarded to multiple organizations that have the ability to make a statewide impact. Programs should contain design elements that may include the following:

Objective 1

Investigative, administrative and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, in a manner that reduces the additional trauma to the child victim and the victim's family and which also ensures procedural fairness to the accused;

Objective 2

Experimental, model, and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques that may improve the prompt and successful resolution of civil and criminal court proceedings or enhance the effectiveness of judicial and administrative action in child abuse and neglect cases, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation cases, including the enhancement of performance of court-appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem for children, and which also ensure procedural fairness to the accused; and

Objective 3

Reform of State laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children from abuse, including sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring fairness to all affected persons.