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April 20, 2026

City of Coppell
The Honorable Wes Mays
255 E. Parkway Blvd
Coppell, Texas 75019

Dear Mayor Mays,

On behalf of Children's Advocacy Center for North Texas, serving Denton, Wise, and Jack counties, I am writing to you regarding our annual partnership and funding request.

First, I want to thank the council and police department for being part of this extraordinary multidisciplinary response against felony-level child abuse and for being true champions for children. Working together to support the investigators strengthens every aspect of the child abuse response – to victims, to the case, and to your community. We are deeply grateful for your commitment to this joint response.

Second, I want to reiterate the important role Children's Advocacy Center for North Texas has in responding to the crisis of child abuse and restoring victims' potential. The Center is the place child abuse investigations are conducted – in partnership with each policing jurisdiction, the District Attorney's office, and the Department of Family and Protective Services. We coordinate the investigation and prosecution of severe – criminal level – abuse cases and provide necessary mental health, medical, and victim advocacy services to child victims of crimes.

This unique partnership is defined and mandated by the Texas Family Code and agreed to by each Chief of Police or Sheriff in our service area, the District Attorneys in all three counties, and the State of Texas through DFPS. In addition to coordinating with the police department to serve your residents, we also provide your team with the training they need to respond to child abuse cases – ensuring the multidisciplinary team's response is immediate, effective, and competent.

Lewisville

1854 Cain Drive
Lewisville, TX 75077

972-317-2818

www.cacnorthtexas.org

Denton

Serve Denton Center
306 N Loop 288 #300
Denton, TX 76209

Bridgeport

2302 Woodrow Wilson Ray Circle
Bridgeport, TX 76426



Finally, I want to share with you the state of our region and your community. The multidisciplinary team in this North Texas region is the strongest it has ever been. As we celebrate 29 years of fighting felony level crimes against children together, our mission remains critical – we are fighting predators that threaten our littlest Texans. They find our kids through online platforms, through otherwise safe places like schools and churches and child friendly havens, and sometimes they are people that seem like good neighbors or trusted family members. Here's a few numbers that I think you'll find important:

- 65% of our cases last year had sexual abuse as the primary allegation. We also worked with severe physical abuse and child sex trafficking cases.
- 75% of our kids are under the age of 13 when their investigation starts and they come through our doors. These crimes are being perpetrated on our littles!
- 99% of our kids report that they knew their perpetrator – these aren't strangers snatching kids! These are people in positions of trust – and they use that position to access children and hurt them.

Each of us has read the media enough to know when one of these crimes happens, families depend on safe adults to do their job. The Advocacy Center works with those trusted professionals – if they are new to the field, we are training them; we are coordinating the case as a child winds the path from investigation to healing to justice; and we provide a beautiful, safe and trauma informed place to provide the right services to our kids. Today I can report to you that we have seen many horrific cases in this North Texas area but the team who is stopping predators and healing children is the best in class.

Even though we are state mandated to exist, we are an underfunded mandate. While the Advocacy Center receives federal and state funding for victims of crime, we also must raise money locally through events, individuals, local corporations, private foundations, and local government. We recognize your past support of our mission and hope you will include our request in your new budget to provide services for your citizens.

Our budget covers 80% of the cost per child through federal and state funding and fundraising efforts. Each year, we ask every jurisdiction that has a signed MOU with us to help bridge the gap for the remaining 20% of our budget – which is why we call this program "Fair Share." If not for the Advocacy Center, municipalities and local law enforcement would have to hire their own victim advocates, provide specialized training on crimes against children, create special child-friendly spaces, and hire their own mental health providers to help the victims of these felony-level crimes receive the justice and healing they deserve. This is cost-prohibitive to local governments; but, because of the structure of the Advocacy Center, we can and do reduce these costs overall, improving outcomes for each victim.

We recognize that not all local governments are able to budget the entire 20% of the total cost to provide their residents with services. Texas Code of Criminal Procedures allows some fees and fines collected to be used for programs designed to enhance child safety, health, or nutrition, including abuse prevention and intervention if the municipalities do not operate a school crossing guard program. Through this process, some of the municipalities in our service area send the entire fund to us each year as their "Fair Share" contribution.

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We calculate the Fair Share request based on the average statewide cost of conducting a child abuse investigation and providing the services mandated by the state. Those direct client services are:

- Forensic Interview (which MUST be conducted by an advocacy center)
- Multidisciplinary Team Coordination
- Multidisciplinary Team Case Review
- Mental Health Services
- Family Advocacy Services
- Forensic Medical Exams

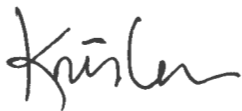
The chart below presents the number of children who live in your jurisdiction who received services in CY 2024 compared to CY 2025. Additionally, it outlines the estimated costs for providing these services in 2025, with an average expense of \$2,900 per child. This year, because training your staff is vital to this coordinated response, we have included the cost of providing training for your municipality's team of child abuse professionals in this total cost.

Number of Children Served			
	2024	2025	Percentage Change
Advocacy Center Total	3,147	2,927	-7%
City of Coppell	8	7	-13%

Total Cost to Serve All CACNT Children	\$8,488,300.00
Cost to Serve Children in Your Jurisdiction (\$2,900 x 7)	\$20,300.00
Fair Share Request (20% of Cost)	\$4,060.00

Thank you for considering our request for funding. Please let us know if we can provide further information to help you understand any of the elements presented here. We are happy to attend a budget work session or council presentation to further explain our process. We strongly value our partnership with you, and we hope you will consider fully funding this request so victims of child abuse living in your city continue to receive the gold standard of care.

Thank you,



Kristen Howell, LMSW
CEO



Jeff Reecer, FACHE
Board of Directors Chair

Enclosures:

Fair Share Municipal Chart

Texas Family Code Subchapter 264.401 – 264.406

Texas Code of Criminal Procedure 102.014

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FAIRSHARE

CITY OF COPPELL



\$20,300

Total cost to serve your residents in 2025

7

Children in your community received services in 2025

\$4,060

Fair Share Request
(20% of total cost)

ABOUT US

When a crime is committed against a child in Denton, Wise, or Jack County, a dedicated multidisciplinary team jumps into action. Local law enforcement, the District Attorney's Office, and DFPS lead the investigation, while the Children's Advocacy Center provides the PLACE where everyone comes together. As the only provider serving Denton, Wise, and Jack counties, we lead the coordinated response and provide the healing services that help children restore their potential. This public-private partnership ensures that child victims across all three counties receive the strongest support possible. Thank you for investing in the pursuit of justice and the healing of your littlest residents.

OUR 6 CORE SERVICES



CASE COORDINATION



FORENSIC INTERVIEW



FAMILY ADVOCACY



MENTAL HEALTH



MEDICAL



CASE REVIEW

WE BELIEVE CHILDREN ARE

WORTHY OF BEING HEARD

AND

WORTHY OF BEING HEALED





Fair Share Chart
For FY2026-2027 request

City or County	Direct Client Services to Children by City of Residence in CY2025	Number of Children Served by City of Residence in CY2025	Direct Client Services to Children by City of Residence in CY2024	Number of Children Served by City of Residence in CY2024	Percentage Change in Number of Children Served	Percentage Change in Direct Client Services Provided	Total Cost per Child for FY2026 2027 (\$2,900)	20% of total cost Requested for FY2026-2027	Awarded in FY2025/2026 for CY2024 clients	FY2023-2024 Contribution (Paid by 9/30/2024)	FY2022-2023 Contribution (Paid by 9/30/2023)
Argyle	145	21	52	11	91%	179%	\$ 60,900.00	\$ 12,180.00	\$ 5,280.00	\$ 11,120.00	\$ 17,850.00
Aubrey	85	19	620	90	-79%	-86%	\$ 55,100.00	\$ 11,020.00		\$ 7,200.00	\$ 3,500.00
Bartonville	104	7	142	7	0%	-27%	\$ 20,300.00	\$ 4,060.00	\$ 2,160.53	\$ 1,112.00	\$ 9,850.00
Boyd	99	9	86	15	-40%	15%	\$ 26,100.00	\$ 5,220.00	\$ 7,200.00	N/A	N/A
Bridgeport	435	36	409	51	-29%	6%	\$ 104,400.00	\$ 20,880.00		N/A	N/A
Carrollton (all zip codes)	1658	167	1422	148	13%	17%	\$ 484,300.00	\$ 96,860.00	\$ 101,491.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 38,835.00
Celina (all zip codes)	91	9	85	7	29%	40%	\$ 26,100.00	\$ 5,220.00	\$ 4,200.00	N/A	\$ 4,675.00
Chico	19	7	Included in Wise Co previously				\$ 20,300.00	\$ 4,060.00		N/A	N/A
Coppell (all zip codes)	85	7	127	8	-13%	-33%	\$ 20,300.00	\$ 4,060.00	\$ 3,840.00	\$ 8,896.00	\$ 4,675.00
Copper Canyon	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,795.17	\$ 1,703.06	\$ 1,662.11
Corinth PD	493	63	610	43	47%	-19%	\$ 182,700.00	\$ 36,540.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,828.00	\$ 6,435.00
Cross Roads	0	0	75	2	-100%	-100%	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00		N/A	N/A
Dallas	617	47	199	22	114%	220%	\$ 136,300.00	\$ 27,260.00		N/A	N/A
Decatur	256	28	335	43	-35%	-24%	\$ 81,200.00	\$ 16,240.00	\$ 20,640.00	N/A	\$ 2,966.56
Denton, City of	4165	414	3740	466	-11%	11%	\$ 1,200,600.00	\$ 240,120.00	\$ 255,908.00	\$ 253,792.00	\$ 339,975.00
Denton County unincorp.	3316	378	2828	265	43%	17%	\$ 1,096,200.00	\$ 219,240.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 96,148.00	\$ 78,810.00
Double Oak PD	35	2	47	6	-67%	-26%	\$ 5,800.00	\$ 1,160.00		\$ 1,112.00	N/A
Elm Ridge PD	128	21	89	20	5%	44%	\$ 60,900.00	\$ 12,180.00	\$ 9,600.00	\$ 5,560.00	\$ 5,000.00
Flower Mound	972	107	1009	113	-5%	-3%	\$ 310,300.00	\$ 62,060.00	\$ 54,240.00	\$ 27,800.00	\$ 142,348.25
Fort Worth	264	42	237	29	45%	11%	\$ 121,800.00	\$ 24,360.00		N/A	N/A
Frisco (all zip codes)	673	92	1117	116	-21%	-40%	\$ 266,800.00	\$ 53,360.00	\$ 48,600.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Hickory Creek	12	2	35	5	-60%	-66%	\$ 5,800.00	\$ 1,160.00	\$ 2,400.00	N/A	\$ 3,400.00
Highland Village	181	17	212	27	-37%	-15%	\$ 49,300.00	\$ 9,860.00	\$ 12,960.00	\$ 12,818.00	\$ 12,325.00
Jack County unincorp.	31	11	247	23	-52%	-87%	\$ 31,900.00	\$ 6,380.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	N/A
Jacksboro	222	27	421	45	-40%	-47%	\$ 78,300.00	\$ 15,660.00	\$ 21,600.00	\$ 4,448.00	\$ 20,000.00
Justin	234	29	492	47	-38%	-52%	\$ 84,100.00	\$ 16,820.00		\$ 10,650.00	\$ 10,625.00
Krugerville	76	5	40	9	-44%	90%	\$ 14,500.00	\$ 2,900.00	\$ 4,320.00	\$ 556.00	\$ 1,275.00
Krum	438	33	219	14	136%	100%	\$ 95,700.00	\$ 19,140.00	\$ 6,720.00	\$ 10,564.00	\$ 10,200.00
Lake Dallas	522	31	311	27	15%	68%	\$ 89,900.00	\$ 17,980.00	\$ 12,960.00	N/A	\$ 11,475.00
Lewisville	2343	337	2510	362	-7%	-7%	\$ 977,300.00	\$ 195,460.00	\$ 89,999.00	\$ 89,623.31	\$ 229,000.00
Little Elm	890	125	1346	173	-28%	-34%	\$ 362,500.00	\$ 72,500.00	\$ 83,040.00	\$ 63,940.00	\$ 69,275.00
Northlake	208	27	275	34	-21%	-24%	\$ 78,300.00	\$ 15,660.00		\$ 6,116.00	\$ 3,825.00
Oak Point PD	39	3	92	10	-70%	-58%	\$ 8,700.00	\$ 1,740.00		\$ 1,112.00	\$ 1,700.00
Pilot Point	150	16	256	18	-11%	-41%	\$ 46,400.00	\$ 9,280.00	\$ 8,640.00	\$ 13,344.00	\$ 3,825.00
Plano (all zip codes)	176	14	181	13	8%	-3%	\$ 40,600.00	\$ 8,120.00		N/A	N/A
Ponder	122	13	157	16	-19%	-22%	\$ 37,700.00	\$ 7,540.00		N/A	\$ 8,500.00
Prosper (all zip codes)	194	16	236	24	-33%	-18%	\$ 46,400.00	\$ 9,280.00		N/A	N/A
Providence Village	262	34	413	20	70%	-37%	\$ 98,600.00	\$ 19,720.00		\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Rhome	51	7	112	12	-42%	-54%	\$ 20,300.00	\$ 4,060.00		N/A	N/A
Roanoke	125	12	154	10	20%	-19%	\$ 34,800.00	\$ 6,960.00	\$ 4,800.00	N/A	\$ 10,200.00
Runaway Bay	11	1	71	9	-89%	-85%	\$ 2,900.00	\$ 580.00	\$ 4,320.00	\$ 556.00	\$ 556.00
Sanger	319	42	345	48	-13%	-8%	\$ 121,800.00	\$ 24,360.00	\$ 23,040.00	\$ 27,800.00	\$ 18,275.00
Southlake (all zip codes)	3	3	59	9	-67%	-95%	\$ 8,700.00	\$ 1,740.00	\$ 4,320.00	\$ 2,780.00	\$ 425.00
The Colony	890	93	1033	112	-17%	-14%	\$ 269,700.00	\$ 53,940.00	\$ 53,760.00	\$ 65,608.00	\$ 59,500.00
Trophy Club	7	5	119	9	-44%	-94%	\$ 14,500.00	\$ 2,900.00		N/A	\$ 2,000.00
Wise County unincorp.	2201	269	3161	343	-22%	-30%	\$ 780,100.00	\$ 156,020.00	\$ 6,569.00	\$ 83,087.25	\$ 30,389.87
Other Cities/Counties	2575	279	2713	266	5%	-5%	\$ 809,100.00				
Total	25,922	2,927	28,409	3,147	-7%	-9%	\$ 8,488,300.00	\$ 1,537,840.00	\$ 980,402.70	\$ 890,153.62	\$ 1,166,502.79

Children's Advocacy Center for North Texas asks local governments to pay a share of the program-specific costs of serving kids living in their jurisdiction who have suffered from abuse. The Center pledges to cover 80% of the direct service expenses to serve children as mandated by the Texas Family Code through federal, state, and event-specific funds; we ask that individual jurisdictions contribute the remaining 20% as cost sharing of these expenses. We have indicated the amounts paid or awarded for the Current FY; "N/A" indicates the city, town, or county has not contributed as this date.

Consider the Following Method for Funding Your “Fair Share” costs:

We would also like you to be aware that the municipality may already have funds available to contribute to your contribution to our response to felony-level child abuse cases: Funds allocated through the county under the Texas Transportation Code sec. 502.403 that can be spent for limited purposes.

Each municipality in the county that receives Child Safety Fee funds may use those funds **only for a purpose permitted by Article 102.014(g), Code of Criminal Procedure**, such as for school crossing guards. If the municipality does not have school crossing guards or does not use all the Child Safety Fee funds for that purpose, the municipality may only expend the funds for very specific purposes. **Child abuse and prevention is a specifically approved use of these funds.** If you have Child Safety Fee money that is currently unused and not needed for school crossing guards, please consider applying this money to **your municipality’s** support of the Advocacy Center.

Effective **January 01, 2024**

The Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 102.014 (having to do with the cities' obligations) states the following regarding the Child Safety Fee: "...**(g) *In a municipality with a population less than 1.3 million according to the most recent federal decennial census, the money collected under this article in a municipal court case must be used for a school crossing guard program if the municipality operates one. If the municipality does not operate a school crossing guard program or if the money received from court costs from municipal court cases exceeds the amount necessary to fund the school crossing guard program, the municipality may either deposit the additional money in an interest-bearing account or expend it for programs designed to enhance child safety, health, or nutrition, including child abuse prevention and intervention and drug and alcohol abuse prevention.***"

FAMILY CODE

TITLE 5. THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP AND THE SUIT AFFECTING THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

SUBTITLE E. PROTECTION OF THE CHILD

CHAPTER 264. CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

SUBCHAPTER E. CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS

Sec. 264.401. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "center" means a children's advocacy center.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 255, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 264.402. ESTABLISHMENT OF CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER. On the execution of a memorandum of understanding under Section 264.403, a children's advocacy center may be established by community members and the participating agencies described by Section 264.403(a) to serve a county or two or more contiguous counties in which a center has not been established.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 255, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 185, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 396 (S.B. 821), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 264.403. INTERAGENCY MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING. (a) A center shall enter into a memorandum of understanding regarding participation in the multidisciplinary team response under Section 264.406. The center and each of the following agencies must execute the memorandum of understanding:

- (1) the department responsible for child abuse and neglect investigations;
- (2) each county and municipal law enforcement agency with jurisdiction to investigate child abuse and neglect in the area to be served by the center; and
- (3) each county or district attorney with jurisdiction to prosecute child abuse and neglect cases in the area to be served by the center.

(b) A memorandum of understanding executed under this section shall include the agreement of each participating agency to cooperate in:

- (1) minimizing the revictimization of alleged abuse and neglect victims and nonoffending family members through the investigation, assessment, intervention, and prosecution processes; and
- (2) maintaining a cooperative team approach to facilitate successful outcomes in the criminal justice and child protection systems through shared fact-finding and strong, collaborative case development.

(c) The memorandum of understanding must be reexecuted:

- (1) at least every three years;
- (2) on a significant change to the memorandum of understanding; or
- (3) on a change of a signatory of a participating agency.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 255, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 396 (S.B. 821), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 264.4031. MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM WORKING PROTOCOL. (a) A center shall adopt a multidisciplinary team working protocol. The working protocol must include:

- (1) the center's mission statement;
- (2) the role of each participating agency on the multidisciplinary team and the agency's commitment to the center;
- (3) specific criteria for referral of cases for a multidisciplinary team response and specific criteria for the referral and provision of each service provided by the center;
- (4) processes and general procedures for:
 - (A) the intake of cases, including direct referrals from participating agencies described by Section 264.403(a) and reports from the department that involve the suspected abuse or neglect of a child or the death of a child from abuse or neglect;
 - (B) the availability outside scheduled business hours of a multidisciplinary team response to cases and provision of necessary center services;

- (C) information sharing to ensure the timely exchange of relevant information;
- (D) forensic interviews;
- (E) family and victim advocacy;
- (F) medical evaluations and medical treatment;
- (G) mental health evaluations and mental health treatment;
- (H) multidisciplinary team case review; and
- (I) case tracking; and

(5) provisions for addressing conflicts within the multidisciplinary team and for maintaining the confidentiality of information shared among members of the multidisciplinary team.

(b) The working protocol must be executed by the participating agencies required to enter into the memorandum of understanding under Section 264.403.

(c) The working protocol must be reexecuted:

- (1) at least every three years;
- (2) on a significant change to the working protocol; or
- (3) on a change of a signatory of a participating agency.

Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 396 (S.B. 821), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 264.404. BOARD REPRESENTATION. (a) In addition to any other persons appointed or elected to serve on the governing board of a center, the governing board must include an executive officer of, or an employee with decision-making authority selected by an executive officer of:

- (1) the department responsible for child abuse and neglect investigations;
- (2) a law enforcement agency with jurisdiction to investigate child abuse and neglect in the area served by the center; and
- (3) the county or district attorney's office with jurisdiction to prosecute child abuse and neglect cases in the area served by the center.

(b) Service on a center's board by an executive officer or employee under Subsection (a) is an additional duty of the person's office or employment.

(c) The governing board members required under Subsection (a) may not constitute a majority of the membership of a center's governing board.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 255, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995. Amended by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 185, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 396 (S.B. 821), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 264.405. CENTER DUTIES. (a) A center shall:

- (1) receive, review, and track department reports relating to the suspected abuse or neglect of a child or the death of a child from abuse or neglect to ensure a consistent, comprehensive approach to all cases that meet the criteria outlined in the multidisciplinary team working protocol adopted under Section 264.4031;
- (2) coordinate the activities of participating agencies relating to abuse and neglect investigations and delivery of services to alleged abuse and neglect victims and their families;
- (3) facilitate assessment of alleged abuse or neglect victims and their families to determine their need for services relating to the investigation of abuse or neglect and provide needed services; and
- (4) comply with the standards adopted under Section 264.409(c).

(b) A center shall provide:

- (1) facilitation of a multidisciplinary team response to abuse or neglect allegations;
- (2) a formal process that requires the multidisciplinary team to routinely discuss and share information regarding investigations, case status, and services needed by children and families;
- (3) a system to monitor the progress and track the outcome of each case;

(4) a child-focused setting that is comfortable, private, and physically and psychologically safe for diverse populations at which a multidisciplinary team can meet to facilitate the efficient and appropriate disposition of abuse and neglect cases through the civil and criminal justice systems;

(5) culturally competent services for children and families throughout the duration of a case;

(6) victim support and advocacy services for children and families;

(7) forensic interviews that are conducted in a neutral, fact-finding manner and coordinated to avoid duplicative interviewing;

(8) access to specialized medical evaluations and treatment services for victims of alleged abuse or neglect;

(9) evidence-based, trauma-focused mental health services for children and nonoffending members of the child's family; and

(10) opportunities for community involvement through a formalized volunteer program dedicated to supporting the center.

(c) The duties prescribed to a center under Subsection (a)(1) do not relieve the department or a law enforcement agency of its duty to investigate a report of abuse or neglect as required by other law.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 255, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 396 (S.B. 821), Sec. 5, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 264.406. MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM. (a) A center's multidisciplinary team must include employees of the participating agencies described by Section 264.403(a).

(b) A representative of any other entity may participate in the multidisciplinary team response as provided by the multidisciplinary team working protocol adopted under Section 264.4031 if:

(1) the entity participates in or provides the following:

(A) child abuse or neglect investigations;

(B) abuse or neglect investigations involving persons with a disability;

(C) services to alleged child abuse or neglect victims; or

(D) services to alleged victims who are persons with a disability;

(2) the center and the participating agencies agree in writing to the entity's participation; and

(3) the entity signs the memorandum of understanding executed under Section 264.403 and the working protocol adopted under Section 264.4031.

(c) A multidisciplinary team shall be actively involved in the following multidisciplinary team response:

(1) coordinating the actions of the participating agencies involved in the investigation and prosecution of cases and the delivery of services to alleged abuse or neglect victims and the victims' families; and

(2) conducting at regularly scheduled intervals multidisciplinary review of appropriate abuse or neglect cases as provided by the working protocol adopted under Section 264.4031.

(d) A multidisciplinary team may review an abuse or neglect case in which the alleged perpetrator is not a person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare.

(e) A multidisciplinary team member is authorized to share with and receive from other multidisciplinary team members information made confidential by Chapter 552, Government Code, Section 40.005 or 48.101, Human Resources Code, or Section 261.201 or 264.408 of this code when acting in the member's official capacity as an employee of a participating agency described by Section 264.403(a) or of another entity described by Subsection (b).

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 255, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 575, Sec. 32, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 185, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 396 (S.B. 821), Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 264.4061. MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM RESPONSE REQUIRED. (a) The department shall refer a case to a center and the center shall initiate a response by a center's multidisciplinary team appointed under Section 264.406 when conducting an investigation of:

(1) a report of abuse or neglect that is made by a professional as defined by Section 261.101 and that:

(A) alleges sexual abuse of a child; or

(B) is a type of case handled by the center in accordance with the working protocol adopted for the center under Section 264.4031; or

(2) a child fatality in which there are surviving children in the deceased child's household or under the supervision of the caregiver involved in the child fatality.

(b) Any interview of a child conducted as part of the investigation under Subsection (a) must be a forensic interview conducted in accordance with the center's working protocol adopted under Section 264.4031 unless a forensic interview is not appropriate based on the child's age and development or the center's working protocol adopted under Section 264.4031.

(c) Subsection (a) applies only to an investigation of abuse or neglect in a county served by a center that has executed an interagency memorandum of understanding under Section 264.403. If a county is not served by a center that has executed an interagency memorandum of understanding, the department may, if appropriate, directly refer a case to a center in an adjacent county to initiate a response by that center's multidisciplinary team.

Added by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 945 (S.B. 1806), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2017.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 396 (S.B. 821), Sec. 7, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 264.407. LIABILITY. (a) A person is not liable for civil damages for a recommendation made or an opinion rendered in good faith while acting in the official scope of the person's duties as a member of a multidisciplinary team or as a board member, staff member, or volunteer of a center.

(b) The limitation on civil liability of Subsection (a) does not apply if a person's actions constitute gross negligence.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 255, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 264.408. USE OF INFORMATION AND RECORDS; CONFIDENTIALITY AND OWNERSHIP. (a) The files, reports, records, communications, and working papers used or developed in providing services under this chapter are confidential and not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, and may only be disclosed for purposes consistent with this chapter. Disclosure may be made to:

(1) the department, department employees, law enforcement agencies, prosecuting attorneys, medical professionals, and other state or local agencies that provide services to children and families; and

(2) the attorney for the alleged victim who is the subject of the records and a court-appointed volunteer advocate appointed for the alleged victim under Section 107.031.

(b) Information related to the investigation of a report of abuse or neglect under Chapter 261 and to the services provided as a result of the investigation is confidential as provided by Section 261.201.

(c) The department, a law enforcement agency, and a prosecuting attorney may share with a center information that is confidential under Section 261.201 as needed to provide services under this chapter. Confidential information shared with or provided to a center remains the property of the agency that shared or provided the information to the center. A request for confidential information provided to the center under this section must be made to the agency that shared or provided the information.

(d) An electronic recording of an interview with a child or person with a disability that is made by a center is the property of the prosecuting attorney involved in the criminal prosecution of the case involving the child or person. If no criminal prosecution occurs, the electronic recording

is the property of the attorney involved in representing the department in a civil action alleging abuse, neglect, or exploitation. If the matter involving the child or person is not prosecuted, the electronic recording is the property of the department if the matter is an investigation by the department of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. If the department is not investigating or has not investigated the matter, the electronic recording is the property of the agency that referred the matter to the center.

(d-1) An electronic recording of an interview described by Subsection (d) is subject to production under Article 39.14, Code of Criminal Procedure, and Rule 615, Texas Rules of Evidence. A court shall deny any request by a defendant to copy, photograph, duplicate, or otherwise reproduce an electronic recording of an interview described by Subsection (d), provided that the prosecuting attorney makes the electronic recording reasonably available to the defendant in the same manner as property or material may be made available to defendants, attorneys, and expert witnesses under Article 39.15(d), Code of Criminal Procedure.

(e) The department shall be allowed access to electronic recordings of interviews of children or persons with a disability.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 575, Sec. 33, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 653 (S.B. 1106), Sec. 4, eff. June 17, 2011.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1069 (H.B. 3259), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 299 (S.B. 60), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 396 (S.B. 821), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 264.409. ADMINISTRATIVE CONTRACTS. (a) The commission shall contract with one statewide organization that is exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(a), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as an organization described by Section 501(c)(3) of that code and that is composed of individuals who have expertise in the establishment and operation of children's advocacy center programs. The statewide organization shall provide training, technical assistance, evaluation services, and funds administration to support contractual requirements under Section 264.411 for local children's advocacy center programs.

(b) The contract under this section must provide that the statewide organization may not spend annually in the performance of duties under Subsection (a) more than 12 percent of the annual amount appropriated to the commission for purposes of this section.

(c) The statewide organization with which the commission contracts shall develop and adopt standards for children's advocacy centers.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 575, Sec. 33, eff. Sept. 1, 1997. Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 347, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 597 (S.B. 354), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 396 (S.B. 821), Sec. 9, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 264.410. CONTRACTS WITH CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS. (a) The statewide organization with which the commission contracts under Section 264.409 shall contract with eligible centers to establish, maintain, and enhance the services provided by the centers.

(b) The contract under this section may not result in reducing the financial support a center receives from another source.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 396 (S.B. 821), Sec. 12, eff. September 1, 2019.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 575, Sec. 33, eff. Sept. 1, 1997. Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 347, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 597 (S.B. 354), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2015.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 396 (S.B. 821), Sec. 10, eff. September 1, 2019.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 396 (S.B. 821), Sec. 12, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 264.411. ELIGIBILITY FOR CONTRACTS. (a) A public entity that operated as a center under this subchapter before November 1, 1995, or a nonprofit entity is eligible for a contract under Section 264.410 if the entity:

- (1) has a signed memorandum of understanding as provided by Section 264.403;
- (2) has a signed working protocol as provided by Section 264.4031;
- (3) has a governing board as provided by Section 264.404;
- (4) has a multidisciplinary team as provided by Section 264.406;
- (5) regularly convenes the multidisciplinary team as provided by Section 264.406;
- (6) employs an executive director who is accountable to the board of directors of the entity and who is not the exclusive salaried employee of any governmental agency; and
- (7) fulfills the duties required by Section 264.405.

(b) The statewide organization described by Section 264.409 may waive the requirements specified in Subsection (a) if it determines that the waiver will not adversely affect a center's ability to carry out its duties under Section 264.405.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 575, Sec. 33, eff. Sept. 1, 1997. Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 347, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 185, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Amended by:

- Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 136 (S.B. 245), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2013.
- Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 597 (S.B. 354), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2015.
- Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 396 (S.B. 821), Sec. 11, eff. September 1, 2019.