



When kids are unable to access a Children's Advocacy Center for a child abuse assessment, child welfare caseworkers are forced to make placement decisions without necessary information.

This means unnecessary family separation, or kids left in dangerous situations.

Support POP 309: \$6M to Protect Access to Children's Advocacy Centers

Oregon Child Abuse Solutions (OCAS) is seeking the continuation of \$6M in funding for Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) during the 2023 Session. CACs provide child abuse medical exams, forensic interviews, therapy, and additional family support services when child abuse is suspected or confirmed.

- CACs provide statutorily mandated services in collaboration with local Child Abuse Multi Disciplinary Teams, but receive insufficient state funding, leading to a lack of staffing, lack of access to vital services, and long wait times for life-saving exams and interviews.
- The 2021 Legislature invested \$6M in CACs to increase access to critical services.
- We urge 2023 Legislative leaders to protect the vital and critical capacity that was realized with the most recent funding levels.



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Children's Advocacy Centers use funds wisely.

The following are examples of how the 2021 funds were spent:

1. **ABC House** (Linn, Benton) added an additional full-time therapy position and increased forensic interview staffing from 1.6 to 2.0 FTE.
2. **Amani Center** (Columbia) was able to maintain staff and service levels through a difficult fundraising period.
3. **Baker County CAC** increased salary to maintain vital forensic interviewer.
4. **Kids' HOPE Center** (Coos) was able to maintain key staff and victim services during a transitional year after the onset of COVID-19.
5. **CARES NW** (Multnomah, Washington) expanded their Family Support Team, increasing services to 21% more families.

6. **CAC of Jackson County** added a data coordinator position and increased their medical providers' time, as well as completed lead paint abatement on their facility.

7. **CAC of Lincoln County** added a specially trained pediatrician to do medical exams one day per week (previously had no on-site medical exams).

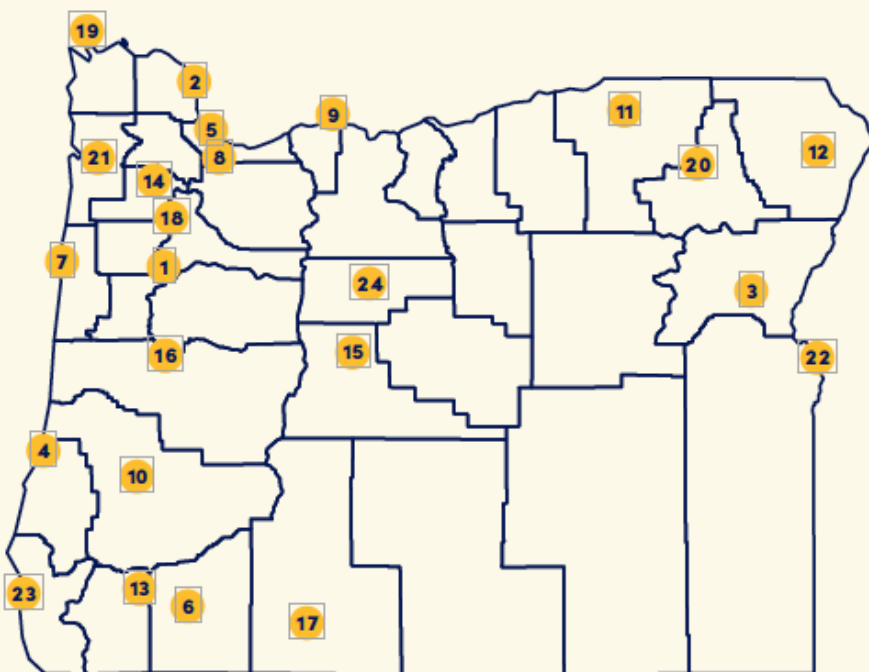
8. **Children's Center (Clackamas)** increased their medical providers, family support, and forensic interviewing staff—decreasing wait times for Karly's Law and urgent appointments. Expansion addressed a critical need for bicultural/bilingual clinic support staff to improve ability to work with Spanish-speaking families. They are on track to see 100 more kids this year than last.

9. **SafeSpace (the Gorge)** utilized the investment to secure a building for the CAC that provides space to meet the needs of families in a friendly, trauma informed environment.

10. **Douglas CARES (Douglas)** is increasing FTE for medical and therapy providers.

11. **Guardian Care Center (Umatilla)** increased forensic interviewer from .5 to 1 FTE and can now see 15 kids weekly.

12. **Helping Hearts (Wallowa)** increased FTE and expanded office hours, allowing their medical provider to seek education, equipment and support to now provide medical/sexual exams on-site vs sending children 140+ miles to receive the same service.



*CACs not listed had not received funds at the time of publication

13. **Josephine County CAC** increased FTE to assist their medical provider with screening and scheduling exams, freeing up valuable doctor time and increasing children seen by 22%. Funds were also dedicated to a new facility, which will allow forensic interviews, medical exams and therapy to be housed in one place for the first time in 33 years.

14. **Juliette's House (Yamhill, Polk)** increased FTE to create more peer-to-peer support networks among families and cross-train a staff member as a forensic interviewer, allowing the center to see 40-50 more children in a year.

15. **KIDS Center (Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook)** increased FTE, decreasing wait times from over two weeks down to one week, and added a volunteer coordinator to rebuild the volunteer program post-pandemic. They also upgraded technology in the examination and partner observation rooms.

16. **Kids FIRST (Lane)** hired a second, full-time medical provider, nearly doubling the number of children seen from 194 to 388 and hired a bilingual forensic interviewer.

18. **Liberty House (Marion, Polk)** hired a full-time bilingual Family Support Specialist and a full-time staff interpreter.

20. **Mt. Emily Safe Center (Baker, Grant, Morrow, Union, Wallowa)** added medical provider hours, increasing number of children seen from 8 to 12 weekly, and increased therapy hours so 11 kids could be seen per week, up from 7.

23. **Wally's House (Curry)** has launched a new therapy program with a full-time therapist.