

(1) over 3,400,000 reports of suspected child abuse and neglect are made each year;

(2) the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases is extremely complex, involving numerous agencies and dozens of personnel;

(3) a key to a child victim healing from abuse is access to supportive and healthy families and communities;

(4) traditionally, community agencies and professionals have different roles in the prevention, investigation, and intervention process;

(5) in such cases, too often the system does not pay sufficient attention to the needs and welfare of the child victim, aggravating the trauma that the child victim has already experienced;

(6) there is a national need to enhance coordination among community agencies and professionals involved in the intervention system;

(7) multidisciplinary child abuse investigation and prosecution programs have been developed that increase the reporting of child abuse cases, reduce the trauma to the child victim, improve positive outcomes for the child, and increase the successful prosecution of child abuse offenders;

(8) such programs have proven effective, and with targeted Federal assistance, have expanded dramatically throughout the United States; and

(9) State chapters of children's advocacy center networks are needed to—

(A) assist local communities in coordinating their multidisciplinary child abuse investigation, prosecution, and intervention services; and

(B) provide oversight of, and training and technical assistance in, the effective delivery of evidence-informed programming, and operations of centers.

(Pub. L. 101-647, title II, §211, Nov. 29, 1990, 104 Stat. 4792; Pub. L. 102-586, §6(a), Nov. 4, 1992, 106 Stat. 5029; Pub. L. 115-424, §2(a), Jan. 7, 2019, 132 Stat. 5465; Pub. L. 117-354, §3(1), Jan. 5, 2023, 136 Stat. 6274.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section was formerly classified to section 13001 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

AMENDMENTS

2023—Par. (1). Pub. L. 117-354, §3(1)(A), substituted “3,400,000” for “3,300,000” and struck out “, and drug abuse is associated with a significant portion of these” after “year”.

Pars. (3) to (9). Pub. L. 117-354, §3(1)(B), (C), added par. (3) and redesignated former pars. (3) to (8) as (4) to (9), respectively.

Par. (9)(B). Pub. L. 117-354, §3(1)(D), inserted “, and operations of centers” after “programming”.

2019—Par. (1). Pub. L. 115-424, §2(a)(1), substituted “3,300,000” for “2,000,000”.

Par. (6). Pub. L. 115-424, §2(a)(2), inserted “improve positive outcomes for the child,” before “and increase” and substituted semicolon for “; and” at end.

Par. (7). Pub. L. 115-424, §2(a)(3), substituted “have expanded dramatically throughout the United States; and” for “could be duplicated in many jurisdictions throughout the country.”

Par. (8). Pub. L. 115-424, §2(a)(4), added par. (8).

1992—Pars. (3) to (7). Pub. L. 102-586 added pars. (3) and (5) and redesignated former pars. (3), (4), and (5) as (4), (6), and (7), respectively.

§ 20302. Definitions

For purposes of this subchapter—

(1) the term “Administrator” means the agency head designated under section 11111(b) of this title;

(2) the term “applicant” means a child protective service, law enforcement, legal, medical and mental health agency or other agency that responds to child abuse cases;

(3) the term “census region” means 1 of the 4 census regions (northeast, south, midwest, and west) that are designated as census regions by the Bureau of the Census as of November 4, 1992;

(4) the term “child abuse” means physical or sexual abuse or neglect of a child, including human trafficking and the production of child pornography;

(5) the term “multidisciplinary response to child abuse” means a coordinated team response to child abuse that is based on mutually agreed upon procedures among the community agencies and professionals involved in the intervention, prevention, prosecution, and investigation systems that best meets the needs of child victims and their nonoffending family members;

(6) the term “nonoffending family member” means a member of the family of a victim of child abuse other than a member who has been convicted or accused of committing an act of child abuse;

(7) the term “regional children's advocacy program” means the children's advocacy program established under section 20303(a) of this title; and

(8) the term “State chapter” means a membership organization that provides technical assistance, training, coordination, grant administration, oversight, and organizational capacity support to local children's advocacy centers, multidisciplinary teams, and communities working to implement a multidisciplinary response to child abuse in the provision of evidence-informed initiatives, including mental health counseling, forensic interviewing, multidisciplinary team coordination, and victim advocacy.

(Pub. L. 101-647, title II, §212, as added Pub. L. 102-586, §6(b)(2), Nov. 4, 1992, 106 Stat. 5029; amended Pub. L. 114-22, title I, §104(1), May 29, 2015, 129 Stat. 236; Pub. L. 115-424, §2(b), (h)(1), Jan. 7, 2019, 132 Stat. 5465, 5470; Pub. L. 117-354, §3(2), Jan. 5, 2023, 136 Stat. 6274.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section was formerly classified to section 13001a of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 212 of Pub. L. 101-647 was renumbered section 214 and is classified to section 20304 of this title.

AMENDMENTS

2023—Par. (5). Pub. L. 117-354, §3(2)(A), which directed insertion of “coordinated team” before “response”, was

executed by making the insertion before “response” the second time appearing, to reflect the probable intent of Congress.

Par. (8). Pub. L. 117-354, §3(2)(B), inserted “organizational capacity” before “support”.

2019—Par. (1). Pub. L. 115-424, §2(h)(1), made technical amendment to reference in original act which appears in text as reference to section 11111(b) of this title.

Pars. (3) to (9). Pub. L. 115-424, §2(b), redesignated pars. (4), (5), and (7) to (9) as (3) to (7), respectively, added par. (8), and struck out former pars. (3) and (6) which defined the terms “board” and “Director”, respectively.

2015—Par. (5). Pub. L. 114-22 inserted “, including human trafficking and the production of child pornography” before semicolon at end.

§ 20303. Regional children’s advocacy centers

(a) Establishment and maintenance of regional children’s advocacy program

The Administrator shall establish and maintain a children’s advocacy program to—

(1) focus attention on child victims by assisting communities in developing child-focused, community-oriented, facility-based programs designed to improve the resources available to children and families;

(2) enhance coordination among community agencies and professionals involved in the intervention, prevention, prosecution, and investigation systems that respond to child abuse cases;

(3) train physicians and other health care and mental health care professionals, law enforcement officers, child protective service workers, forensic interviewers, prosecutors, victim advocates, multidisciplinary team leadership, and children’s advocacy center staff, in the multidisciplinary approach to child abuse so that trained personnel will be available to provide support to community agencies and professionals involved in the intervention, prevention, prosecution, and investigation systems that respond to child abuse cases;

(4) provide technical assistance, training, coordination, and organizational capacity support for State chapters; and

(5) collaborate with State chapters to provide training, technical assistance, coordination, organizational capacity support, and oversight of—

- (A) local children’s advocacy centers; and
- (B) communities that want to develop local children’s advocacy centers.

(b) Activities of regional children’s advocacy program

(1) Administrator

The Administrator shall—

(A) establish and maintain regional children’s advocacy program centers; and

(B) fund existing regional centers with expertise in multidisciplinary team investigation, trauma-informed interventions, and evidence-informed treatment,

for the purpose of enabling grant recipients to provide information, services, training and technical assistance to aid communities in establishing and maintaining multidisciplinary programs that respond to child abuse.

(2) Grant recipients

A grant recipient under this section shall—

(A) assist communities, local children’s advocacy centers, multidisciplinary teams, and State chapters—

(i) in developing and expanding a comprehensive, multidisciplinary response to child abuse that is designed to meet the needs of child victims and their families;

(ii) in promoting the effective delivery of the evidence-informed Children’s Advocacy Center Model and the multidisciplinary response to child abuse, including best practices in—

- (I) organizational support and development;
- (II) programmatic evaluation; and
- (III) financial oversight of Federal funding;

(iii) in establishing child-friendly facilities for the investigation and intervention in child abuse;

(iv) in preventing or reducing trauma to children caused by duplicative contacts with community professionals;

(v) in providing families with needed services and assisting them in regaining maximum functioning;

(vi) in maintaining open communication and case coordination among community professionals and agencies involved in child protection efforts;

(vii) in coordinating and tracking investigative, preventive, prosecutorial, and treatment efforts;

(viii) in obtaining information useful for criminal and civil proceedings;

(ix) in holding offenders accountable through improved prosecution of child abuse cases;

(x) in enhancing professional skills necessary to effectively respond to cases of child abuse through training; and

(xi) in enhancing community understanding of child abuse; and

(B) provide training and technical assistance to local children’s advocacy centers, interested communities, and chapters in its census region that are grant recipients under section 20304 of this title.

(c) Operation of regional children’s advocacy program

(1) Solicitation of proposals

Not later than 1 year after November 4, 1992, the Administrator shall solicit proposals for assistance under this section.

(2) Minimum qualifications

In order for a proposal to be selected, the Administrator may require an applicant to have in existence, at the time the proposal is submitted, 1 or more of the following:

(A) A proven record in conducting activities of the kinds described in subsection (c).

(B) A facility where children who are victims of sexual or physical abuse and their nonoffending family members can go for the purpose of investigation and intervention in child abuse.

(C) Multidisciplinary staff experienced in providing evidence-informed services for children and families.