

Georgia Division of Family and Children Services

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)  
Panel Recommendations and Agency Response

June 2023

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## Recommendations: CAPTA Plan and Grant Funding

(Page 12-13) The Child Protective Services Advisory Committee (CPSAC) continues to recommend that the Division institutionalize the administration and management of the CAPTA state grant to engage external stakeholders in key decision-making, implementation, and performance evaluation of CAPTA-funded projects to increase transparency and accountability.

1. Develop a timeline to facilitate the engagement of partners and stakeholders, including CAPTA Panel members, to formalize a process for the CAPTA State Grant that is similar to the process for the CJA Grant and includes:
  - a. Proposal guidelines and performance standards
  - b. Engaging CAPTA Panel members and stakeholders in proposal review and award decision making for initial and ongoing requests
2. Develop a plan for ongoing evaluation of the state CAPTA Plan to ensure it meets both state and CAPTA objectives.
3. Conduct an annual review of the state CAPTA Plan with key partners and stakeholders to increase awareness of the plan and its objectives, and to ensure its effectiveness and responsiveness to community and Division needs.

### **2023 Division Response:**

In 2022, the Division developed a formalized application structure for the CAPTA State Grant to solicit proposals for funding and review applications in partnership with stakeholders. The 2022 CAPTA Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) was widely shared across the state to inform agencies and organizations of the available funding. Due to the 2016 CARA legislation (P.L. 114-198) that increased the annual amount of state CAPTA grant awards to strengthen the development, implementation, and monitoring of plans of safe care for substance-affected newborns and their caregivers, the 2022 FOA guidelines required potential applicants to submit proposals that addressed this priority population. CAPTA Panel members, along with regional DFCS staff, former foster youth, and parent advisory council members, were invited to participate in the review and scoring of the applications. The Division plans to release a second FOA for CAPTA funding in 2023 to solicit additional applications for funding.

The CAPTA state plan was last updated in 2020, as well as the state's five-year strategic plan – the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP). The next scheduled review and revision of the CFSP will occur in 2024. The Division will engage stakeholders at that time to evaluate and update, as necessary, the CAPTA state plan to ensure the CAPTA plan aligns with the CFSP and remains effective and responsive to the needs of the community. Members of the CAPTA Panels are encouraged to share the state's CAPTA

plan throughout their networks to raise awareness of the need for programs and services that meet the objectives of the state plan.

(Page 23) The Children’s Justice Act (CJA) Task Force submitted its recommendations for projects to receive CJA awards. The applications for CJA funding far exceeded the available FY24 funds, so the CJA Task Force recommends that the Division use the CAPTA state grant to fund the Multi-Disciplinary Child Abuse and Neglect Institute (MDCANI) that was not able to be funded with the CJA grant.

**2023 Division Response:**

The Division supports the MDCANI training by providing a dedicated staff person from the Training and Professional Development Unit to facilitate curriculum development and course evaluation. The Division will provide funding as needed for MDCANI in FY2024, to continue offering this training opportunity for staff and stakeholders.

Recommendations: Access to CPS History

(Page 20-21) The CJA Task Force noted that real-time access to CPS history for law enforcement may influence the direction of the investigation or action by the coroner on scene, resulting in delays in autopsy results that may impact DFCS investigations. A noted barrier to accessing CPS history by local law enforcement and/or coroners is through an established local channel or the Centralized Intake Call Center (CICC).

The Task Force recommends that DFCS policy be reviewed and revised to include establishing an appropriate protocol for accessing maltreatment history by authorized individuals on scene through CICC to inform their investigative process.

**2023 Division Response:**

Law enforcement can request immediate assistance from DFCS. The Division maintains policy to provide guidance on sharing information with law enforcement.

- Policy 2.6 Confidentiality/Safeguarding Information describes the specific agencies and circumstances when pertinent information about a child can be shared, including DFCS history
- Policy 3.1 Receiving Intake Reports describes the procedures to follow when law enforcement contacts CICC requesting immediate assistance

Because CICC is not able to verify the identity of a caller, CICC staff cannot provide confidential information over the phone. CICC will obtain the reason for the request and immediately notify the County Department. The county staff assigned to respond to the request will provide immediate assistance by conducting a SHINES screening and providing requested information to the LE officer.

(Page 32) The Maltreatment Committee recommends that the reports detailing the findings and opportunities identified in the Safety Science critical incident review process and resulting actions be made available to stakeholders and partners who also have a role in the prevention of child fatalities.

**2023 Division Response:**

The systems analyses conducted through the Safety Science approach are providing an in-depth view for Division leadership. The reports are currently for internal use. The Division will explore opportunities to share selected findings from the critical incident reviews to strengthen the state's efforts at review and analysis of child fatalities.

[Recommendation: Training for CFR Teams](#)

(Page 35) The Maltreatment Committee recommends that the Division partner with the Child Fatality Review (CFR) Panel to develop a training for local CFR teams on Plans of Safe Care (POSC) and their role in child protection efforts for drug-exposed infants. The Committee further recommends that the training should identify and emphasize the role of a POSC in prevention. This training should be made available on demand so it can be used by the local CFR teams when reviewing infant deaths.

**2023 Division Response:**

The Division looks forward to partnering with the CAPTA Panel members, including the Child Fatality Review Panel, to explore training opportunities for local CFR Committee members.

## Recommendations: Workforce Retention

(Page 12) The Child Protective Services Advisory Committee recommends that the Division expand its review and analysis of results from staff exit surveys to include stakeholders, internal and external, who would participate in the ongoing evaluation of exit survey data.

In 2023, the Workforce committee would like to take a deeper dive into exit survey results and conduct exploratory research to identify opportunities pre-resignation to address human resource, professional, environmental, cultural issues that contribute to job dissatisfaction and high vacancy rates.

### **2023 Division response:**

The Department of Human Services, Office of Human Resources collects exit interview data for employees who voluntarily leave the agency. This information is summarized and provided to DHS / Division Office Leadership monthly for review and analysis. This recommendation will be shared with OHR for consideration.

(Page 12) The CPS Advisory Committee also recommends that the Division consider outsourcing the management of its staff exit survey to increase response rates and provide a secure, safe, and confidential place for respondents to comment on their employment experience.

### **2023 Division response:**

The Department of Human Services, Office of Human Resources assists with the development of policies, employee benefits, job titles, compensation, employee relations, performance management, organizational development, training and ensuring fair and lawful employment practices. Part of their responsibility is to also manage the staff exit surveys for the Division. This recommendation will be shared with OHR for consideration.

(Page 12) The CPS Advisory Committee understand that several workforce retention strategies have been implemented, yet turnover remains high. The Committee recommends that the Division engage the Committee in evaluating the effectiveness of any strategy implemented to address retention. The Committee would like to be a part of the evaluation, lending its expertise to the process.

**2023 Division response:**

Reducing employee turnover remains a priority for the Division. The Department of Human Services, Office of Human Resources works closely with the Division's Training and Professional Development staff to develop and monitor workforce recruitment and retention strategies. This recommendation will be shared with OHR for consideration.