



# Dakota Children's

ADVOCACY CENTER



**2019 Annual Report**

# Our Services

Attention to the needs and abilities of children is the hallmark of the Children's Advocacy Center model to ensure that children are not further victimized by the systems intended to protect them. From the initial allegation of abuse, the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) approach allows the child an opportunity to talk with a single interviewer in a safe, neutral setting, thus protecting the victim from being unnecessarily interviewed by multiple people from each specific field. The team continues to work together to guide the investigation, treatment, management and possible prosecution of the case to ensure the greatest level of protection and care for the child and his/her family.

## Forensic Interviews

Specially trained Forensic Interviewers work with the MDT to ensure victims are not interviewed unnecessarily and allow them to share their story in a safe, legally sound and neutral setting.

## Advocacy Services

Advocacy focuses on the needs of the youth and non-offending caregiver(s), providing needed support and information along with a compassionate, listening ear.

## Medical Evaluations

Specialized medical evaluations are offered to ensure the health and safety of each victim, identify any evidence of abuse, and refer for additional care as needed.

## Mental Health Care

Specialized, evidence-based, trauma-focused mental health services are offered to the victim and family to help them cope with the trauma and to assist them through the healing process.

## MDT Collaboration

CAC's and MDT members come together to improve the response of the investigation and intervention of child abuse.

## Prevention and Education

While there is no one thing we can do to guarantee children will be safe, there are things we can do to decrease the likelihood of abuse and improve our response to it.

292

Forensic Interviews



4374

Advocacy Services



149

Medical Evaluations



1018

Mental Health Sessions



79

MDT Members at Case Review



1696

Prevention and Education Services

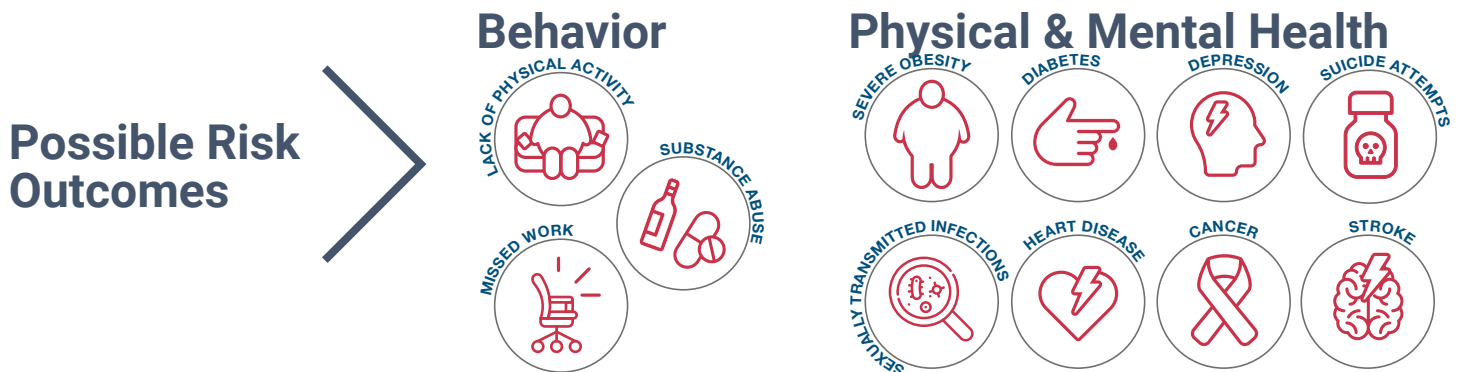


# Why It Matters

Child abuse and other forms of trauma can have lifelong effects on children, families, and communities.

## Child trauma can last a lifetime.

Many studies have shown the strong relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which include childhood trauma like abuse, and serious outcomes such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, substance use, health problems, and even poverty and early death.



## Trauma is both common and costly to society.

How many children are we talking about? Nearly half of all U.S. children experience at least one type of childhood trauma. That exacts a toll on children, their caregivers, and their community, and our country as a whole also pays a price. Quite literally: In addition to the physical, emotional, and social costs of child abuse, it also carries economic costs.<sup>1</sup>

### Abuse and other forms of trauma are common.

Nearly half of all U.S. children—some **34 million**—have experienced at least one type of childhood trauma, while **16 million** have experienced two or more types of trauma.<sup>2</sup>

### Abuse carries a heavy cost.

The lifetime cost for each victim is

**\$210,012<sup>1</sup>**

Each year, total lifetime costs of new cases of child abuse reach approximately

**\$124 billion**

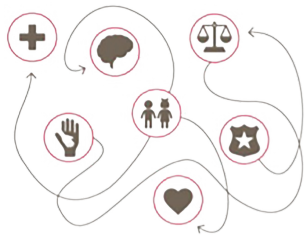
<sup>1</sup> Fang, X., Brown, D., Florence, C., and Mercy, J. The economic burden of child maltreatment in the United States and implications for prevention. (2012) Child Abuse and Neglect, Volume 36, Issue 2, February 2012, pages 156-165.

<sup>2</sup> Bethell, C., Newacheck, P., Hawes, E., Halfon, N. Adverse childhood experiences: assessing the impact on health and school engagement and the mitigating role of resilience. (2014) Health Affairs Dec; 33(12);210-2016

# What We Do

To understand what a Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC) is, you must understand what children face without one. Without a CAC, the child may end up having to tell the worst story of his or her life over and over again, to doctors, law enforcement, lawyers, therapists, investigators, judges, and others. They may have to talk about that traumatic experience in a police station where they think they might be in trouble, or may be asked the wrong questions by a well-meaning teacher or other adult that could hurt the case against the abuser.

## Without CACs



## With CACs



When police or child protective services believe a child is being abused, the child is brought to the CAC—a safe, child-focused environment—by a caregiver or other “safe” adult. At the CAC, the child tells their story once to a trained interviewer who knows the right questions to ask in a way that does not re-traumatize the child. Then, a team that includes medical professionals, law enforcement, mental health, prosecution, child protective services, victim advocacy, and other professionals make decisions together about how to help the child based on the interview. CACs offer therapy and medical exams, plus courtroom preparation, victim advocacy, case management, and other services. This is called the multidisciplinary team (MDT) response and is a core part of the work of CACs.

## Our Goals



Do the best job possible in finding out what happened.



Help make the process as comfortable as possible for you.



Work in cooperation with other services/programs to help your child and you.



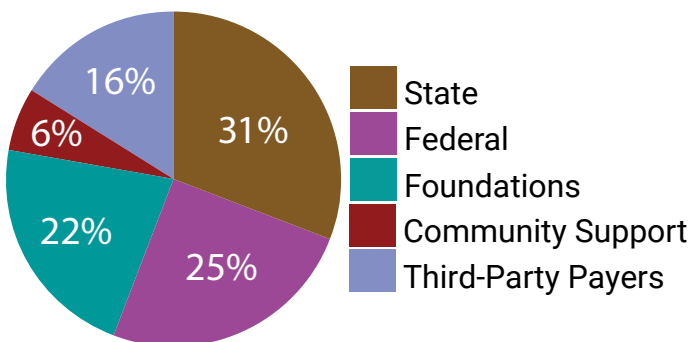
Help your family begin to heal.

# How We Are Funded

## Revenue and Expenses

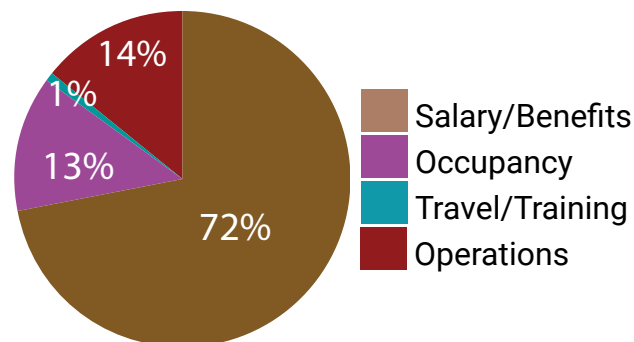
### Revenue

As a non-profit organization, the DCAC is dependent on the generosity of the communities we serve. CACs never bill families for services. We are funded through grants, foundations, community support and third-party payers.



### Expenses

By far a majority of our expenses go to supporting direct services to traumatized kids and their families. We do this so we can provide a safe, family-friendly environment that promotes hope, health, and healing.



## Partners in Our Success



NATIONAL  
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Missouri Slope Areawide  
United Way



United Way  
of Dickinson



Corrections and  
Rehabilitation



OTTO  
BREMER  
TRUST™



Human Services



CHILDREN'S  
ADVOCACY  
CENTERS  
OF NORTH DAKOTA

# Who We Are



## Dakota Children's Advocacy Center

The Dakota Children's Advocacy Center (DCAC) provides a compassionate and effective way to bring services to children and families affected by abuse. Our collaboration with multidisciplinary team members significantly reduces the trauma associated with child abuse and improves case outcomes. We help coordinate care and investigation from first report to conviction and beyond, while keeping the child at the center of everything the team does.

*The mission of the DCAC is to provide a safe, family-friendly environment that promotes hope, health, and healing to traumatized children and their families.*



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## February

With a grant from the Missouri Slope United Way the DCAC started a partnership with Jeannette Myhre Elementary School to provide **weekly** mental health services and support for kids and staff.



## April

Started the Telehealth Outreach Program with CAC's across the state to provide mental health services via video conferencing. This year we provided **254** mental health services via Tele.

## July

Added a second Forensic Interviewer to increase accessibility. Wait times decreased by **4 weeks**.



## September

Hired our first Director of Development and Engagement to increase community engagement and funding. Every year the DCAC loses approximately **\$60,000** of uncovered costs for counseling and other services for kids and families.



## December

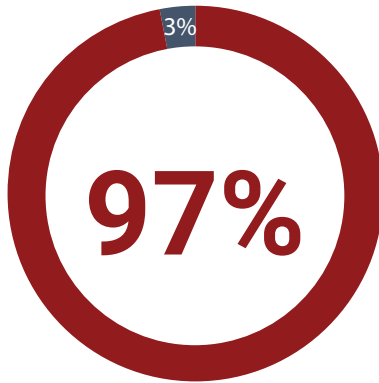
Awarded a **\$175,420.00** grant to provide statewide leadership and training in Building Resiliency and Combating Vicarious Trauma throughout 2020.



# Our Impact

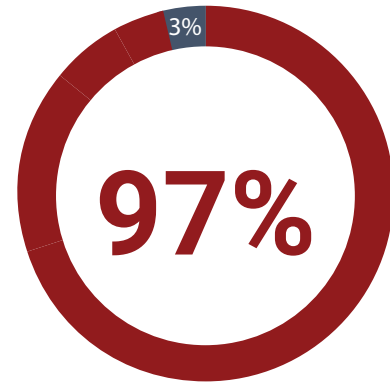
*"This has been such a hard thing for us and the Dakota Children's Advocacy Center has literally been a life-saver. Your services are amazing and we are so grateful."*

**I believe my child felt safe at the center.**



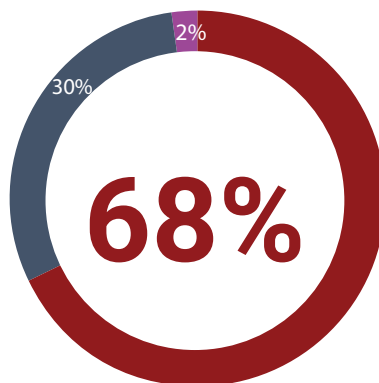
Strongly Agree    Somewhat Disagree  
Somewhat Agree    Strongly Disagree

**The DCAC provided me with resources to support my child.**



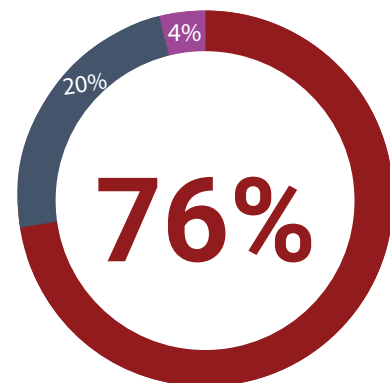
Strongly Agree    Somewhat Disagree  
Somewhat Agree    Strongly Disagree

**The DCAC provides resources that build better cases.**



Strongly Agree    Somewhat Disagree  
Somewhat Agree    Strongly Disagree

**MDT members feel clients benefit from the collaborative approach.**



Strongly Agree    Somewhat Disagree  
Somewhat Agree    Strongly Disagree

*"The Dakota Children's Advocacy Center is an invaluable resource"*



# Our Numbers

DCAC provided  
**7529**



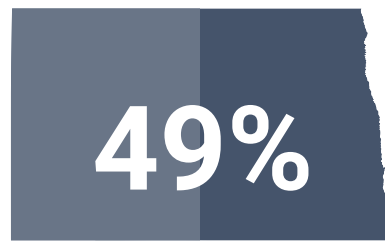
services to  
**690**



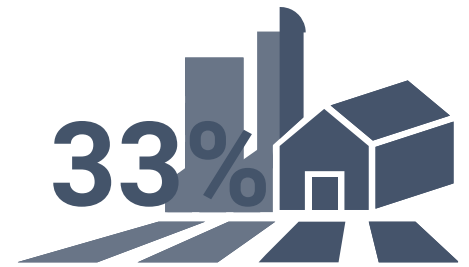
people in  
**2019**

A 20% increase  
from 2018

**63% Female**  
**37% Male**



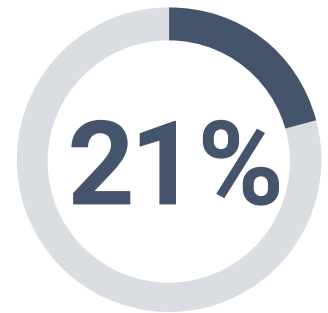
of North Dakota counties and  
1 Native American  
reservation referred to the  
DCAC last year.



of referrals came from  
rural counties.



knew their offender. Most of  
the time, the dangers to  
children are not from  
strangers, but from someone  
they know and trust.

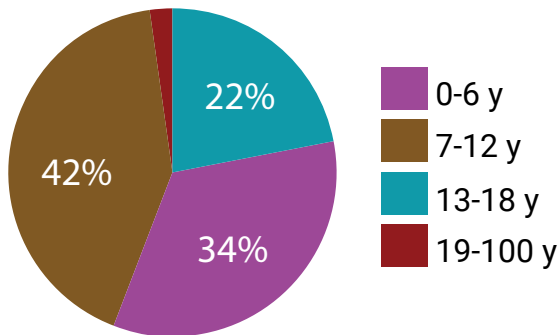


of offenders were < 18,  
highlighting the need for  
evidence-based services  
for kids with sexual  
behavior problems.

# Who We Serve

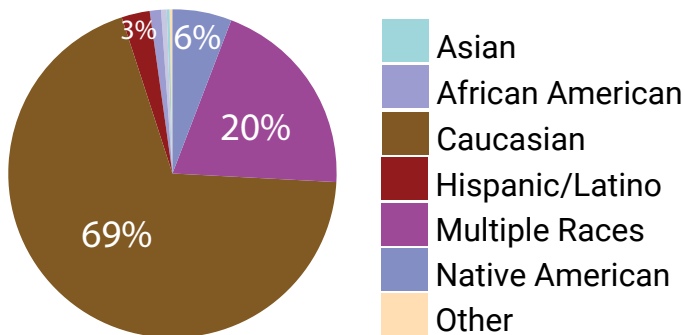
**One in every 10 children** will be a victim of sexual abuse by their 18th birthday; approximately 65% will be female. Based on data from the CDC, a conservative estimate for the cost of maltreatment in North Dakota is more than \$525 million in one year.

\*Numbers are based on averages from over the years.



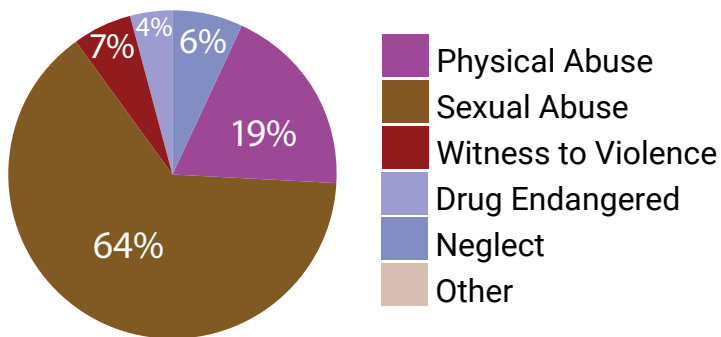
## Age

Though abuse affects children of all ages, the majority of children seen at Children's Advocacy Centers in North Dakota are under 12.\*



## Race

As North Dakota has grown over the past 10 years so has the ethnic diversity of our victims. Although 69% of our victims are Caucasian, representation of other races have increased nearly 10%.\*



## Types of Abuse

The majority of cases seen at the CACs in North Dakota involve an allegation of sexual abuse. In fact, more than one in ten of all substantiated victim abuse and neglect referrals to social service agencies nationwide are victims of sexual abuse.\*

**The Dakota Children's Advocacy Center exists to change those numbers and lead the fight against the cycle of child abuse through a more coordinated and compassionate approach.**

# How You Can Help



The services of the Dakota Children's Advocacy Center (DCAC) are made possible because of the generous support of the community. We have grown out of a community need to better the response and intervention of those most vulnerable and we need you to partner with us to make that happen. Donate today!

The DCAC is solely funded through grants, donation and third-party payers. Every penny donated helps make a difference in the lives of children.

## Join a Committee

When it comes to making a difference in improving children's lives, there is a place for everyone to contribute. Child abuse and neglect is a community problem.



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## Volunteer

In order to provide services free to families, the DCAC truly depends on the help of volunteers. Volunteers contribute their unique talents, skills and knowledge to help restore hope, health and healing to children and their families.

## Wish List

Visit us @ [www.dakotacac.org](http://www.dakotacac.org) to view our Wish List of needed items that help us support the families we serve.



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For more information on how you can help visit our website @ [www.dakotacac.org/how-you-can-help](http://www.dakotacac.org/how-you-can-help)