

## 4. VICTIM SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY

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### C. Victim Advocates serving CAC clients must provide the following constellation of services:

1. Crisis assessment and intervention, risk assessment, and safety planning and support for children and family members at all stages of involvement with CAC
2. Assessment of individual needs and cultural considerations for the child and family to ensure those needs are addressed
3. Presence at CAC during the forensic interview in order to participate in information sharing; inform and support family about the coordinated, multidisciplinary response; and assess needs of child and non-offending caregiver
4. Provision of education and access to victims' rights and crime victims' compensation
5. Assistance in procuring concrete services (housing, protective orders, domestic violence intervention, food, transportation, public assistance, etc.)
6. Provision of referrals for specialized, trauma focused, evidence-supported mental health and medical treatment, if not provided at the CAC
7. Access to transportation to interviews, court, treatment and other case-related meetings
8. Engagement in child and family response regarding participation in the investigation and/or prosecution
9. Participation in case review in order to discuss the unique needs of the child and family and plan associated support services, ensure the seamless coordination of services, and ensure the child and family's concerns are heard and addressed
10. Provision of updates to the family on case status, continuances, dispositions, sentencing, and inmate status notification (including offender release from custody)
11. Provision of court education and courthouse/courtroom tours, support, and accompaniment
12. Coordinated case management meetings with all individuals providing victim advocacy services.

## **STATEMENT OF INTENT:**

While the particular combination of services required will vary based upon the child and family's unique needs and the legal requirements of any civil and/or criminal cases, all children and families need support in navigating the various systems they encounter that are often unfamiliar to them. Crisis assessment and intervention, advocacy, and support services help to identify the child and family's unique needs, reduce fear and anxiety, and expedite access to appropriate services. Families can be assisted through the various phases of crisis management with problem solving, access to critical treatment and other services, and ongoing education, information and support. Crises may recur with various precipitating or triggering events including, but not limited to, financial hardships, child placement, arrest, change/ delay in court proceedings, and preparation for court testimony. Children may experience crisis and trauma, including suicidal ideation, at unanticipated times. Many CACs provide advocacy services for children and their family members on-site and/or through linkage agreements with other community agencies or system-based providers.

State and federal laws require that victims of crime, including victims of child abuse, are informed of their rights as crime victims, including information about, and eligibility for, crime victim compensation. Caregivers who are affected by the crime may also be entitled to services. Generally, children and their families will be unfamiliar with their legal rights. Therefore, information regarding rights and services should be routinely and repeatedly explained as necessary and made available to all children and their caregivers.