

FY26 Appropriations Priorities



Prevent Child Abuse America Appropriations Recommendations

Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America) is a national network of state chapters and over 600 Healthy Families America (HFA) evidence-based home visiting program sites. The priorities listed below have been identified by our network because they address the need for prevention efforts across the nation. These priorities will strengthen community-based primary prevention by investing in practical solutions and focusing child welfare and public health resources to support kids and families before they are in crisis, helping them to thrive and avoid costly interventions.

Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Program: CBCAP grants provide critical support for locally driven programs and services essential to building healthy and thriving communities; including family resource centers, parenting skills and home visitation, and coordination and connection to mental health and substance use services. While 70% of the funds are proportionately distributed to states based on the number of children, 30% of the funds are based on leveraging non-federal funds (private, state, or other non-federal funds). CBCAP grant funding supports a continuum of efforts responsive to the needs of families and communities, reducing the need for child welfare involvement. CBCAP only received \$70.66 million in FY25, while the cost of child abuse and neglect is \$220 million every day.

Funding Request – Level Funding (\$70.66 million) under HHS/ACF

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): Early exposure to violence or other ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. However, ACEs can be prevented and having strategies in place, before a traumatic event, can dramatically reduce negative effects. Prevention remains the single most cost-effective approach to minimizing the impact of ACEs and its lifelong health impacts. Investing in prevention reduces the cost of interventions and treatment later in life and promotes healthy outcomes for children. In 2023, 12 grantees were funded, but the need is far greater.

Funding Request – Level Funding (\$9 million) under HHS

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention (CSA): Extensive research shows that experiences of childhood sexual abuse are associated with short term and long-lasting physical, mental, behavioral health problems and poor academic and financial outcomes. Resources for child sexual abuse have mostly focused on treatment for victims and criminal justice-oriented approaches for perpetrators. These efforts are important after child sexual abuse has occurred. However, little investment has been made in preventing child sexual abuse from happening in the first place. Effective evidence-based strategies are available to proactively protect children from child sexual abuse, but few have been widely disseminated. Funding is needed to develop, evaluate, implement, and disseminate evidence-based child sexual abuse primary prevention strategies. According to CDC estimates, the lifetime economic burden of CSA is at least \$9.3 billion, while the CSA program was funded at only \$3M in FY25.

Funding Request – Level Funding (\$3 million) under HHS