
BENNINGTON COUNTY
ASSOCIATION AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

ANNUAL REPORT
FY2021

PREPARED BY:
JENNA CASLIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SEPTEMBER 2021

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Bennington County Association Against Child Abuse
dba Bennington County Child Advocacy Center and Special Investigations Unit
129 Elm Street
Bennington, Vermont 05201
Tax Status: 501 (c) 3 Federal Exempt # 03-0338769

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Email: kyle.hoover@vermont.gov

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DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITIES

MISSION STATEMENT

The Bennington County Child Advocacy Center and Special Investigations Unit (BCCAC/SIU) is a multidisciplinary team (MDT) that ensures children and families involved in sexual abuse or allegations resulting in serious physical injury cases receive child-friendly services from law enforcement, prosecution, protective services, and receive timely and effective counseling. These cases require special expertise in the area of investigation and services to victims to enhance protection and to facilitate court proceedings. The BCCAC/SIU proactively investigates these cases and emphasizes prevention through education and training. The operations of the BCCAC/SIU promote cooperative efforts between municipalities, police, prosecutor's office, medical community, mental health, child protective services, schools, and other advocacy groups.

VISION STATEMENT

The Bennington County Child Advocacy Center and Special Investigations Unit is dedicated to being a leading advocacy and learning center in the state of Vermont.

We protect the rights of the victims, meet the needs of the families, and encourage community supports.

We promote educational activities for our youth that strive to reduce the probability of them becoming victims of abuse or victimizers.

We provide the highest quality staff development to all Multidisciplinary Team Members, both locally and state-wide, that is current, improves the quality of forensic investigations, and builds professionalism in public service.

We monitor the legal framework at the state and federal level to ensure that the laws protecting our children, vulnerable adults, and adult victims of abuse are adhered to and reflect best practice.

STRATEGIC PLAN EVALUATION FY21

GOAL #1: Identify realistic funding sources

Objectives:

A. Identify realistic funding sources.

- a. Seek at least 3 other grant funding sources for both the general fund and specific programming.
- b. Continue annual giving campaign and increase our constituency list.
- c. Develop at least two more funding events.
- d. Recruit board members with capital campaign experience.

Status:

- a. JUST BIKE justice for kids' event was held virtually, due to the pandemic in the fall of 2020.
- b. A United Way grant was applied for FY22 to obtain funding for CAC staff to receive training to broaden our educational offerings for the community. The grant was awarded to our center.
- c. Obtained a Boomerang account to manage and organize constituency list and fundraising efforts.
- d. Began transforming April Awareness campaigns into fundraising efforts.
- e. Added a cornhole tournament fundraising event for summer of 2021.
- f. Added a craft and vendor fair fundraiser for September 2021.

B. Participate in established community events

- a. Family activities
- b. Information/ resource tables
- c. Make an intentional effort to co-sponsor events with other organizations.

Status:

- a. Due to the pandemic many community events have been on hold this past year. The CAC continued to host our annual #Benningtongoesblue campaign virtually. The Clothesline Project and Pinwheel Gardens throughout the community also continued.
- b. Our staff volunteered at local foodbank distributions during the COVID-19 pandemic shut down.

C. Public Relations

- a. Maintain presence on social media sites
- b. Continue outreach to local media outlets: digital, radio, television and paper
- c. Develop Public Service Announcement for radio and television

Status:

- a. Created a YouTube account to allow for staff to still provide ACT 1 Parent Nights for local schools and other educational content to share with the community.
- b. Worked with the Vermont Children's Alliance to finalize their #Itsyourbusiness PSA that was aired on local radio.
- c. Shared on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram all April Child Abuse Prevention Awareness campaigns that were traveling through the county.
- d. Continue to be active on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter in sharing content relevant to families, community and our mission.

GOAL #2: Increase Prevention Education

Objectives:

A. Serve on community boards/committees that promote early childhood and family

- a. Continue to expand education programming for the community.
- b. Offer 3 connections to our programming in the Northshire.
- c. Continue to expand education programming for Birth to 5 years old.
- d. Continue to implement educational programming for school-age students.
- e. Develop education programming for college-age students.

Status:

- a. With a change in staffing, we have applied for a been awarded grant funding for FY22 to train all staff in the Healthy Relationships Project, Darkness to Light programming and to purchase additional Care for Kids kits to be utilized by local early childhood education programs after they are trained by our office.
- b. Continued to collaborate with and be creative with navigating the pandemic and providing ACT 1 parent nights via YouTube. As well as an in person presentation for students at Bennington Elementary.
- c. Collaborated with Castleton State College in a display of the Clothesline Project for their students.

B. Increase professional development opportunities for partner agencies and Multidisciplinary Team Members

- a. Utilize a list serve to announce local, state, and national trainings.
- b. Identify needs for professional development at the local level.
- c. Offer/support workshops/conferences held locally.
- d. Provide workshops that supports understanding Vicarious Trauma.

Status:

- a. Due to the pandemic trainings that were going to be brought to the area were postponed.
- b. Our Executive Director was trained in providing Vicarious Trauma workshops for the MDT.
- c. Assisting MDT members in obtaining scholarships to attend the Conference on Crimes Against Women and the Crimes Against Children Conference.

Goal #3: Support state-wide efforts for improving laws that impact child maltreatment investigations, prosecution, intervention, and prevention.

Objectives:

- a. Work with legislature and other parties to change laws.
- b. Bring attention to these issues with fact-based information.
- c. Garner support from other agencies and the community by educating them on the issues.
- d. Host a Legislative Breakfast for the local delegation.
- e. Seek out and support local clinicians and medical care providers.

Status:

- a. On-going
- b. Two board members, from DCF and the State's Attorney's Office often consult at the state level on new legislation.
- c. Continues to participate in VCA meetings, list serve updates and accept invitations to discuss legislature with delegates and other organizations to help promote change.
- d. Legislative Breakfast on hold this year due to

Goal #4: Increase organizational ability to meet current National Children's Alliance Standards

Objectives:

- a. Evaluate current Mental Health supports within the community.
- b. Develop a long-term plan for increasing Mental Health supports within the community.
- c. Annually review and update the Succession Plan for CAC staff.
- d. Evaluate current medical practices in place and how it aligns with 2017 Standards for medical care.

Status:

- a. In August 2019 we received Re-Accreditation through the National Children's Alliance.
- b. We currently have three private mental health clinicians that we have operating agreements with. We have begun to work with United Counseling Services to provide tele-mental health services for our clients. Two SANEs at SVMC have received training in Pedi-SANE. SVMC is piloting a tele-health system for SANES with UVM.
- c. The Succession Plan for CAC staff is completed and will be updated annually.

STRATEGIC PLAN FY21

Bennington County Child Advocacy Center & Special Investigations Unit Strategic Plan FY 2022

MISSION STATEMENT

The Bennington County Child Advocacy Center and Special Investigations Unit (BCCAC/SIU) is a multidisciplinary team (MDT) that ensures children and families involved in sexual abuse or allegations resulting in serious physical injury cases receive child-friendly services from law enforcement, prosecution, protective services, and receive timely and effective counseling. These cases require special expertise in the area of investigation and services to victims to enhance protection and to facilitate court proceedings. The BCCAC/SIU proactively investigates these cases and emphasizes prevention through education and training. The operations of the BCCAC/SIU promote cooperative efforts between municipalities, police, prosecutor's office, medical community, mental health, child protective services, schools, and other advocacy groups.

VISION STATEMENT

The Bennington County Child Advocacy Center and Special Investigations Unit is dedicated to being a leading advocacy and learning center in the State of Vermont.

We protect the rights of victims, meet the need of the families, and encourage community supports.

WE promote educational activities for our youth that strive to reduce the probability of them becoming victims of abuse or victimizers.

We provide the highest quality staff development to all Multidisciplinary Team Members, both locally and state-wide, that is current, improves the quality of forensic investigations, and builds professionalism in public service.

We monitor the legal framework at the state and federal level to ensure that the laws protecting our children, vulnerable adults, and adult victims of abuse are adhered to and reflect best practice.

GOAL #1: Increase organizational development.

Objectives:

A. Identify realistic funding sources.

- a. Seek at least 3 other grant funding sources for both the general fund and specific programming.
- b. Continue annual giving campaign and increase our constituency list.
- c. Develop at least two more fundraising events.
- d. Petition to be added to the ballots for town appropriation in remaining Bennington County towns.

B. Participate in established community events.

- a. Family activities
- b. Information/resource tables
- c. Make an intentional effort to co-sponsor events with other organizations.

C. Public Relations

- a. Increase presence on social media sites.
- b. Explore new social media platforms and potential for outreach.
- c. Continue outreach to local media outlets: digital, radio, television, and paper.
- d. Develop Public Service Announcement for radio and television.

GOAL #2: Increase Prevention Education

Objectives:

A. Expand prevention education offerings capacity.

B.

- a. Seek grant funding opportunities for staff to become trainers and facilitators for a variety of prevention programs.
- b. Offer 3 connections to our programming in the Northshire.
- c. Continue to expand education programming for Birth to 5-year-olds.
- d. Continue to implement and support education programming for school-age students.

C. Increase professional development opportunities for partner agencies and Multidisciplinary Team Members.

- a. Utilize list serve to announce local, state, and national trainings.
- b. Identify needs for professional development at the local level.
- c. Offer/support workshops/conferences held locally.
- d. Provide workshops that support understanding vicarious trauma.

Goal #3: Support state-wide efforts for improving laws that impact child maltreatment investigations, prosecution, intervention, and prevention.

Objectives:

- a. Work with legislature and other parties to change laws.
- b. Bring attention to these issues with fact-based information.
- c. Garner support from other agencies and the community by educating them on the issues.
- d. Host a Legislative Breakfast for the local delegation.
- e. Seek out and support local clinicians and medical providers.

Goal #4: Increase organizational ability to meet current National Children's Alliance Standards.

Objectives:

- a. Evaluate current mental health supports within the community.
- b. Develop a long-term plan for increasing mental health supports within the community.
- c. Annually review and update the Succession Plan for CAC staff.
- d. Evaluate current medical practices in place and how it aligns with 2017 standards for medical care.

Goal #5: Expand support and programming available to victims and nonoffending family members within our community.

Objectives:

- a. Evaluate service gaps for support and programming available to victims and non-offending family members within Bennington County.

- b. Create programming or groups for various groups of victims, male survivors and teenagers.
 - c. Seek additional valuable paper resources to have on display in the office for clients.
 - d. Make an effort to collaborate with other community organizations who serve similar populations.
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AS OF AUGUST 1, 2021

Kyle Hoover, President

Julie Pagliccia, Vice President

Christopher Oldham, Treasurer

Alexander Burke, Secretary

Beth Sausville, Member

Bernadette Thompson, Member

BENNINGTON COUNTY CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER STAFF

Jenna Caslin, Executive Director (began February 15, 2021)

Joy Kitchell, Executive Director (ended December 31, 2020)

Madelyn Gardner, Case Coordinator/Administrative Assistant (ended July 16, 2021)

Jonna Loomis, Case Coordinator/Administrative Assistant (began August 23, 2021)

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT STAFF (CO-LOCATED)

Anthony Silvestro, Bennington Police Department Detective

Marina Pacilio, Vermont State Police Detective Trooper

Lauren Ronan, Vermont State Police Detective Sargent

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FY 2015: Financial Review

FY 2016: Audit

FY 2017: Financial Review

FY 2018 Financial Review

FY 2019 Financial Review

FY 2020 Financial Review (included)

FY 2021 Audit (pending)

MUNICIPALITIES APPROPRIATION SUPPORT

FY 2022

Town of Bennington: \$5,000.00

Town of Landgrove: \$500.00

Town of Peru: \$500.00

Town of Pownal: \$500.00

Town of Sandgate: \$200.00

Town of Shaftsbury: \$500.00

Town of Woodford: \$100.00

FY 2023 Pending Requests

Town of Bennington: \$5,000.00

Town of Landgrove: \$500.00

Town of Peru: \$500.00

Town of Pownal: \$500.00

Town of Sandgate: \$200.00

Town of Searsburg \$500.00

Town of Shaftsbury: \$500.00

Town of Woodford: \$100.00

THREE-YEAR BUDGET COMPARISON

Income			
Funding Sources	Actual FY2020	Actual FY2021	Budget FY2022
SIU Program Support Grant	\$100,221.00	\$103,228.06	\$103,228.06
State Appropriations	\$32,850.00	\$31,705.00	\$31,705.00
Vermont General Funds	\$7,150.00	\$6,795.00	\$6,795.00
Vermont Children's Alliance sub award from National Children's Alliance	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00	0.00
Donations	\$13,644.36	\$4,000.00	8,000.00
Rental Income	\$12,080.00	1,250.00	0.00
Town Appropriations	\$7,100.00	\$7,300.00	\$7,300.00
SIU Law Enforcement Grant	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00
United Way	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	2360.00
Total Income			
	\$255,689.72	\$223,278.06	\$219,388.06
Expenses		estimate	estimate
Personnel	\$120,645.23	\$120,645.23	\$120,645.23
Payment to BPD (SIU LE Grant)	\$60,000.00	\$80,000.00	\$60,000.00
Building	\$26,763.99	\$26,763.99	\$26,763.99
Utilities	\$11,358.36	\$11,358.36	\$11,358.36
Operating	\$10,972.18	\$10,972.18	\$10,972.18
Other	5,220.55	5,220.55	5,220.55
Expenses			
	\$234,960.31	\$234,960.31	\$234,960.31

DOLLARS SPENT IN BENNINGTON

100% of the Personnel line goes towards Bennington County residents. As residents, their dollars are spent, for the most part, locally.

\$60,000 or 25% of the overall budget is paid to the Town of Bennington to support the salary and benefits of the BPD SIU Detective. Thanks to an additional award we will be receiving and paying \$80,000 to the Town of Bennington for the SIU Detective salary and benefits for FY22 only.

Our office is in Bennington, so in general, utilities, building, and operating expenses are paid locally.

BENNINGTON STATISTICS

The FY2020 Strategic Plan Evaluation notes in detail the prevention and education work done within the Bennington community.

Regarding clients served, it should be noted that our numbers are fluid. The COVID-19 crisis did have an impact on the number of clients seen at the Bennington County Child Advocacy Center as well as the number of cases that are currently within the court system. Once a disclosure of abuse is made, the length of time we provide support can vary greatly, depending upon the nature of each case. The Bennington Child Advocacy Center staff may work with a family for several years. The judicial process can take as long as three years; our staff maintains contact and support through the duration. We have some families that we have stayed connected with for up to five years. Then there are families that may discontinue with us and reconnect a year or two later. Each family's needs are unique; we strive to provide whatever support is best for healing.

Clients Served

Fiscal Year	New Clients
FY 2019	87
FY 2020	81
FY 2021	99

FY 2022 (as of September 30, 2021)	24
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