

SLO 101: Quick Facts About State Liaison Officers



Capacity Building
CENTER FOR STATES

As the intermediary between state child welfare services and the Children's Bureau (CB), State Liaison Officers for Child Abuse and Neglect (SLOs) fulfill a variety of roles. This designated title signals their expertise in child welfare and identifies them as the state's child protection contact for CB. A few quick facts about SLOs that highlight the roles and responsibilities of the position, resources available, and options for support and collaboration are provided below.

What Is a State Liaison Officer?

CB first used the term State Liaison Officer (SLO) in the mid-1980s to indicate the public child welfare representative of each state and territory. Since then, SLOs have served as the point of contact between public child welfare agencies, and CB central and regional offices.

Who Are the SLOs and How do I Identify Them?

Each state or territory child welfare agency designates one individual to serve as their respective SLO. The SLO provides expertise in child protective policies, procedures, and programming related to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and generally is responsible for knowing CAPTA requirements. The SLO often is the state's child protection manager. To access a directory of the designated SLO for each state go to: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/SLO>

What Are the Responsibilities of an SLO?

One of the most important roles of the SLO is serving as CB's contact person for public child protective services and constituent concerns in the SLO's state or territory. SLOs may also collect data for CB, federal regional offices, and their state's child welfare system.

SLOs and Children's Justice Act Grantees

Children's Justice Act (CJA) grantees are directly responsible for the administration and oversight of the CJA grants to states under CAPTA. SLOs are not considered grantees and do not administer grants; however, CJA grant staff may sometimes function simultaneously as the SLO for their individual state or territory.

CJA grantees and SLOs also may meet and collaborate on common points of interest, including investigations into serious and life-threatening abuse or neglect and child fatalities or near-fatalities that could result in civil or criminal prosecution.

For more information about CJA go to: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/childrens-justice-act>

What Resources Are Available to SLOs?

The Capacity Building Center for States (Center) supports child welfare professionals performing similar work and facing related challenges by providing connections to peer networks, or what the Center calls constituency groups (CGs). The SLO CG includes access to an SLO-designated listserv and a directory of SLOs in each state and territory.

Through the listserv, SLOs receive invitations for regularly scheduled webinars, annual in-person meetings, and opportunities to plan CG activities.

CG resources allow SLOs ongoing contact with peers from other states and provide opportunities to exchange information and stay informed about ways states are implementing CAPTA and child welfare programming. SLOs can post inquiries on the SLO listserv about any topic and receive frequent feedback from their SLO peers. For more information about CGs, visit <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/providing-services/constituency/current-constituency-groups/>.

The Children's Bureau website is another valuable resource for SLOs. The website provides extensive information concerning CB programs, grants, monitoring, and Federal laws and policies. To access the CB website, go to: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb>. To learn more about new and existing federal legislation, regulations, and CB policies, including program instructions on the CB website, visit: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/laws-policies/policy-program-issuances>

The Child Welfare Information Gateway (Gateway), a service of CB, is an additional resource for general child welfare information for SLOs including a regularly updated database of State statutes concerning child welfare and child abuse and neglect. To access the Gateway's State Statute database, go to: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/>

How Do I Use the SLO Listserv?

After you are designated as the SLO for your state or territory, submit a request to CB Lead Contact for SLO to be added as a member of the listserv. Upon approval, you will receive an email notification from the administrator noting that you were added to the group.

Contact Information

For any questions or comments concerning SLO please contact Lauren Fischman, the Children's Bureau Lead Contact for SLO, at lauren.fischman@acf.hhs.gov.