



**Fly-In Scheduled for March 16-17, 2026** to advocate on Capitol Hill for passage of H.R. 4972 - Create Accountable Respectful Environments (CARE) for Children Act. We are asking that member agencies planning to be in attendance notify me by February 17, 2026 [[don@core-dc.org](mailto:don@core-dc.org)].

Two Teams meetings are being scheduled on February 18, 2026 to discuss the legislative summit and provide training. Time for the sessions are 9:00 CST/10:00 EDT and 3:00 CST/4:00 EDT. Gregg Harper, Lobbyist for CORE will be available to talk with us about the process. In addition, Maria Knapp, legislative chair for the committee and Sean Milner, will assist in leading the discussion.

I have also reached out to the Association of Christian Child Care Administrators and the Family Resource Centers of Texas to invite representatives from their organizations to join CORE on Capitol Hill for this event.

This event will be a day dedicated to advocacy, collaboration, and engagement with federal leaders. The day will provide opportunities to connect with policy makers, share organizational priorities, and strengthen collective impact of legislative issues.

The timing is of critical importance. Realistically, mid-term elections will be the focus for the remaining half of the year. The time is now to communicate to legislators the importance of this legislation to assist in resolving the capacity crisis in finding appropriate placement resources for children needing residential care to prevent imminent harm.

### **Agenda for the Legislative Summit**

Pre-Summit Preparation Meeting : March 16, 2026 6:00 PM - Review key talking points, legislative priorities, and strategies for effective advocacy. Location Citizen M Hotel - 550 School St SW, Washington, District of Columbia, 20024

Capitol Tour: March 17, 2026 7:30 AM - Tour the historic Capitol with Congressman Gregg Harper

Legislative Meetings

Lunch in the Senate Dining Room

Networking Dinner: Enjoy an evening of connection and conversation at Carmines's

Who Should Attend: Leaders, advocates, and representatives from CORE Members interested in legislative engagement and policy advancement.

RSVP Information Please confirm attendance by February 17, 2026 with Don Forrester at don@core-dc.org. Include the names and titles of all attendees in the RSVP.

### **Report on Committees addressed in the CORE Strategic Plan for 2026-2029**

I consistently hear from those in our membership that the relationships developed with peers and opportunities to benefit from shared knowledge is the primary and highest level benefit associated with the Coalition of Residential Excellence. The strategic plan includes four committee structures:

◆ **Communication**

◆ **Conference/Education**

◆ **Legislative**

◆ **Finance**

CORE needs support in all of these areas. Who better to supply the knowledge than those of you who comprise our membership? The secondary impact of the committee structures is the opportunity to know others better and individually benefit from the shared process.

**IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO EXPRESS AN INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN ANY OF THESE COMMITTEES.** Identify your interest to us and we will ensure you are provided the opportunity for inclusion.

As a status report update, I am sharing a listing of those who have signed up by committee throughout this report. Please don't overlook the opportunity to join them. All of our committees are important.

**Communication Committee.** Much of our strategic plan is tied to the importance of communication and efforts for CORE to maintain a higher profile.

For those of you are seasoned communication professionals, the list of possibilities is probably unlimited. Some of the things I've thought of related to communication include:

- Improve branding, attract new members and explore current member expectations for information or opportunities
- What topics or area of interests do members have regarding conference topics or the need for special workshops or seminars
- How do we raise awareness of the gaps in services to children and youth in crisis that fall off the radar or interest of legislative staff
- It has been suggested we launch a quarterly online magazine that could promote the strengths or abilities of our member agencies and/or challenges that need to be overcome to strengthen services to children and families in crisis
- How do we increase partnership for events/media/research
- How do we upgrade website content to include resources or training topics

## **COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE**

We are still awaiting other potential committee members, but currently have confirmation from: Monica Flickinger - Milton Hershey School, Kevin Hewitt - Christian Children's Home of Ohio, Dr. Chad Parker - Tupelo Children's Mansion, Deborah Tannenbaum -Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches, Kelly Lawson - Methodist Children's Home, Chrystelle Thames - The Baptist Children's Village, Paul Schandavel - Children's Home, Inc., Tyler Pau -Kamehameha Schools, and Don Forrester - Coalition of Residential excellence.

The first meeting on the Communication Committee is scheduled through Zoom on February 24 , 2026 at 2:00 CST/3:00 EDT.

## **2026 CORE National Conference**

The 2026 National CORE Conference is scheduled on November 3-5, 2026. The conference is being host by Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches and the location for the conference is Lake City, FL.

The conference will take place in what previously was a historical hotel that has been converted to an event center for conferences, weddings and other special events. Check-in will take place on Tuesday, November 3, 2026 and the group will be transported to the Ranch for the opening of the conference and dinner on Tuesday evening. On Wednesday and Thursday, the event will be at the conference center in Lake City, FL.

### **Conference/Education Committee**

We are still awaiting other potential committee members, but currently have confirmation from: Elisha Hoggard - Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches, Traci Wagner - Methodist Children's Home, Kristyn Butts - Masonic Home at Oxford, Dr. Juston Gates - Missouri Baptist Children's Home, Maria Knapp- Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches, Tyler Pau - Kamehameha Schools and Don Forrester - Coalition of Residential Excellence.

### **Finance Committee**

We are still awaiting other potential committee members, but currently have confirmation from: Jennifer Renner-Myer - St. Joseph's Indian School, Deborah Tannenbaum - Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches, Kevin Hewitt - Christian Children's Home of Ohio, James Turner - Milton Hershey School and Don Forrester -Coalition of Residential Excellence.

### **Ad Hoc Committee - Faith Based Enrichment**

In response to a query regarding strategies CORE members have in place for spiritual formation for their students, the question was asked: "Would your organization be interested in collaborating on developing a Christ-centered approach to spiritual formation for your organization so we can implement "best practices?"

All nine of those responding answered "Yes." A Zoom meeting of that group is set for February 12, 2026

**NOTE: CORE Membership Dues for 2026 are now due.** As shared earlier, following notification of an increase in CORE's dues back in November, member agencies that could not financially increase their contributions were provided an opportunity to request a scholarship to assist with the increased cost of membership. I am pleased to report that the CORE Board favorably responded to those requests. There were only three.

In addition, member agencies that need to pay dues in two installments are granted permission to do so with the second installment being due in July 2026