# 

# Local Collaborative

# Accreditation Application

# Kern County

# Network for Children

# Kern County Network for Children

# Mission Statement

# *The mission of the Kern County Network for Children is to protect and enrich the lives of children in Kern County through the commitment of all community partners by helping to build and sustain healthy families.*

**Governing Board**

Tammy Burns, *Early Childhood Council*

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Legal Counsel: Theresa Goldner, *Office of Kern County Counsel*

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1. **Introduction to Accreditation**

The Kern County Network for Children (KCNC) has received local, state, and national recognition over the past twenty two years for initiating and sustaining collaborative partnerships benefiting children and families. KCNC has taken pride in developing and implementing local community collaboratives and integrated service delivery models that are rooted in research and based on best practices. In an effort to promote excellence and ongoing improvement, KCNC has developed an accreditation process for newly emerging and established community collaboratives. Currently, nineteen community collaboratives have successfully completed the Accreditation process.

Accreditation (willingly submitting to self-study and evaluation) will build commitment and foster a deeper understanding of community collaborative efforts among group members, area residents, service partners, funders, and policy makers. The accreditation process is also designed to promote a uniform child well-being agenda throughout the county. The ultimate goal of this process is to measurably improve outcomes for all children and their families. The KCNC invites all of Kern’s community collaboratives to apply for accreditation.

**There are two types of accreditation offered by Kern County Network for Children:**

* **Local Community Collaborative Accreditation**

#### This accreditation is for groups that have brought together individuals who: share a common concern for children and families in a specific geographical area, are focused on issues identified by their own community members, and have engaged key partners that can assist the community in making positive changes.

* **Local Community Collaborative with Integrated Services Accreditation**

This accreditation is for groups as described above ***that are also*** utilizing an integrated service delivery system for providing families with multi-disciplinary, strength-based case management and support services.

This accreditation process will provide community groups with the following benefits:

1. Public recognition throughout the county as a proactive, engaged community collaborative that has agreed to uphold KCNC’s standards of excellence.
2. Opportunities for regular communication and partnership with other collaboratives.
3. Access to public policy makers, service providers, and others devoted to improving child well-being.
4. Hands-on training and education in the provision of child and family services.
5. Leadership development opportunities for grassroots leaders and community volunteers.
6. Technical assistance in community development, strategic planning, service delivery, program administration, as well as research and evaluation.
7. Grant writing and sustainability assistance.
8. Improved communication with public agencies offering child and family services.
9. Enhanced credibility with potential funders, new collaborative partners, and local policy makers.

Applications for accreditation will be accepted annually.

**Background Information**

In 1992, the Kern County Network for Children brought together the County’s senior policy makers, representatives from private business, and leaders of community based organizations. Charged by the Kern County Board of Supervisors, the mandate to this group was to explore needed changes in county policies and help develop public/private partnerships that would better support and empower all of Kern’s communities.

One result of this unique partnership was the development and implementation of KCNC’s system of local collaboratives. These groups began working together on the following:

* Taking ownership of local planning and empowerment processes so the entire community began sharing responsibility for addressing priority concerns.
* Formalizing partnerships that effectively serve children and families.
* Using indigenous resources creatively to provide accessible services to all families.
* Learning to measure and communicate positive changes in the lives of children and families.

Kern’s maturing system of local community collaboratives quickly realized that money was not needed to make real and lasting changes. Each community simply focused on its own assets and worked together to address its own difficulties. This grassroots approach of addressing local issues locally - and including residents, businesses, schools, churches, elected officials, non-profit groups, and public agencies - was overwhelmingly successful. Throughout the County, community collaboratives began noticing that success is not reliant upon enhanced or increased funding, and that lasting changes can occur when existing money and resources are simply reallocated, realigned, and/or redirected.

Although not dependent on new or additional funds, collaboratives soon discovered that a byproduct of working well together was the ability to effectively seek new money to help serve families in their neighborhoods. Local community collaboratives have since brought millions of dollars into communities throughout Kern County. By rallying resources and seeking out previously untapped funding sources, many collaboratives now provide increased advocacy, leadership, training, support, and services to parents, teachers, community residents, agency staff, and partner organizations to help meet the needs of children and families in their own neighborhoods.

**What’s In It For My Neighborhood?**

The first question most community members ask when developing a collaborative is "What’s in it for my neighborhood?" First and foremost, your neighborhood has the opportunity to participate in a better way of doing business. You will no longer have to rely on government to decide what is best for your community or how issues should be addressed. Secondly, you can work together to increase the services and/or resources you decide are necessary for safe and healthy children and families in your community.

The Kern County Network for Children believes, based on the long standing success of established community collaboratives, that empowered people coming together make successful changes in their neighborhoods and effectively turn shared vision into reality. By participating in the Accreditation process, your community will experience the power of collaboration, and let policy makers know that your community meets or exceeds the KCNC’s standards of excellence.

###### The Accreditation Process

Applicants may apply for one of the following two types of accreditation:

##### Local Community Collaborative

This accreditation is for groups that have brought together individuals who: share a common concern for children and families in a specific geographical area, are focused on issues identified by their own community members, and have identified key partners that can assist the community in making positive changes.

A collaborative that successfully completes this level of accreditation will have:

* Formed a structure around community identified needs.
* Created a realistic Plan of Action to address priority issues using local resources that is based on best practices, and includes effective ways to measure collaborative success.
* Gained the combined commitment of key partners within the targeted community to implement the agreed upon Plan of Action.

To apply for this level of accreditation, complete Sections 1 – 3 of the application and attach Forms A, B, and C.

##### Local Community Collaborative with Integrated Services

This accreditation is also for groups that have brought together individuals who: share a common concern for children and families in a specific geographical area, are focused on issues identified by their own community members, and have identified key partners that can assist the community in making positive changes. **Additionally**, these collaboratives will have begun providing integrated, direct services to children and families living in the community.

A collaborative that successfully completes this level of accreditation will have:

* Formed a structure around community identified needs.
* Created a realistic plan to address priority issues using local resources that is based on best practices, and includes effective ways to measure collaborative success.
* Gained the combined commitment of key partners within the targeted community to implement the agreed upon Plan of Action.
* Built a strong network of service providers working together to serve neighborhood residents.
* Carefully designed and implemented an integrated service delivery system focused on prevention and early intervention.
* Utilizes a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary, strengths based case management system for children and families.

To apply for this level of accreditation, complete Sections 1 – 4 of the application and attach Forms A, B, C, and D.

**Who Can Apply?**

Any community desiring to work together to benefit children and families can apply. Whether you belong to an existing collaborative or you want to form a new collaborative, the process is simple:

* Bring people in your community together
* Ask them what they want to do for children and families in your area
* Determine what resources and strengths you have
* Develop and implement a plan to make positive changes in your community
* Continue to work together to measurably achieve common goals

**How Do We Start?**

We encourage communities applying for accreditation to carefully review KCNC’s ***Cookbook -*** ***Recipes for Community Success: A Guide for Improving the Condition of Children and Families in your Community.*** A copy can be found on the KCNC website at [www.kcnc.org](http://www.kcnc.org.) under the “Community Building” link.This comprehensive publication captures the many lessons learned by successful collaborative efforts, outlines provenprocesses for building effective collaboratives and integrated service delivery systems, and includes a number of tools that will be useful during the application process.

If you do not have access to the Internet, simply call the Kern County Network for Children’s office at (661) 636-4488 to have a copy mailed to you. The ***Cookbook*** provides useful tools, helpful hints, and key ingredients your community will need to succeed. Simply combine these ingredients with your community’s enthusiasm, dedication, and leadership to achieve success. Applications for Accreditation will be accepted ongoing throughout the year.

For technical assistance with completing this Accreditation application, please call or email:

Tom Corson

Kern County Network for Children

(661) 636-4488

Email Address: tocorson@kern.org

**What Happens After We Submit the Application?**

KCNC staff will assemble a multi-disciplinary Review Team with expertise in community collaboration and the successful implementation of integrated service delivery systems. This team will review all applications that are complete and then evaluate them utilizing a standardized scoring tool – based on the Application Instructions (Section V). After a thorough review of all applications, the team will make formal Accreditation recommendations to KCNC’s Governing Board. You will be notified of the Review Team’s recommendation to approve or deny your application by letter according.

**What If We Are Not Initially Recommended?**

If your group is not initially recommended for Accreditation, the Review Team will provide a list of additional steps your collaborative must take and/or information you must submit before you will be recommended for Accreditation. Additional time will be provided to complete the steps requested by the Review Team. After completing these steps, your supplemented Application will be re-reviewed by the Review Team. Please note that only those applications that are complete upon initial submission will be reviewed. Applications that fail to fully address all required application components and/or include all attachments will not be eligible for review.

If the supplemented Application is satisfactory to the Review Team, a recommendation for Accreditation will be presented to the KCNC Governing Board for approval. Applicants who fail to complete the action steps outlined by the Review Team in a timely and satisfactory manner will be denied a recommendation for Accreditation.

Applicants will receive a second notification by letter of the Review Team’s final recommendation. Applicants wishing to appeal this final recommendation may do so to the KCNC Governing Board. However, appeals must only take issue with the review process. Appeals that focus only on the fact that an Accreditation recommendation was denied will not be heard.

**How Will We Know If We Are Accredited?**

KCNC’s Governing Board will make Accreditation decisions. These decisions will be made at public meetings and you are invited to attend. You will also receive a letter with the Governing Board’s decision. Collaboratives receiving Accreditation will receive a copy-ready *KCNC* *Seal of Accreditation* that can be included on printed collaborative materials.

**Will We Be Accredited Forever?**

Since community needs are always changing, Accreditation will only be for a three-year period. A Renewal application (including a new community needs assessment) will be required after that time.

To maintain the integrity of the Accreditation process, Accreditation can also be rescinded. This can occur for two reasons:

1. Collaboratives significantly deviate from their original action plans or collaborative structures without KCNC approval.
2. Collaboratives fail to submit a required annual report.

However, before Accreditation is rescinded, the Collaborative will be properly notified of the compelling reasons for the proposed action, and be given the opportunity to complete a corrective action plan. This plan will be designed to help the Collaborative retain Accreditation status and will contain specific steps and timetables. The final decision to rescind Accreditation will be made by the KCNC Governing Board.

KCNC will provide accredited collaboratives with: free technical assistance, monthly trainings, regular opportunities to discuss barriers to success with partners who may be able to help, and forums to discuss issues with local policy makers.

**What Is Expected After We Are Accredited?**

Accredited Collaboratives will be expected to file an annual report. This report must focus on the community concerns originally described in your Application and how they have been successfully addressed. You will also be asked to give assurances that you are not significantly deviating from the proposed action plans and/or collaborative structures presented in your application.

In addition to the annual report, site visits by KCNC staff may be conducted during the year so that technical assistance can be regularly provided to Accredited Collaboratives.

Issues may arise during the year that require changes to the Collaborative’s action plan and/or structure. KCNC will be supportive of these needed changes, and KCNC staff will be available to assist accredited collaboratives with the development of any needed changes. Amended action plans and/or revised collaborative structures can be submitted to KCNC staff for review and approval at any time during the three-year Accreditation period.

Applications must meet all requirements set forth in this Application for Accreditation. Although this is not a grant funded application, it should be stated that the Application shall not in any way be construed as an agreement, obligation or contract between KCNC and any person or organization submitting an application. The Kern County Network for Children reserves the right to rescind Accreditation status if a collaborative fails to maintain its structure and/or pursue in good faith what is outlined in the approved Application for Accreditation.

By submitting an application for accreditation, your collaborative agrees to enter into a formalized relationship with KCNC. A panel designated by KCNC staff will carefully review applications and recommendations will be made to the KCNC Governing Board for final approval. The Accreditation review process may include site visits from KCNC staff, Review Team, and/or Governing Board members.

In general, reviewers will be guided by the following principles:

* Content, not writing style, is most important. Reviewers will look past writing skills and presentation to the substance of the application. Did you tell your story? Did you identify what your community/neighborhood wants? Did you paint a picture of how your community collaborative will function and tell your plans to measurably impact the priority concerns of the community?
* Applications will be judged on documentation that demonstrates community commitment and involvement, and ensures that your collaborative is focused on what the community or neighborhood wants. Strategies, goals and partners you have in place to realistically and measurably achieve what your community or neighborhood needs will also be considered.
* For those applying to become a Local Collaborative with Integrated Services, reviewers will look to see if you have a system in place that will: strengthen service coordination through multi-disciplinary approaches, ensure integration based on common goals and service outcomes, utilize best practice models, monitor the quality of services provided, maximize valuable indigenous resources, and measure service outcomes. There are two common outcomes that should be the focus of enhanced integrated service activities: 1) Improved child safety and 2) Improved family functioning.
* Reviewers will also want documentation showing a commitment from those that will be a part of your integrated service case management system and/or multi-disciplinary team.

**All applications should be submitted as follows:**

**By mail: OR In person:**

**Kern County Network for Children Kern County Network for Children**

**Attn: Tom Corson Attn: Tom Corson**

**1300 17th Street 1212 18th Street**

**Bakersfield, California, 93301 Bakersfield, California, 93301**

**Applicants must submit one original and two additional copies of the completed Accreditation application Faxed or emailed applications shall not constitute receipt.**

###### Application Instructions

Applications for both Accreditation types must meet the requirements set forth below. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

Applications must:

* Be printed on white, 8 1/2 x 11” paper
* Be double-spaced, using minimum 12-point typeface
* Include a heading on each page with the collaborative name and the page number
* Include an original document and four copies
* Be stapled.

**The Application must include the following clearly marked components in order:**

1. **Application Cover Sheet (FORM A).** An electronic version can be found at the KCNC web site: [www.kcnc.org](http://www.kcnc.org), under the “Accreditation” link.
2. **Collaborative Plan of Action (FORM B).** An electronic version of this form can be found at the KCNC web site: [www.kcnc.org](http://www.kcnc.org), under the “Accreditation” link. Please provide one form for each primary concern identified by your community.
3. **Collaborative Membership Roster (FORM C)**

Successful collaboratives must have a plan that is strongly supported by all collaborative partners, and includes realistic outcomes that can be measured. An electronic version of this form can be found at the KCNC web site: [www.kcnc.org](http://www.kcnc.org), under the “Accreditation” link.

**D. Body of the Application**

Introductory Comments to SECTION 1:

To help with the design of a community collaborative, KCNC has identified the following key elements and best practices that successful Local Community Collaboratives must include:

* Targeted goals and outcomes that are realistic and measurable
* Recently completed community needs assessment
* Monthly or bimonthly community meetings
* Neighborhood involvement
* Active involvement with KCNC
* Subcommittees targeting specific issues (i.e., jobs, clean-ups, crime)
* Centralized meeting and/or services sites
* Community leadership development
* Partners include agency, school, business, churches, residents, etc.
* Identified collaborative leadership.

**SECTION 1: Collaborative Summary**

Provide a one to three page summary describing your Collaborative. Within the space available, these are suggested summary points:

1. Unique characteristics of your community, including specific geographic boundaries. (If you are providing integrated services clearly describe the target population.)
2. Key collaborative participants.
3. The strengths, challenges and priority concerns of your community collaborative
4. Summary of your collaborative’s goals.
5. Who chairs/convenes meetings? Who creates agendas and records minutes?
6. Who will be responsible for measuring collaborative success, regularly communicating progress to the collaborative, and submitting the annual report that will be required to maintain Accreditation?
7. Who continually outreaches to community members? When, where, and with what frequency do meetings regularly occur?
8. How will collaborative and community members, service providers, KCNC, and partners communicate (meeting minutes, town hall meetings, newsletters, etc.)?

**SECTION 2. Community Needs and Priorities**

Please provide a one to three page narrative describing the needs and priorities identified by your collaborative.

1. What methods were used to conduct your community needs assessment (e.g., focus groups, surveys, town hall meetings, etc.)?

Special Note:

Although census and demographic data can be included, the focus must be on the priorities that the community has identified. (Please reference **the *Cookbook - Recipes for Community Success: A Guide for Improving the Condition of Children and Families in your Community*** described in Section II for strategies and tools.)

Your collaborative is free to decide on what tools are best to uniquely gather input from community members and collaborative partners. Needs assessment processes that have been completed up to twelve months prior to this application may be used as long as collaborative members agree that it continues to be relevant, and provides the information required for the Accreditation Application.

1. What were the top concerns identified through your community needs assessment process?
2. How are the findings identified by your community needs assessment the same or different when compared to data available from schools, agencies, and county statistics?
3. Which community/neighborhood issue(s) of concern will your collaborative target?
4. Attach Form C that shall serve as the Plan of Action that has been agreed upon by collaborative members and will be implemented to measurably affect change.

**SECTION 3: Collaborative Structure**

Please provide a one to two page narrative describing your collaborative structure.

1. Who are your collaborative members? In addition to this description, please attach Form B.
2. How are you structured and how will you ensure broad-based representation of the community?
3. Why do you exist? What’s your mission/purpose and vision/desired state?

The remainder of this application (Section 4, Section 4 Addendum, and FORM D) applies only to those collaboratives pursuing the Accreditation of Local Community Collaborative with Integrated Services.

Introductory Comments to SECTION 4

Some collaboratives have taken the next step by providing direct services to families. The Accreditation awarded to these collaboratives is Local Community Collaborative with Integrated Services. These groups provide a range of direct services; utilize a uniquely designed, comprehensive, strength based case management and multi-disciplinary team system; and, have carefully developed a network of linkages that weave together a continuum of services.

Implementing an integrated service system demands expanded community participation, imposes responsibility for child safety and family well being, and requires that a range of prevention and early intervention strategies be utilized and continually evaluated. Local Community Collaboratives with Integrated Services utilize the strengths and resources of key partners to collaboratively achieve the following critical outcomes:

* Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect
* Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate
* Children have permanency and stability in their living situations
* The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children
* Children receive adequate services to meet their physical, emotional and mental health needs
* Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs
* Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs.

To help with the design of integrated service delivery systems, KCNC has identified the following key elements and best practices that successful Local Community Collaboratives with Integrated Services must include:

* Specific geographic regions/hubs/communities are targeted, and community collaborative members are meaningfully involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services.
* Resources and linkages are identified and developed through formalized partnerships.
* Families are considered as full partners with access, voice and ownership at all levels of service planning, implementation, and evaluation.
* Strategies that are linked to family/community strengths, in that child and family strengths and self-identified needs must be the focus of services and supports that are identified during the assessment and plan development processes.
* Flexibility in the location, time, planning, and funding for services.
* Mechanisms and structures to support parent advocacy and leadership so that plan development and service delivery will focus on providing families with skills to independently advocate, locate services, and monitor their own service delivery in order to increase success following the completion of services.
* Culturally competent services that are tailored to each family’s culture, values, norms, strengths and preferences.
* Blending of formal and natural/informal resources (e.g. support groups, mentors, etc.), through strengths-based service planning. Formal and informal supports must be identified, planned for, and developed. Families need opportunities to move towards independent use of supports while gaining greater reliance on informal supports by the time services end.
* Perseverance in support and assistance to families that includes the frequent review and modification of service plans based on the child’s and family’s developing strengths, and changing needs.
* Client case load maximums of 20 to 25 per full time case manager.
* Client satisfaction tools are utilized to evaluate services and refine services provided.
* Crisis intervention services are available to children and families.
* Targeted case management services are comprehensive, utilize a Multi-disciplinary team (MDT’s, FAST, SARB, Etc.) approach, and include a common point of entry and intake that is agreed upon by all collaborative partners and easy for families to access.
* Tracking processes and data systems are in placed to evaluate service effectiveness.
* Confidentiality tools are fully utilized.
* Appropriate and careful oversight of services is provided to ensure service quality and effectiveness.
* Sustainability of services is addressed in a strategic manner, and a plan for generating resources is in place and revisited regularly.

**SECTION 4: Description of Integrated Services**

Please respond to following questions within a limit of six pages.

*Again, the remainder of this application applies only to those seeking the Accreditation of Local Collaborative with Integrated Service Accreditation.*

1. Describe the system of case management that is used. How does the local collaborative ensure that each targeted client is served through a strengths-based, individualized, goal oriented case plan, and that progress is followed through the system?
2. Describe how the integrated services are linked to the community collaborative?
3. How often are reports of system outcomes, successes, and barriers reported back to the collaborative?
4. How does your collaborative provide the child/family with a stable point of contact for referral and resolving difficulties?
5. How will parents/consumers participate in the design and evaluation of services? Attach copies of client satisfaction measurement tools.
6. What kinds of informal support services and/or linkages will you offer to parents/consumers (e.g. parent support groups, parent partners, mentors, etc.)?
7. How will you comprehensively assess and reassess family strengths?
8. How will you ensure case plans are culturally sensitive, strengths-based, and are developed in partnership with family members? How will you ensure that clients take an active role in finding solutions for themselves and others?
9. How will you give priority for services to children at high risk of abuse and/or neglect?
10. What specific types of services and linkages are offered and how are they coordinated?
11. How does your local collaborative provide outreach to clients?
12. How is the family’s progress monitored to ensure services have an impact? What evaluation tools are utilized? You may use the KCNC Social Condition Matrix or other established system. Attach copies of evaluation tools if not using the KCNC’s Social Conditions Matrix. For more information about the Matrix, visit the KCNC web site: www.kcnc.org.
13. Please describe your multi-disciplinary approach to case management (MDT’s, SARB’s, FAST meetings, etc.) What role does at least one Local Government Agency play? (A Local Government Agency must be a law enforcement or County agency such as Mental Health, Probation, Human Services, or Public Health.). What disciplines/agencies do team members represent? How often are team meetings held and who is responsible for convening and facilitating them?
14. Describe the site or space that is used as the hub of activity. What services and resources are available at the site?
15. Attach a copy of the common referral form and confidentiality form that is used by your collaborative partners. How are the referrals coordinated?
16. Who staffs your integrated system and what are their qualifications? Who is responsible for ensuring the quality of services, what are their qualifications, and what strategies do they use? Who is responsible for measuring the outcome of services provided and client satisfaction, and regularly communicating that information to collaborative partners so that any needed changes in service delivery strategies can be made?
17. Provide assurance that staff will receive Mandated Reporter training annually, and that staff will participate in other trainings as resources permit. To assist Accredited Collaboratives with meeting staff training needs, monthly training opportunities will be offered free of charge. Topics will include Mandated Reporter training, and every effort will be made to host trainings on topics that are suggested by collaboratives.
18. Provide assurance that key partner agencies are in good standing with funding agencies and provide services in strict compliance with local, state, and federal laws.

**SECTION 4 ADDENDUM**

Please attach the following items to the application

1. Organization chart
2. Confidentiality forms
3. Referral forms
4. Case management forms
5. Evaluation tools

**Form D - Collaborative Partnership Roles (FORM D).** An electronic version of this form can be found at the KCNC web site: www.kcnc.org, under the “Accreditation” link.