

The Agency

Office of the Child Advocate

Agency Operations

To fulfill a statutory mandate to protect the legal, civil and special rights of all children and youth involved in the care of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and to improve their conditions and circumstances through monitoring, compliance, and advocacy.

The office is staffed with 5.8 authorized full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. The office is responsible for oversight of DCYF care for 5,300 children and yearly monitoring site visits to monitor their care at 120 group homes and residential programs in this State. The office also provides direct legal representation for at least 35-40 children voluntarily placed in state care.

The office reviews and monitors systematic and individual issues related to 250 residents at the Rhode Island Training School. It provides direct oversight and on-site visits on a weekly basis. The Office of the Child Advocate also files Victim Compensation claims for children who have been physically and/or sexually assaulted and are in the care of the State.

Agency Objectives

To monitor the Department of Children, Youth and Families to ensure that it offers children in its care adequate protection and quality services, while affording these children respect for their individual rights and dignity. This includes public education, legislative advocacy, investigations, and litigation.

To review and make recommendations regarding the Department of Children, Youth and Families procedures; to investigate institutional abuse allegations and child fatalities; to provide information and referral on matters relating to children; participate in voluntary admissions procedures; to monitor child placements; to conduct annual site visits at residential/group care programs; and, to review the Department of Children, Youth and Families' compliance with day-care licensing laws.

Statutory History

In 1980, the General Assembly created the Office of the Child Advocate. Its powers and duties are codified in R.I.G.L. 42-73. The office of the Child Advocate possesses a statutory right of access, including subpoena power, to all providers, the Family Court, Department of Children, Youth and Families, and law enforcement records. There is also a right of physical access to all child-care programs and children in care.

In 1992, the office of the Child Advocate's responsibilities with respect to children in state care were statutorily expanded to include review of child fatality cases and representation of child victims of crime pursuant to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act.

The Budget

Office of the Child Advocate

	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 Revised	FY 2006 Recommended
Expenditures By Object				
Personnel	723,865	429,867	344,875	473,769
Other State Operations	108,422	96,299	85,575	68,359
Aid To Local Units Of Government	-	-	-	-
Assistance, Grants and Benefits	74,033	72,064	-	-
Subtotal: Operating Expenditures	\$906,320	\$598,230	\$430,450	\$542,128
Capital Improvements	-	-	-	-
Capital Debt Service	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	\$906,320	\$598,230	\$430,450	\$542,128
Expenditures By Funds				
General Revenue	534,804	497,069	394,960	494,068
Federal Funds	371,516	84,479	34,172	48,060
Restricted Receipts	-	16,682	1,318	-
Total Expenditures	\$906,320	\$598,230	\$430,450	\$542,128
FTE Authorization	12.5	5.8	5.8	5.8
Agency Measures				
Minorities as a Percentage of the Workforce	12.5%	12.5%	-	-
Females as a Percentage of the Workforce	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Persons with Disabilities as a Percentage of the Workforce	-	-	-	-
Program Measures				
Percentage of Facilities that are Inspected and Compliant with Standards of Care	NA	90.9%	90.0%	90.0%