

**VOLUME II:
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**OFFICE OF THE
CHILD ADVOCATE**

Agency Summary

OFFICE OF THE CHILD ADVOCATE

Agency Mission

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. These activities include, but are not limited to, public education, legislative advocacy, investigation, 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 site visits at all DCYF licensed placements; and to review the Department of Children, Youth and Families' compliance with licensing regulations.

Agency Description

The Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) is charged with fulfilling 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). In so doing, the Office strives to improve conditions and circumstances through monitoring, compliance, and advocacy.

The office is staffed with 10.0 authorized full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. The office is responsible for oversight of children under DCYF care and monitoring of DCYF licensed facilities. The office also provides direct legal representation for a portion of children voluntarily placed in state care and youth involved in the Voluntary Extension of Care (VEC) program. The OCA also can intervene legally on the case of any child open to DCYF.

The office reviews and monitors systematic and individual issues related to residents at the Rhode Island Training School. It provides direct oversight and on-site visits. 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.

Statutory History

In 1980, the General Assembly created the Office of the Child Advocate. Its powers and duties are codified in R.I. General Laws § 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. This review was at the discretion of the Child Advocate until July 2016, when Governor Raimondo signed a bill into law, which expanded this crucial mandate. The OCA is now required to review every child fatality and near fatality, when the child's family, caretaker or household member currently has or previously was involved with DCYF.

Budget

Office Of The Child Advocate

	2019 Actuals	2020 Actuals	2021 Enacted Budget	2021 Revised Budget	2022 Recommended
Expenditures by Program					
Central Management	958,016	1,028,374	1,233,388	1,237,225	1,179,668
Total Expenditures	958,016	1,028,374	1,233,388	1,237,225	1,179,668
Expenditures by Object					
Salary And Benefits	860,810	908,543	1,098,548	1,102,385	1,036,749
Contract Professional Services	0	2,405	4,000	4,000	2,700
Operating Supplies And Expenses	91,771	117,426	111,055	111,055	120,434
Assistance And Grants	0	0	17,785	17,785	17,785
Subtotal: Operating	952,581	1,028,374	1,231,388	1,235,225	1,177,668
Capital Purchases And Equipment	5,436	0	2,000	2,000	2,000
Subtotal: Other	5,436	0	2,000	2,000	2,000
Total Expenditures	958,016	1,028,374	1,233,388	1,237,225	1,179,668
Expenditures by Source of Funds					
General Revenue	815,011	865,116	1,005,223	1,008,314	1,044,909
Federal Funds	143,005	163,258	228,165	228,911	134,759
Total Expenditures	958,016	1,028,374	1,233,388	1,237,225	1,179,668
FTE Authorization	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0

Performance Measures

Office Of The Child Advocate

Visit/Review of DCYF Licensed Facilities

The OCA monitors all facilities licensed by the Department of Children, Youth and Families including but not limited to group homes, foster homes, day cares and the RI Training School. Through thorough site reviews and routine visits by OCA staff the office ensures the appropriateness of the physical living conditions, suitability of clinical treatment programs, compliance with licensing regulations, compliance with contractual obligations and reviews the safety and well-being of children in a particular placement. [Note: Missing values appear as zeros in the measure.]

	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Target	65.00	70.00	100.00	70.00	70.00
Actual	55.00	269.00	284.00	0.00	

Resolved Inquiries

OCA receives a variety of inquiries each day, requiring differing levels of response. Each staff member is a vital part of providing a proper resolution, which includes but is not limited to referrals, relaying information, providing notice to DCYF of an issue and assisting with the process to provide an appropriate resolution, a formal investigation, a site review or legal intervention. The figures below represent the number of inquiries resolved. [Note: Missing values appear as zeros in the measure.]

	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Target	225.00	225.00	300.00	300.00	300.00
Actual	692.00	641.00	582.00	0.00	

Victims of Crime Act Assistance

OCA has the important task of researching incidents of abuse reported to DCYF each month to determine whether that individual could potentially be eligible for assistance through this program. Assistance is provided to each victim by providing information about the program, completion of the application process and guidance with victim services. The figures below represent the number of victims assisted. [Notes: FY 2019 targets have been updated. Missing values appear as zeros in the measure.]

	<i>Reporting Period: Federal Fiscal Year</i>				
<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Target	200	400	400	500	500
Actual	1,769	1,416	1,379	0.00	

Personnel

Agency: Office Of The Child Advocate

Central Management

		FY 2022	
		FTE	Cost
Unclassified			
CASE MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR	00819A	1.0	47,014
CHILD ADVOCATE	00862F	1.0	100,027
CONFIDENTIAL SECRETARY	00817A	1.0	44,373
GRANTS MANAGER	00823A	1.0	53,704
PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INFORMATION COORDINATOR	00824A	1.0	61,696
SENIOR PLANNING & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST	00324A	2.0	123,134
SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR	00329A	1.0	77,870
STAFF ATTORNEY III	00832A	1.0	84,543
STAFF ATTORNEY IV	00834A	1.0	90,941
Subtotal Unclassified		10.0	683,302
Subtotal		10.0	683,302
Turnover			(51,913)
Total Salaries			631,389
Benefits			
FICA			48,300
Health Benefits			112,867
Payroll Accrual			3,680
Retiree Health			33,337
Retirement			182,236
Subtotal			380,420
Total Salaries and Benefits		10.0	1,011,809
Cost Per FTE Position			101,181
Statewide Benefit Assessment			24,940
Payroll Costs		10.0	1,036,749
Purchased Services			
Clerical and Temporary Services			1,700
Legal Services			1,000
Subtotal			2,700
Total Personnel		10.0	1,039,449
Distribution by Source of Funds			
General Revenue		8.0	925,205
Federal Funds		2.0	114,244
Total All Funds		10.0	1,039,449