

**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). 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 providing oversight to DCYF and the children and families they serve. This includes the 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 VEC program. The OCA can provide legal advocacy in 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 OCA also files Victim Compensation claims for children who have been physically and/or sexually assaulted and are in the care of the State. Please see our Agency Narrative for a further description of the work performed by the OCA.

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. In 2016, a bill was signed into law mandating the OCA to review every child fatality and near fatality, when the child's family, caretaker, or household member currently has or previously had involvement with DCYF.

Budget

Office of the Child Advocate

	2020 Actuals	2021 Actuals	2022 Enacted Budget	2022 Revised Budget	2023 Recommended
Expenditures by Program					
Central Management	1,028,374	991,174	1,243,526	1,166,531	1,160,468
Total Expenditures	1,028,374	991,174	1,243,526	1,166,531	1,160,468
Expenditures by Object					
Salary And Benefits	908,543	913,777	1,127,434	1,070,509	1,022,262
Contract Professional Services	2,405	723	2,700	2,700	2,700
Operating Supplies And Expenses	117,426	76,674	93,607	91,322	133,506
Assistance And Grants	0	0	17,785	0	0
Subtotal: Operating	1,028,374	991,174	1,241,526	1,164,531	1,158,468
Capital Purchases And Equipment	0	0	2,000	2,000	2,000
Subtotal: Other	0	0	2,000	2,000	2,000
Total Expenditures	1,028,374	991,174	1,243,526	1,166,531	1,160,468
Expenditures by Source of Funds					
General Revenue	865,116	937,682	1,036,219	1,104,557	1,152,930
Federal Funds	163,258	53,492	207,307	61,974	7,538
Total Expenditures	1,028,374	991,174	1,243,526	1,166,531	1,160,468
FTE Authorization	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0

Performance Measures

Office of the Child Advocate

Visits to DCYF Licensed Facilities/Face to Face Visits with Youth

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. During our drop in visits or site reviews the OCA staff are sure to connect with the children placed in the program and ensure their needs are being met.

<i>Frequency: Annual</i>	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Target	65.00	100.00	70.00	350.00	375.00
Actual	269.00	568.00	387.00	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>Frequency: Annual</i>	<i>Reporting Period: State Fiscal Year</i>				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Target	225.00	300.00	300.00	500.00	500.00
Actual	641.00	1,164.00	611.00	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>Frequency: Annual</i>	<i>Reporting Period: Federal Fiscal Year</i>				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Target	200	400	500	1,000	1,000
Actual	1,416	2,758	1,275	0.00	

Personnel

Agency: Office of the Child Advocate

Central Management

		FY 2022		FY 2023	
		FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Unclassified					
CASE MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR	00819A	1.0	48,165	1.0	50,697
CHILD ADVOCATE	00862F	1.0	105,089	1.0	107,716
CONFIDENTIAL SECRETARY	00817A	1.0	46,623	1.0	48,857
GRANTS MANAGER	00823A	1.0	54,647	1.0	57,936
PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INFORMATION COORDINATOR	00824A	1.0	64,818	1.0	66,439
SENIOR PLANNING & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST	00324A	2.0	129,377	2.0	135,204
SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR	00329A	1.0	81,810	1.0	83,855
STAFF ATTORNEY III	00832A	1.0	88,821	1.0	91,041
STAFF ATTORNEY IV	00834A	1.0	95,543	1.0	97,931
Subtotal Unclassified		10.0	714,893	10.0	739,676
Subtotal		10.0	714,893	10.0	739,676
Turnover			(62,866)		(103,401)
FY 2021 Retro COLA Payment			14,224		0
Total Salaries			666,251		636,275
Benefits					
Contract Stipends			4,500		4,500
FICA			51,262		49,019
Health Benefits			88,527		92,612
Payroll Accrual			3,829		0
Retiree Health			35,445		28,708
Retirement			194,116		185,837
Subtotal			377,679		360,676
Total Salaries and Benefits		10.0	1,043,930	10.0	996,951
Cost Per FTE Position			104,393		99,695
Statewide Benefit Assessment			26,579		25,311
Payroll Costs		10.0	1,070,509	10.0	1,022,262
Purchased Services					
Clerical and Temporary Services			1,700		1,700
Legal Services			1,000		1,000
Subtotal			2,700		2,700
Total Personnel		10.0	1,073,209	10.0	1,024,962

Personnel

Agency: Office of the Child Advocate

Central Management

	FY 2022		FY 2023	
	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Distribution by Source of Funds				
General Revenue	10.0	1,013,965	10.0	1,017,424
Federal Funds	0.0	59,244	0.0	7,538
Total All Funds	10.0	1,073,209	10.0	1,024,962
