



**CHILD PROTECTION**  
**OMBUDSMAN**  
of COLORADO

**Office of the Child Protection Ombudsman**

**Fiscal Year 2018-2019**

**Performance Plan**

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# Agency Overview

## **Background**

The Office of Colorado's Child Protection Ombudsman (CPO) was established in June 2010, under Senate Bill 10-171. This legislation provided that the CPO would operate as a program through a contract with a local non-profit agency, issued and managed by the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS).

Senate Bill 10-171 was passed in response to the deaths of 12 children in Colorado who were known to child protection services. The deaths of these children in 2007 sparked an outcry by the public that there be greater oversight, accountability and transparency of the child protection system in Colorado. The public demanded to know more about how the systems charged with protecting Colorado's children were keeping them safe and working to prevent such tragedies in the future.

Years after the CPO's creation, legislators determined that CPO needed independence from the agencies it was designed to review. So, on June 2, 2015, Senate Bill 15-204, *Concerning the Independent Functioning of the Office of the Child Protection Ombudsman*, was signed into law. This legislation transformed the original "program" into a distinct and independent state agency. The new, independent CPO opened in 2016.

The concept of an ombudsman dates back hundreds of years and is designed to provide citizens with an independent, unbiased and trusted intermediary between the public and an entity. In a similar fashion, the CPO works to provide a clear channel between the citizens of Colorado and the agencies and providers tasked with protecting children. The CPO is guided by standards set by organizations such as the United States Ombudsman Association and the American Bar Association. Using those standards, the CPO serves the public by independently gathering information, investigating complaints and providing recommendations to child protection agencies and providers.

To ensure the accountability and transparency of the CPO and the Ombudsman, the legislature also created the Child Protection Ombudsman Board (CPO Board) in 2015. The CPO Board was the first of its kind in the nation. By law, the CPO Board is required to oversee the Ombudsman's performance and act as an advisory body on strategic direction and outreach decisions by the CPO.

The CPO is now housed within the Colorado State Judicial Branch and is located at the Ralph L. Carr Judicial Center in Denver. Colorado's current Child Protection Ombudsman, Stephanie Villafuerte, was appointed in December 2015 by the CPO Board. Ombudsman Villafuerte took office in January 2016.

## **Mission**

The Office of Colorado's Child Protection Ombudsman works to improve the safety, permanency and well-being of Colorado's children by investigating complaints, delivering recommendations and driving systemic reform in the child protection system.

## **Vision**

Ensuring safety for Colorado's children today and envisioning a stronger child protection system for the future.

## **Major Agency Functions**

### **Role of the CPO**

By design, the CPO serves as an independent, neutral problem solver that helps citizens navigate a complex child protection system in an expert and timely manner. The CPO has independent access to child protection records that are not otherwise available to the public. This allows the CPO to objectively assist citizens with concerns, investigate issues affecting the child protection system, deliver recommendations and drive systemic reform through research and education. Through objective study the CPO works to improve the delivery of services to children and families within the child protection system.

### **Responsibilities of the CPO**

The CPO was established pursuant to C.R.S. 19-3.3-101. In addition to providing all citizens free and confidential services, the CPO provides citizens and stakeholders four primary services.

**NAVIGATE** – The CPO helps citizens navigate the child protection system and directs them towards needed services and resources. Citizens often contact the CPO with questions about how a child protection agency/provider functions or which system provides a certain service. If the CPO determines that a citizen’s inquiry does not contain a complaint alleging violations by an agency/provider, the CPO will help resolve their question by providing either systems navigation or a resource referral.

**INVESTIGATE** – The CPO objectively researches and investigates concerns about the delivery of services to children and families within the child protection system. If the CPO determines that a complaint about an agency/provider within the child protection system includes allegations that rules or laws were violated in the delivery of services to children, the CPO will open an investigation. During an investigation CPO staff will conduct a comprehensive, independent study of relevant facts, records and witness statements. The CPO’s investigations may include a single agency/provider or multiple systems impacting multiple families in Colorado.

**ILLUMINATE** – The CPO’s work illuminates the strengths and weaknesses within the child protection system that are directly impacting the safety, permanency and well-being of children and families. By publicly releasing investigation reports, violations and data, the CPO provides citizens and stakeholders with the information necessary to maintain a transparent and accountable child protection system.

**REFORM** – The CPO will make recommendations to the public, child protection agencies/providers, the General Assembly and the Governor that help reform and improve outcomes for children and families.

## **Jurisdiction and Environment**

The CPO receives “*complaints concerning child protection services made by, or on behalf of, a child relating to any action, inaction, or decision of any public agency or any provider that receives public moneys that may adversely affect the safety, permanency, or well-being of a child. The Ombudsman may, independently and impartially, investigate and seek resolution of such complaints, which resolution may include but need not be limited to, referring a complaint to the state department or appropriate agency or entity and making a recommendation for action relating to a complaint.*” See C.R.S. 19-3.3-103(1)(a)(I)(A).

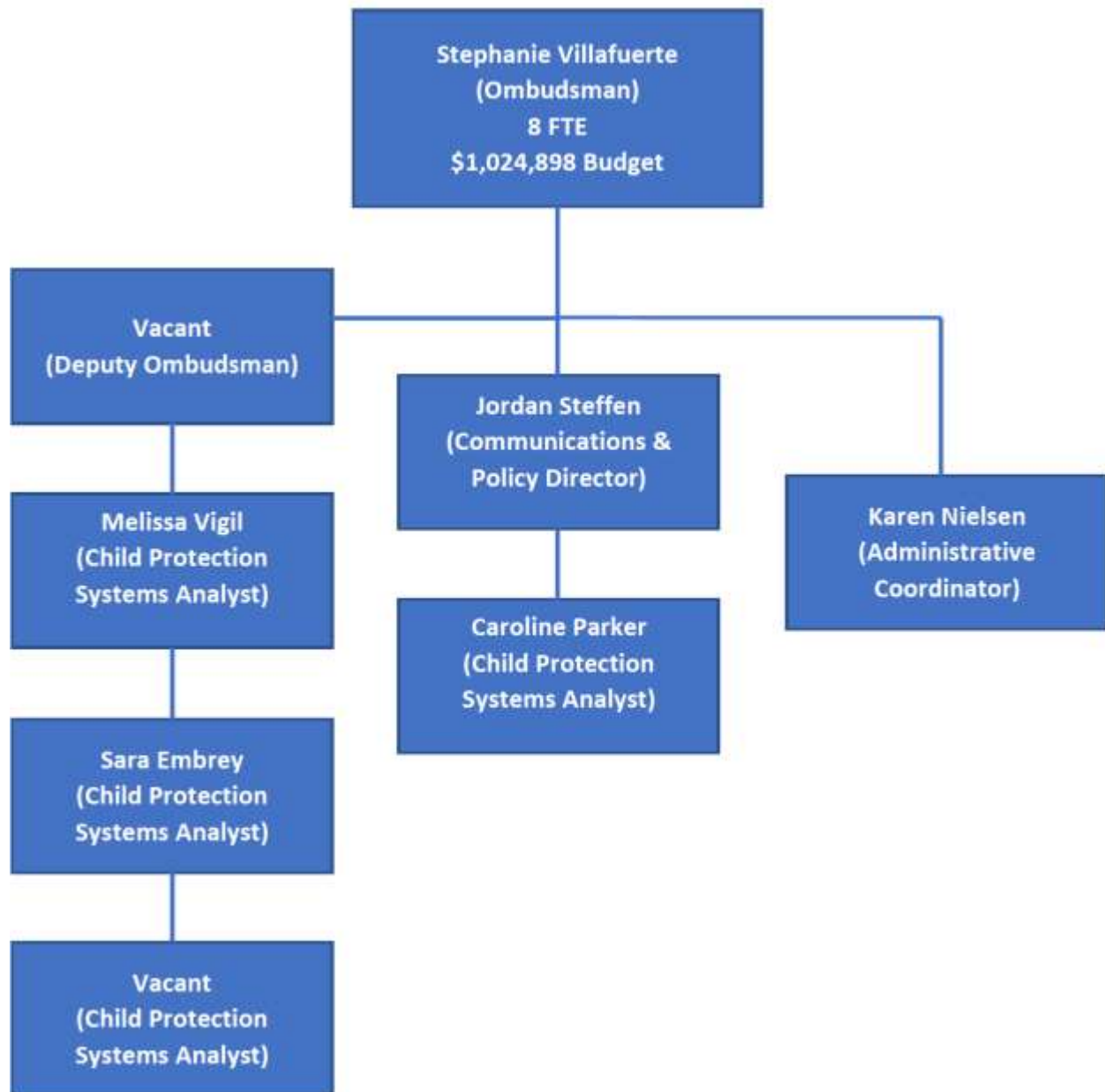
Some examples of agencies/providers the CPO has jurisdiction to review include: human service agencies, youth corrections, law enforcement, educators, medical professionals and treatment providers.

Pursuant to C.R.S. 19-3.3-101 to 110, the CPO does not have the authority to:

- Investigate allegations of abuse and/or neglect.
- Interfere or intervene in any criminal or civil court proceeding.
- Investigate complaints related to judges, magistrates, attorneys or guardians ad litem.
- Overturn any court order.
- Mandate the reversal of an agency/provider decision.
- Offer legal advice.

## **Staff Flow Chart**

During Fiscal Year 2017-18, the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) granted the CPO's request for a total of two additional FTEs – one full-time position and two part-time positions. The two half-time FTE were used to turn an existing part-time child protection systems analyst and the part-time administrative coordinator into full-time positions. The JBC also approved a new full-time child protection analyst position. In total, the CPO is comprised of eight full-time employees: Ombudsman, Deputy Ombudsman, Communications and Policy Director, Administrative Coordinator and four Child Protection Systems Analysts.



## Recap of Fiscal Year 2017-18

2017-2018 Performance Plan	Completed	Ongoing	No Longer Applicable
5 Strategies	0 Strategies	5 Strategies	0 Strategies
14 Critical Processes	14 Critical Processes	14 Critical Processes	0 Critical Processes
32 Key Metrics	11 Key Metrics	18 Key Metrics	3 Key Metrics

The Strategic Policy Initiatives (SPI) outlined in the CPO’s Fiscal Year 2017-18 Performance Plan were designed to ensure the CPO has the necessary resources and practices to address system-wide issues affecting the child protection system, while also provide a high quality of service for citizens seeking one-on-one assistance. The SPI created by the CPO – designed to guide the agency for a minimum of three fiscal years – focused on three areas of the CPO’s work: communication and outreach, efficient and impactful practices and expanding expertise. To create meaningful change within the child protection system, the CPO will have to continue accommodating the breadth and complexity of the issues affecting children and families in Colorado.

Aided by the SPI outlined in its Performance Plan, the CPO achieved new strides during the past fiscal year, making it the agency’s most impactful year yet. From improving communication to increasing resources, the CPO made progress in each of the areas defined in the 2017-18 Performance Plan. Information derived from CPO cases is now delivered to citizens and stakeholders through consistent mechanisms and templates. Communication between the CPO and agency/providers is more open and productive than in previous years. As of June 1, the CPO has received 554 inquires from citizens, indicating that the CPO will see an increase in the total inquires received during Fiscal Year 2017-18, compared to the previous fiscal year. New policies implemented by the CPO ensured the agency was able to provide citizens with quality services, while also addressing systemic issues within the child protection system. Additionally, the CPO has continued to expand its work into different areas of the child protection system, as well as increase the frequency with which the CPO is communicating issues to stakeholders and legislators.

Some additional highlights from Fiscal Year 2017-18 include:

- Adoption Assistance Investigation:** In December 2017, the CPO released its investigation report regarding Colorado’s adoption assistance program. The report marked the first systemic investigation completed by the agency and more than 16 months of work by the CPO. The CPO worked with dozens of adoptive families and several local and state agencies in completing the investigation. The investigation resulted in a total of 14 recommendations to the Colorado General Assembly and the CDHS. Those recommendations were used by the CDHS to create a two-year improvement plan for the program. They were also used by JBC staff to create legislation – which was signed by Gov. Hickenlooper in May – to improve how the program is funded. Beginning in July 2018, the CPO is leading a group of stakeholders to draft legislation that will repeal and amend Colorado Revised Statute to improve how such services are administered across the state and ensure families have equal opportunities to access the benefits offered by the program.

- **Investigation of El Pueblo Boys and Girls Home:** In September 2017, the CPO opened an investigation of the actions leading to the closure of the El Pueblo Boys and Girls Home (El Pueblo), a residential child care facility (RCCF) that was licensed by the CDHS and served children with complex mental and behavioral health needs from across Colorado and other states. The closure followed the suspension of El Pueblo’s license by the CDHS in response to multiple violations of RCCF standards that endangered the safety and well-being of children in the facility’s care. In the course of its research, the CPO has identified a number of policy and practice concerns that extend beyond El Pueblo. Such concerns may be indicative of issues affecting the ongoing oversight of RCCFs statewide. The CPO will release its investigation report – including recommendations – by September 1, 2018.
- **Legislative Impact:** In past fiscal years, strained resources and staff availability forced the CPO to turn down requests from legislators to provide input regarding legislation. During the past fiscal year, the increased efficiency with which the CPO handled its cases – and the increased exposure of the agency caused by the release of the adoption assistance report – resulted in the CPO weighing in on almost a dozen pieces of legislation. Additionally, the CPO provided educational testimony for four bills, including a bill to limit the release of autopsy reports of minors, proposed changes to addressing mandatory reporters who fail to report and a bill to protect the rights of parents with disabilities. This summer the CPO is leading two stakeholder groups which the agency anticipates will result in legislation to be introduced next session.
- **Municipal Court Information Sharing:** At the request of legislators, the CPO spearheaded a group of more than 20 stakeholders to address gaps in how municipal courts share charging information and criminal records. Such blind spots in information sharing have long plagued the child protection community. The CPO coordinated the stakeholder group during the past legislative session and will continue to do so this summer. The CPO anticipates working with the stakeholder group and legislators to draft legislation for next session.
- **Outreach and Coordination with the Juvenile Justice Community and Division of Youth Services:** The CPO has expanded its efforts to coordinate with the juvenile justice community to address issues that may be affecting children in the child protection system. These efforts including forming and housing a monthly round-table discussion with stakeholders from the Colorado Defense Bar, Colorado Public Defender’s Office, Disability Law Colorado and the American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado (ACLU). Additionally, the CPO is coordinating with the ACLU to streamline complaints regarding the Division of Youth Services (DYS). The CPO has continued its efforts to connect with families and juveniles within the DHS. During the past fiscal year, the DHS posted the CPO’s information on its website and encourages families with complaints about the DHS to contact the CPO.

The expanding impact and work of the CPO, however, also revealed growing pains to be expected of any agency striving to increase the quality and quantity of services it provides citizens. These strains were heightened by staff shortages experienced by the CPO during the past fiscal year. Since October, the CPO has been down, at minimum, by ½ FTE. That number increased to one and a half FTE in March, and



again increased to a full two FTE in April. The JBC granted the CPO's request for additional FTE (see page 6, and the CPO has been working diligently to fill all vacancies. In filling its vacancies, however, the CPO is also working to ensure that new employees have the necessary experience and skill sets to be an asset to the agency, and, more importantly, the citizens the CPO services. The CPO has hired a child protection systems analyst, who will begin before the new fiscal year.

It is important to note that, despite the staff shortages, the CPO has met its key metrics for releasing reports on time, closing cases on time and completing the accomplishments listed above. Such vacancies have affected the CPO's ability to launch some of its outreach initiatives. The Communications and Policy Director, who is responsible for organizing such initiatives, spent the majority of the first quarter working with the Ombudsman to complete and distribute the adoption assistance report. The following three quarters required the Communications and Policy Director to dedicate their efforts to communicating with stakeholders and legislators during the legislative session and then organizing stakeholder meetings for the summer months.

All of the Critical Processes and Key Metrics included in Strategic Policy Initiative One have been adjusted so the CPO may continue working to improve that area of its practices.

# Strategic Policy Initiatives

## Introduction

The CPO implemented its *Case Practices and Operating Procedures* on July 1, 2017. These practices and procedures were designed to ensure the CPO handles the demand for its services in an efficient and effective manner. Specific to the CPO's strategic planning efforts, the *Case Practices and Operating Procedures* were designed to:

- Streamline procedures for receiving inquiries and complaints about the child protection system.
- Create clear deadlines and expectations for the agencies/providers the CPO is working with.
- Standardize reporting formats, including templates for finalized reports and briefings.
- Outline procedures for the public release of CPO findings, recommendations and data.

The *Case Practices and Operating Procedures* helped the CPO achieve all of these goals, but, more importantly, they also provided insight to how the CPO may continue to improve its practices, the services it offers to citizens and the CPO's ability to positively impact the child protection system. Using this insight, the CPO scheduled a staff retreat in May 2018 and began a scheduled review of its *Case Practices and Operating Procedures*. Additionally, CPO staff spent months researching the practices and policies of similar ombudsman office across the country. As a result, the CPO revised portions of its *Case Practices and Operating Procedures* and plans to implement the new polices in July 2018. To ensure the CPO is utilizing the tools and guidance provided in the SMART Act, the CPO's Fiscal Year 2018-19 Performance Plan has been revised to accommodate the anticipated changes to its *Case Practices and Operating Procedures*. The majority of the changes made to its *Case Practices and Operating Procedures* focus on giving the CPO more flexibility to achieve strong outcomes for families, allowing the CPO to be more proactive in addressing issues affecting the child protection system and ensuring that issues identified by the CPO are resolved and systems are improved. The CPO has adjusted a number of Key Metrics within Strategic Policy Initiative Two to accommodate growth under its new *Case Practices and Operating Procedures*.

## Strategic Policy Initiatives for Fiscal Year 2018-2019

**1 STRATEGIC POLICY INITIATIVE: Improve communication methods and increase outreach campaigns to better educate and engage citizens and stakeholders on issues facing the child protection system.**

The CPO is statutorily required to educate citizens and stakeholders “concerning child maltreatment and the role of the community in strengthening families and keeping children safe.” See C.R.S. 19-3.3-103(2)(c). The CPO has identified the following Strategies and Critical Processes as ways to become more accessible to the public and improve the consistency in which it shares its work with citizens and stakeholders. The Strategies, Critical Process and Key Metrics outlined below are designed to ensure the CPO is fulfilling its mandate to educate the public regarding issues affecting the child protection system.

**STRATEGY ONE: Maintain consistent, timely and informative methods of communicating the CPO’s work to citizens and stakeholders.**

By clearly and consistently communicating both the individual and systemic issues plaguing the child protection system, and recommendations for improvement, the CPO continues to fulfill the utilitarian role the legislature designated for it.

<b>Critical Process – Produce and release quarterly reports.</b>		
<b>Key Metrics</b>		
<b>Fiscal Year 2018-2019</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce and release two CPO Quarterly Reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce and release four quarterly reports.</li> <li>Profile two issues, agencies/providers or organizations that are lesser known within the child protection system.</li> <li>Reach 150 subscribers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce and release four quarterly reports.</li> <li>Profile two issues, agencies/providers or organizations that are lesser known within the child protection system.</li> <li>Reach 200 subscribers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome:</b> This critical process will be complete after the CPO consistently produces four quarterly reports each fiscal year, for three consecutive fiscal years. (Expected Completion Date: Fiscal Year 2021-2022)</p>		

<b>Critical Process – Complete investigation reports and case briefings using standardized templates and post finalized documents to the website in a timely fashion.</b>		
<b>Key Metrics</b>		
<b>Fiscal Year 2018-2019</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100 percent of CPO’s reports will be posted to the website within 48 business hours of finalization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain timely posting of all CPO briefings and reports.</li> <li>Assess any needed changes to report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine whether the Critical Process has been completed.</li> <li>If the Critical Process has been completed,</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a notification system to alert a list of subscribers when briefings and reports are posted to the website.</li> <li>• Assess any needed changes to report formats and public release practices.</li> </ul>	<p>formats and public release practices.</p>	<p>develop a Critical Process to improve and expand the notification system alerting the public to new reports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Metrics.</li> </ul>
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**Outcome:** This critical process will be complete after the notification system is launched and the CPO posts 100 percent of its case briefings and investigation reports to the website within 48 business hours of finalization for two consecutive fiscal years. (Expected Completion Date: Fiscal Year 2020-2021)

**Critical Process – Develop and maintain a Dashboard page on the CPO’s website that provides citizens and stakeholders access to CPO data.**

**Key Metrics**

<b>Fiscal Year 2018-2019</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch Dashboard on CPO website.</li> <li>• Assess improvements and needs of the Dashboard page.</li> <li>• Update data in Dashboard during the first week of every month.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjust Dashboard page as necessary and improve functions that are confusing or inefficient.</li> <li>• Send survey to stakeholders seeking input on the Dashboard.</li> <li>• Update data in Dashboard bi-weekly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use information gathered from the 2019-2020 survey to improve functions that are confusing or inefficient.</li> <li>• Develop and launch campaign to increase awareness about the Dashboard.</li> </ul>

**Outcome:** This critical process will be completed after the Dashboard is updated bi-weekly for two consecutive fiscal years. (Expected completion date: Fiscal Year 2020-2021)

**Critical Process – Ensure transparency regarding the CPO’s ongoing work by consistently updating and posting public notifications of pending cases, case briefings and legislative updates.**

**Key Metrics**

<b>Fiscal Year 2018-2019</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the list of public notifications on the Pending Cases page of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjust the Pending Cases page of the CPO’s website as necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine whether the Critical Process has been completed.</li> </ul>

<p>the CPO’s website weekly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjust the Pending Cases page of the CPO’s website as necessary and improve functions that are confusing or inefficient.</li> <li>• 100 percent of case briefings will be completed and posted to the Case Briefings page of the CPO’s website within the 60-day deadline set in the CPO’s <i>Case Practices and Operating Procedures</i>.</li> </ul>	<p>and improve functions that are confusing or inefficient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjust the Case Briefings page of the CPO’s website as necessary and improve functions that are confusing or inefficient.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the Critical Process has been completed, develop a new Critical Process to begin streamlining the Public Notifications into the CPO Dashboard.</li> <li>• If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Metrics.</li> </ul>
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**Outcome:** This critical process will be complete after the CPO updates its public notifications of pending cases every week, 100 percent of the case briefings are posted within the set deadline and the bill tracker is updated every week for two consecutive fiscal years. (Expected completion date: 2020-2021)

**Critical Process – Continue to improve communication with legislators concerning issues the CPO has identified and provide consistent and timely communication of CPO findings and recommendations.**

**Key Metrics**

<b>Fiscal Year 2018-2019</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create policy for consistently sharing information with legislators, including an email listserv.</li> <li>• Create listserv that includes all legislators.</li> <li>• Provide information about the ongoing work the CPO is doing and how to access that information on the CPO website.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize legislative communication policy.</li> <li>• During the summer months, send legislators a survey asking about their interests in child protection issues and if there are any areas specifically they and/or their constituents want to be informed about.</li> <li>• Provide legislators quarterly reports.</li> <li>• Provide legislators an opportunity for a training session on the CPO Dashboard so they may quickly access data about their district and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During summer months, send legislators a survey asking about their interest in child protection issues and if there are any areas specifically they and/or their constituents want to be informed about.</li> </ul>

	child protection services in their community.	
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**Outcome:** This critical process will be complete after the CPO has created a consistent practice of communicating with legislators that results in the legislators’ use of the CPO’s services. (Expected completion date: Fiscal Year 2020-2021)

**STRATEGY TWO: Expand outreach efforts and improve campaigns to better engage and serve communities less familiar with CPO services.**

The CPO will work to ensure that all communities in Colorado have equal access to CPO services and information. Expanding engagement with communities less familiar with the CPO’s services – including Spanish speaking citizens – will be key in creating impactful reform to all areas of Colorado’s child protection system.

**Critical Process – Continue to increase engagement with foster and adoptive parents, kinship providers, children and juveniles, mandatory reporters and the child protection legal community through education and outreach campaigns.**

**Key Metrics**

<b>Fiscal Year 2018-2019</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify organizations and agencies/providers – which the CPO has not previously partnered with – that serve the five identified communities.</li> <li>Distribute CPO literature to all agencies/providers and organizations identified.</li> <li>Develop a strategic plan to connect with identified organizations and agencies/providers. Schedule speaking and informational meetings.</li> <li>Complete outreach campaigns with four of the organizations and agencies/providers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a listserv of all organizations and agencies/providers identified in 2018-19.</li> <li>Distribute a survey to the listserv seeking feedback regarding awareness of CPO services and interests in receiving additional materials or coordinating an informational meeting.</li> <li>Complete outreach campaigns with four of the organizations and agencies/providers.</li> <li>Use data to track the number of calls the CPO received from the five communities identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete outreach campaigns with four of the organizations and agencies/providers.</li> <li>Update listserv of organizations and agencies/providers.</li> <li>Provide interested parties an opportunity for a training session on the CPO Dashboard so they may quickly access data about their community.</li> <li>Use data to track the number of calls the CPO received from the five communities identified.</li> </ul>

**Outcome:** This critical process will be complete after outreach campaigns with 12 groups have been completed. (Estimated completion date: Fiscal Year 2020-2021)

**Critical Process – Increase engagement with agencies/providers and organizations in rural communities through education and outreach campaigns.**

**Key Metrics**

Fiscal Year 2018-2019	Fiscal Year 2019-2020	Fiscal Year 2020-2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute CPO literature to all child welfare departments and judicial districts in the state.</li> <li>• Complete two outreach campaigns in different rural judicial districts. During those campaigns engage with entities such as, child welfare departments, court improvement programs, school districts, regional hospitals and law enforcement.</li> <li>• Create listserv of all rural agencies/providers and organizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute a survey to the listserv seeking feedback regarding awareness of CPO services and interests in receiving additional materials or coordinating an informational meeting.</li> <li>• Complete two outreach campaigns in different rural judicial districts. During those campaigns engage with entities such as, child welfare departments, court improvement programs, school districts, regional hospitals and law enforcement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete two outreach campaigns in different rural judicial districts. During those campaigns engage with entities such as, child welfare departments, court improvement programs, school districts, regional hospitals and law enforcement.</li> <li>• Update listserv of all rural agencies/providers and organizations.</li> <li>• Provide interested parties an opportunity for a training session on the CPO Dashboard so they may quickly access data about their community.</li> </ul>

**Outcome:** This critical process will be complete after the CPO has completed outreach campaigns in six different rural judicial districts. (Expected completion date: Fiscal Year 2020-2021)

**Critical Process – Expand services to the Spanish-speaking community through increased outreach and improved accessibility.**

**Key Metrics**

Fiscal Year 2018-2019	Fiscal Year 2019-2020	Fiscal Year 2020-2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute Spanish literature to all county child welfare departments and all judicial districts.</li> <li>• Create the capability to view a Spanish version of the CPO website.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain translation services to aid Spanish-speaking citizens who contact the CPO.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch Spanish-language outreach campaigns, to include “town hall” meetings in Latino communities and coordination with Latino community leaders to do so.</li> </ul>

**Outcome:** This critical process will be complete after the CPO increases outreach and improves accessibility to a point that the CPO is consistently serving Spanish-speaking citizens. (Expected completion date: Fiscal Year 2020-2021)

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**STRATEGIC POLICY INITIATIVE: Implement practices that ensure the CPO manages its caseload efficiently and effectively, allotting staff the necessary time and resources to investigate systemic concerns.**

The demand for CPO services has increased steadily since the agency’s inception, as has the breadth and complexity of issues presented to the CPO. To facilitate systemic reform through comprehensive investigations and inclusive policy resolution, the CPO must recognize complex cases quickly and resolve less complicated cases faster. The strategy below will help the CPO achieve this goal and ensure that the quality of services is maintained.

**STRATEGY ONE: Implement practices and procedures that will decrease the amount of Information/Resource Referrals and Assists are open and conversely increase the amount of time CPO staff dedicate to systemic issues affecting the child protection system.**

Information/Resource Referrals and Assists are the most common service provided by the CPO. The high demand for these services requires CPO staff to be efficient in contacting citizens, identifying their concerns and determining what is necessary to help citizens resolve their inquiry. Ensuring CPO staff are providing these services in an efficient and effective manner will, in turn, allow the CPO to dedicate the time necessary to study issues affecting the child protection system as a whole. All services provided by the CPO staff should be completed in a timely manner. The Critical Processes below, combined with the CPO’s policies outlined in the CPO’s *Case Practices and Operating Procedures*, will help the CPO provide all citizens quality services and ensure the agency has time and resources to address systemic issues.

**Critical Process – Streamline the process for identifying inquiries that result in Information/Resource Referral or Assists and close such cases in a timely manner.**

**Key Metrics**

<b>Fiscal Year 2018-2019</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>80 percent of inquiries resulting in an Information/Resource Referrals will be closed within 30 business days of receiving the inquiry.</li> <li>80 percent of inquires resulting in Assists will be closed within 60 business days.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>90 percent of inquiries resulting an Information/Resource Referral will be closed within 30 business days of receiving the inquiry.</li> <li>85 percent of inquires resulting in Assists will be closed within 60 business days.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100 percent of inquiries resulting an Information/Resource Referral will be closed within 30 business days of receiving the inquiry.</li> <li>90 percent of inquires resulting in Assists will be closed within 60 business days.</li> </ul>

**Outcome:** This critical process will be complete after the CPO closes 100 percent of the inquiries resulting in an Information/Resource Referral within 15 business days of receiving the inquiry for two consecutive fiscal years and when 90 percent of inquires resulting in Assists are closed within 60 business days of receiving the inquiry for two consecutive fiscal years. (Estimated completion date: Fiscal Year 2021-2022)



**Critical Process – Meet deadlines for completing investigations, as stated in the CPO’s Case Practices and Operating Procedures.**

**Key Metrics**

<b>Fiscal Year 2018-2019</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>70 percent of CPO investigations will be closed within the 60-business day deadline. (This figure does not include investigations in which case briefings are completed.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>80 percent of CPO investigations will be closed within the 60-business day deadline. (This figure does not include investigations in which case briefings are completed.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100 percent of CPO investigations will be closed within the 60-business day deadline. (This figure does not include investigations in which case briefings are completed.)</li> </ul>

**Outcome:** This critical process will be complete after the CPO closes 100 percent of its investigations within the 60-business day deadline for two consecutive fiscal years. This figure does not include investigations in which case briefings are completed. (Expected completion date: 2021-2022)

**Critical Process – Utilize data to identify trends in the child protection system to launch investigations sooner.**

**Key Metrics**

<b>Fiscal Year 2018-2019</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue holding weekly Case Staffing meetings.</li> <li>Develop an electronic system for tracking trends and issues identified by staff.</li> <li>Launch one investigation based on information gained from data collected from cases involving Assists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch two investigations based on information gained from data collected from cases involving Assists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch two investigations based on information gained from data collected from cases involving Assists.</li> </ul>

**Outcome:** This critical process will be complete after the CPO initiates at least two investigations based on an internal analysis of data and caseloads each year for two consecutive fiscal years. (Expected completion date: Fiscal Year 2020-2021)

### 3

### STRATEGIC POLICY INITIATIVE: Increase the expertise and resources needed to investigate and research systemic issues within the child protection system.

The CPO is charged with recommending systemic changes to *“improve the safety of and promote better outcomes for children and families receiving child protection services in Colorado.”* See C.R.S. 19-3.3-103(2)(e). These recommendations are often included in the CPO’s investigation reports. An investigation is the most time and resource intensive service the CPO provides. To ensure the CPO is completing these cases in a timely manner, and maintaining a quality of work that will drive change within the child protection system, the agency must ensure its staff are both capable and well equipped.

#### STRATEGY ONE: Expand expertise and resources to ensure the CPO is fulfilling its mandated charge of investigating systemic issues and driving reform across the child protection system.

During Fiscal Year 2017-18, the JBC granted the CPO’s request for additional staff. Once all eight positions have been filled, the CPO will begin redistributing caseloads and assignments based on staff’s individual strengths and skill sets.

#### Critical Process – Analyze whether systemic issues warrant additional staff and expertise.

##### Key Metrics

Fiscal Year 2018-2019	Fiscal Year 2019-2020	Fiscal Year 2020-2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire additional child protection systems analyst.</li> <li>• Redistribute caseloads and reassess best approaches to systemic investigations and research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze data from the previous fiscal year to determine the impact the additional staff had on decreasing caseloads and increasing the CPO’s capacity to complete systemic investigations and research.</li> <li>• Analyze data to determine the nature of the systemic issues facing the child welfare system.</li> <li>• Using information from these analysis, determine whether to seek funds for additional staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze data from the previous fiscal year to determine the impact the additional staff had on decreasing caseloads and increasing the CPO’s capacity to complete systemic investigations and research.</li> <li>• Analyze data to determine the nature of the systemic issues facing the child welfare system.</li> <li>• Using information from these analyses, determine whether to seek funds for additional staff.</li> </ul>

**Outcome:** This critical process will be complete after the CPO is able to analyze two complete fiscal years of data in determine staffing needs. (Estimated completion date: Fiscal Year 2020-2021)

<b>Critical Process – Use expertise of staff to complete outreach in relevant areas.</b>		
<b>Key Metrics</b>		
<p><b>Fiscal Year 2018-2019</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the expertise of current staff grow, and/or the CPO gains additional staff, CPO staff will aid in outreach efforts and identifying systemic issues within their given area of expertise. These areas of expertise may include, DYS, mental health or child welfare.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the expertise of current staff grow, and/or the CPO gains additional staff, CPO staff will aid in outreach efforts and identifying systemic issues within their given area of expertise. These areas of expertise may include, DYS, mental health or child welfare.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the expertise of current staff grow, and/or the CPO gains additional staff, CPO staff will aid in outreach efforts and identifying systemic issues within their given area of expertise. These areas of expertise may include, DYS, mental health or child welfare.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome:</b> This critical process will be complete after CPO staff has developed a broad range of expertise either through hiring additional positions or enhancing the knowledge of current staff. (Expected completion date: Fiscal Year 2020-2021)</p>		

**STRATEGY TWO: Improve how the CPO tracks and analyzes its recommendations to agencies/providers.**

The CPO has a statutory responsibility to maintain an accountable and transparent agency. Tracking and reporting the outcomes of its recommendations will provide a strong gauge for determining the CPO’s impact in reforming the child protection system.

<b>Critical Process – Design and implement system to track status of CPO recommendations.</b>		
<b>Key Metrics</b>		
<p><b>Fiscal Year 2018-2019</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create and implement a policy that allows the CPO to track recommendations and determine whether they have been implemented.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using the policy implemented during Fiscal Year 2017-2018, the CPO will analyze the recommendations from the same period and determine whether they have been implemented. That information will be included in the CPO’s Annual Report as well as on the CPO’s</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using the policy implemented during Fiscal Year 2017-2018, the CPO will analyze the recommendations from the same period and determine whether they have been implemented. That information will be included in the CPO’s Annual Report as well as on the CPO’s</li> </ul>

	Dashboard page on its website.	Dashboard page on its website.
<b>Outcome:</b> This critical process will be complete after the CPO establishes an efficient policy for tracking and reviewing its recommendations, and that practice produces accurate data for at least two consecutive fiscal years. (Estimated completion date: Fiscal Year 2020-2021)		

## **Conclusion**

The Child Protection Ombudsman respectfully submits this report to the Joint Budget Committee and the General Assembly, as is required under C.R.S. 2-7-204. The CPO will comply with its requirements under the statute and will submit the required reports and evaluations.