



CHILD PROTECTION
OMBUDSMAN
of COLORADO

**Office of Colorado's Child Protection
Ombudsman**

**Fiscal Year 2019-2020
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 the 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

We are innovative change agents committed to informing and reforming child protection systems for children, families and communities.

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. The CPO receives complaints concerning actions or inactions by child protection agencies that may adversely impact the safety, permanency or well-being of a child. Child protection agencies are those that receive public funds to protect or care for children. This includes law enforcement, mental health agencies, child welfare services and the Division of Youth Services.

In addition to providing all citizens free and confidential services, the CPO provides citizens and stakeholders three primary services:

Information and Resources Referral (IRR) – The CPO provides citizens with information, resources and/or education to help resolve their questions regarding the child protection system. The CPO will speak with a citizen on the phone to learn more about their concern. CPO staff may personally connect the caller with a resource that is best suited to address their question.

Assist – This is the most common service provided by the CPO. The CPO works with citizens to clarify what is happening in their specific case, including processes and actions taken by an agency or provider. CPO staff will complete an independent review of relevant records, rule and law. Depending on the complexity and nature of the inquiry, the CPO may contact the agency/provider involved to gain a better understanding about a specific situation. In some instances, the CPO may facilitate communication between the caller and the agency involved in the case with the goal of resolving the problem.

Investigation – The CPO will open an investigation if it determines a case may result in recommendations for statutory, budgetary and/or administrative changes to improve the broader child protection system. A comprehensive, independent study of relevant facts, records, rules and law will be completed. The CPO will interview all relevant parties and may interview subject matter experts. For all investigations, the CPO will contact the relevant agency/provider and release a public investigation report.

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.

Recap of Fiscal Year 2018-19

2018-19 Performance Plan	Completed
5 Strategies	0 Strategies
14 Critical Processes	0 Critical Processes
32 Key Metrics	15 Key Metrics

The Strategic Policy Initiatives created by the CPO for Fiscal Year 2018-19 focused on three areas of the CPO’s work: communication and outreach, efficient and impactful practices and expanding expertise. The CPO implemented improved practices during the past fiscal year, each designed to ensure the CPO’s work is impactful, accessible and accurate. The agency also expanded its expertise significantly, bringing on staff with experience in the Division of Youth Services (DYS), mental health and public health. As of June 11, 2019, the CPO received 541 contacts during Fiscal Year 2018-19. The agency anticipates receiving just under 600 calls by the end of the fiscal year. The number of contacts received during Fiscal Year 2018-19 will likely not exceed the number of contacts received during the previous fiscal year. However, the cases opened during Fiscal Year 2018-19 represent some of the most complex and diverse issues ever presented to the CPO.

As the CPO’s caseload diversified and the agency became better situated to take the lead on important public policy issues, the agency recognized the need to prioritize how it communicates with the public and how it engages stakeholders in creating change. As a result, the CPO initiated two significant projects during Fiscal Year 2018-19.

CPO Communication and Education – During the past three fiscal years, the CPO has struggled to implement several of the critical processes and key metrics aimed at improving how the agency communicates its work with citizens. Repeatedly, the agency was forced to place other operational priorities ahead of these efforts, such as ensuring cases are completed in a timely manner and the CPO is responsive to stakeholders and legislators. As the CPO’s case practices and operating procedures have become more refined, however, the agency is now in a place where it may focus attention and resources on improving its communication strategy. To help accomplish this goal, the CPO obtained the services of a local public relations firm during the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2018-19. During the past quarter, the firm has surveyed stakeholders and others to determine the most effective approaches to improve how the CPO communicates with citizens and others in the child protection community. The firm will provide the CPO with a strategic plan (CPO Communication Plan) by the close of Fiscal Year 2018-19. In anticipation of this plan, the CPO has adjusted and, in some instances, removed critical processes from SPI One. During Fiscal Year 2019-20, the CPO will work to implement the strategies, programs and services outlined in the forthcoming communications plan.

CPO Public Policy Advancement Center – The CPO is charged with improving how child protection services are delivered to children and families in Colorado. To date, the CPO has primarily fulfilled that charge by studying systems and agencies and issuing appropriate recommendations for improvement. During the past fiscal year, however, the CPO recognized that its role in improving systems goes well beyond issuing recommendations. In fact, the CPO is

uniquely positioned to serve as an objective facilitator, statutorily designed to help bring together stakeholders, citizens and others to study and drive systemic change. As such, the CPO started drafting a strategic plan during the past quarter. That plan will guide the CPO in launching its Public Policy Advancement Center during Fiscal Year 2019-20. The CPO has created Strategic Policy Four to reflect this work.

Some additional highlights from Fiscal Year 2018-19 include:

- **Passage of Adoption Assistance Legislation:** In December 2017, the CPO released its investigation report regarding Colorado's adoption assistance program. The investigation resulted in a total of 14 recommendations. One recommendation directed the Colorado General Assembly to repeal and amend the Colorado's law outlining the adoption assistance program. Colorado's statute did not accurately reflect federal law and guidance and did not provide Colorado's 59 county human services departments with sufficient guidance to administer the program. Between June and October 2018, the CPO facilitated eight stakeholder meetings totaling more than 20 hours of discussion among nearly 30 stakeholders. Those discussions resulted in Senate Bill 19-178, which strengthened the state's adoption assistance program in three primary ways:
 - Colorado's law was brought into compliance with federal law and guidance
 - Ensured eligible children and youth have equal access to the program
 - Ensured adoptive families and county departments have consistent, accurate information and guidance about eligibility requirements and the services, benefits and remedies available under the program.

The legislation passed without any opposition. Gov. Jared Polis signed the bill on May 16, 2019.

- **Launch of CPO's Division of Youth Services Program:** Since becoming an independent agency in 2016, the CPO has seen a steady increase in the number of inquiries it receives regarding the Colorado Division of Youth Services (DYS). Those inquiries included individual cases centered on various concerns, including whether a juvenile received adequate medical care while in a facility and whether a DYS staff member's use of physical restraint was appropriate. While the CPO has attempted to address these issues, the agency has lacked both resources and expertise to address such inquiries and complaints effectively. During the 2018 Legislative Session, the Joint Budget Committee granted the CPO's request for an additional employee to lead the agency in creating and running the CPO's DYS program. During Fiscal Year 2018-19, the CPO filled this position. Since October 2018, the CPO's DYS Chief Analyst has been reviewing cases involving youth at DYS facilities, as well as strategizing how to best build the CPO's new program. The program will serve a variety of functions, including responding to inquiries from citizens about the DYS, educating stakeholders and the community about the CPO's services and providing recommendations for improvements to the DYS.

Strategic Policy Initiatives

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.

Critical Process – Complete investigation reports and case briefings using standardized templates and post finalized documents to the website in a timely fashion.

Key Metrics		
<p>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement any applicable practices or products detailed in the CPO Communication Plan. • Develop a notification system to alert a list of subscribers when briefings and reports are posted to the website. • Assess any needed changes to report formats and public release practices. • Maintain timely posting of all CPO briefings and reports. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the Critical Process has been completed. • If the Critical Process has been completed, develop a Critical Process to improve and expand the notification system alerting the public to new reports. • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop 	<p>Fiscal Year 2021-2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the Critical Process was not completed in FY 2020-21, implement any practices or products developed during the previous fiscal year.

	appropriate Key Metrics.	
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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 issue briefs 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 – Ensure transparency regarding the CPO’s ongoing work by consistently updating and posting public notifications of pending cases, case extensions and legislative updates.

Key Metrics

Fiscal Year 2019-2020	Fiscal Year 2020-2021	Fiscal Year 2021-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement any applicable practices or products detailed in the CPO Communication Plan. Update the list of public notifications on the Pending Cases page of the CPO’s website weekly. 100 percent of case extensions will be completed and posted to the Case Extension page of the CPO’s website within the 60-day deadline set in the CPO’s <i>Case Practices and Operating Procedures</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the Critical Process has been completed. If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Metrics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the Critical Process was not completed in FY 2020-21, implement any practices or products developed during the previous fiscal year.

Outcome: This critical process will be complete after the CPO updates its public notifications of pending cases every week, 100 percent of the case extensions 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

Fiscal Year 2019-2020	Fiscal Year 2020-2021	Fiscal Year 2021-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement any applicable practices or products detailed in the CPO Communication Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During summer months, send legislators a survey asking about their interest in child protection issues and if 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2020-21.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>there are any areas specifically they and/or their constituents want to be informed about.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide legislators an opportunity for a training/information session regarding the CPO’s work, Public Policy Advancement Center and resources the agency provides. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Metrics.
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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		
Fiscal Year 2019-2020	Fiscal Year 2020-2021	Fiscal Year 2021-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement any applicable practices or products detailed in the CPO Communication Plan. • Distribute CPO literature to all relevant agencies/providers and organizations. • Complete outreach campaigns with four organizations and agencies/providers the CPO has not previously engaged with. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete outreach campaigns with four of the organizations and agencies/providers. • Update listserv of organizations and agencies/providers. • Provide interested parties an opportunity for a training session on the CPO Dashboard so they may quickly access data about their community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2020-21. • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Metrics.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute a survey to the CPO’s stakeholder listserv seeking feedback regarding awareness of CPO services and interests in receiving additional materials or coordinating an informational meeting. 		
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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 2019-2020	Fiscal Year 2020-2021	Fiscal Year 2021-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement any applicable practices or products detailed in the CPO Communication Plan. Distribute CPO literature to all child welfare departments and judicial districts in the state. 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Update listserv of all rural agencies/providers and organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2020-21. If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Metrics.

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 2019-2020	Fiscal Year 2020-2021	Fiscal Year 2021-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute Spanish literature to all county child welfare departments and all judicial districts. Create the capability to view a Spanish version of the CPO website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain translation services to aid Spanish-speaking citizens who contact the CPO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin developing a strategic outreach plan for Spanish-speaking communities and start meeting with community leaders to determine how the CPO may efficiently deliver services.

Outcome: This critical process will be complete after the CPO increases outreach for Spanish-speaking citizens. (Expected completion date: Fiscal Year 2021-2022)

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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

Fiscal Year 2019-2020	Fiscal Year 2020-2021	Fiscal Year 2021-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90 percent of inquiries resulting an Information/Resource Referral will be closed within 30 business days of receiving the inquiry. 90 percent of inquires resulting in Assists will be closed within 60 business days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 percent of inquiries resulting an Information/Resource Referral will be closed within 30 business days of receiving the inquiry. 90 percent of inquires resulting in Assists will be closed within 60 business days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2020-21. If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Metrics.

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

Fiscal Year 2019-2020	Fiscal Year 2020-2021	Fiscal Year 2021-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.)

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

Fiscal Year 2019-2020	Fiscal Year 2020-2021	Fiscal Year 2021-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch two investigations based on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch two investigations based on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the Critical Process was

information gained from data collected from cases involving Assists.	information gained from data collected from cases involving Assists.	completed during Fiscal Year 2020-21. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Metrics.
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. After all eight positions were filled, the CPO redistributed 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 2019-2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	Fiscal Year 2020-2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	Fiscal Year 2021-2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2020-21. If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO

<p>investigations and research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze data to determine the nature of the systemic issues facing the child welfare system. Using information from these analysis, determine whether to seek funds for additional staff. 	<p>investigations and research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze data to determine the nature of the systemic issues facing the child welfare system. Using information from these analyses, determine whether to seek funds for additional staff. 	<p>from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Metrics.</p>
<p>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)</p>		

Critical Process – Use expertise of staff to complete outreach in relevant areas.		
Key Metrics		
<p>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2021-2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2020-21. If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Metrics.
<p>Outcome: 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.

Critical Process – Design and implement system to track status of CPO recommendations.		
Key Metrics		
Fiscal Year 2019-2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and implement a policy that allows the CPO to track recommendations and determine whether they have been implemented. 	Fiscal Year 2020-2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the policy implemented during Fiscal Year 2018-19, 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. 	Fiscal Year 2021-2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the policy implemented during Fiscal Year 2018-19, 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.
Outcome: 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 2021-2022)		

4 STRATEGIC POLICY INITIATIVE: Establish the CPO’s Public Policy Advancement Center, which will serve as an objective and innovative space for citizens and stakeholders to discuss and improve child protection systems.

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. 19-3.3103(2)(e). As part of this, the CPO will create the Public Policy Advancement Center to research, investigate and promote best practices in child protection systems and to make recommendations to improve Colorado’s child protection systems, services and agencies.

STRATEGY ONE: Ensure the CPO’s Public Policy Advancement Center is an efficient, effective and inclusive space to promote improvements in Colorado’s child protection system.

The Public Policy Advancement Center will analyze trends from internal investigations as well as from local and state level data to assess critical gaps in Colorado’s child protection systems. The program will also explore existing best practices and stakeholder recommendations to identify potential and necessary changes.

Critical Process – Implement thorough and consistent practices to ensure the CPO’s Public Policy Advancement Center is effectively identifying priorities and providing an inclusive environment for discussion.		
Key Metrics		
Fiscal Year 2019-2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch the CPO’s Public Policy Advancement Center. 	Fiscal Year 2020-2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the procedures established during the previous fiscal year. 	Fiscal Year 2021-2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the procedures established during the previous fiscal year.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish public processes and expectations regarding how the program will select issues and what it will produce. • Establish a space on the CPO’s website dedicated to informing citizens, stakeholders and legislators about the issues being addressed and the products being produced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make any necessary improvements to the program to ensure it is inclusive, effective and efficient. • Make any necessary improvements to the CPO’s website to ensure citizens are informed about the program and have the ability to access group discussions and projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make any necessary improvements to the program to ensure it is inclusive, effective and efficient. • Make any necessary improvements to the CPO’s website to ensure citizens are informed about the program and have the ability to access group discussions and projects.
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Outcome: This critical process will be complete after the CPO establishes an efficient and effective program. (Estimated completion date: Fiscal Year 2022-2023)

Critical Process – Develop efficient outreach mechanisms to ensure the public is informed of the issues and has clear expectations regarding what the CPO’s Public Policy Advancement Center will produce.

Key Metrics

Fiscal Year 2019-2020	Fiscal Year 2020-2021	Fiscal Year 2021-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement any applicable practices or products detailed in the CPO Communication Plan. • Develop listservs of applicable stakeholders. • Develop and implement a system for consistently informing citizens, stakeholders and legislators about ongoing work. • Develop and implement a system for receiving public comment that accommodates for citizens and stakeholders in rural areas who may not attend meetings and discussions in person. • Develop and implement a system for distributing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess all communication practices and products, including the CPO’s website. • Assess the effectiveness of any outreach efforts to inform citizens and stakeholders of the program. • Make any necessary improvements to ensure that citizens and stakeholders are aware of the program and informed about the work being done. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess all communication practices and products, including the CPO’s website. • Assess the effectiveness of any outreach efforts to inform citizens and stakeholders of the program. • Make any necessary improvements to ensure that citizens and stakeholders are aware of the program and informed about the work being done.

and promoting final products and recommendations developed through the program.		
Outcome: This critical process will be complete after the CPO establishes an efficient and effective program. (Estimated completion date: Fiscal Year 2022-2023)		

STRATEGY TWO: Ensure the center is consistently identifying relevant issues and developing well vetted, objective and detailed recommendations for change.

Critical Process – Implement practices that will facilitate collaboration among stakeholders and ensure the CPO’s Public Policy Advancement Center is transparent and accessible		
Key Metrics		
<p>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement public procedures and practices for seeking and incorporating input from stakeholders and citizens. • Develop and implement public procedures and practices for alerting stakeholders and citizens when the program selects a new issue or project. • Develop and implement public procedures and practices for alerting stakeholders and citizens when recommendations have been issued. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess all of the program’s public reporting functions. • Make any necessary improvements to ensure all stakeholders are alerted when the program selects a new program, begins discussing a new issue and issues recommendations. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2021-2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess all of the program’s public reporting functions. • Make any necessary improvements to ensure all stakeholders are alerted when the program selects a new program, begins discussing a new issue and issues recommendations.
Outcome: This critical process will be complete after the CPO establishes an efficient and effective program. (Estimated completion date: Fiscal Year 2022-2023)		

STRATEGY THREE: Ensure the CPO is producing products that effectively guide the child protection community in implementing recommendations developed through the CPO’s Public Policy Advancement Center.

Critical Process – Implement and maintain a process for assessing the outcomes of recommendations developed through the CPO’s Public Policy Advancement Center.

Key Metrics

Fiscal Year 2019-2020	Fiscal Year 2020-2021	Fiscal Year 2021-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and implement a policy that allows the CPO to publicly track recommendations developed through the program and determine whether they have been implemented. • Solicit stakeholder feedback regarding the products and recommendations developed through the program. • Develop and implement a public reporting system which demonstrates how the CPO is working to ensure recommendations are implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess all of the programs and products implemented during the previous fiscal year. • Survey relevant stakeholders to determine which recommendations have been implemented. • Seek feedback regarding recommendations that were not implemented. • Make any necessary improvements to ensure the recommendations developed through the program are implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess all of the programs and products being utilized. • Survey relevant stakeholders to determine which recommendations have been implemented. • Seek feedback regarding recommendations that were not implemented. • Make any necessary improvements to ensure the recommendations developed through the program are implemented.

Outcome: This critical process will be complete after the CPO establishes an efficient and effective program. (Estimated completion date: Fiscal Year 2022-2023)

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.