



CHILD PROTECTION
OMBUDSMAN
of COLORADO

Office of the Child Protection Ombudsman

Fiscal Year 2017-2018

Performance Plan

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Child Protection Ombudsman

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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 review and investigate complaints, 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.

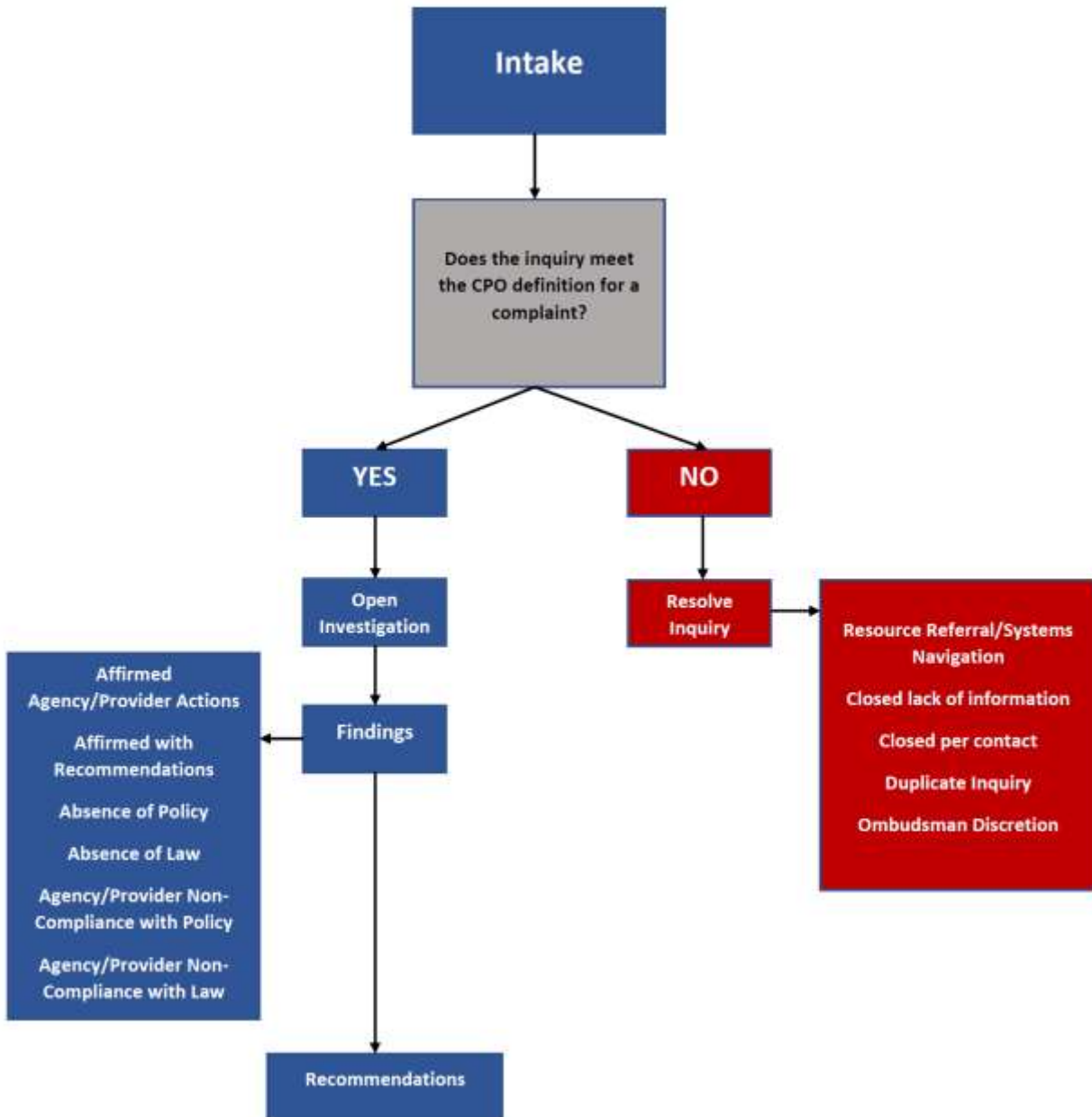
INVESTIGATE – The CPO objectively researches and investigates concerns about the delivery of services to children and families within the child protection system. If the CPO determines that a complaint about an agency/provider within the child protection system includes allegations that rules or laws 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.

Process Flow Chart

Each contact the CPO receives is evaluated using the process below.



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).

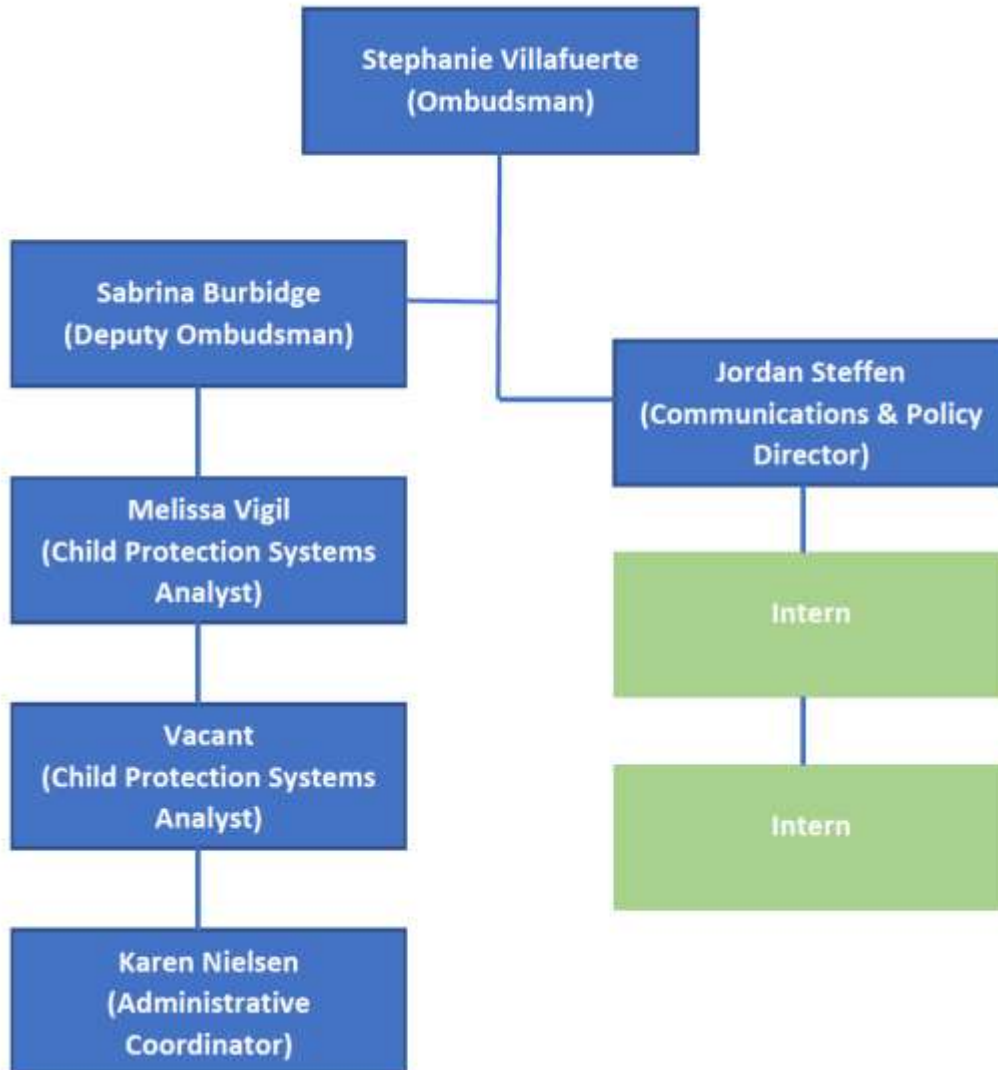
Some examples of agencies/providers the CPO has jurisdiction to review include: human service agencies, youth corrections, law enforcement, educators, medical professionals and treatment providers.

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.
- Review or 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

The CPO is comprised of five full-time employees: Ombudsman, Deputy Ombudsman, Communications and Policy Director and two Child Protection Systems Analyst. (The CPO will fill the second Child Protection Systems Analyst position in July 2017.) The position of Administrative Coordinator is a part-time position.



Recap of Fiscal Year 2016-2017

The CPO's Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Performance Plan outlined four major goals (strategic policy initiatives). To help achieve those goals, the CPO detailed nine strategies, 33 performance measures (critical processes) and 64 key metrics. During Fiscal Year 2016-2017, the CPO completed five strategies, 24 performance measures and 47 key metrics.

2016-2017 Performance Plan	Completed	Ongoing
9 Strategies	6 Strategies	3 Strategies
33 Critical Processes	28 Critical Processes	5 Critical Processes
64 Key Metrics	51 Key Metrics	13 Key Metrics

The past 12 months marked the CPO's first complete fiscal year as an independent state agency. As such, the CPO's Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Performance Plan was its first. At the time the CPO submitted its first Performance Plan, its permanent office space and IT systems were not yet finalized, and personnel policies and operating procedures were being drafted. The goals and performance measures created for Fiscal Year 2016-2017 reflected the immediate needs of establishing an efficient and effective office, as well as preliminary strategies for meeting the demand for CPO services. The CPO completed more than 80 percent of its goals, strategies and performance measures during Fiscal Year 2016-2017.

The three strategic policy initiatives outlined in this Performance Plan incorporate three strategies carried over from Fiscal Year 2016-2017.

Looking forward, the CPO has not only refined its understanding of the demand for services and the resources necessary to efficiently serve citizens, it has also realized the full potential of the agency and the work required to create meaningful change within the child protection system. While the goals and strategies created in Fiscal Year 2016-2017 were key in establishing the CPO, they no longer accommodate the breadth and complexity of the work ahead. As such, the CPO has created three new strategic policy initiatives that will push the CPO further as it continues to be a leader in improving the child protection system in Colorado.

Strategic Policy Initiatives

Introduction

During the past fiscal year, the CPO focused a substantial amount of attention and effort establishing strong practices. Performance evaluations were created and completed. Staff participated in an in-house retreat to discuss practices that were serving citizens well, and practices that were hindering the delivery of services. More than a dozen outreach campaigns engaged communities and increased awareness of the CPO's services. The Joint Budget Committee (JBC) granted the CPO the funds to turn the position of communications and policy director into a full-time position and funds to hire a second child protection systems analyst.

One of the CPO's biggest achievements in the past fiscal year was the completion of its *Case Practices and Operating Procedures*. CPO staff dedicated months to analyzing past procedures and identifying the improvements necessary for the CPO to move forward with impactful change. While the CPO's *Case Practices and Operating Procedures* provide guidance for everything from case management to grievance policies, the practices and procedures most relevant to this Performance Plan include:

- Streamlined procedures for receiving inquiries and complaints about the child protection system.
- Clear deadlines and expectations for the agencies/providers the CPO is investigating.
- Standardized reporting formats, including templates for finalized reports and briefings.
- Procedures for the public release of CPO findings, recommendations and data.

The CPO's *Case Practices and Operating Procedures* will be implemented in full on July 1, 2017. A copy of the document will be available on the CPO's website.

These practices and procedures were designed to ensure the CPO handles the demand for its services in an efficient and effective manner. The CPO received at least 564 contacts during Fiscal Year 2016-2017. While the high demand for one-on-one services continues, so does the necessity for the CPO to tackle complex, systemic issues facing the child protection system. During Fiscal Year 2016-2017, the CPO opened two cases involving statewide issues affecting the child protection system. These two investigations are the first of their kind and require significant staff time to complete. To date, staff have dedicated hundreds of hours, contacted dozens of agencies and reviewed thousands of pages of documents in these two ongoing cases. The findings and recommendations that will be made in these two cases have the potential to greatly improve the delivery of services to multiple families by multiple agencies. As a result, the strategic policy initiatives outlined in this Performance Plan were designed to position the CPO in a place where it has the necessary resources and practices to handle large systemic cases while maintaining a high quality of service for citizens seeking one-on-one assistance.

Strategic Policy Initiatives for Fiscal Year 2017-2018

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). During the past fiscal year, the CPO worked to identify ways to become more accessible to the public and improve the transparency of its work. The strategies, critical process and metrics outlined below were designed to ensure the CPO is fulfilling its mandate.

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

Since its inception, the CPO has issued more than 200 recommendations regarding practice improvements to agencies/providers within the child protection system. Only 30 percent of those recommendations have been clearly communicated with citizens, legislators and stakeholders. A lack of resources in previous years prevented the CPO from hiring a communications director and implementing a public reporting policy. As a result, the CPO’s public communications have appeared inconsistent.

Successfully implementing the public reporting procedures outline in the CPO’s *Case Practices and Operating Procedures* – and increasing communications with stakeholders and citizens – will be critical in ensuring the CPO fulfills its mandate of educating the public. By clearly and consistently communicating both the individual and systemic issues plaguing the child protection system and recommendations for improvement, the CPO will better fulfill the utilitarian role the legislature designated for it.

Critical Process – Produce and release quarterly reports.

Key Metrics

Fiscal Year 2017-2018	Fiscal Year 2018-2019	Fiscal Year 2019-2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and release two CPO Quarterly Reports. (First report to be released in April 2018.) Re-tool report formats as necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and release four quarterly reports. Profile two issues, agencies/providers or organizations that are lesser known within the child protection system. Reach 150 subscribers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and release four quarterly reports. Profile two issues, agencies/providers or organizations that are lesser known within the child protection system. Reach 200 subscribers.

Outcome: 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 2020-2021)

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

Key Metrics

Fiscal Year 2017-2018	Fiscal Year 2018-2019	Fiscal Year 2019-2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 percent of the CPO’s reports and briefings will be produced using a standardized template. • 80 percent of CPO reports will be posted to the website within 72 business hours of finalization. • 100 percent of CPO briefings will be posted to the website within 48 business hours of finalization. • Assess any needed changes to report formats and public release practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 percent of CPO’s reports will be posted to the website within 48 business hours of finalization. • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain timely posting of all CPO briefings and reports. • Assess any needed changes to report formats and public release practices.

Outcome: This critical process will be complete after the notification system is launched and the CPO posts 100 percent of its investigative briefings and investigation reports to the website within 48 business hours of finalization for two consecutive fiscal years. (Expected Completion Date: Fiscal Year 2019-2020)

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

Key Metrics

Fiscal Year 2017-2018	Fiscal Year 2018-2019	Fiscal Year 2019-2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch Dashboard. (Launch expected in July 2017.) • Assess improvements and needs of the Dashboard page. • Update data in Dashboard during the first week of every month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust Dashboard page as necessary and improve functions that are confusing or inefficient. • Send survey to stakeholders seeking input on the Dashboard. • Update data in Dashboard bi-weekly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use information gathered from the 2018-2019 survey to improve functions that are confusing or inefficient. • Develop and launch campaign to increase awareness about the Dashboard.

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 investigations, investigative briefings and legislative updates.

Key Metrics

Fiscal Year 2017-2018	Fiscal Year 2018-2019	Fiscal Year 2019-2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the list of public notifications on the Pending Investigations page of the CPO’s website bi-weekly. • 70 percent of investigative briefings will be completed and posted to the Investigative Briefings page of the CPO’s website within the 60-day deadline set in the CPO’s <i>Case Practices and Operating Procedures</i>. • Update the CPO’s bill tracker every Monday during legislative session. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the list of public notifications on the Pending Investigations page of the CPO’s website weekly. • Adjust the Pending Investigations page of the CPO’s website as necessary and improve functions that are confusing or inefficient. • 100 percent of investigative briefings will be completed and posted to the Investigative Briefings 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"> • Adjust the Pending Investigations page of the CPO’s website as necessary and improve functions that are confusing or inefficient. • Adjust the Investigative Briefings page of the CPO’s website as necessary and improve functions that are confusing or inefficient.

Outcome: This critical process will be complete after the CPO updates its public notifications of pending cases every week, 100 percent of the investigative 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 – 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 2017-2018	Fiscal Year 2018-2019	Fiscal Year 2019-2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create policy for consistently sharing information with legislators, including an email listserv. • Create listserv that includes all legislators. • Provide informational reports and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize legislative communication policy. • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

<p>investigation reports directly to legislators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information about the ongoing work the CPO is doing and how to access that information on the CPO website. 	<p>their constituents want to be informed about.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide legislators quarterly reports. • Provide legislators an opportunity for a training session on the CPO Dashboard so they may quickly access data about their district and child protection services in their community. 	
<p>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 2019-2020)</p>		

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

Since its inception, the citizens contacting the CPO have largely been comprised of biological relatives of children receiving services from the child protection system. That trend continued during Fiscal Year 2016-2017. About 62 percent of the citizens who contacted the CPO during the past fiscal year were biological parents or grandparents concerned about an agency/provider’s actions or inactions in providing services to children. During the same period, the number of contacts from foster and adoptive parents, kinship placements, children and juveniles, mandated reporters and the child protection legal community made up 13 percent of the CPO’s total contacts. The CPO had previously identified these communities as ones it would like to increase engagement with. That critical process has been incorporated in the CPO’s new strategic policy initiatives.

In a similar vein, 82 percent of the calls the CPO received in Fiscal Year 2016-2017 involved agency/providers in metro areas. During the next fiscal year, 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.

<p>Critical Process – 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.</p>		
<p>Key Metrics</p>		
<p>Fiscal Year 2017-2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify organizations and agencies/providers – which the CPO has 	<p>Fiscal Year 2018-2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a listserv of all organizations and 	<p>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete outreach campaigns with four of

<p>not previously partnered with – that serve the five identified communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute CPO literature to all agencies/providers and organizations identified. • Develop a strategic plan to connect with identified organizations and agencies/providers. Schedule speaking and informational meetings. • Complete outreach campaigns with four of the organizations and agencies/providers. 	<p>agencies/providers identified in 2017-2018.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute a survey to the listserv seeking feedback regarding awareness of CPO services and interests in receiving additional materials or coordinating an informational meeting. • Complete outreach campaigns with four of the organizations and agencies/providers. • Use data to track the number of calls the CPO received from the five communities identified. 	<p>the organizations and agencies/providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Use data to track the number of calls the CPO received from the five communities identified.
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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 2019-2020)

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

Key Metrics

Fiscal Year 2017-2018	Fiscal Year 2018-2019	Fiscal Year 2019-2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Create listserv of all rural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute a survey to the listserv seeking feedback regarding awareness of CPO services and interests in receiving additional materials or coordinating an informational meeting. • 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 	<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. • Provide interested parties an opportunity for a training session on the CPO Dashboard so

agencies/providers and organizations.	hospitals and law enforcement.	they may quickly access data about their community.
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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 2019-2020)

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

Key Metrics

Fiscal Year 2017-2018	Fiscal Year 2018-2019	Fiscal Year 2019-2020
<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"> Launch Spanish-language outreach campaigns, to include “town hall” meetings in Latino communities and coordination with Latino community leaders to do so.

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)

2

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.

During Fiscal Year 2016-2017, individual CPO staff members managed an average caseload of at least 50 open cases a month. Those cases varied from less complicated inquiries about child protection systems, to investigations that involved allegations of rule and law violations by multiple agencies. 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 create more efficient methods of recognizing complex cases sooner and resolving 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 time investigations are open and conversely increase the amount of time CPO staff dedicate to systemic issues affecting the child protections system.

Providing citizens with a resource referral or systems navigation is the least time intensive service the CPO provides. It is also the most common service provided by the CPO. During Fiscal Year 2016-2017, 39 percent of the calls the CPO received resulted in either systems navigation or a resource referral being provided. The high demand for these services, combined with the limited resources and staff during the past fiscal year, resulted in inquiries remaining open for more than five business days. Of the total inquiries that resulted in a resource referral or systems navigation, 43 percent remained open for more than a week and 23 percent remained open for more than two weeks. One inquiry was open for more than four weeks. For most cases open longer than two weeks, CPO staff were working to contact citizens and obtain necessary information. In January 2017, the CPO amended its policy that an inquiry will remain open for 20 business days while staff attempt to contact citizens. That policy now requires an inquiry be open no more than 10 business days while staff attempt to contact citizens.

Meeting the high demand for resource referrals and systems navigation has strained staff resources and, as a result, 44 percent of investigations in Fiscal Year 2016-2017 remained open for longer than 60 business days.

On July 1, 2017, the CPO will implement its *Case Practices and Operating Procedures*. Included in those procedures is the requirement that CPO staff complete an investigation within 60 business days from the opening of the investigation or release an investigative briefing explaining why the investigation requires more time. Additionally, the procedures set standard practices for opening, investigating and closing investigations. Those practices, combined with the strategy below, will help the CPO improve how it handles cases so more resources may be dedicated to studying systemic issues.

Critical Process – Streamline the process for identifying inquiries that result in systems navigation or a resource referral and close such inquiries in a timely manner.

Key Metrics

Fiscal Year 2017-2018	Fiscal Year 2018-2019	Fiscal Year 2019-2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90 percent of inquiries resulting in systems navigation or a resource referral will be closed within 10 business days of receiving the inquiry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 percent of inquiries resulting in systems navigation or a resource referral will be closed within 10 business days of receiving the inquiry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70 percent of inquiries resulting in a system navigation or a resource referral will be closed within five business days of receiving the inquiry.

Outcome: This critical process will be complete after the CPO closes 100 percent of the inquiries resulting in a systems navigation or resource referral within five business days of receiving the inquiry for two consecutive fiscal years. (Estimated completion date: Fiscal Year 2020-2021)

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

Key Metrics

Fiscal Year 2017-2018	Fiscal Year 2018-2019	Fiscal Year 2019-2020
<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 investigative 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 investigative briefings are completed.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70 percent of CPO investigations will be closed within 30 business days of being opened. The remaining 30 percent of investigations will be closed within the 60-business day deadline. (This figure does not include investigations in which investigative 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 investigative briefings are completed. (Expected completion date: 2020-2021)

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

Key Metrics

Fiscal Year 2017-2018	Fiscal Year 2018-2019	Fiscal Year 2019-2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and implement a policy that requires CPO staff – on a reoccurring and scheduled basis – to analyze data and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement policy developed in Fiscal Year 2017-2018. Using information gathered during data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using information gathered during data analysis, initiate two investigations.

individual caseloads to identify trends or issues that need to be investigated.	analysis, initiate one investigation.	
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 2022-2023)		

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). To date, the CPO has identified several systemic issues affecting the delivery of services to children and families within the child protection system. The CPO launched two statewide investigations regarding such issues. In addition, the CPO dedicates substantial staff time to collaborating with stakeholders and completing independent research to identify and monitor concerns both central and peripheral to the child protection system. However, during Fiscal Year 2016-2015, it became clear that limited staff and resources will narrow the opportunities the CPO has to fulfill its role of driving change in those areas.

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 the past fiscal year, legislators and stakeholders requested the CPO to testify or provide input on more than a dozen important pieces of legislation. The CPO only comments on issues it has thoroughly studies. That practice, combined with the lack of time and staff to complete such research, forced the CPO to decline addressing seven bills affecting the child protection system.

Instances such as these confirmed that for the CPO to remain in compliance with statute, it will not only require additional staff, but staff with expertise outside of the child welfare system. Six of the bills the CPO was unable to weigh in on, focused on issues outside the child welfare system. During the past three fiscal years, the CPO has seen a steady increase in the number of cases involving agencies/providers within the Division of Youth Corrections (DYC), juvenile justice and mental health systems. The number of cases involving systems outside of child welfare was four times higher during Fiscal Year 2016-2017 compared to the previous fiscal year.

The JBC recognized the CPO’s need for additional staff and expertise. In November 2017, the JBC approved the CPO’s request for funds to hire an additional child protection systems analyst. In selecting its new hire, the CPO will require the individual to have experience and knowledge of the DYC. The CPO received seven complaints regarding the DYC during the past fiscal year. The new child protection system analyst will utilize their experiences not only to investigate complaints about the DYC, but to help handle numerous cases in other areas as well. The CPO will use the new position as a guide for future decisions in seeking additional staff and expertise.

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

Key Metrics

Fiscal Year 2017-2018	Fiscal Year 2018-2019	Fiscal Year 2019-2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hire new child protection systems analyst.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze data from the previous fiscal year to determine the impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyze data from the previous fiscal year to determine the impact

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redistribute caseloads and reassess best approaches to systemic investigations and research. 	<p>the additional staff had on decreasing caseloads and increasing the CPO's capacity to complete systemic 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>the additional staff had on decreasing caseloads and increasing the CPO's capacity to complete systemic 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>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 2017-2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child protection system analyst with expertise in the DYC will aid in outreach efforts and identifying systemic issues within this area. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2018-2019</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. 	<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.
<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.

With the exception of recommendations issued to the CDHS, the CPO does not know whether its more than 200 recommendations have been implemented. As such, the CPO does not have a true metric for measuring its effectiveness at driving systemic reform in Colorado's child protection system.

While the CPO does not have authority to mandate any agency/provider to comply with its recommendations, the CPO does have a statutory responsibility to maintain an accountable and

transparent agency. Creating a system that allows the CPO to track and report on the outcomes of its recommendations will provide a stronger 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		
<p>Fiscal Year 2017-2018</p> <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. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2018-2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Dashboard page on its website. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2019-2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Dashboard page on its website.
<p>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 2020-2021)</p>		

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 Office will comply with its requirements under the statute and will submit the required reports and evaluations.