



CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN

**FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

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Fiscal Year 2019-20 Strategic Policy Initiatives

Throughout Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20, the Office of Colorado's Child Protection Ombudsman (CPO) worked on four Strategic Policy Initiatives (SPI), which are detailed goals intended to elevate the performance of the agency. Specifically, the SPI guided the CPO's work in the areas of communication and outreach, efficient and impactful practices, expanding expertise and promoting best practices.

Each SPI, comprised of *strategies*, *critical processes* and *key metrics*, helped guide the CPO towards its goals.¹ The CPO is pleased to share this Annual Performance Report that summarizes the agency's FY 2019-20 Performance Plan, achievements and opportunities.

SPI 1: IMPROVE COMMUNICATION METHODS AND INCREASE OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS TO BETTER EDUCATE AND ENGAGE CITIZENS AND STAKEHOLDERS ON ISSUES FACING THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM.

Strategy: Maintain consistent, timely and informative methods of communicating the CPO's work to citizens and stakeholders.

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

Status of Key Metrics: Completed

The CPO stayed on track with its Communication Plan and implemented activities in a timely manner. The CPO emailed quarterly newsletter to stakeholders on the CPO's listserv. The CPO launched a new website and developed an option for additional stakeholders to add themselves to the listserv. During FY 2019-20, the CPO did not complete any investigation reports. Completed documents, along with other deliverables, were posted on the CPO's website in a timely fashion.

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.

Status of Key Metrics: Completed

The CPO stayed on track with its Communication Plan and implemented activities in a timely manner. The CPO removed the "Pending Cases" and the "Case Extension" pages from the CPO's website.

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.

Status of Key Metrics: Completed

The CPO stayed on track with its Communication Plan and implemented activities in a timely manner. Due to COVID-19 and the stunted 2020 legislative session, the CPO postponed the development and dissemination of a survey to legislators until FY 2020-21. The CPO updated/modified this critical process in its FY 2020-21 Performance Plan.

¹ FY 2019-20 strategies and critical processes are fully listed in this report. For a full list of key metrics, please see the [CPO's FY 2019-20 Performance Plan](#).

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

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.

Status of Key Metrics: Completed

The CPO stayed on track with its Communication Plan and implemented activities in a timely manner. The CPO distributed “rack cards” and/or information to all relevant agencies/providers and organizations during meetings and presentations. The CPO completed outreach campaigns with organizations and agencies/providers the CPO had not previously engaged with; however, COVID-19 impacted the quantity and timelines of campaigns. It is anticipated that additional campaigns will be completed during FY 2020-21. Additionally, the CPO adjusted the timeframe to develop and disseminate a survey to the CPO’s stakeholder listserv. It is anticipated that the survey will be developed and disseminated during FY 2020-21. The CPO updated/modified this critical process in its FY 2020-21 Performance Plan.

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

Status of Key Metrics: Completed

The CPO stayed on track with its Communication Plan and implemented activities in a timely manner. During FY 2019-20, the CPO developed and printed literature to child welfare departments and judicial districts. It is anticipated that literature will be distributed during FY 2020-21. Additionally, due to COVID-19, the CPO postponed its out-of-town board meeting and thus its completion of two outreach campaigns in different rural judicial districts. It is anticipated that these campaigns will be completed during FY 2020-21. The CPO updated/modified this critical process in its FY 2020-21 Performance Plan.

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

Status of Key Metrics: Completed

The CPO stayed on track with its Communication Plan and implemented activities in a timely manner. The CPO contracted with a communications firm to translate CPO outreach materials into Spanish. Additionally, the capability to view the CPO’s website in Spanish was created and a Spanish version of the CPO’s complaint form is available on the website. Though this critical process is considered complete, the CPO continues to focus on engaging with the Spanish-speaking community and has integrated this goal into its FY 2020-21 Performance Plan.

SPI 2: IMPLEMENT PRACTICES THAT ENSURE THE CPO MANAGES ITS CASELOAD EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY, ALLOTING STAFF THE NECESSARY TIME AND RESOURCES TO INVESTIGATE SYSTEMIC CONCERNS.

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

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

Status of Key Metrics: Ongoing

The CPO successfully closed 90 percent of inquiries resulting in an Information/Resource Referral within 30 business days of receiving the inquiry and 90 percent of inquiries resulting in Assists within 60 business days of receiving the inquiry. Though the CPO considers this critical process completed for FY 2019-20, it will continue to focus on this critical process during FY 2020-21.

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

Status of Key Metrics: Completed

The CPO did not open any investigations during FY 2019-20.

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

Status of Key Metrics: Completed

The CPO is no longer launching investigations as the sole way of researching and sharing information. During FY 2019-20, the CPO launched a new process –Special Initiatives (SI). Through SI, the CPO researches and shares best practices regarding child protection issues. The CPO launched its first SI during FY 2019-20 and developed critical processes around SI in the agency's FY 2020-21 Performance Plan.

SPI 3: INCREASE THE EXPERTISE AND RESOURCES NEEDED TO INVESTIGATE AND RESEARCH SYSTEMIC ISSUES WITHIN THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM.

Strategy: 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.

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

Status of Key Metrics: Completed

On an ongoing basis, the CPO analyzes data to determine the impact staff is having on decreasing caseloads and increasing the CPO's capacity to complete systemic research. Also, on an ongoing basis, the CPO analyzes data to determine the nature of the systemic issues facing the child protection system. New critical processes around staff resources are included in the agency's FY 2020-21 Performance Plan.

Critical Process: Use expertise of staff to complete outreach in relevant areas.

Status of Key Metrics: Completed

Staff routinely aid in outreach efforts and identify systemic issues within their given area(s) of expertise. New critical processes around staff resources are included in the agency's FY 2020-21 Performance Plan.

Strategy: Improve how the CPO tracks and analyzes its recommendations to agencies/providers.

Critical Process: Design and implement system to track the status of CPO recommendations.

Status of Key Metrics: Completed

Throughout FY 2019-20, the Deputy Ombudsman coordinated with partners to get updates on each of the recommendations the CPO issued since FY 2017-18. A new critical process regarding the update and implementation of recommendations is included in the agency's FY 2020-21 Performance Plan.

SPI 4: ESTABLISH THE CPO AS A LEADER IN INFORMATION GATHERING AND DISSEMINATION AS IT RELATES TO ISSUES FACING THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM.

This SPI was added during FY 2019-20 and replaced the SPI "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" that was listed in the CPO's FY 2019-20 Performance Plan. This SPI was developed to reflect the CPO's new process for researching and sharing information about best practices – SI. The CPO stopped working on a Public Policy Advancement Center, as SI activities will accomplish many of the goals the Center was being developed to accomplish. The CPO will report its progress on this SPI starting in FY 2020-21.

Conclusion

The 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.