



# **CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN**

**FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022  
QUARTER TWO PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

**January 31, 2022**

**Stephanie Villafuerte  
Child Protection Ombudsman**

## Fiscal Year 2021-22 Strategic Policy Initiatives

The CPO is pleased to share this Quarter Two Performance Evaluation that tracks the agency's performance on its Strategic Policy Initiatives (SPI). SPI help to ensure that the Office of Colorado's Child Protection Ombudsman (CPO) is effectively and efficiently implementing practices to address system-wide issues impacting the child protection system, while also providing a high quality of service for citizens seeking one-to-one assistance.<sup>1</sup> SPI are intended to guide the agency's work for multiple fiscal years. To create meaningful change, the CPO regularly updates SPI as the needs and resources of the agency expand, and as the field of child protection changes.

Though quarter two performance evaluations are intended to summarize agencies' performance on SPI from October 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>, the CPO is sharing information from July 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup> – effectively covering both the first and second quarters of the Fiscal Year (FY). The CPO is overseen by the CPO Board and agency staff routinely provide public updates regarding the agency's performance during bi-monthly board meetings.<sup>2</sup> Due to the amount of reporting required of the agency, the CPO is meeting the requirements of C.R.S. §2-7-204 by publishing two quarterly evaluations per year; however, as indicated, each report will present performance information regarding two quarters.

In its FY 2021-22 Performance Plan, the CPO identified three SPI to help guide the agency's work in the areas of communication and outreach, efficient and impactful practices, expanding expertise and promoting best practices. They include:

- Target communications and engagements to better educate and serve citizens and stakeholders.
- Implement practices that ensure efficient and effective CPO services.
- Establish the CPO as a leader on issues facing the child protection system.

Each SPI has corresponding *strategies, critical processes, key activities*, as well as *key outcome(s) and metrics*, that help demonstrate the CPO's performance towards achieving the SPI. These are detailed later in this document.

Key takeaways from quarter one and quarter two of FY 2021-22 include how the agency:

- Continued to be a strong presence in conversations regarding how to improve Colorado's child protection system evidenced by the number of stakeholder meetings staff attended;
- Continued to suspend its in-person outreach efforts due to the global pandemic;
- Increased its newsletter listserv subscribers by 5 percent; and
- Improved its data system to collect race, ethnicity and preferred pronoun data from its clients.

The CPO is committed to establishing and tracking performance metrics. Please reach out to the CPO with any questions or for additional information.

---

<sup>1</sup> The CPO's enabling statutes can be found in C.R.S. §19-3.3-101 through §19-3.3-110.

<sup>2</sup> CPO Board meeting minutes can be accessed online at <https://coloradocpo.org/staff-board/>.

## SPI 1: TARGET COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENTS TO BETTER EDUCATE AND SERVE CITIZENS AND STAKEHOLDERS.

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, critical processes, key metrics and outcomes as ways to become more accessible to the public and improve the consistency in which it shares its work with citizens and stakeholders.

***Strategy: Provide consistent, timely and informative communications to citizens, legislators and stakeholders on issues facing the child protection system.***

By communicating issues plaguing the child protection system, and recommendations for improvement, the CPO continues to fulfill the role the legislature designated for it.

**Critical Process: Communicate issues the CPO has identified to citizens, legislators and stakeholders by providing consistent and timely notices of the CPO’s findings and recommendations.**

---

### **Key Activities for FY 2021-22:**

- Send newsletters to citizens, legislators and stakeholders highlighting issues and information identified by the CPO, access to the CPO’s services and a discussion of how Colorado’s child protection system impacts communities of color.
- Survey legislators about their interest, and their constituents’ interest, in child protection issues. Analyze survey data to develop and target communications.
- Provide a CPO orientation presentation to interested new members of the General Assembly during Quarter Two.

### **Key Metrics and Outcome(s):**

- Increased awareness of child protection issues, as measured by the number of newsletters sent per quarter.
- Increased contact with legislators and/or their staff, as measured by the CPO’s community outreach spreadsheet.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Quarter One Updates:**

- Newsletters sent: 1
- Contacts with legislators and/or their staff: 4 (Please note that the CPO is working to update its tracking of legislative-related community outreach events and that this number may underrepresent the total number of contacts that occurred.)

#### **Quarter Two Updates:**

- Newsletters sent: 2
- Contacts with legislators and/or their staff: 7 (Please note that the CPO is working to update its tracking of legislative-related community outreach events and that this number may underrepresent the total number of contacts that occurred.)

---

<sup>3</sup> Every month, CPO staff record community outreach activities for the CPO Board in a spreadsheet, detailing conferences, trainings, meetings, presentation and other engagements with child protection system stakeholders.

**Critical Process: Communicate issues the CPO has identified to stakeholders and/or ensure CPO representation in stakeholder meetings.**

---

**Key Activities for FY 2021-22:**

- Attend stakeholder meetings related to child protection issues.

**Key Metrics and Outcome(s):**

- Continual CPO presence in stakeholder meetings, as measured by the CPO's community outreach spreadsheet.

**Quarter One Update:**

- Stakeholder meetings attended: 74 (This includes the CPO's presence at "external committees," "general meetings" and "legislative meetings".)

**Quarter Two Update:**

- Stakeholder meetings attended: 117 (This includes the CPO's presence at "external committees," "general meetings" and "legislative meetings".)

***Strategy: Engage with communities to expand the CPO's statewide presence and to identify emerging issues in child protection.***

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 – particularly populations which are overrepresented in the child protection system – will be key in creating impactful reform to all areas of Colorado's child protection system.

**Critical Process: Engage with the CPO's listserv to determine which communities the CPO is contacting, how to increase the CPO's statewide presence and to identify emerging issues in the child protection system.**

---

**Key Activities for FY 2021-22:**

- Survey the CPO's listserv to:
  - Identify who is and who is not part of the CPO's listserv;
  - Determine strategies to engage with underrepresented communities;
  - Gather feedback regarding awareness of CPO services;
  - Identify those interested in receiving additional materials; and
  - Identify emerging child protection issues.
- Share listserv with underrepresented communities.

**Key Metrics and Outcome(s):**

- Increased awareness of the CPO, as measured by an increase in the CPO's listserv subscribers.
- The identification of emerging child protection issues, as indicated by survey results.

**Quarter One Updates:**

- New listserv subscribers: 16 (Please note that prior to July 1, 2021, the CPO had a total of 672 subscribers.)
- Survey results: The CPO plans to develop the survey for its listserv during quarter four of the fiscal year.

**Quarter Two Updates:**

- New listserv subscribers: 19
- Survey results: The CPO plans to develop the survey for its listserv during quarter four of the fiscal year.

**Critical Process: Engage youth impacted by the child protection system to increase CPO services provided to youth clients.**

---

**Key Activities for FY 2021-22:**

- Distribute youth-specific materials describing the CPO's services to agencies, providers and communities serving youth in out-of-home placements.
- Complete outreach campaigns to increase the CPO's direct contact with youth clients, including those in DYS youth centers and out-of-home placements. Discuss their experiences, needs and how the CPO may better serve them.
- Update the CPO's internal database to allow CPO staff to track calls received by youth clients.

**Key Metrics and Outcome(s):**

- Increased distribution of youth-specific written materials, in both English and Spanish, as measured by the number of materials distributed.
- Increased number of engagements with youth impacted by the child protection system, as measured by the number of presentations and/or focus groups hosted by the CPO.
- Increased services to youth, as measured by an increase in cases initiated by youth.

**Quarter One Updates:**

- Materials distributed: N/A
- Presentations/focus groups hosted: N/A (Please note that due to the global pandemic, the CPO has suspended its presentations and focus groups.)
- Cases initiated by youth: 10

**Quarter Two Updates:**

- Materials distributed: Several outreach materials were sent to the Pueblo Department of Social Services; however, the count was not recorded.
- Presentations/focus groups hosted: N/A (Please note that due to the global pandemic, the CPO has suspended its in-person presentations and focus groups.)
- Cases initiated by youth: 13

**Critical Process: Engage parents, relatives or other caregivers of children involved in the child protection system – including biological parents, foster parents, adoptive parents – to increase CPO services provided to these clients.**

---

**Key Activities for FY 2021-22:**

- Distribute parent-specific materials describing the CPO's services to agencies, providers and communities serving parents, including foster parents, adoptive parents and parents of youth in DYS youth centers.
- Complete outreach campaigns to increase the CPO's direct contact with parent clients, including foster parents, adoptive parents and parents of youth in DYS youth centers. Discuss their experiences, needs and how the CPO may better serve them.

**Key Metrics and Outcome(s):**

- Distribution of parent-specific written materials, in both English and Spanish, as measured by the number of materials distributed.
- Number of engagements with parents impacted by the child protection system, as measured by the number of presentations and/or focus groups hosted by the CPO.
- Increased services to parents, relatives or other caregivers, as measured by an increase in cases initiated by parents, relatives or other caregivers.

**Quarter One Updates:**

- Materials distributed: N/A
- Presentations/focus groups hosted: 1
- Cases initiated by parents, relatives or other caregivers: 188

**Quarter Two Updates:**

- Materials distributed: N/A (Please note that several outreach materials were sent to the Pueblo Department of Social Services, but the count was not recorded.)
- Presentations/focus groups hosted: N/A (Please note that due to the global pandemic, the CPO has suspended its in-person presentations and focus groups.)
- Cases initiated by parents, relatives or other caregivers: 177

**Critical Process: Engage mandatory reporters – including specific services providers, educators, medical providers and mental health professionals – and the child protection legal community to increase CPO services provided to these clients.**

---

**Key Activities for FY 2021-22:**

- Complete outreach campaigns to at least four organizations/agencies/providers per year.
- Provide educational opportunities to interested entities about the CPO’s services.
- Update the CPO’s internal database to allow CPO staff to track calls received by mandatory reports and the child protection legal community.

**Key Metrics and Outcome(s):**

- Completed presentations to organizations/agencies/providers, as measured by the number of presentations completed per quarter.
- Increased services to mandatory reporters and the child protection legal community, as measured by an increase in cases initiated by mandatory reporters and the child protection legal community.

**Quarter One Updates:**

- Presentations hosted: N/A (Please note that due to the global pandemic, the CPO has suspended its in-person presentations and focus groups.)
- Cases initiated by mandatory reporters and members of the child protection legal community : 23

**Quarter Two Updates:**

- Presentations hosted: N/A (Please note that due to the global pandemic, the CPO has suspended its in-person presentations and focus groups.)
- Cases initiated by mandatory reporters and members of the child protection legal community: 25

**Critical Process: Engage rural communities to increase CPO services provided to clients in rural areas.**

---

**Key Activities for FY 2021-22:**

- Complete outreach campaigns to at least two rural judicial districts per year. During the campaigns, engage with entities such as child welfare departments, court improvement programs, school districts, regional hospitals and law enforcement.
- Provide educational opportunities to interested entities about the CPO's services.

**Key Metrics and Outcome(s):**

- Completed presentations to rural communities, as measured by the number of presentations completed per quarter.

**Quarter One Update:**

- Presentations hosted: N/A (Please note that due to the global pandemic, the CPO has suspended its in-person presentations and focus groups.)

**Quarter Two Update:**

- Presentations hosted: N/A (Please note that due to the global pandemic, the CPO has suspended its in-person presentations and focus groups.)

***Strategy: Ensure the CPO is targeting communications and services to all of Colorado's diverse communities.***

**Critical Process: Identify who the CPO is serving and compare this information to Colorado demographic data.**

---

**Key Activities for FY 2021-22:**

- Collect and analyze client demographic data to determine which communities the CPO is serving.
- Pull and analyze child protection demographic data to identify populations that are represented throughout Colorado.
- Compare the percentage of populations the CPO is serving to the percentages of each demographic present in the child protection system to inform ongoing outreach campaigns.

**Key Metrics and Outcome(s):**

- Increase CPO service delivery to all involved in the child protection system, as measured by the number of cases initiated by demographic data.

**Quarter One Update:**

- Cases initiated: N/A (Please note that during this time, the CPO worked to identify which fields to add to its data system to begin collecting demographic data.)

**Quarter Two Update:**

- Cases initiated: N/A (Please note that during this time, the CPO revised its data system to begin collecting demographic data, including the clients' race, ethnicity and preferred pronoun. The CPO plans to study this data during quarters three and four to ensure the CPO is achieving this critical process.)

## SPI 2: IMPLEMENT PRACTICES THAT ENSURE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE CPO SERVICES.

The CPO is statutorily required “to receive 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 the child.” See C.R.S. §19-3.3- 103(1)(a). The CPO has identified the following strategies, critical processes, key metrics and outcomes as ways to help ensure efficient and effective CPO services.

**Strategy: *Implement practices and procedures that support CPO staff.***

The high demand for CPO services requires 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 supported will, in turn, ensure the CPO is providing services in an efficient and effective 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.<sup>4</sup>

**Critical Process: Gather feedback from CPO clients to ensure quality services for citizens.**

---

**Key Activities for FY 2021-22:**

- Develop a post-case-closure survey.

**Key Metrics and Outcome(s):**

- An understanding of the opportunities and strengths, as demonstrated by the survey data.

**Quarter One Update:**

- Survey data: N/A

**Quarter Two Update:**

- Survey data: N/A (Please note that during this time, the CPO explored options to develop a post-case-closure survey.)

**Strategy: *Ensure the CPO is continually applying a diversity, equity and inclusion lens to its services.***

**Critical Process: Provide ongoing CPO staff education on diversity, equity and inclusion to help staff best serve Coloradans.**

---

**Key Activities for FY 2021-22:**

- Provide CPO staff with diversity, equity and inclusion educational opportunities.

**Key Metrics and Outcome(s):**

- The total number of educational opportunities attended, as measured by the CPO’s community outreach spreadsheet.

**Quarter One Update:**

- Educational opportunities attended: 2

---

<sup>4</sup> For more information about the CPO’s practices and procedures, please refer to the [Office of Colorado’s Child Protection Ombudsman Case Practices and Operating Procedures](#).



**Quarter Two Update:**

- Educational opportunities attended: 0 (Please note that during this time, the CPO collected bids from third-party contractors to provide the agency training and recommendations on how to continue developing staffs' knowledge around diversity, equity and inclusion best practices.

**SPI 3: ESTABLISH THE CPO AS A LEADER ON ISSUES FACING THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM.**

The CPO must work to recommend “systemic change to improve the safety of and promote better outcomes for children and families receiving protection services in Colorado.” See C.R.S. §19-3.3-130(2)(e). To ensure the CPO is maintaining a quality of work that will drive change within the child protection system and sharing information in a timely manner, the agency must ensure its processes are streamlined and efficient, and that recommendations are being considered and/or implemented.

*Strategy: Identify systemic issues that are pertinent to improving the child protection system.*

**Critical Process: Identify systemic child protection issues from CPO data to alert citizens, legislators and stakeholders to emerging or reoccurring issues.**

**Key Activities for FY 2021-22:**

- Quarterly analyze trends within CPO data to identify any themes/topics/issues that are emergent or reoccurring.

**Key Metrics and Outcome(s):**

- The identification of child protection issues, as demonstrated in trend data.

**Quarter One Update:**

- Child protection issues identified in trend data: 1 (The CPO issued an issue brief regarding the state’s mandatory reporting law after identifying a trend in its case data. Please note that the CPO is working to update its tracking of trends and that this number may underrepresent the total number of trends that were identified.)

**Quarter Two Update:**

- Child protection issues identified in trend data: 1 (The CPO identified a trend regarding timely responses to reports of child abuse and neglect. The CPO anticipates publishing an issue brief on this topic before the end of the fiscal year. Please note that the CPO is working to update its tracking of trends and that this number may underrepresent the total number of trends that were identified.)

*Strategy: Track and analyze recommendations to monitor CPO’s impacts and progress.*

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: Track the uptake and implementation of recommendations.**

**Key Activities for FY 2021-22:**

- Determine whether recommendations are being acknowledged and/or implemented by agencies.

- Ask agencies how they are using CPO work products.

**Key Metrics and Outcome(s):**

- To have a deeper understanding of how the CPO’s recommendations are changing the state’s child protection system, as measured by the number of recommendations acknowledged and/or implemented.

**Quarter One Update:**

- Recommendations acknowledged/implemented: The CPO continues to monitor the impacts of all its recommendations on the child protection system. During quarter one, the CPO dedicated agency resources to monitor the implementation of recommendations made in its [2017 investigation of the state’s adoption assistance program](#), [2019 investigation of residential child care facilities](#), [2021 child fatality issue brief](#) and [2021 mandatory reporting issue brief](#).

**Quarter Two Update:**

- Recommendations acknowledged/implemented: The CPO continues to monitor the impacts of all its recommendations on the child protection system. During quarter two, the CPO dedicated agency resources to monitor the implementation of recommendations made in its [2017 investigation of the state’s adoption assistance program](#), [2019 investigation of residential child care facilities](#), [2021 child fatality issue brief](#) and [2021 mandatory reporting issue brief](#).

**Strategy:** *Encourage citizens and stakeholders to use the CPO as a resource to improve the child protection system.*

**Critical Process:** Offer ongoing opportunities for citizens, legislators and stakeholders to engage in the CPO’s system work.

---

**Key Activities for FY 2021-22:**

- Develop opportunities for citizens, legislators and stakeholder to engage in the CPO’s work by continually offering information regarding CPO projects, initiatives, legislative efforts, etc.

**Key Metrics and Outcome(s):**

- Increased use of the CPO as a resource for child protection information, as measured by the number of contacts the CPO receives from citizens, legislators and stakeholders.

**Quarter One Update:**

- Contacts from citizens, legislators and stakeholders for systems work information: 47 (Please note that this metric reflects the number of legislators and stakeholders that signed up for the CPO’s Safety Science training. The CPO is working to update the key metric for this critical process.)

**Quarter Two Update:**

- Contacts from citizens, legislators and stakeholders for systems work information: 18 (Please note that this metric reflects the number of legislators that signed up to meet with the CPO prior to the 2022 legislative session. The CPO is working to update the key metric for this critical process.)

## 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.