



CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN of COLORADO

COLORADO CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN BOARD

PUBLIC MEETING

July 14, 2022

Record of Proceedings

Notice of this meeting was provided pursuant to the Colorado Open Meetings Law, § 24-6-402, C.R.S.

CONVENE

The subcommittee meeting of the Child Protection Ombudsman Board was convened via Zoom teleconference at 9:30 a.m. by Deputy Ombudsman Jordan Steffen.

A quorum of the Board was not required.

INTRODUCTIONS

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

Board Members on Zoom

Hon. Kenneth Plotz
April Lane
Victoria Shuler

Others Present

Jordan Steffen, Deputy Ombudsman
Janna Fischer, Assistant Attorney General

PRESENT FROM THE PUBLIC

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

OPENING REMARKS

Subcommittee members, Office of Colorado's Child Protection Ombudsman (CPO) staff and Janna Fischer, Assistant Attorney General (AAG) participated via Zoom teleconferencing.

Deputy Ombudsman Jordan Steffen welcomed everyone and thanked the subcommittee members for sharing their experiences and perspectives on improving the agency's outreach efforts to serving youth in Colorado.

DISCUSSION OF THINK OF US SUMMARY REPORT

Deputy Ombudsman Jordan Steffen thanked the Subcommittee members for all of their work during the past few months. She opened up the conversation regarding the report prepared by Think of US, which facilitated discussions with young people who have experienced the child protection system. TOU hosted three sessions with young people to discuss CPO materials and how the agency may improve its outreach and services for this population. TOU asked that CPO staff and board members not participate in the meetings.

Tori Shuler expressed her concerns with not knowing who TOU used for their youth lived experts and was concerned that she was not able to participate in the sessions because, in her experience in Colorado, those lived experience youth and young adults are very willing to have someone hear their voice. Deputy Ombudsman Steffen shared some of the same concerns and stated that the agency will use the experience to help shape how it engages with youth in the future. Regardless, the agency learned a lot about engaging young people and elevating their voice.

Deputy Ombudsman Steffen reported that there was very useful information that came out of the TOU report. However, she also expressed awareness that the overview of the agency's services provided to the young adults may not have been sufficient. This likely impacted the feedback many of the participants received. Still, the agency will utilize information in the report to continue evolving its materials and outreach efforts.

WORKING SESSION

Partnership Suggestions

Ms. Shuler reported that youth advocates in Colorado's have such a strong partnering with Fostering Great Ideas, Project Foster Power with Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center, Urban Peak, Elevating Connections, and Colorado Office of the Child Representative (OCR) – which houses the Lived Experts Action Panel. She encouraged the CPO to continue working with these organizations to incorporate youth voice into its work. She reported that she would be happy to share her contacts with the CPO because having that perspective would really help the CPO advance their youth engagement.

Lived Experience Internships/Externships

Ms. Shuler also suggested the CPO have a lived-experience internship program either an unpaid, stipend based, or even an AmeriCorps opportunity. Deputy Ombudsman Steffen reported that she has also been looking into an externship program with the law schools to have additional exposure to work with the lived experts. Ms. Shuler shared what a typical acknowledgement or stipend would look like and that she would be happy to help the CPO in filling the internship in lived experience opportunities from the students she is currently working with.

Commitment Statement and Strategic Plan

The group then discussed a commitment statement that will be drafted and posted on the CPO's website. The statement will serve as a public-facing promise to continue engaging with youth to improve the agency's services and work. The statement will be finalized before the end of the calendar year. The group also committed to drafting a strategic plan that will outline the agency's continued efforts to engage youth and learn from their voice and experience.

Training Suggestions/Opportunities

April Lane asked what kind of trauma informed training or experience the CPO staff has in working with children and youth. Deputy Ombudsman Steffen reported that all the client service analysts are certified

caseworkers and that the CPO employees regularly partake in ongoing trainings. She reported that in the near future the CPO has scheduled training specific to Solution Focused Brief Therapy Training, Customer Service and Trauma Informed Response Services Training.

Ms. Lane said that appreciated the information and said that she will also look into finding some additional trauma informed training for staff along with some funding suggestions that the CPO could consider.

Ms. Shuler stated that Positive Youth Development principles guides communities and organizations on how to organize services, opportunities and support youth in reaching their full potential. She suggested that it might be something for the CPO to get the training in the future.

Ms. Shuler also suggested that the CPO look into the Criminal Justice Act Task Force which is composed of professionals and individuals with knowledge and experience relating to the criminal justice system and issues of child physical abuse, child neglect, child sexual abuse and exploitation, and child maltreatment related fatalities also has training funding opportunities. She reported that they have funded other independent offices conferences-training budgets.

CLOSING REMARKS

Deputy Ombudsman Steffen reported that she will compile the information, identify gaps and distribute it to the group during the coming months. There was a suggestion to continue to meet one or two times a year to discuss the needs of youth and children. She thanked everyone for their participation, suggestions and discussions in these subcommittee meetings and will look at having a meeting following the November board meeting.

ADJOURN

The Board subcommittee formally adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

ATTESTATION

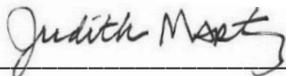
As Board Chair and Board Vice-Chair, I attest that these minutes of the open public meeting held on July 14, 2022, of the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman Board substantially reflect the substance of the discussion and action taken related to the matters under the authority of the Board and in compliance with the Open Meetings Law, § 24-6-402, C. R.S.



Board Chair

09-14-22

Date



Board Vice-Chair

09-14-22

Date

