

The Independent, Nonpartisan Board of Colorado's Child Protection Ombudsman

Overview of the Office of Colorado's Child Protection Ombudsman

The Office of Colorado's Child Protection Ombudsman (CPO) is committed to ensuring the state's complex child protection system consistently provides high-quality services to every child, family and community in Colorado. The CPO listens to people about their experience with, and concerns about, child protection. Through the course of helping citizens, staff identify trends where communities' needs have changed and the system has not had the resources or practice to keep up. The agency then makes public recommendations for system improvement and contributes to lasting change by convening lawmakers, professionals and other stakeholders to advance legislation and policies for long-term positive impacts on children, families and communities.

Duties of the CPO Board

The board is charged with:

- Overseeing personnel decisions related to the Child Protection Ombudsman;
- Overseeing and advising the Child Protection Ombudsman on the strategic direction of the office and its mission;
- Promoting the use, engagement, access, and mission of the office;
- Providing fiscal oversight;
- Ensuring the office operates in compliance with the law, memorandums of understand, and state and federal laws relating to the child welfare system; and
- Providing assistance, as practicable and as requested by the Child Protection Ombudsman.

Workload & Meeting Schedule

CPO Board members are expected to come prepared to each of the board's bi-monthly meetings. This includes reviewing agency documents, such as financial reports, meeting minutes, and agency updates. Meetings are scheduled for three hours each and are held virtually or in a hybrid format. One meeting each year is held outside of the metro area in a rural community.

CPO Board Membership

The CPO is comprised of 12 members with appointments from each branch of government. The membership of the board must, to the extent practical, include persons from throughout the state and persons with disabilities, and reflect the ethnic diversity of the state. Additionally, all members must have child welfare policy or system expertise or experience. Below lists each appointing entity and their corresponding appointments.

The Chief Justice of the Colorado Supreme Court appoints the four following members:

1. An individual with experience as a respondent parents' counsel;
2. An individual with experience defending juveniles in court proceedings;
3. An individual with legal experience in dependency and neglect cases; and
4. An individual with experience in criminal justice involving children and youth.

The Governor appoints the following four members:

1. An individual with previous professional experience with a rural county human or social services agency or a rural private child welfare advocacy agency;
2. An individual with previous professional experience with the department of human services;
3. An individual with previous professional experience with an urban human or social services agency or an urban private child welfare agency; and
4. An individual with experience in primary or secondary education.

The President and Minority Leader of the Senate appoints the following two members:

1. An individual who was formerly a child in the foster care system; and
2. An individual with professional experience as a county and community child protection advocate.

The Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives appoint the following two members:

1. A current or former foster parent; and
2. A health care professional with previous experience with child abuse and neglect cases.

Board members serve four-year terms and are not compensated, except that they may be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses.

Want to Learn More?

To learn more about the CPO or its board, please visit coloradocpo.org. Additionally, inquiries may be directed to Deputy Child Protection Ombudsman, Jordan Steffen, at jsteffen@coloradocpo.org.