



COLORADO OFFICE OF  
**THE CHILD'S  
REPRESENTATIVE**

**PERFORMANCE PLAN**

**July 1, 2023**

## Mission

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OCR gives children and youth a voice in Colorado legal proceedings through high-quality legal representation that protects and promotes their safety, interests, and rights.

## Vision

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Justice, opportunity, and healthy families for all court-involved children and youth.

## Values

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### **Accountability**

Colorado's children, attorneys, families, and communities can count on OCR to ensure that each decision we make and action we take advances our mission in a fair, equitable, inclusive, and transparent manner.

### **Efficiency**

OCR strives to accomplish its mission and conserve resources by streamlining efforts, adhering to deadlines, resolving conflict constructively, and honoring well-defined projects, processes, and roles. We balance our drive to achieve with thoughtful planning and implementation.

### **Empowerment**

OCR cultivates an environment of respect, honesty, and equity. We value the diverse experiences and expertise of the children we serve, our attorneys, and our staff. We invest time to reflect and connect, focus on strengths, value feedback, and recognize success. We stand for justice and support each other in our mission to empower children.

## Overview

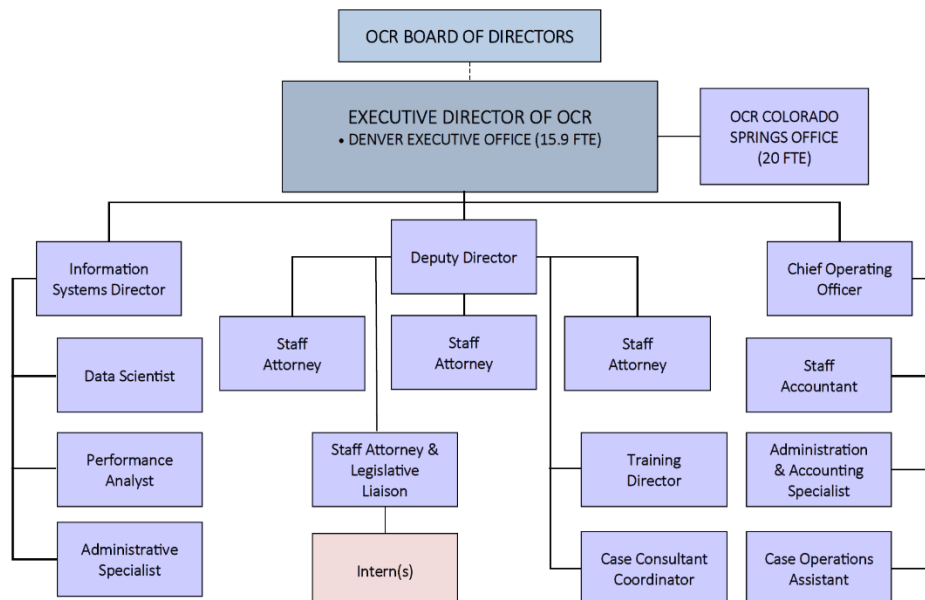
The Office of the Child’s Representative (“OCR”) was created by the Colorado General Assembly in 2000 through House Bill 00-1371 to improve representation for Colorado’s most vulnerable children and youth. OCR’s enabling legislation and mandates are found in Colorado Revised Statute §13-91-101 et seq. and require the OCR to:

- Ensure provision of uniform, high-quality legal representation to children involved in judicial proceedings in Colorado.
- Enhance the provision of guardian ad litem (“GAL”) or Counsel for Youth (“CFY”) services in Colorado.
- Provide high-quality, accessible training throughout the state.
- Make recommendations to the Colorado Chief Justice concerning practice standards.
- Provide oversight to ensure compliance with the established practice standards.
- Establish fair and realistic compensation for state-appointed GALs and CFY sufficient to attract and retain high-quality, experienced attorneys to serve as GALs or CFY.
- Work cooperatively and form partnerships with local judicial districts, attorneys, and children and youth impacted by the child welfare and juvenile justice system.
- Develop measurement instruments to assess and document the effectiveness of various models of representation.

OCR began operating in 2001 and became a permanent independent state agency in 2010. In the last 22 years, OCR has worked diligently to successfully fulfill these mandates and improve the quality of legal services and representation of children and youth in Colorado. OCR comprises two offices. The Executive Office, located in the Ralph Carr Judicial Center (1300 Broadway, Suite 320, Denver, CO 80203) houses OCR’s Executive Director, Chris Henderson, and his staff:

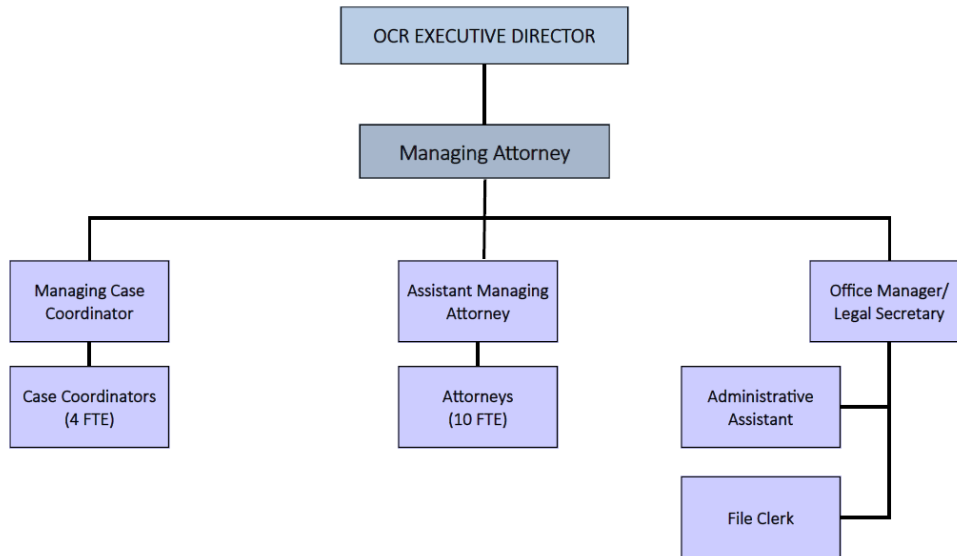
### Colorado Office of the Child’s Representative (OCR) Organizational Chart

November 1, 2022



The Colorado Springs Office operates under OCR and provides high quality GAL and CFY representation to children and youth in the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District through a multidisciplinary legal office model. The Colorado Springs Office is managed by Nicole Lyells and comprises 11 case-carrying attorneys, 5 case consultants (CCs), and administrative support staff.

**Colorado Office of the Child’s Representative (OCR)  
Colorado Springs Office Organizational Chart (20 FTE)**



**Attorney Services Provided by OCR**

OCR oversees approximately 275 attorneys who serve as GALs, CFY, or Child’s Legal Representatives (“CLR”), and these attorneys span the entire state, representing children and youth (or their best interests) in all 22 judicial districts. A GAL or CFY is appointed by the court for every child or youth who is a party in a dependency and neglect (“D&N”) or Foster Youth Transition Program case (“FYTP”) as mandated in C.R.S. §19-1-111, §19-3-203, and §19-7-308. OCR is responsible for oversight and payment of these appointments, including any applicable appeal. OCR is responsible for the following mandatory appointments:

<b>CASE TYPE</b>	<b>OCR RESPONSIBILITY</b>
<b>Dependency &amp; Neglect</b>	All GAL and CFY appointments.
<b>Foster Youth in Transition (FYTP)</b>	All CFY assignments or appointments.
<b>Underage Party seeking a Marriage License</b>	All GAL appointments (GAL appointed for all youth 16-17 seeking a marriage license).
<b>Juvenile Delinquency – detained youth only</b>	All GAL appointments for youth who are detained (this appointment is limited to the time of detention and further appointment is guided by §19-1-111) <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is a new mandatory appointment created in HB23-1307, effective June 7, 2023.

The court has *discretion* to appoint an OCR attorney in the following proceedings and OCR is responsible for those appointments as follows:

<b>Case Type</b>	<b>OCR Responsibility</b>
<b>Delinquency &amp; Direct File</b>	All GAL appointments.
<b>Truancy</b>	All GAL appointments.
<b>Paternity &amp; Support</b>	GAL appointments where at least one party is indigent.
<b>Probate</b>	GAL appointments where at least one party is indigent.
<b>Adoption &amp; Relinquishment</b>	All GAL appointments.
<b>Mental Health</b>	All GAL appointments.
<b>Victim Witness</b>	All GAL appointments.
<b>Domestic Relations</b>	Child’s Legal Representative (“CLR”) appointments when one or both parties are indigent.
<b>D&amp;N GAL for a minor parent</b>	All GAL appointments.

In addition, OCR may be responsible for appointments in other proceedings when deemed necessary by the court.

### Attorney Roles

Each proceeding has its own statutory roles and responsibilities, and these vary slightly. Overall, however, the roles of the attorney remain the same. GALs and CLR’s represent the best interests of the child or youth they are appointed to and the attorney’s professional duties flow to the best interests of the child. GALs are appointed to independently investigate the best interests of the child and advocate for those best interests through all stages of the proceedings. CLR’s have a similar role and are appointed only in Domestic Relations (DR) cases. CFY represents the youth’s stated position and the attorney’s professional duties flow to the youth client directly. CFY are appointed to independently investigate, counsel the youth, and advocate for the youth’s position throughout all stages of the proceedings.

Attorneys that contract with OCR (OCR Attorneys) are held to high practice standards, set forth in Chief Justice Directive 04-06 (“CJD 04-06”). These attorneys are well trained, skilled litigators, with specialized knowledge of child welfare and juvenile law. The legal advocacy provided by OCR attorneys plays a critical role in protecting children and youth rights, promoting the child’s or youth’s safety and well-being, and ensures these children and youth have a voice throughout their legal proceedings.

## FY24 Wildly Important Goal (WIG)

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**OCR WILL FURTHER ADVANCE YOUTH RIGHTS IN COLORADO LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AND CHILD WELFARE AND JUVENILE JUSTICE RELATED POLICY INITIATIVES.** *YOUTH ENCOMPASSES THE AGES OF 0 – 21 YEARS OLD AND IT IS IMPORTANT TO ENGAGE IN AN INTENTIONAL EFFORT TO RECOGNIZE, DEFINE, PROTECT, AND ADVANCE THEIR INTERESTS AND RIGHTS ON INDIVIDUAL CASES AND IN THE LAW AND POLICY ATTORNEYS RELY ON TO ADVOCATE FOR THOSE INTERESTS.*

### Strategies

- a) Develop and implement an affirmative policy strategy focused on youth rights.
- b) Improve appellate procedures to ensure children and youth have effective appellate representation that protects their interests and advances their rights. Ensure strong appellate records through effective trial advocacy.
- c) Utilize IV-E funding to expand youth access to skilled multidisciplinary legal teams and provide holistic legal representation on civil legal service matters impacting their safety, well-being, and success.
- d) Provide training targeted to issues impacting youth rights in Colorado.
- e) Protect youth's best interests and advance their rights in juvenile justice proceedings through specialized training, practice supports, and attorney lists.
- f) Identify the impacts of disproportionality and disparities in child protection, juvenile justice, and other OCR cases and identify strategies to address these disparities and advance youth rights through legal advocacy.
- g) Ensure the right of children and youth to attend and meaningfully participate in D&N proceedings by providing effective advocacy and communication tools, identifying and addressing barriers, and expanding effective practices throughout Colorado.
- h) Bolster efforts to support effective advocacy in domestic relations, truancy, and other OCR discretionary appointments.

## OCR's Other Performance Goals and Strategies

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**GOAL 1:** PROVIDE CHILDREN AND YOUTH A VOICE IN THE COLORADO LEGAL SYSTEM THROUGH EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT ATTORNEY SERVICES AND ADVOCACY.

### Strategies:

- a) *Ensure children's and youth's voice and interests are paramount throughout the proceedings and in the development of policy, law, and practice.*
- b) *Provide and promote effective use of case consultant (CC) support to attorneys.*
- c) *Provide oversight and evaluation of attorney practice.*
- d) *Establish fair and reasonable compensation for OCR attorneys.*
- e) *Recruit and retain a sufficient pool of qualified attorneys to meet each district's needs.*

## **GOAL 2: OPTIMIZE EFFICIENCIES IN OCR OVERSIGHT AND BILLING.**

### Strategies:

- a) *Manage appropriations.*
- b) *Optimize use and effectiveness of CARES.*
- c) *Process, manage, and evaluate attorney billings.*

## **GOAL 3: ENSURE ATTORNEYS AND CASE CONSULTANTS REMAIN CURRENT IN STATE AND FEDERAL LAW AND REGULATIONS, SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH, BEST PRACTICES IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, AND EVIDENCE BASED SERVICES.**

### Strategies:

- a) *Cultivate a learning and practice environment that supports excellence in legal representation.*
- b) *Deliver high-quality accessible training to advance best practices, address emerging topics in relevant fields, and implement OCR's Core Competencies.*
- c) *Assess attorney and case consultant education and support needs.*
- d) *Maintain and disseminate current and relevant resources for attorney and case consultant use regarding relevant law, social science, and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) strategies.*

## Goal 1

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### **Provide children and youth a voice in the Colorado legal system through effective and efficient attorney services and advocacy.**

OCR has worked to advance youth voice and youth rights through the implementation of HB22-1038, passed in April of 2022 and effective January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023. This legislation ensures that youth 12 and over have an attorney who represents their stated position in D&N proceedings.

In addition to promoting youth voice directly in court, OCR has a robust Engaging and Empowering Youth program that focuses on increasing youth attendance in court, incorporating youth feedback and voice into OCR policies and programming, disseminating up to date and accessible youth resources, and gathering youth surveys.

OCR uses its case management and billing system, CARES, to report on several areas related to youth voice, including reports to ensure attorneys are visiting children and youth in their placements in a timely manner and youth attendance at court reports. Youth data is reflected in the chart below. Youth attendance at court is a complex data point because it is impacted by judicial officers and other parties as much as youth and OCR attorneys. However, OCR believes its attorneys are in a strong position to encourage this policy and effectuate change across the state.

### OCR's Lived Expert Action Panel (LEAP)

OCR's LEAP began in 2021 and is currently comprised of 12 young adults with lived experience in D&N, FYTP, JD, and/or truancy proceedings. LEAP and its members have helped provide training to attorneys and other parties involved in child welfare and delinquency proceedings, including at OCR's Fall Conference, OCR's Core Competencies I, and the Colorado Convening on Children, Youth and Families. Additionally, members provided youth voice at the Colorado Mentoring Summit and the Strengthening Families and Communities Summit. In FY23, LEAP selected three projects to focus on, which included developing an emancipation checklist, a flyer for stakeholders regarding DYS facilities and sentencing, and an ICWA resource. LEAP provides valuable input regarding OCR policies, youth resources, and communication. Outside of the OCR, LEAP participates in state-wide efforts like the Colorado Child Welfare Codesign Steering Committee and the Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Multidisciplinary and Cross-Jurisdictional Training Project. LEAP members have also provided valuable testimony at the Colorado State Capitol on a variety of bills.

### Youth Outreach

As part of the OCR's Engaging and Empowering Youth program, OCR attends or hosts youth events across the state, speaking with young people who are involved in the child welfare and/or juvenile justice system. Youth who attend these events are offered the opportunity to provide direct feedback regarding their OCR attorney through an anonymous survey. This survey is also available on the OCR's youth page and gives OCR direct feedback from youth working with OCR attorneys.

In addition, OCR conducts youth reference interviews as part of its contract renewal process for one third of Colorado's judicial districts each year. This provides direct youth feedback about current contract attorneys. In FY23, OCR conducted 81 youth reference interviews regarding 73 attorneys up for renewal. This feedback is incorporated into the attorney's evaluation regarding compliance with OCR practice standards and is discussed with each attorney during their renewal interview. Additional data in the chart below comes from Court Observation forms, Stakeholder feedback surveys, and youth events and surveys.

Goal 1: Provide children and youth a voice in the Colorado legal system through effective attorney services and advocacy.												
<i>Ensure children's &amp; youth's voice &amp; interests are paramount throughout the proceedings</i>	FY21		FY22		FY23		FY24		FY25		FY26	
	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual
# of youth events attended or sponsored	5	4	5	12	8		10		10		10	
# of youth surveys received	100	18	100	140	100		100		100		100	



% of renewing attorneys w/ at least 1 youth reference interview	95%	<b>88%</b>	95%	<b>100%</b>	95%	<b>99%</b>	95%		95%		95%	
% of GALs stated child's position in court observations <sup>2</sup>	85%	<b>33%</b>	85%	<b>43%</b>	90%	<b>57%</b>	90%		90%		90%	
% of youth over 12 who attended a benchmark, permanency, or review hearing	Est. Base line	<b>19%</b>	20%	<b>20.4%</b>	25%		25%		30%		30%	
% of youth report attorney talked to them about the right to go to Court <sup>3</sup>	70%	<b>63%</b>	70%	<b>83%</b>	75%		75%		80%		80%	
% of youth report having contact with attorney 1/mo. or more	-	-	Est Base line	<b>70%</b>	75%		75%		80%		80%	
% of youth report they trusted their OCR attorney always/usually	-	-	Est Base Line	<b>77%</b>	80%		80%		85%		85%	
% of initial 30 day visits completed	100%	<b>97%</b>	100%	<b>95%</b>	100%		100%		100%		100%	

### Case Consultant Support

Multidisciplinary law practice is a well-accepted best practice that the OCR is working to infuse throughout the state. Attorneys may hire their own social work professional, referred to as a case consultant (CC) or they may engage the services of an OCR contract CC to work on specific cases. The use of CCs allows additional work on cases at a lower hourly rate, provides social science expertise to complement the attorney's expertise, and can enhance attorney contact with children/youth and other parties. Case Consultant I level professionals must have either a license in a relevant field, a Master's in a relevant field, or a Bachelor's in a relevant field plus at least 2 years of relevant experience. Case Consultant II level must be licensed as a Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Professional Counselor (LPC), or Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT). OCR expanded its CC contracts in FY23 and now contracts directly with 19 CCs who are available state-wide.

<sup>2</sup> Beginning in FY23 this measure is solely for GALs due to the ethical obligations of CFY and looks at youth 5 & older. This number cannot account for instances when a GAL may not state a position in accordance with the child's wishes.

<sup>3</sup> This question changed slightly for FY22 when the youth survey was updated and streamlined. The concept in previous year reporting is similar.

## Attorney Oversight and Evaluation

Child welfare cases are very fact specific and individualized, which means that appropriate results for one child may not be appropriate for another child. Because of this, the practice does not lend itself to simple outcome-based analysis, which is why the OCR concentrates its data collection on compliance with practice standards. Every year OCR establishes lists of attorneys eligible for OCR appointments in each of the 22 judicial districts across the state. OCR uses a comprehensive evaluation strategy and [benchmarks](#) to ensure compliance with practice standards and relevant chief justice directives related to the practice as it establishes these eligibility or appointment lists. This evaluation strategy includes:

- Annual verification process
- Tri-annual renewal process
- New attorney interviews
- Ongoing assessment, periodic reviews, and risk-based sampling of attorney activity

Each year, attorneys contracting with OCR must disclose disciplinary history, verify fulfillment of OCR training requirements, and verify malpractice insurance requirements. Every three years, OCR requires attorneys to undergo a more involved contract renewal process that includes analysis of additional qualitative data sources. This three-year renewal process is staggered so that one third of attorneys are undergoing renewal each year. The Annual Verification and Tri-Annual Renewal process requires review of the following data sources (those in bold only apply to the Tri-Annual Renewal Process):

- D&N Initial 30-day Visit Report
- Attorney Discipline Report
- Judicial Officer Stakeholder Survey Report
- Training Verification Form
- Malpractice Insurance Verification
- Outstanding Issues Form
- **Court Observation Summary**
- **Case Reference Summary**
- **Writing Sample**
- **One on One Interview**
- **Activity in Timeframe Report**
- **Youth in Court Reports**
- **Youth Surveys**

Each attorney is reviewed by an OCR staff attorney who assesses any discrepancies between the attorney's data and the established benchmarks. Attorneys falling outside of the benchmarks are staffed by the OCR to determine what is necessary. This process promotes consistency and transparency in OCR's contract decisions. In FY23, the OCR processed 233 verifications and renewal applications and received 50 additional new applications.

*Judicial Officer Stakeholder Surveys and Case Reference Interviews*

OCR seeks judicial feedback for each verifying or renewing attorney through an annual survey administered statewide to Judicial Officers presiding in relevant case types. Responses from this survey are included in various charts in this report and reflect answers of Strongly Agree or Agree, which are noted as “SA/A”. In FY23, OCR received a total of 347 survey responses concerning 190 attorneys.

OCR also seeks direct feedback from youth, caregivers, and parents for each renewing attorney through case reference interviews. These are done with a standardized script to ensure consistency and provide meaningful feedback directly from parties that are working with OCR attorneys. In FY23, OCR interviewed 248 total references concerning 73 attorneys.

*Court Observations*

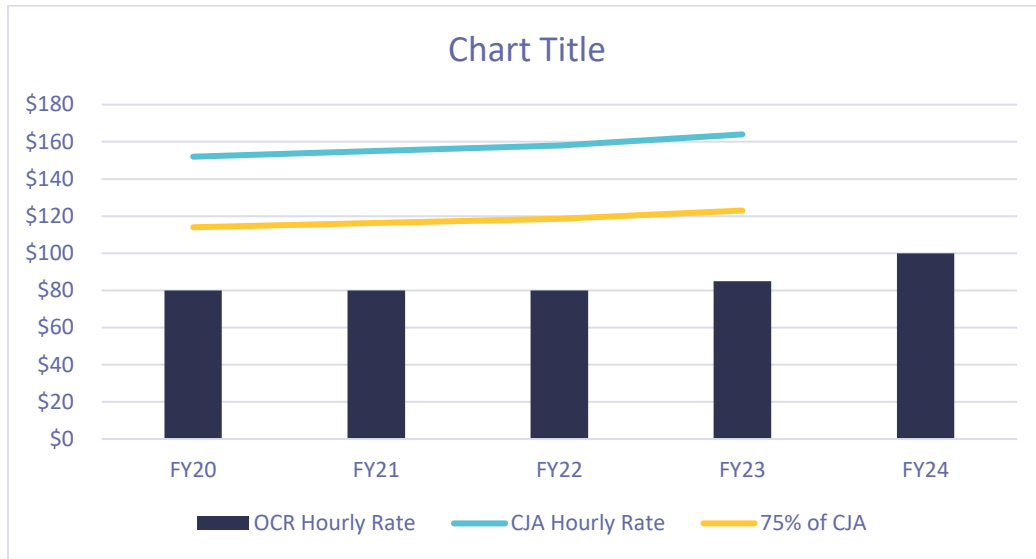
Court observations are done using separate standardized forms for D&N cases and for JD cases. In FY23, OCR conducted 220 observations involving 90 attorneys and 403 children/youth.

Goal 1: Provide children and youth a voice in the Colorado legal system through effective attorney services and advocacy.												
Provide oversight & evaluation of attorney practice	FY21		FY22		FY23		FY24		FY25		FY26	
	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual
Attorney attends all court hearings (SA/A)	97%	99%	100%	99%	100%	92%	100%		100%		100%	
Appointed Attorney Personally Appeared (Ct. Ob)	95%	97%	98%	95%	98%	97%	98%		98%		98%	
Attorney provided current, independent information	90%	72%	90%	76%	95%	87%	95%		95%		95%	
Attorney possesses requisite knowledge and skills to provide effective legal rep (SA/A)	-	-	-	-	Est. Benchmark	97%	98%		98%		100%	

**Fair and Reasonable Compensation**

OCR is statutorily mandated, in C.R.S. 13-91-105, to establish fair and realistic rates of compensation to enhance the legal representation of children. OCR is immensely grateful to the Joint Budget Committee and the General Assembly for approving the requested rate increase, which brings the OCR contract attorney hourly rate to \$100/hour beginning July 1, 2023. In addition, the passage of SB23-227 gives OCR a sustainable path to secure attorney compensation

rates that are at least 75% of the rate set pursuant to the Federal “Criminal Justice Act Revision of 1986”, which sets rate for indigent representation in federal court. With the increase to \$100/hour, OCR attorney rates are at 61% of the CJA rate.



### Recruitment and Retention

OCR’s efforts to attain a more competitive compensation rate addressed above is a vital piece of the agency’s recruitment and retention strategy. Outside of compensation, the OCR administers an Attorney Satisfaction Survey to all contract attorneys for the year. OCR strives to be responsive to the feedback from these surveys as part of its retention strategy. In FY23, OCR received 176 Attorney Satisfaction Surveys covering all 22 Judicial Districts. OCR is acting in a variety of ways that are responsive to the results of the survey. For example, OCR is engaging in an attorney wellbeing program, launching a new policy to compensate attorneys for up to 10 CLEs of in person OCR approved training, starting a second chair litigation support program, and expanding payment categories for the CC program.

To further these efforts, OCR assigns staff attorneys to be liaisons with specific judicial districts each year. This ensures that each district has a contact who can provide support, training, and discuss issues specific to the district. The staff attorney liaison also assesses the needs of each district by collaborating with judicial officers, meeting with attorneys, and reviewing judicial district filing statistics and OCR appointment data. These assessments ensure attorneys who contract with the OCR are not overwhelmed by their caseloads but are able to sustain a practice.

## GOAL 2

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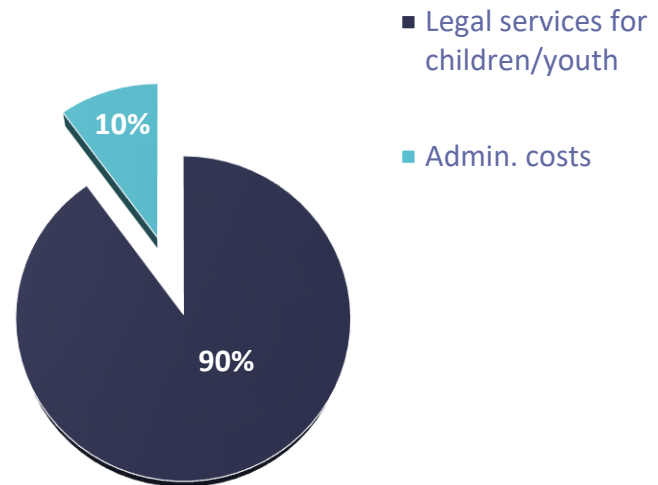
### Optimize efficiencies in OCR oversight and billing.

#### Manage Appropriations

OCR strives to be efficient and effective in utilizing its annual appropriation. OCR's budget is driven largely by attorney activity and caseloads. For example, the court appointed counsel ("CAC") appropriation is driven strictly by caseload and workload of contractor's billing. OCR does not control the number of appointments, as these are made by courts. In contrast, OCR does control non-CAC expenditures and endeavors to ensure these

stay within the annual allocation amount. In FY23 (through 3/31/23), OCR used 90% of its expended funds for attorney services (including the CAC line item) and only 10% for administration. Through the first three quarters of the fiscal year, OCR has expended 65% of its appropriation and is currently on track to be well within budget by the end of the fiscal year.

FY 23 Administrative Expenditures  
(through 3/31/23)



#### Optimize Use and Effectiveness of CARES

The current CARES system was developed in 2018 and underwent a significant update in 2022. This proprietary case management and billing system allows for streamlined billing, case management, and oversight reporting. CARES also allows OCR to track IV-E spending through a custom rules-based engine. Most recently, OCR released CARES enhancements to support client-directed representation by allowing for attorneys' youth-specific roles to change during their representation and enforcing the transition to client-directed representation for some, but not all, case types and roles when youth turn 12. OCR's Information Systems team worked to make these changes user-friendly and intuitive for attorneys while maintaining data integrity. The changes include user-friendly enhancements such as a new appointment management screen and warnings as youth approach age 12 to minimize the impact of new data entry requirements for its 550 active users. At the end of June, there were approximately 9,000 open appointments in CARES covering all OCR case types.

Through CARES, OCR does periodic reporting that aids in both Goal 1 and Goal 2, with the following reports:

- Child Counts per attorney
- 30-day initial visits in D&N cases
- Potential duplicate entries
- Non-attorney staff in court
- 12+ hours billed per day
- 15+ hours billed on an appointment/month
- Age maximums for D&N cases
- Risk sampling of high-cost contractors/appointments per quarter

### Process, Manage and Evaluate Contractor Billing

As illustrated above, OCR uses CARES to evaluate contractor billing in addition to reporting on attorney compliance with practice standards. OCR’s Operations Team processes invoices for approximately 275 attorneys each month with a multilevel review/approval system. While OCR has up to 45 days to pay an invoice, it endeavors to pay all undisputed invoices within 30 days of receipt. As of March 31, 2023, OCR staff processed 2,063 invoices in FY23 through CARES and an additional 576 non-CARES payments.

Goal 2: Optimize efficiencies in attorney oversight and billing.												
Process, manage and evaluate contractor billing.	FY21		FY22		FY23		FY24		FY25		FY26	
	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual
Non-CAC expenditures stay within budgeted appropriation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Avg. # of days from invoice submission to payment in state financial system	10	10	10	12	14		14		14		14	

## GOAL 3

**Ensure attorneys and case consultants remain current in state and federal law and regulations, social science research, best practices in diversity and inclusion, and evidence-based services.**

Cultivate a learning and practice environment that supports excellence in legal representation.

OCR has developed a learning and practice environment that infuses diversity, equity, and inclusion principles throughout and focuses on four overarching core competencies as the foundation of high-quality representation:

- Ethics/Role of the GAL, CLR, or CFY
- Substantive Knowledge
  - Federal and state law
  - Social science and cultural competency
- Skills
  - Out of court advocacy
  - In court advocacy
  - Effective engagement with youth and professionals
  - Conducting a meaningful independent investigation
- Law Practice Management

To support this learning and practice environment, OCR offers periodic staffings by case type (e.g. FYTP, youth justice, appellate litigation support, CLR) where attendees can assess needs and create a community of shared knowledge and information.

In addition to the overarching competencies, OCR focuses on key priorities each fiscal year. These priorities are informed by:

- OCR's WIG and performance goals
- Contractor needs identified by the Attorney Satisfaction Survey and monthly case-type staffings
- LEAP input and recommendations
- New state and federal legislation

For FY24, the training priorities are:

- Disabilities: early intervention and intervention for children and youth; ADA
- Kinship and family connections
- Older youth: advocacy, services, supports, and client engagement

Deliver high-quality accessible training to advance best practices, address emerging topics in relevant fields, and implement OCR's Core Competencies.

The General Assembly charged OCR with providing high-quality and accessible training throughout the state and OCR contract attorneys are required to complete at least 10 hours of OCR sponsored or approved training, including at least 2 hours of diversity, equity and inclusion specific training.

To meet these requirements, OCR hosts an annual conference and provides periodic training throughout the year. It is vital that this training be accessible to attorneys state-wide. To that end, OCR provides webinars at least once per quarter and endeavors to livestream in-person trainings when possible. OCR works with an audio/visual team to record the majority of OCR sponsored training which is then archived and available on OCR's website.

To further enhance learning opportunities and state-wide accessibility, the OCR has developed curriculum for e-learning on-demand courses. Currently, the OCR offers:

- Indian Child Welfare Act: Quick Guide
- Special Immigrant Juvenile Status: Quick Guide
- Appellate Certification Course
- Core Competencies training topics: sources of law in dependency & neglect cases; educational advocacy, stages of a dependency & neglect case, stages of a juvenile delinquency case

In total, OCR offered an ambitious 91 CLEs in FY23, including a 2-day in-person fall conference, a virtual 1-day spring conference, 4 days of new attorney Core Competency trainings (partially in person and partially virtual), a 1-day in person workshop, 15 webinars and 3 co-sponsored trainings with community partners that spanned 5 separate days. These trainings covered 5 different case types with 1 additional CC specific training offered. Many of these trainings are applicable to all OCR case types. Training in the areas of the law covered by OCR attorneys requires a nimble approach as the law is continually evolving and therefore the OCR training program must continually change to remain up to date and relevant. At the end of FY23, OCR has a total of 250 current and up to date hours of CLEs available online for easy accessibility across the state.

To further delivery of high-quality training, the OCR offers scholarships to state and national conferences to support contractor learning and community building. The OCR offered 9 scholarships to the National Association of Counsel for Children Annual Conference and 5 scholarships to the Colorado Bar Association 2023 Appellate Practice Update.

To support our contractors in obtaining essential and timely information about the transition to client-directed representation, the OCR compensated approximately 230 contractors to attend the 2022 Fall Conference, which was focused on the new counsel for youth attorney role. This was a necessary investment in OCR attorney's professional development and effective implementation of HB23-1038 (part of OCR's FY23 WIG). OCR was able to use IV-E Funding for this important enhancement of high-quality legal representation in Colorado.

Maintain and disseminate current and relevant resources for attorney and case consultant use regarding relevant law, social science, and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) strategies.

OCR uses a variety of tools to support Goal 3 such as:

- [Guided Reference in Dependency \(GRID\)](#) – comprehensive advocacy guide published in 2012, rewritten in 2018, and updated annually.
- [Litigation Toolkit](#) – comprises pleadings, social science resources, and practice tools.
- [Litigation Support List](#) – attorneys with subject matter expertise who are approved to consult on cases and assist in high-quality legal representation.



- **Second Chair List** – beginning in FY24, OCR will offer litigation support through a list of experienced attorneys available to second chair specified hearings.
- **Mentoring Program** – each OCR contract attorney is assigned a district specific mentor for the first year of their contract.
- **OCR Listserv** – membership is required for OCR contractors and the listserv provides an excellent forum to disseminate and discuss difficult case issues, trends, case law or legislative updates, new case processes, and recent developments. In FY23, OCR attorneys sent 812 emails via the listserv.
- **Quarterly Newsletters** – provides up-to-date information on case law updates, legislative updates, training announcements, attorney shout-outs and more.
- **Westlaw** – OCR provides this comprehensive legal research tool to every OCR contract attorney.

**Goal 3: The OCR will ensure attorneys remain current in state and federal law and regulations, social science research and evidence-based services.**

	FY21		FY22		FY23		FY24		FY25		FY26	
	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual
# new CLE hours sponsored by OCR/Year	80	85	85	83	85	91	85		85		85	
OCR Training is tailored to meet the specialized needs of OCR attorneys (SA/A)	95%	98%	98%	94%	98%		98%		98%		98%	
% of attorneys indicated very satisfied/satisfied with GRID	95%	99%	95%	100%	95%	96%	95%		95%		95%	
% of attorneys indicated very satisfied/satisfied with OCR Listserv	95%	96%	95%	98%	95%	90%	98%		98%		98%	
Litigation Toolkit forms/resources available online	190	206	220	266	250		280		300		300	
% of attorneys indicated very satisfied/satisfied with OCR Litigation Toolkit	95%	95%	95%	94%	95%	89%	95%		98%		98%	

**Conclusion**

OCR is proud of the progress made by its staff and contract attorneys to further OCR’s Mission and goals and looks forward to another year of working to advance youth rights in Colorado. OCR invites you to look at the [newly update website](#), which is more accessible and features an expanded youth center, for updates throughout the year.