
Office of the Child's Representative



Performance Management System

Fiscal Year 2023

*OCR is an independent
agency within the
Judicial Department*



OCR Mission

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.

OCR Vision

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

OCR Values

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, 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 and honesty. 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.

Agency Overview

The Office of the Child’s Representative (OCR) is an independent state agency created in 2000 to address the General Assembly’s concerns about the quality of representation provided to Colorado children. Colorado Revised Statute §13-91-101 et seq. mandates that OCR:

- Improve the quality of attorney services and maintain consistency of representation statewide.
- Provide accessible training statewide for attorneys.
- Establish minimum practice standards for all attorneys representing the best interests of children or acting as counsel for youth.
- Provide oversight of the practice of attorneys to ensure compliance with the established minimum standards.
- Establish fair and realistic compensation for state-appointed GALs and Counsel for Youth sufficient to retain high-quality, experienced attorneys.
- Serve as a resource for attorneys.
- Develop measurement instruments to assess and document the effectiveness of various models of representation.

The OCR has been working diligently and successfully to fulfill these mandates and improve the quality of legal services and representation of children in Colorado. Currently the OCR contracts with approximately 270 attorneys who serve children and youth in all 22 judicial districts across the state. In 2022, the OCR successfully sought legislative change through HB22-1038 to change legal representation for youth 12 and older in dependency and neglect cases from best interests of the child legal representation to client-directed legal representation. This change will go into effect January 9, 2023.

Continuous Improvement Process Timeline

July	<p>Submit and publish Performance Plan – July 1</p> <p>Assess performance data and hold debrief meeting with management</p> <p>Present Performance Plan to staff and analyze strengths and areas of need and start discussions about strategies for improvement</p> <p>Assess and improve Performance Management System</p> <p>Plan for Attorney Satisfaction Survey Questions</p> <p>Begin Court Observations for attorneys that will be renewing their contracts this fiscal year</p>
August/September	<p>Post OCR’s Performance Management System – August 1</p> <p>Finalize and administer the OCR Attorney Satisfaction Survey</p>
October	<p>Draft Annual Performance Report</p> <p>Review agency’s job descriptions for currentness and revise as necessary</p> <p>Prepare annual budget, taking into consideration information obtained through OCR performance data</p>
November	<p>Submit and publish Annual Performance Report – Nov. 1</p> <p>Share results of Annual Performance Report and disseminate to central office staff.</p> <p>Plan for engaging contractors/agency employees regarding relevant assessment and improvement strategies</p> <p>Submit annual budget request to the Joint Budget Committee</p>
December	<p>Review Performance Plan and make decisions about content – assess whether anything is outdated, no longer needed, or if new data is available.</p>
January	<p>Publish Performance Evaluation</p> <p>Present to joint legislative committees of reference and the JBC</p>
February	<p>Stakeholder Survey Administered</p>
March	<p>Finalize court observations for renewal Attorneys – March 1</p> <p>Finalize case reference interviews - March 31</p> <p>Annual Verifications Collected</p> <p>Meet with OCR staff to engage in strategic planning for next year’s Performance Plan, discuss potential WIGs and review/update other goals as needed.</p>
April	<p>Compile attorney performance data</p> <p>Gather Performance Plan data and finalize the WIG</p> <p>Assess district needs</p>
May	<p>Assess attorney performance data in conjunction with OCR Benchmarks</p> <p>Gather remaining data for the Performance Plan and begin drafting</p>
June	<p>Interview renewing attorneys and evaluate attorney practice data</p> <p>Identify training needs</p> <p>Finalize the Performance Plan</p>



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Wildly Important Goal (WIG)

OCR will successfully implement HB22-1038 and further infuse youth voice in the culture of OCR and related legal services.

OCR FY23 PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Provide children a voice in the Colorado legal system through effective and efficient attorney services and advocacy.

- A. Ensure children's voice & interests are paramount throughout the proceedings and in the development of policy, law & practice
- B. Provide and promote effective use of case consultant (CC) support to attorneys
- C. Provide oversight & evaluation of attorney practice
- D. Establish fair and reasonable compensation for OCR attorneys

Goal 2: OCR will optimize efficiencies in attorney practice and billing.

- A. Manage appropriations & assess program and district needs
- B. Optimize use and effectiveness of C.A.R.E.S. (OCR's on-line case management/billing system)
- C. Process, manage, and evaluate contractor 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.

- A. Cultivate a learning & 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 Core Competencies
- C. Assess attorney and CC education and support needs
- D. Maintain and disseminate current and relevant resources for attorney and CC use regarding law, social science, and DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) strategies.