



# Colorado Office of the Child's Representative

2014 Annual Report to the General Assembly

September 2, 2014



*The Office of the Child's Representative (OCR) is required by C.R.S. § 13-91-105 to submit a report to the General Assembly in September of each year. The report provides an update of the OCR's mandated efforts to provide and oversee best interests legal representation for children in Colorado. The report includes an overview of OCR's major accomplishments, goals, and fiscal management of appropriations.*

The Office of the Child's Representative provides competent and effective best interests legal representation to children who have been abused, neglected or abandoned, impacted by high conflict parenting time disputes or charged with delinquent acts and without a parent or guardian able to protect their best interests during the proceedings. OCR spends **4.4% of its budget on central administration**. **Eighty percent (80.4%)** of OCR's budget is expended on attorney services in dependency and neglect cases. OCR contracts with 252 attorneys skilled in juvenile law throughout the state and in every judicial district to provide mandated legal services. The contract entities are small businesses, including sole practitioners, law firms, and non-profit organizations.

#### HIGHLIGHTS:

- **OCR secured Title IV-E funding.** Federal law provides for reimbursement of guardian *ad litem* training expenses. The OCR has sought to tap into this funding source for several years and those efforts culminated in OCR receiving \$9,391.00 in FY 13-14 to augment its training budget.
- **OCR's data management billing system** known as the Colorado Attorney Reimbursement Electronic System (C.A.R.E.S.) is a source of financial and attorney practice data. OCR continues to enhance CARES in order to meet the agency's unique oversight needs and further the user's ease of use.
- **The OCR's assessment of the effectiveness of a multidisciplinary model** to deliver GAL services in Arapahoe, Denver and El Paso counties continues. The OCR's FY 12-13 study conducted in partnership with University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work provided limited information on this model and OCR has structured a new assessment.



# STATE OF COLORADO



## Office of the Child's Representative

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Linda Weinerman  
Executive Director

Members of the 69<sup>th</sup> General Assembly:

It is my pleasure to introduce the Office of the Child's Representative (OCR) Report to the General Assembly for 2014. Our agency was established by the legislature in 2000 to improve attorney representation for Colorado's most vulnerable citizens, our children. Children who find themselves involved in the court system have no resources or ability to independently access justice, and they rely upon our attorneys to zealously advocate on their behalf. In 2014, OCR attorneys represented the best interests of 17,000 children throughout the state in abuse and neglect, delinquency, paternity, truancy and high conflict domestic relations proceedings. The majority of these children are victims of child maltreatment and neglect who require representation throughout the duration of complex child welfare legal proceedings. Many of these children have been removed from their homes and have spent time in the foster care system.

As a state agency, OCR is committed to achieve our mission of improving attorney representation for children in the most cost-efficient manner without compromising the safety or well-being of children. Fully 95% of our appropriation is spent directly on attorney services. OCR contracts with approximately 230 attorneys to provide mandated legal services to children. Those attorneys, known as Guardians *ad litem*, child's legal representatives and child and family investigators, have dedicated thousands of hours to zealously represent each child's best interest at each and every stage of the child's court case. Their work is more and more challenging; the complexity of cases has increased while the availability of adequate resources has diminished. All of the strides on behalf of children detailed in the attached report are the direct result of the dedication and commitment of this amazing group of skilled legal advocates.

This Agency and our attorneys are grateful to the General Assembly for creating an environment in which children are entitled to legal representation and for providing funding sufficient to ensure consistent, high quality representation. Most importantly, we appreciate the General Assembly's support for our first attorney rate increase since July of 2008. The attorney rate increase to \$75 per hour in FY 14-15 enables our attorneys to fully investigate every child's circumstances and promote outcomes that serve the child's best interests. While still well below the private sector rate, this increase supports our Agency's efforts to attract and retain attorneys who are qualified and dedicated to this difficult work.

As always, we welcome your assistance, comments or suggestions. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 303-860-1517 ext. 105 or [lindaweinerman@coloradochildrep.org](mailto:lindaweinerman@coloradochildrep.org).

Sincerely,

Linda Weinerman  
Executive Director

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## CHILD'S REPRESENTATIVE BOARD

The Colorado Supreme Court appoints the nine-member child's representative board (Board) in accordance with the requirements and qualifications found in Colorado Revised Statutes § 13-91-104(2). The Board must consist of three attorneys, three advocates for children in the court system, and three citizens. There must be no more than five members of one political party and six of the seven congressional districts must be represented on the Board. The Board serves without compensation and works cooperatively with OCR's Executive Director to provide fiscal oversight, participate in policy and funding decisions, and assist in GAL and CASA training, as needed. The diverse and experienced Board represents all seven congressional districts and has a balance of Republican and Democratic members.

**Terraine Bailey**, Democrat, Sixth Congressional District, *GAL Attorney, Denver County, Attorney*

**Marsha Caplan**, Democrat, Second Congressional District, former *Executive Director, Voices for Children CASA, Advocate*

**Paul Garcia**, Democrat, Seventh Congressional District, *Dean of Adams City High School, Citizen*

**Lynne Hufnagel**, Democrat, First Congressional District, *Retired Denver District Court Judge, Attorney*

**Laura Hunt**, Republican, Fourth Congressional District, *Executive Director, Larimer County Child Advocacy Center, Advocate*

**Senator Cheri Jahn**, Democrat, Seventh Congressional District, *Owner, Colorado Housekeeping & Home Care Services, Citizen*

**Peggy Rudden**, Republican, Sixth Congressional District, *Executive Director, CASA Advocates for Children, Advocate*

**Joseph Wallis**, Republican, Fifth Congressional District, *GAL Attorney, El Paso County, Attorney*

**(Former) Senator Al White**, Republican, Third Congressional District, *Director, Colorado Tourism Office, Citizen*

**Ms. Victoria Black**, non-voting Youth Advisory member. Although not statutorily required, the Board includes a non-voting youth advisory member. The youth advisory member is a former beneficiary of GAL services.

## OCR STAFF

**Linda Weinerman**, Executive Director

**Sheri Danz**, Deputy Director

**Amanda Donnelly**, Staff Attorney

**Dorothy Macias**, Staff Attorney &  
Legislative Liaison

**Elisabeth Dickinson**, Controller/Budget Officer

**Ashlee Jones**, Training Coordinator

**Katie Irwin**, Staff Accountant

**Melanie Jannicelli**, Attorney Reimbursement  
& Human Resources Manager

**Rebecca Garrison**, Interactive Systems Administrator



## OVERVIEW

The **Office of the Child’s Representative (OCR)** is the state agency mandated to provide competent and effective legal best interests representation to children involved in the Colorado court system. OCR was created by the General Assembly in 2000 to improve representation for Colorado’s most vulnerable children by establishing minimum practice standards and providing litigation support, accessible high-quality statewide training and oversight of the practice. At the time of the OCR’s creation, the General Assembly had serious concerns about the subpar quality of representation provided to children in Colorado, including: 1) financial barriers to the necessary frontloading of services or ongoing dedication of the proper amount of time to cases; 2) GAL case-loads impairing appropriate case preparation and investigation; 3) insufficient meaningful interaction by GALs with children in their environment and 4) a lack of participation by GALs in court.

**OCR serves children** who have been abused and neglected, impacted by high-conflict parenting time disputes and/or charged with delinquent acts and without a parent or guardian able to protect the children’s best interests during the proceedings. In Fiscal Year 2013-14 (FY 13-14), the OCR served nearly 17,000<sup>1</sup> children involved in dependency and neglect, delinquency, truancy, probate and high conflict divorce cases. At least 79.4% of these children are victims of serious child maltreatment and egregious physical abuse and neglect and require representation for the entire life of their case. Many of these children have been removed from their family home and spend time in foster care.

**OCR’s Denver Executive Office** is located in the Ralph Carr Judicial Center, 1300 Broadway, Ste. 320, Denver, CO 80203. The OCR’s Executive Director, three staff attorneys and five support staff (budgeted 7.85 FTE) are charged with improving legal services for children and addressing the unique needs of legal representation of children in Colorado.

**OCR attorneys are skilled** in pediatric and juvenile law, knowledgeable of social science research and trained in child welfare representation best practices. Depending upon the case to which the attorney is appointed, the attorneys are known as Guardians *ad litem* (GALs), Counsel for Children in D&N proceedings, Child Legal Representatives (CLRs) or Child and Family Investigators (CFIs). In FY 13-14, contractors continued to provide attorney services at a reduced rate of \$65 per hour; the OCR appreciates the Joint Budget Committee and General Assembly’s support in FY 13-14 of an increase in the hourly rate to \$75 beginning in FY 14-15. The average cost of an OCR case in FY 13-14 was \$1,217.95; an average \$55.52 per case increase from FY 12-13.

Court-appointed attorney GAL legal representation is a mandated service that must be provided to children who have been abused and neglected. Section 19-3-203, C.R.S. (2014), states the court shall appoint a GAL in every dependency and neglect (D&N) case. Courts have the discretion to appoint GALs in delinquency (JD), truancy, paternity, probate, relinquishment, mental health and other proceedings when best interests representation is deemed necessary. While the statutory roles and responsibilities vary slightly by proceeding, in all case types, the GAL’s professional duties flow solely to the best interests of the child. The GAL is appointed to independently investigate,

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<sup>1</sup> OCR relies on the attorney user to designate the child party-type in OCR’s case management and billing system. In FY 13-14, there were 5865 individuals entered into the system without a party-type designation, therefore the number of children receiving legal services provided by the OCR is likely more than the number reported.

make recommendations that are in the best interests of the child and advocate on that child's behalf through all stages of the proceedings.

Attorneys may also be appointed as Child's Legal Representative (CLR) or Child and Family Investigator (CFI) in domestic relations (DR) proceedings. Section 14-10-116, C.R.S. (2014), requires the state to bear all costs in a parental responsibility case of a CLR or CFI appointment if the parties are indigent. The OCR serves as the oversight and payment entity for attorney CLR and attorney CFI state-paid services; the Office of the State Court Administrator (SCAO) oversees non-attorney and private pay attorney CFI appointments.

In FY 12-13, the OCR assumed the responsibility for oversight and payment of attorneys appointed as counsel for children in D&N proceedings. The appointment of counsel for children is discretionary; the court may appoint counsel for the child facing potential or actual contempt citations and for the child who holds his/her evidentiary therapeutic privilege.

OCR provides attorney services to Colorado's children by employing three models of representation:

1. **Independent contractors:** The OCR contracts with approximately 250 independent contractors throughout Colorado. These contract entities are small businesses and include sole practitioners and law firms. Often, contractors live and work in the same communities as the children and youth they serve.
2. **OCR's El Paso County GAL Office:** A model of attorney services that falls under the jurisdiction of the OCR is the OCR's El Paso County GAL Office. The creation of the office as the Fourth Judicial District Pilot Project was in direct response to Senate Bill 99-215 (Long Appropriations Bill), Footnote 135, which directed the Judicial Department to pilot alternative methods of providing GAL services. This "staff model" office is in its fourteenth year of operation. The OCR El Paso GAL Office employs 13 attorneys, four case workers/coordinators and two support staff (budgeted 19.05 FTE). The case coordinators are social service professionals that supplement attorney services by providing, for example, analyses of treatment needs, meaningful participation in case staffings, communication with treatment providers and observation of parent/child visits. The use of such multidisciplinary staff services is recognized as a promising practice by the National Association of Counsel for Children.
3. **OCR's Multidisciplinary Law Office (MDLO) Pilot Program:** The OCR's multidisciplinary law office program is an endeavor allowing the OCR to explore another model for providing efficient and effective GAL services. This program was developed after many years of analysis regarding a fiscally responsible manner to implement SB 03-258, Footnote 118, which requested that the OCR study alternative methods of providing GAL services in D&N cases by exploring whether it could implement a multidisciplinary office in Denver similar to the OCR El Paso County GAL Office.

***"He was really good. He treated me more like a human being and not a misfit."***

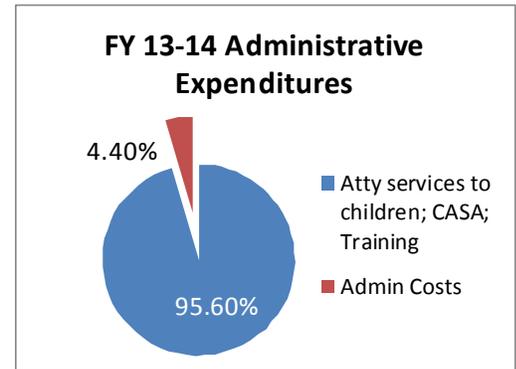
*- A youth's feedback about an OCR attorney*

***"I couldn't ask for a better person to represent my interests. He always listens to me and gives great advice."***

*- A youth's feedback about an OCR attorney*

Regardless of the type of service delivery model attorneys operate under, all OCR attorneys are held to high practice expectations and specially trained on the law, social science research and best practices relating to issues impacting children involved in court proceedings.

OCR spends 95.6% of its budget on meeting its statutory mandates, primarily on attorney services for children through state employees in the Office of the Child’s Representative El Paso County Guardian *ad litem* Office (OCR El Paso GAL Office) and independent contractors throughout the state. In FY 13-14, independent contractors provided attorney services at a reduced rate of \$65 per hour. The average cost of an OCR case in FY 13-14 was \$1,217.95; a \$55.52 increase over FY 12-13. The remaining 4.4% of OCR’s budget is used to administer the agency.



OCR maintains high expectations of its independent contractors and OCR El Paso GAL Office state employees. In addition to the professional standards governing all attorneys, OCR attorneys are held to standards set by Chief Justice Directive (CJD) 04-06, CJD 04-08, their contract with OCR and the practice standards set by OCR. GALs must independently investigate the matters to which they are appointed, make recommendations that are in the best interests of the child and advocate on the child’s behalf. GALs in Dependency and Neglect cases must meet each child in each placement and continue to communicate with the child throughout the case. Although the unique statutory responsibilities of a GAL/CLR do not set forth a traditional attorney-client relationship between the appointed attorney and the child, the client of the GAL/CLR is the best interests of the child. The GAL’s/CLR’s determination of the child’s best interests must include consultation with the child in a developmentally appropriate manner.

**OCR monitors attorney services** throughout the year in a number of ways. The OCR sends annual electronic surveys aimed at assessing GAL performance to stakeholders in all 22 judicial districts. The stakeholders include judicial officers, court facilitators, court administrators and active CASA agencies. OCR also distributes a survey to department caseworkers, respondent parent counsel, department attorneys and probation officers. Each year, the OCR Executive Director and attorney staff personally meet or contact stakeholders in each of the 22 judicial districts to assess attorney services. The OCR monitors hourly billing statements submitted by GALs in order to ensure that the work done on a case is adequate and that state dollars are used for only allowable expenditures. The OCR conducts random audits of attorney work. OCR also conducts structured court observations of attorneys in judicial districts selected for OCR’s tri-annual evaluation as explained in Section I below. Every complaint received by the OCR is thoroughly investigated. The OCR has implemented corrective action, including termination of or not renewing attorney contracts with GALs who have displayed a pattern of failing to meet OCR expectations, the requirements of CJD 04-06 and contractual obligations.

**OCR is a resource to legislators** by providing information and answering questions concerning children’s issues. OCR welcomes comments and questions from legislators regarding GALs, legislation or specific issues concerning children or GALs in a legislator’s community.

**OCR Mission Statement:** The mission of the Office of the Child’s Representative (OCR) is to provide competent and effective legal representation to Colorado’s children involved in the court system because they have been abused and neglected, charged with delinquent acts and without a parent available to protect their best interests during the proceedings, or impacted by high conflict parenting time disputes. As a state agency, the OCR is accountable to the State of Colorado to achieve this mission in the most cost-efficient manner without compromising the integrity of services or the safety and well-being of children. The OCR is committed to ensuring that children whose interests are represented by its contract attorneys, Colorado’s most vulnerable and marginalized population in the courts, receive the best legal services available to protect and promote their safety and well-being and to have their voice heard throughout all aspects of a case.

**Vision:** Each Colorado child in need of an OCR attorney will receive comprehensive legal advocacy from an attorney who has expertise in juvenile law and will diligently and effectively represent the child’s legal interests in a cost-effective manner.

## OCR's LEGISLATIVE MANDATES

OCR's legislative mandates are set forth in C.R.S. § 13-91-101, *et seq.* The mandates include:

- I. Provide oversight and improve quality of best interests attorney services and maintain consistency of best interests representation statewide.
  - II. Establish minimum practice standards, duties and responsibilities for all attorneys representing children in judicial proceedings, including the investigation of maximum-caseload limitations for GALs.
  - III. Provide litigation support to OCR attorneys.
  - IV. Establish minimum training requirements and accessible high-quality training statewide for attorneys, judges, magistrates and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) volunteers.
  - V. Establish fair and realistic compensation for state-appointed children's attorneys sufficient to retain high-quality, experience pediatric attorneys.
  - VI. Assess and document the effectiveness of various models of representation.
  - VII. Work with CASA to develop CASA offices in each county and enhance funding resources for CASA.
- I. **Provide oversight and improve quality of best interests attorney services and maintain consistency of best interests representation statewide.**

The Executive Director, Deputy Director, staff attorneys, and office staff monitor attorney services in a number of ways. Each year, the OCR Executive Director and attorney staff meet or communicate with stakeholders in each of the 22 judicial districts to assess attorney services. In addition, OCR staff monitors contract attorney services by scrutinizing billing statements, conducting an annual contract/evaluation process, investigating complaints and assessing compliments and other feedback on attorney's work.

**Attorney billing submittals are scrutinized** by OCR staff, controller and, as needed, attorneys review attorney billings in order to ensure that the work done meets minimum standards and state dollars are efficiently used for only allowable expenditures. OCR has developed Billing Policies and Procedures and expertise in review of billings to maximize the efficient use of taxpayer dollars. OCR staff also conducts regular financial data analysis and random audits of attorney billing throughout the year.

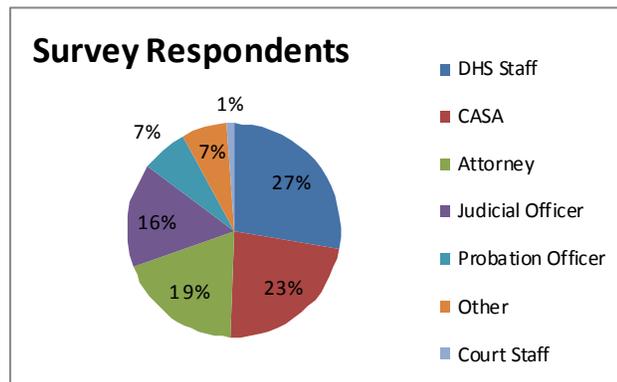
**Annual Surveys.** Every year, the OCR distributes an objective evaluation survey to gather feedback on all attorneys who are providing GAL services. OCR sends the surveys to judicial officers, court administrators, court facilitators, department of human services staff, CASA agencies, probation officers and attorneys representing other parties in D&N and JD cases throughout Colorado's 22 judicial districts.<sup>2</sup> The survey seeks feedback on GAL knowledge, performance, participation in case conferencing and general practice. While this instrument measures perception and is

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<sup>2</sup>The OCR recognizes foster parents, respondent parents and youth are vital stakeholders in juvenile court proceedings, however, it was not feasible to include them in this evaluation. The OCR plans to include these additional groups in its Multidisciplinary Law Office evaluation.

voluntary, combined with other information, the survey helps OCR identify potential training needs and practice issues to be addressed with individual attorneys. The survey seeks feedback on GAL knowledge, performance, participation in case conferencing, and general practice. In FY 13-14, OCR received 1083 electronic survey responses that provided feedback on 228 OCR attorneys/contractors.

Stakeholder feedback is an important component of OCR’s assessment of GAL services and training needs. Highlights of the electronic surveys are shown below:



Question answered <i>(respondents were allowed to answer "Do Not Know")</i>	Strongly Agree or Agree
GAL Possesses relevant advocacy skills	90%
GAL possesses requisite knowledge	90%
GAL familiar with community services	90%
GAL personally attends all court hearings	94%
GAL critically assesses department case plans & permanency plans	83%
GAL is respectful of others involved in the case	88%

**OCR’s annual contract process** serves as an effective method of monitoring attorney services and ensures that qualified attorneys provide consistent best interests legal representation for children throughout Colorado. The OCR establishes attorney appointment eligibility through a comprehensive evaluation strategy, which consists of a statewide annual appraisal of existing attorney services, a tri-annual extensive contract application process, ongoing assessment and periodic audits of attorney activity and a formalized complaint process. OCR does not automatically continue attorney eligibility for appointments. At the completion of the contract process, OCR compiles its annual list of attorneys eligible for appointment in each judicial district, distributes it to judges and court staff by July 1st of each year and subsequently prepares contracts for attorneys on its lists. The contract process also provides OCR with the ability to address systemic needs within each jurisdictional district, such as the need for additional or fewer attorneys, training requirements on specific issues and general concerns within the system.

The OCR’s current contract process contains a series of steps, including review of the stakeholder surveys detailed above. OCR requires all attorneys, regardless of whether they have an existing contract or are new applicants, to complete an application. Selected new applicants are contacted and interviewed. Every application is considered as contracts are not automatically renewed. In FY 13-14, OCR received 228 renewal applications/attorney verifications and 58 new applications.

In FY 12-13, OCR instituted a tri-annual extensive contract/evaluation process. Each year, the OCR evaluates attorneys in one-third of Colorado’s 22 judicial districts. OCR’s extensive evaluation consists of attorney application and appraisal information detailed above; interviews of children/youth, parents and caregivers; structured court observations; submission of a writing sample; expanded stakeholder feedback and selected reports from C.A.R.E.S. The OCR conducts meetings with key stakeholder groups in each of the districts scheduled for evaluation. The OCR staff attorney assigned to the district meets with each existing contractor under evaluation to discuss the data collected during the evaluation, identify practice issues and assess ongoing suitability for an OCR contract.

Structured Court Observations. In FY 12-13, the OCR began conducting court observations in D&N cases in order to obtain first-hand knowledge regarding attorney courtroom performance. OCR developed an instrument and trained OCR staff and interns to standardize documentation and data collection. OCR collects data on attorney participation, advocacy and the type of information the attorney provides to the court. The OCR capitalized on the opportunity to obtain data regarding youth participation in D&N cases. The OCR expanded the observations in FY 13-14 to include JD cases in order to refine OCR practice expectations. The OCR conducted 287 court observations involving 480 children in FY 12-13 and **426 court observations** involving **674 children** in FY 13-14.

Interviews of youth, parents and caregivers. Each attorney participating in the tri-annual evaluation submits contact information for three youth, parents and caregivers involved in their case(s). OCR interns and staff contact the references in order to obtain information from at least one individual in each category of reference and conduct a structured interview regarding the attorney's services. In FY 13-14, OCR conducted 232 interviews concerning 93 existing contract attorneys.

Meetings with stakeholders. The OCR Executive Director and attorney staff endeavor to meet personally or by teleconference with contract attorneys, judicial officers, court personnel and CASA directors each year. In some instances, OCR attorney staff contacts county attorneys and county department of social services directors, as well as other community agencies involved in the protection of children. During the meetings, OCR discusses attorney performance, judicial concerns, jurisdictional trends and potential training needs.

**OCR attorney staff investigates complaints** of contract attorney's work throughout the year. One of OCR's first activities was to establish a formal complaint process as recommended by the 1996 State Auditor's Performance Audit of GAL services. The OCR requires complaints be in writing using its online or hard copy complaint form. The staff attorney assigned to the judicial district investigates whether the GAL complied with standards of practice as established by this agency, applicable Chief Justice Directives (CJD) and state statutes. The OCR does not second guess attorney recommendations or opine on the child's best interests; the focus of the complaint investigation is on the investigative process employed by and legal support relied upon by the attorney.

***“She is a really good GAL  
and she really does advocate  
for my best interests.”***

*- A youth's feedback about an OCR  
attorney*

OCR attorney staff received 24 complaints in FY 13-14. Each complaint is thoroughly investigated by contacting the complainant and attorney, reviewing the court record of action and attorney billing submittals and interviewing witnesses identified by both the complainant and the attorney. Three complaints received at the end of the fiscal year remain under investigation. One complaint uncovered a “concern” with the attorney's practice but did not disclose any violation of practice standards; nevertheless the OCR requested the attorney engage in the Colorado State Bar's professionalism training. Eleven complaints were deemed “founded”; giving rise to an audit of the attorney's work to determine whether the behavior was an anomaly in practice or part of a pattern of conduct. Failure to complete a timely visit with the child in placement, conduct an independent investigation and lack of professionalism are examples of “founded” complaints. OCR has implemented corrective action, including terminating or not renewing attorney contracts with GALs who have displayed a pattern of failing to meet OCR expectations, the requirements of CJD 04-06 and contractual obligations.

II. Establish minimum practice standards, duties and responsibilities for all attorneys representing children in judicial proceedings, including the investigation of maximum-caseload limitations for GALs.

OCR maintains high expectations of its attorneys. In addition to the professional standards governing all attorneys, OCR attorneys standards are set by CJD 04-06 and their contract with OCR. An OCR attorney must independently investigate matters, make recommendations that are in the best interests of the child, and advocate on the child's behalf. The attorney must meet each child client in every placement and continue to communicate with the child throughout the case. Usually, there is more than one child per case and the children are often placed in different homes or treatment facilities. The attorney must consult with each child in a developmentally appropriate manner and consider the child's position in formulating his/her determination of the child's best interests. The attorney must appear at all court hearings; attend ancillary hearings such as special education hearings or child support hearings; prepare for and litigate contested matters; and participate in out-of-court meetings concerning appropriate placement, treatment, and long-term planning for the child. The GAL must interview and maintain contact with other people involved in the child's life, including the CASA volunteer if one is assigned to the case. The GAL is responsible for promoting the child's safety and well-being throughout the case and ensuring that the child is successfully placed in a safe, appropriate and permanent home.

*“When I met the GAL, I knew that everything was going to be okay and it has been. She has continued to put the kids’ well-being in the forefront as well as taken the multiple family dynamics into account.”*

*- A caregiver’s feedback about an OCR attorney*

OCR’s **Cornerstone Advocacy initiative**, a modified version of New York’s Center for Family Representation’s Cornerstone Advocacy program, emphasizes proactive and intensive advocacy in D&N cases focused on four cornerstones:

- Frequent and meaningful visits,
- Placement arrangements supportive of family connections,
- Services tailored to the strengths and needs of children and parents,
- Education and transition planning supportive of academic and life success.

Cornerstone Advocacy provides a framework for a GAL’s investigation and advocacy and is consistent with the Colorado Children’s Code stated preference for in-home placement, preserving and strengthening family ties whenever possible and timely resolution of cases in the best interests of children. See C.R.S. § 19-1.102(1). An assessment of Cornerstone Advocacy as implemented in New York City demonstrated that this model has resulted in significantly more children remaining in in-home placements, reduced time in foster care, and lower foster care reentry rates.

Implemented in FY 10, OCR integrated Cornerstone Advocacy in its practice standards and continued trainings focused on the initiative throughout FY 13-14.

**OCR continues to assess the establishment of caseload limitations.** OCR’s pilot office programs, which have implemented caseload limits, and data management system will further inform its assessment of establishing caseload limitations. OCR is able to monitor individual attorney caseloads through the use of OCR C.A.R.E.S and plans to develop a formalized process of determining whether to implement caseload limitations of all independent contractors.

### III. Provide litigation support to the practice of OCR attorneys.

The OCR believes serving as a resource to attorneys is a critical part of its mission to improve the quality of best interests representation. Attorneys are welcome to contact the Executive Director and attorney staff for assistance. The OCR serves as a resource and offers support to its contract attorneys on a daily basis in a number of ways.

#### **Response to individual inquiries by contract attorneys.**

Attorneys contact the Executive Director, staff attorneys and support staff for assistance each day. OCR provides litigation support, legal references and research and expert resources to attorneys. The Executive Director and attorney staff assist contract attorneys by providing legal information and guiding them to relevant statutory and case law, appropriate professionals, written materials, and other resources in both trial and appellate courts.

*“I am very comfortable with her and feel like I can talk to her even about mistakes I have made in the past. She is very personable. She always gives us one hundred percent of her attention.”*

*- A parent’s feedback about an OCR attorney*

**OCR updates.** OCR provides periodic electronic notices of recent federal and state court decisions and legislative changes that pertain to the representation of the best interests of children, trainings and current events involving child welfare issues.

**OCR Newsletter.** OCR publishes a quarterly newsletter containing a review of case law and legislation, policy updates, training resources and a variety of hot topics in the legal and child welfare arena.

**The OCR listserv.** OCR contract attorneys are required to subscribe to the OCR listserv. The listserv is a forum for contract attorneys to ask questions about any aspect of their case, from information about a particular child placement agency or service provider to technical legal issues pending before the court. OCR also uses the listserv to communicate new case processes and inform contractors of developments in the field. The listserv is limited to attorneys who contract with OCR.

**The OCR website.** OCR’s website provides information for the public, child welfare stakeholders and attorney contractors. OCR attorneys may access an Attorney Center containing billing procedures and policies, local and national resources and the OCR motions bank. The website also publishes links to OCR Newsletters, seminal and relevant cases, national and local organizations and resources for use by the general public. In FY 13-14, OCR upgraded its website and plans to further enhance its ease of use in FY 14-15.

### IV. Establish minimum training requirements and provide accessible training statewide for attorneys, judges, magistrates, and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) volunteers.

OCR recognizes that training for the attorneys is a critical component to enhancing the provision of legal services to children. A child-sensitive legal system depends upon a bench and bar of considerable sophistication and competence in not only the law but on issues unique to children. Attorneys representing children must draw upon interdisciplinary knowledge from such pertinent fields as psychology, sociology, social work and medicine. Children are best served by legal practitioners in the child welfare system when judges and attorneys understand the social and psychological implications of a case, as well the impact of the developmental level and unique needs of each child.

OCR maintains stringent training requirements. OCR attorneys are contractually obligated to participate in a mini-

mum of 10 Continuing Legal Education (CLE) hours of OCR sponsored/approved training each year. OCR attorneys must list applicable CLE hourly credits on their annual application. During FY 13-14, OCR offered training through two state-wide conferences, single-subject trainings and brown-bag webinars. The conferences and webinars were recorded and posted to the OCR website to ensure that training could be easily accessed at any time thereafter by those attorneys who could not attend. In FY 13-14, the OCR website offered 52 CLE hours of archived trainings.

OCR sponsored 57 CLE training hours in FY 13-14. Following are some of the trainings that the OCR sponsored, organized or participated in over the last year.

- OCR Summer Conference, "Case by Case: Bringing the Child to the Forefront of Your Legal Advocacy" (7/29/13 & 7/30/13)
- Immigration Issues for Court-Involved Youth and Families Webinar (10/2/13)
- PAIMI Webinar: What Is Colorado's "Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness" Program and When as a GAL Should I Consider Making a Referral? (10/23/14)
- OCR's Court Observation Form Webinar (11/5/13)
- Waiver World: Adoption Subsidies, Relative Guardianship Assistance, and Kinship Support through Colorado's Title IV -E Waiver (1/13/14)
- FY 15 OCR Contract Renewal and Application Webinar (2/19/14)
- Permanency Roundtables as Part of the Title IV-E Waiver (3/5/14)
- Daylong training on Essential Law Practice Management for GALs | Practical Technology for GALs: Tools to Improve Productivity, Profitability, and Quality of Work Life | Child's Team: Challenges, Strategies & Benefits of Lawyers & Social Workers Working Together (3/21/14)
- OCR & SCAO Preconference Appellate Workshop (4/2/14)
- OCR & SCAO Spring Conference, *Lawyers Advocating for Better Family Outcomes: Skills and Strategies for GALs and RPC* (4/3/14 & 4/4/14)
- L.A.N. v. L.M.B. Presentation (6/20/14)

***"He doesn't pre-judge, he sees a clearer picture than most people I run into. He's a great person, very non-judgmental. He's the perfect person to be working with in a situation like this."***

*- A parent's feedback about an OCR attorney*

OCR Executive Director and attorney staff also trained other professionals, stakeholders, community members and court personnel throughout FY 13-14. OCR spoke at the following conferences/trainings and/or group meetings:

- American Bar Association, 15<sup>th</sup> ABA National Conference on Children & the Law: Lawyers as Partners for Family Well-Being, *Effective & Efficient? An Evaluation of Multidisciplinary Law Offices in Colorado*, July 15, 2013.
- National Association of Counsel for Children, *Effective & Efficient? An Evaluation of Multidisciplinary Law Offices in Colorado*, August 27, 2013.
- National Association of Counsel for Children *Ethical Challenges for Children's Attorneys: Practical Solutions*
- National Association of Counsel for Children *How to Make Court a Meaningful Experience for Youth*
- Colorado Court Improvement Committee, *Effective & Efficient? An Evaluation of Multidisciplinary Law Offices*

in Colorado, October 25, 2013.

- Presentation on *Colorado Juvenile Court* to the Fostering Healthy Futures Graduate Interns Denver Juvenile Court, *Legislative & Case Law Review*
- Denver MDIC, *L.A.N. in DR Proceedings & Legislative Update*
- Mountain Pine Woman's Club of Parker, *Colorado's Child Welfare System*
- RPC Work Group, *Colorado Office of the Child's Representative*
- American Bar Association National Right to Counsel Strategy Group, *Colorado Office of the Child's Representative, An Overview*
- Colorado Department of Human Services Permanency Task Force, *Survey Result Regarding Youth in Court*
- Domestic Relations Institute, *State paid Appointments of CLRs and CFIs*

In FY 13-14, OCR's efforts to secure Title IV-E funding was realized. Federal law provides for reimbursement of GAL training expenses. The OCR has sought to tap into this funding source for several years and those efforts culminated in OCR receiving \$9,391.00 in FY 13-14 to augment its training budget.

#### V. Establish fair and realistic compensation for state-appointed children's attorneys sufficient to retain high-quality, experienced pediatric attorneys.

OCR's legislative mandate includes establishing fair and realistic compensation for contract attorneys, with the goal of adequately paying attorneys for the work they perform. OCR inherited a flat-rate pay system at its formation. With General Assembly support, OCR transitioned the payment structure to hourly billing. The hourly fee limit has been set at \$65/hour over the course of several legislative sessions and is the identical rate paid by the Office of Alternative Defense Counsel and the State Court Administrator's Office. The JBC historically supports this hourly rate and recognizes that the attorneys who are paid the state rate earn less than attorneys in the private sector. Due to the budget crisis, OCR delayed its request for an increase to the hourly rate until the budget cycle beginning in November 2013. The OCR thanks the General Assembly for supporting the hourly rate increase to \$75 per hour beginning in FY 14-15.

*“As my GAL, she knows me well, and grounded her support of me based on her relationship with me. She often stood her ground when facing resistance from opposing team professionals.”*

*- A youth's feedback about an OCR attorney*

#### VI. Assess and document the effectiveness of various models of legal service provision.

As indicated on page 7, OCR provides attorney services to Colorado's children by employing three models of representation. OCR provides legal services by contracting with independent contractors, hiring state employees in the Fourth Judicial District and contracting with pilot multidisciplinary offices in two judicial districts.

1. **Independent contractors** continue to provide children legal services in each judicial district. In FY 13-14, OCR contracted with approximately 250 attorneys throughout the state. Contract attorneys are small business owners within their communities. Many lease office space and employ other members of the community in which they practice. This model is the historical means of providing best interests representation in Colorado.

2. **The Office of the Child’s Representative El Paso County Guardian *ad litem* Office (OCR El Paso GAL Office)** in the Fourth Judicial District is a multidisciplinary office staffed by state employees that falls under the oversight of the OCR. OCR’s El Paso GAL Office provides legal services in an approach similar to the manner in which a local Public Defender’s office provides attorney services. The OCR El Paso GAL Office operates as a multidisciplinary public law firm and employs 13 attorneys, five case workers/coordinators and four support staff (budgeted 19.05 FTE). The case coordinators have a social work or related background and make a significant contribution to the legal representation of children by assisting attorneys in their analyses of treatment needs, participating in case meetings, communicating with treatment providers, reviewing psycho-social assessments and observing visits between parents and their children.

***“She never made me feel weird. When your kid has a GAL, it can feel funny, as if someone thinks you don’t have your own child’s best interest in mind. She never made me feel like that.”***

*- A parent’s feedback about an OCR attorney*

ment needs, participating in case meetings, communicating with treatment providers, reviewing psycho-social assessments and observing visits between parents and their children.

The National Association of Counsel for Children (NACC) has endorsed dedicated children’s law offices as one of the best models for delivery of high-quality legal services. Moreover, members of the El Paso child welfare community and the court system have commented on the significant improvements in GAL representation as a direct result of the OCR El Paso GAL office. The OCR El Paso GAL Office is included in the multidisciplinary law office evaluation underway, as detailed below.

3. **OCR’s Multidisciplinary law office pilot project.** In 2003, the General Assembly instructed OCR in SB 03-258 Footnote 118 to study alternative methods of providing GAL services in dependency and neglect cases, specifically whether OCR could implement a multidisciplinary office in Denver similar to the OCR El Paso GAL Office. Creating a state office in Denver appeared cost-prohibited and so in May 2010, the OCR issued a Request for Proposal for the creation of multidisciplinary law offices in Denver and Arapahoe counties. In January 2011, the OCR contracted with three such offices to implement a multidisciplinary approach to GAL services in those two counties.

OCR established the multidisciplinary law offices as a 30 month pilot project from January 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013. The offices are staffed by attorneys and social service professionals with the goal of providing innovative and efficient GAL services resulting in better outcomes for children. Attorneys make use of social service professionals to supplement attorney services in a number of ways, including analyzing treatment needs, participating in treatment meetings, communicating with treatment providers and augmenting attorney interactions with children and their families and placements. In addition to implementing a multidisciplinary approach to cases, the offices operate under enhanced practice standards, supervision and accountability expectations.

In FY 12-13, OCR partnered with the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work to evaluate the effectiveness of the multidisciplinary law office as a model of delivering legal services to children in juvenile court proceedings. The DU study focused on understanding how the multidisciplinary law offices function and whether this model has enhanced GAL practice in Arapahoe, Denver and El Paso counties. Five student groups conducted the study during the last school year. In fall 2012, students under the direction of faculty, developed evaluation plans, in winter 2012, the students collected data and in spring 2013, the students analyzed the data. The students collected data through many

***“My GAL has done everything possible.”***

*- A youth’s feedback about an OCR attorney*

means, including web-based surveys, telephone interviews, focus groups, OCR C.A.R.E.S. reports and court observations. The students sought feedback from youth who received legal services by utilizing phone interviews and mailed surveys. Few conclusions can be drawn based on the DU study; therefore OCR has extended the program to continue its assessment.

In FY 13-14, OCR enhanced the MDLO “performance measures” to include, increased and consistent contact with youth, (2) increased attendance at relevant meetings and proceedings, (3) increased youth participation and youth voice at case events and hearings and (4) heightened promotion of diligent search for family connections. OCR anticipates the MDLO evaluation to continue over the next two fiscal years.

## VII. Support Colorado Court Appointed Special Advocates in the development of programs in each county and enhance funding resources.

While GALs are the child’s legal advocate and parties to D&N cases, community volunteers, known as CASAs, are appointed in 16 of Colorado’s 22 judicial districts by the court to serve as a support to children and their families and provide helpful information to the GAL and court. The different roles of and collaboration between GALs and CASAs are best illustrated by the following case:

*Five children ages six to 10 were adjudicated dependent and neglected by their parents. The children were placed in separate foster homes in Pueblo, Payton, Denver metro and Conifer due to their special needs. Each child informed his/her Gal that s/he wanted to remain in contact with his/her siblings. The GAL for the oldest child was able to overcome the department’s claim that sibling contact and visits were not appropriate due to the children’s “behaviors” and obtained a court order requiring contact and visits. The CASA implemented the court order by arranging sibling activities and coordinating transportation, often driving the children herself.*

Although each local program is unique, similarities do exist. The CASA’s role is outlined in § 19-1-201, C.R.S. *et. seq.* CASA volunteers must meet minimum requirements, pass background checks, and successfully complete a mandatory 30 or 40-hour training program based on the curriculum created by the National CASA Association. Local CASA programs also require 12 hours of additional annual training. Most CASA volunteers concentrate their valuable service on one case at a time. Typically, volunteers must commit to 1 year of service or for the duration of a case, whichever is longer. In addition, local programs often require a minimum monthly time commitment from their volunteers.

***“He’s got an awfully big heart. Our son had done this horrible thing, but he was very non-judgmental toward him. That meant a lot to me.”***

*- A parent’s feedback about an OCR attorney*

OCR GALs and CASA volunteers work collaboratively to advance the best interests of children. CASA volunteers provide written reports to the court and parties and may participate in case events. CASAs also establish supportive relationships with children, parents, and relatives or kin. CASA volunteers are able to bring joy to the children they serve by participating in fun activities with them such as bowling, attending movies, and shopping; these activities are funded by the CASA volunteer.

In FY 13-14, Colorado CASA received \$1,020,000 from the State of Colorado as a line item in the OCR budget. The state office used a portion of the monies for general program support and the remaining funds were passed through to the 16 CASA programs across the state. In FY 13-14, 1,694 volunteers donated 132,357 hours, served 3,858 children and received 921 new case appointments. CASA programs trained 588 new volunteers in FY 13-14.

## 2013-14 INNOVATIONS TO OCR PROVISION OF LEGAL SERVICES

### I. OCR's Data Management and Billing System known as OCR C.A.R.E.S.

OCR requires all attorneys, including members of the multidisciplinary law office program, to input case information and data for each appointment. Information includes home visits and other contacts with children, phone calls, meetings, document preparation, court hearing type and outcomes and placement moves. OCR C.A.R.E.S. allows for information sharing between office staff. Additionally, OCR has access to case information, except attorney work product, in order to confirm compliance with the requirements set forth in CJD 04-06, provide enhanced oversight and track trends for each jurisdiction and the state.

***“My GAL explained court proceedings to me, solicited my input, and advised me accordingly. She attended all of my staffings, in person or by phone... Most importantly, she was respectful of and responsive to my mom’s concerns and suggestions.”***

*- A youth’s feedback about an OCR attorney*

In FY 12-13, OCR acquired the source code to the case management system in order to tailor its use as a billing system and oversight tool. In FY 13-14, OCR began enhancing the system to create efficiencies for both attorney users and OCR staff in processing attorney bills and providing oversight of the practice.

### II. Monitoring and involvement in Court of Appeals and Supreme Court Cases

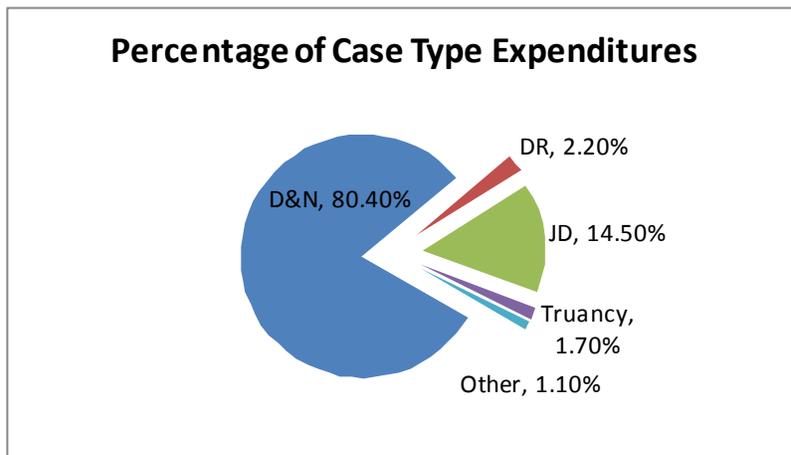
OCR attorney staff weekly monitors decisions published by the Colorado Court of Appeals and the Colorado Supreme Court and keeps GALs apprised of significant appellate decisions impacting their GAL/CLR practice. Additionally, OCR occasionally weighs in as *amicus curiae* on Colorado Supreme Court cases that may have significant implications for GALs. Participation as *amicus*, also referred to as “friend of the court,” allows a non-party to the case to weigh in on the case’s policy or other implications. The court must grant permission to participate as *amicus*. The cases on which the OCR has participated as *amicus* have significant policy implications for GALs and juvenile law practitioners.

## OVERVIEW OF OCR BUDGET

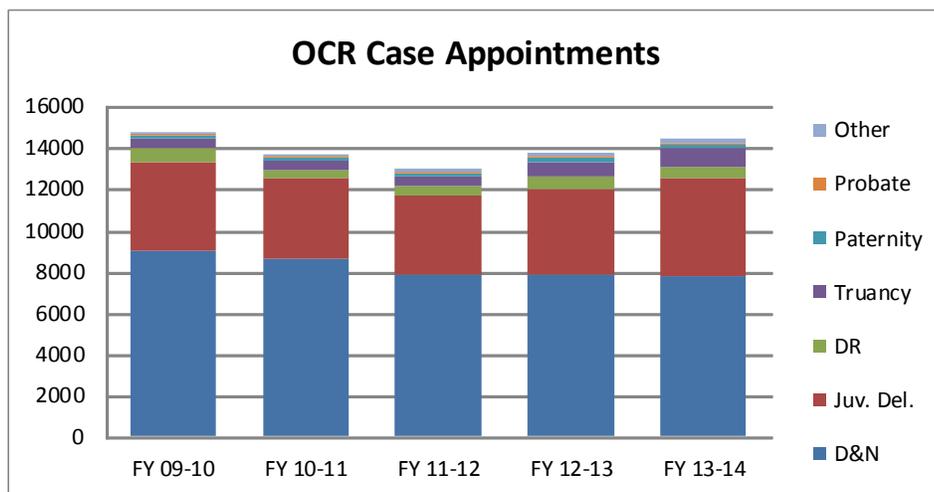
One of the OCR’s mandates is to enhance funding to promote effective legal advocacy. Given the state of Colorado’s FY 13-14 budget, the OCR continued its focus on creating efficiencies and securing basic funding to meet the need for attorney services. The following is an overview of the OCR budget and an outline of factors that contribute to the budget.

**Summary of Appropriations:** In FY 13-14, the OCR spent 4.4% of its budget on its central administrative office, which is dedicated to fulfilling OCR’s statutory mandates. OCR expended \$17,625,017 on attorney services for children. OCR used \$34,893 of its budget to providing training to GALs and other stakeholders throughout Colorado. The General Assembly passed \$1,020,000 as a budget line-item directly through to CASA of Colorado.

**Breakdown of the Mandated Attorney Services Provided by OCR:** OCR attorneys represent the best interests of children in dependency and neglect, delinquency, domestic relations, truancy, paternity, mental health and probate cases. In FY 13-14, the OCR paid attorney services in 14,471 case appointments. The average cost of an OCR case was \$1,217.95 in FY 13-14. The appointments in dependency and neglect cases account for 80.4% of attorney services expenditures. The breakdown of expenditures by case type is in the chart below.



The OCR saw an overall increase in appointments in FY 13-14 from the previous three fiscal years. This fiscal year’s appointments amount to an 11.4% increase over FY 11-12. The breakdown of appointments for each case type over the last five fiscal years is shown in the chart below.



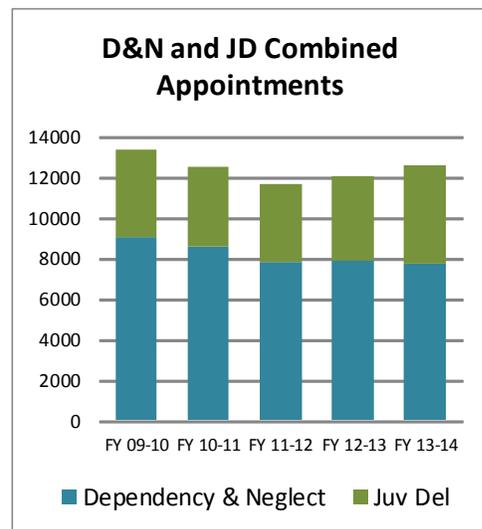
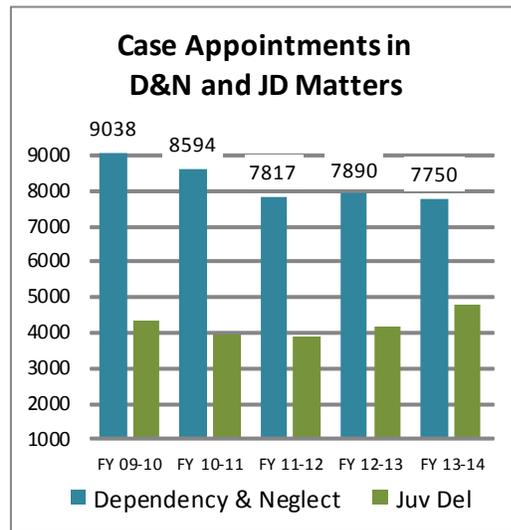
**Dependency and Neglect and Juvenile Delinquency** appointments combined account for 87% of the OCR’s appointments. The two case types present similar issues concerning family dynamics, placements and treatment. D&N appointments are mandatory when the local department of human/social services alleges the child has suffered abuse and neglect. JD appointments are necessary when the parent is unwilling or unable to perform basic parental duties in the case.; that is, the parents cannot promote or protect the child’s interests as s/he faces a delinquency petition. OCR attorneys report that children served in the juvenile justice system in FY 13-14 frequently present issues previously served in D&N matters.

The OCR experienced a decrease in dependency and neglect case appointments, although D&N expenditures, including the appeals in those matters, still account for 80.4% of attorney expenditures. The average cost per dependency and neglect case was \$1811.41 in FY 13-14; a 2.8 hour increase in the amount of time expended in D&N proceedings over FY 12-13. The increased complexities of cases, increased duties of GALs due to case law or statutory changes and fewer resources for families mean that additional attorney advocacy is required to successfully resolve issues.

Fiscal Year 13-14 continued the trend of increased Juvenile Delinquency appointments, but costs per case stabilized. In FY 12-13, the average cost per juvenile delinquency case as \$532; in FY 13-14, the average cost per JD matter increased by \$2.66 to \$534.66. The OCR continues to train judicial staff and contract attorneys on the requirements of SB 09-268, which amended C.R.S. § 19-1-111 to clarify that GALs are only appointed in certain instances in delinquency matters: if a parent is not present, if there is a conflict of interest between the child and parent and if the appointment is shown to be in the best interests of the child. The OCR continues to emphasize that the GAL must not remain on the case indefinitely and the GAL’s appointment terminates upon sentencing when the child is returned home.

**Domestic Relations Cases.** Indigent parties in domestic relations (DR) matters may seek court appointment of a state-paid Child’s Legal Representative (CLR) or attorney Child and Family Investigator (CFI). A CLR is appointed to represent the child (ren)’s best interests. The CFI is appointed to investigate a matter pending before the court, provides a report to the court and may be called as a witness. The attorneys appointed in either role are subject to OCR oversight and comprise the OCR DR appointments. Court appointments of OCR attorneys in DR cases decreased by 9% in FY 13-14, with 575 appointments in FY 13-14 compared to 631 appointments in FY 12-13. OCR continued to see a decrease in the average cost of appointments this fiscal year from \$759.00 average cost per case in FY 12-13 to \$670.30 average cost per case in FY 13-14. The OCR believes the 12% decrease in costs is due to its continuing efforts to promote efficiencies in practice and engage with judicial officers to limit the scope of appointments.

The Early Neutral Assessment (ENA) programs in Adams County and the City and County of Denver have proven to be a cost-effective measure of addressing issues in DR proceedings. The ENA program is similar to mediation in that parties work with an attorney and a therapist prior to court in order to work out any differences in such matters as parenting time and decision-making responsibilities. In FY 13-14, seven (7) Adams County cases and 46 Denver cases qualified for participation in the ENA program at a total cost of \$20,762 or \$391.74 cost per case. The OCR continues to evaluate the efficacy of the ENA program.



# Appendix A

## OCR Legislative Review

1. **SB 14-062 Reinstatement of Parent-Child Legal Relationship.** Under § 19-3-612, a county department of social services, a child's guardian *ad litem* (GAL), or a youth over the age of 16 years may petition the court to reinstate parental rights in limited situations three years following the termination order and upon clear and convincing proof that the parent has addressed the issues that form the basis of the D&N and termination proceedings. Section 19-3-612 requires successful completion of a "transition period" prior to reinstating parental rights.
2. **HB 14-1362 Great-Grandparent Visitation with Great-Grandchildren.** Great-grandparents are added to § 19-1-117 Visitation Rights of Grandparents.
3. **HB 14-1368 Transition Youth (18-21) Who Have Developmental Disabilities from the Child Welfare System to Adult Services.** Under §§ 25.5-6-409.5 and 26-5-102(2)(j), county welfare system caseworkers must develop a plan for the transition of youth ages 18-20 with intellectual and developmental disabilities to adult services. The bill sets forth criteria that must be included in the transition plan and the plan and transfer must be in the child's best interests.
4. **HB 14-1162 Protect Victim of Sexual Assault where a Child Was Conceived as a Result of the Sexual Assault.** This bill was the result of recommendations from a Task Force created by last year's legislation (SB 13-227) of which the OCR was a member. Last year's legislation addressed termination following a criminal conviction of sexual assault and upon proof that the child was conceived as a result of the sexual assault. This bill creates a process to allow the victim to file a petition in juvenile court to terminate in cases that do not involve a conviction and/or address allocation of parental responsibilities upon proof that the child was conceived as a result of a sexual assault.
5. **HB 14-1032 Defense Counsel for Juvenile Offenders.** This bill originated from recommendations by the Juvenile Defense Attorney Interim Committee. The bill insures juveniles receive uniform advisement regarding the right to counsel and timely appointment of counsel should the juvenile and his/her parents/guardians be eligible for court-appointed counsel.
6. **SB 14-203 Respondent Parents Counsel Child Abuse and Neglect.** The bill establishes the Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel in the judicial department effective July 1, 2015, to provide high-quality legal representation to respondents involved in dependency and neglect proceedings that lack the financial means to retain counsel. The judicial branch has considered the issue of respondent representation for several years and, in January 2014, convened a work-group to make recommendations regarding the practice. This bill codifies the efforts of the work-group. OCR Executive Director Linda Weirnerman is a member of the work-group.
7. **SB 14-201 Child Protection Ombudsman Advisory Work Group.** In 2010, the GA approved the creation of the Child Protection Ombudsman's Office and established a temporary work group to make recommendations regarding the Ombudsman's Office's operations and function. The Ombudsman's Office has been in operation for three (3) years and an audit of the Ombudsman's Office is due July 1<sup>st</sup>. This bill establishes a new work group to review the audit; reconcile the initial recommendations and the current functioning of the office, and make additional recommendations for autonomy and accountability. The OCR is a statutory member of the work group.
8. **SB 14-021 Persons with Mental Illness in Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems.** The legislative oversight committee and task force are extended to July 1, 2020. The task force, of which the OCR is a statutory member, will make recommendations regarding the juvenile competency statute.
9. **HB 14-1273 Human Trafficking.** The bill aligns Colorado's definition of human trafficking with the federal definition and creates a Human Trafficking Council to advise the state on training, public outreach, and additional legislative measures. The Governor will appoint the members of the council.

## Appendix B

### OCR Committee Work

Successful advocacy for children is often the result of collaboration and the sharing of resources among many state agencies and child advocate organizations. The following is a list of OCR committee involvement either as member or chairperson.

**Supreme Court Family Issues Committee and Other Professionals Standing Subcommittee:** This committee was established by the Supreme Court, as a result of the recommendations of the Colorado Supreme Court Commission on Families. The Executive Director serves on this committee.

**The Child Welfare Training Steering Committee:** A committee of the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), county departments, and stakeholders working to redesign Colorado state training models for social workers and supervisors to help improve outcomes for children and families. The Executive Director and Training Coordinator serve on this committee.

**CDHS'S Child Welfare Executive Leadership Council:** CDHS formed the council to bring together executive leaders in child abuse prevention and protective services from across Colorado to provide advice and counsel to CDHS on matters related to protecting vulnerable children and advancing our child protective services system. The Executive director serves on the council.

**The Child Welfare Strategy Group:** This group is sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Center for Effective Services and System. The group is working on identifying and implementing strategies to advance permanency for older youth in Colorado. The Executive Director is a member of the Sponsor Group.

**Colorado Child Fatality Prevention Review Team:** The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's state-wide multidisciplinary team examines every child death in Colorado. The committee is charged with compiling statistical analysis, trends and recommendations to reduce child fatalities. The Deputy Director serves on this committee.

**Court Improvement Committee:** OCR is a member of the Colorado Court Improvement Committee (CIC) as an ex-officio member without voting rights. The CIC focuses on improving the justice system for children, especially children in dependency and neglect cases. Specifically, the CIC oversees the federal grant given to each state that is to be utilized to improve the Dependency Court System.

**Training Subcommittee of the Court Improvement Committee:** CIC formed the training subcommittee for the purpose of developing a multi-disciplinary training curriculum with CDHS, judges, county attorneys, GALs, Respondent Parent's Counsel and other stakeholders.

**Juvenile Justice and Mental Health Subcommittee of the Legislative Task Force on the Mentally Ill in Criminal Justice:** This committee focuses on obtaining consistent screening for those in the juvenile justice system and working with family advocates to assist families with mental health or juvenile justice problems.

**Colorado CASA .** The OCR's Executive Director is a member of the Colorado CASA Board of Directors. OCR Staff Attorney/Legislative Liaison is a member of the CASA legislative committee.

**Our Kids, Your Kids Steering Committee:** OCR is one of the founding organizations seeking to create and sustain a network to support children and youth involved in the court system.

**Collaboration in 2013 and Beyond:** County, state, agency and provider stakeholders meet to discuss relevant issues, initiatives, and potential legislative agendas.

**Juvenile Law Section of the Colorado Bar Association:** The Deputy Director is a co-editor for the Juvenile Law section of the Colorado Lawyer which involves obtaining article submissions and editing them for publication in the Colorado Lawyer.

**Legislative Implementation Committees:** Legislation passed by the General Assembly requires implementation by the Executive and Judicial Branches. OCR attorney staff participate in multi-disciplinary committees in order to affect the General Assembly's intent in the area of child and juvenile law.

Task Force on Children Conceived by Rape pursuant to S.B. 13-227

Juvenile Right to Counsel interim committee pursuant to HRJ 13-1019

**Colorado Women's Bar Association Public Policy Committee:** OCR's legislative Liaison is a member.

**Child Advocacy Centers Board.** The OCR Executive Director is a member of the Child Advocacy Centers Board of Directors.