
Performance Management System

Office of the Child's
Representative

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AGENCY OVERVIEW

The Office of the Child’s Representative (OCR) is the state agency mandated to provide competent and effective legal 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. The OCR oversees attorneys who provide legal representation as guardians *ad litem* (GAL), counsel for child in a dependency and neglect case, and child legal representatives (CLR). The OCR ensures children’s voice and interests are paramount in the development of policy, law and practice at the legislature and through partnerships with child welfare agencies and stakeholders and active participation in policy committees throughout the state.

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 available to safeguard their best interests during the proceedings. The OCR serves approximately **17,000 children** annually in dependency and neglect, delinquency, truancy, paternity, probate, and high-conflict divorce cases. A majority of these children are victims of serious child maltreatment 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 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, impacted by high conflict parenting time disputes, or charged with delinquent acts and without a parent available to protect their best interests during the proceedings. 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 a skilled attorney who has expertise in juvenile law who will diligently and effectively represent the child’s legal interests in a cost-effective manner.



THE OCR GOALS & PRIORITIES	1) The OCR will provide children a voice in the Colorado legal system through effective attorney services and advocacy.	2) The OCR will optimize efficiencies in attorney practice and billing.	3) The OCR will ensure attorneys possess relevant skills and remain current in state and federal law and regulations, social science research, and evidence-based services.
<i>Activities & Operations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure children’s voice and interests are paramount in the development of policy, law and practice in Colorado. ▪ Establish attorney qualifications and practice standards ▪ Provide oversight and evaluation of attorney practice ▪ Assess judicial district needs ▪ Contract with attorneys based on data illustrating compliance with CJD and OCR practice standards and district needs ▪ Establish fair and reasonable compensation for OCR attorneys ▪ Investigate alternative methods of providing legal representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manage appropriations and assess program needs ▪ Maximize use and effectiveness of OCR’s electronic case management/billing system ▪ Provide litigation support and facilitate practice innovations ▪ Process, manage, and evaluate attorney activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultivate a learning and practice environment that supports excellence in legal representation ▪ Assess attorney education needs ▪ Implementation of OCR Core Competencies ▪ Require attorneys to meet minimum training requirements ▪ Disseminate updates on developments in law and social science and maintain current and relevant resources for attorneys’ use
<i>Measure</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attorney compliance with applicable Chief Justice Directives and OCR practice standards ▪ Effective engagement and empowerment of children/youth ▪ OCR engagement in policy work <i>Impact of OCR attorney representation on court processes, advancing children’s interests in court proceedings and potentially outcomes</i> ▪ Secure a sufficient pool of qualified attorneys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OCR’s use of resources promotes efficient oversight of attorneys ▪ Attorney activity and cost per case ▪ Effective and efficient use of support staff by attorneys ▪ Case fees, expert witnesses, and other litigation support are justified by case needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OCR Core Competencies addressed in trainings ▪ Manner in which OCR trainings and litigation supports impact practice ▪ Attorney evaluation of trainings and litigation supports ▪ Accessibility of OCR training and litigation supports ▪ Attorney compliance with training requirements
<i>Report</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OCR’s on-line case management/billing system, Colorado Attorney Reimbursement Electronic System (C.A.R.E.S.) data ▪ Court data (observations) ▪ Interviews of children/youth, parents, and placement providers ▪ Attorney evaluation and complaint records ▪ Judicial and stakeholder feedback ▪ Interviews of and feedback from attorneys ▪ Evaluation of multidisciplinary office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Salary/rate survey ▪ C.A.R.E.S. data ▪ Court data ▪ CORE ▪ Attorney and OCR staff feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skills assessment ▪ C.A.R.E.S. data ▪ Court data ▪ Attorney training records ▪ Attorney and stakeholder feedback ▪ Attorney use of litigation supports
<i>Assess</i>	<p>Whether</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual attorney data supports contracting decisions ▪ OCR provides sufficient qualified attorneys to meet children’s needs ▪ OCR policy, support, and oversight promotes effective legal services and advocacy 	<p>Whether</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Costs are reasonable and justified ▪ OCR systems and support promote optimum use of tax dollars 	<p>Whether</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ OCR trainings are meaningful, relevant and accessible ▪ OCR trainings and litigation supports promote cost-effective legal services ▪ Attorneys apply learned principles, skills, and knowledge ▪ OCR litigation supports remain relevant and up-to-date
<i>Improve</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise policies, qualifications, practice standards, delivery model, and support, as indicated ▪ Develop attorney recruitment and retention strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request adjustments to appropriations, as necessary ▪ Revise policies, electronic case management/billing system, and support, as indicated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise Core Competencies, as indicated ▪ Develop training effectiveness evaluation model

TIME-LINE

August 1	Post OCR's Performance Management System
October	Compile and assess performance data Draft Annual Performance Report
November 1	Publish Annual Performance Report
November - December	Present to joint legislative committees of reference and JBC Solicit feedback from agency employees Solicit feedback from agency contract attorneys in even number years
April - May	Compile and assess performance data Written Report to JBC Implement improvements & identify training needs
June	Research, review, and complete Performance Plan
July 1	Performance Plan is submitted to the JBC Assess and improve Performance Management System