

The Agency

Office of the Child Advocate

Agency Operations

The Office of the Child Advocate is charged with fulfilling a statutory mandate to protect the legal, civil and special rights of all children and youth involved in the care of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). In so doing, the Office strives to improve conditions and circumstances through monitoring, compliance, and advocacy.

The office is staffed with 5.8 authorized full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. The office is responsible for oversight of DCYF care for 5,300 children and yearly monitoring site visits to monitor their care at 120 group homes and residential programs in the state. The office also provides direct legal representation for at least 35-40 children voluntarily placed in state care.

The office reviews and monitors systematic and individual issues related to 250 residents at the Rhode Island Training School. It provides direct oversight and on-site visits on a weekly basis. The Office of the Child Advocate also files Victim Compensation claims for children who have been physically and/or sexually assaulted and are in the care of the State.

Agency Objectives

To monitor the Department of Children, Youth and Families to ensure that it offers children in its care adequate protection and quality services, while affording these children respect for their individual rights and dignity. These activities include, but are not limited to, public education, legislative advocacy, investigation, and litigation.

To review and make recommendations regarding the Department of Children, Youth and Families procedures; to investigate institutional abuse allegations and child fatalities; to provide information and referral on matters relating to children; participate in voluntary admissions procedures; to monitor child placements; to conduct annual site visits at residential/group care programs; and to review the Department of Children, Youth and Families' compliance with day-care licensing laws.

Statutory History

In 1980, the General Assembly created the Office of the Child Advocate. Its powers and duties are codified in R.I.G.L. 42-73. The office of the Child Advocate possesses a statutory right of access, including subpoena power, to all providers, the Family Court, Department of Children, Youth and Families, and law enforcement records. There is also a right of physical access to all child-care programs and children in care.

In 1992, the office of the Child Advocate's responsibilities with respect to children in state care were statutorily expanded to include review of child fatality cases and representation of child victims of crime pursuant to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act.

The Budget

Office of the Child Advocate

	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Enacted	FY 2009 Revised	FY 2010 Recommended
Expenditures By Object					
Personnel	481,065	467,832	537,487	536,957	571,061
Operating Supplies and Expenses	67,288	16,059	21,313	17,040	17,087
Aid To Local Units Of Government	-	-	-	-	-
Assistance, Grants and Benefits	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal: Operating Expenditures	\$548,353	\$483,891	\$558,800	\$553,997	\$588,148
Capital Purchases and Equipment	2,845	1,558	-	1,000	-
Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-
Operating Transfers	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	\$551,198	\$485,449	\$558,800	\$554,997	\$588,148
Expenditures By Funds					
General Revenue	513,524	445,443	519,657	514,442	547,048
Federal Funds	37,674	40,006	39,143	40,555	41,100
Total Expenditures	\$551,198	\$485,449	\$558,800	\$554,997	\$588,148
FTE Authorization	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7
Agency Measures					
Minorities as a Percentage of the Workforce	10.0%	18.0%	18.0%	18.0%	33.0%
Females as a Percentage of the Workforce	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	83.0%
Persons with Disabilities as a Percentage of the Workforce	-	-	-	-	-
Program Measures					
Percentage of Inspected Facilities Compliant with Standards and Care	90.0%	90.0%	90.0%	90.0%	90.0%