



# What is an Ombudsman? The History and Services of the OCCPO

*Joint Budget Committee  
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Dennis Goodwin, Ombudsman

Sabrina Byrnes, Associate Ombudsman

*The OCCPO is a program of National Association of Counsel for Children*

# Who Are We?

- Dennis Goodwin, Child Protection Ombudsman
- Sabrina Byrnes, Associate Ombudsman
- Lisa Kreutzer-Lay, Quality Assurance and Research Specialist
- Karen Nielsen, Intake and Administrative Coordinator

"The Office of the Child Protection Ombudsman has the power and duty to facilitate a process of independent, impartial review of family and community concerns; request independent, accurate information and to conduct case reviews to help resolve child protection issues and overall systemic issues."

-Senate Bill 10-171

# About Us

- Anyone may file a confidential complaint or concern with the CPO.
- The Office will report annually to the Governor, Legislature, and Executive Director of Colorado Department of Human Services regarding systemic issues, data trends, and recommendations for improvements.
- The Ombudsman's Office also serves as a resource and "systems navigator" to stakeholders and the general public by assisting with individual cases while also providing ongoing public education and resources to promote the best interest of children and families.

# Program Objectives

- We are a voice for children and families in Colorado.
- We exist to assist Colorado's Child Protection System through accountability and in identifying gaps in services and response, training needs and supervisor and management improvement.

# Our Approach

- Advocate for fairness and for an impartial and objective experience for all citizens that are touched by the child protection system, including County and State Department staff.
- Promoters of best practice through recommendations to overall systems improvements or consultation.
- Proactive change-agent through recommendations, facilitation of discussions for systems improvements and change, as well as an advisor to various stakeholders within the child protection community.

# Nuts and Bolts of the Ombudsman Office

The OCCPO accepts 3 kinds of input from the public:

- 1) Complaints
- 2) Suggestions
- 3) Compliments

The OCCPO provides 4 basic services:

- 1) Consideration and potential investigation of complaints / inquiries;
- 2) Tracking and analysis of data for public reporting and for systemic recommendations;
- 3) Systems navigation and general assistance to public including system stakeholders; and
- 4) Public education.



## What Can We Do

- Facilitate a process of independent, impartial review of family and community concerns.
- Request independent, accurate information.
- Conduct case reviews to help identify and resolve child protection and overall systemic issues.
- Serve as a resource and “systems navigator” to stakeholders.
- Provide ongoing public education and resources.

## What We Cannot Do

- Directly respond to emergencies regarding child safety.
- Review complaints concerning domestic relations issues (CFI, court rulings, etc)
- Investigate or overturn the acts or decisions of courts, judges, or their staff.
- Provide legal advice.



# The Process

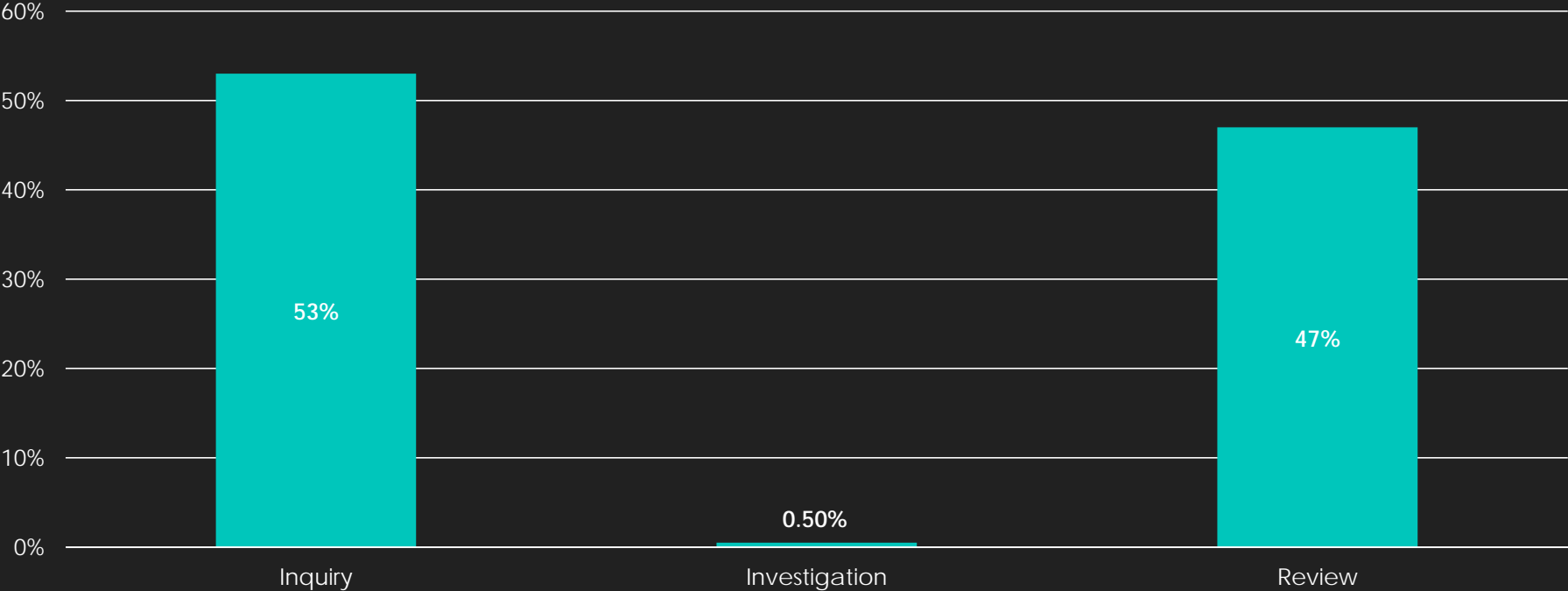


# Contacts for FY 2011/12-FY 2013/14

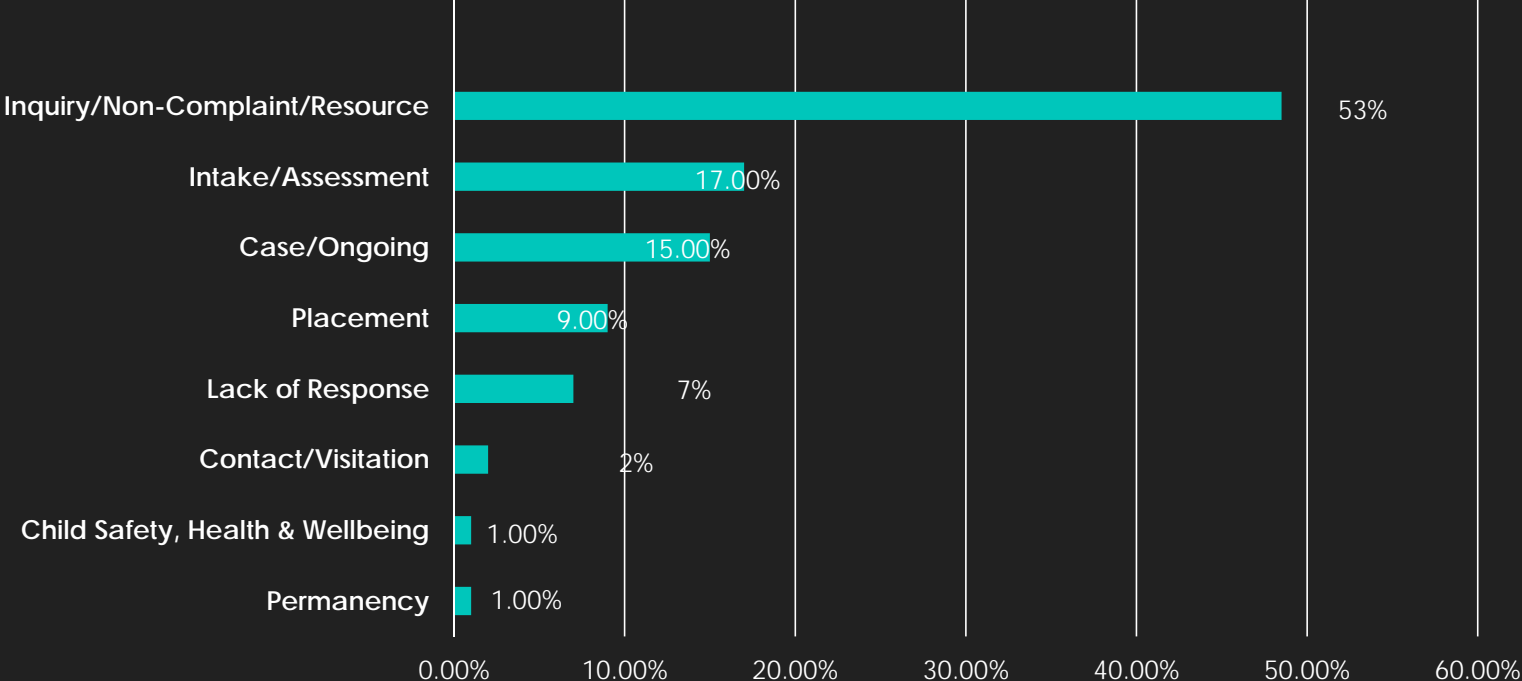
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Change
Systemic	21	20	4	-80%
Non-Systemic	135	297	401	197%
Total	156	317	405	160%



# Classification of Contacts FY 2013/14



# Nature of Contacts FY 2013/14



# Contact Dispositions FY 2013/14

Affirmed Agency/Caseworker Actions	87%
Agency/Caseworker Non-Compliance with Policy or Law and Reviews with Recommendations	12%
Deviation from Best Practice Standards	<0.5%

# Who's Calling Us?

Child's Parent	36%
Child's Grandparent	18%
Child's Other Relative	12%
Community Professional	7%
Foster and/or Adoptive Parent	4%
Friend/Neighbor	3%
Advocate	2%
Legislator	1%
Law Enforcement	1%

# How Are They Finding Us?

Facebook/Twitter/Internet/Website	36%
Previous OCCPO Contact	16%
CDHS	9%
Community Agency	5%
Media	5%
County DSS/DHS	4%
Friend or Family Member	4%
Advocate	2%
Attorney	1%

# Issues Tracked by OCCPO in FY 2013/14

- Risk and Safety Assessments
- Intake Inconsistencies or Issues
- Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse
- Substance Abuse and Implications for Parenting
- Systems Navigation Issues
- Concerns/Fear of Retribution
- Training Issues
- Adoption Subsidies
- Child Fatality Review Team and the Ombudsman Office Role
- Child Protection Team Issues
- Grievance Processes



# Getting the Word to You

- Annual Report
- Newsletter
- Email
- Budget Presentations
- Public Education Opportunities
- Media
- 15 Minute Face to Face Meetings with Legislators

# Review and Investigation Trends

- Safety and Risk Assessments
- Inconsistent/Incomplete TRAILS documentation
- Multi-agency Collaboration (medical, law enforcement, etc)
- Failure to document new incidents of abuse/neglect on ongoing cases
- Expired time frames
- Missing or outdated Memorandums of Understanding with Law Enforcement
- Missing face to face contacts with children and parents
- Inadequate safety planning
- Case transfer issues
- Ongoing evaluation of RED Team processes

# Recommendation Summary

- Accurate and Complete Documentation
- Ongoing Systems Collaboration
- Safety and Risk Assessment Training
- Review/Revise MOU's
- Ongoing RED Team Training
- Safety planning training
- Training regarding Assessment Closure requirements
- Training on Volume VII face to face contact requirements
- Case Transfer training
- Timely Completion of Assessments
- Abuse Recognition Training
- Assessment Findings Training

What Would You Like to Know?

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

# THANK YOU!

**Dennis Goodwin, Child Protection Ombudsman**

[dennis@protectcoloradochildren.org](mailto:dennis@protectcoloradochildren.org)

**Sabrina Byrnes, Associate Ombudsman**

[sabrina@protectcoloradochildren.org](mailto:sabrina@protectcoloradochildren.org)

[www.protectcoloradochildren.org](http://www.protectcoloradochildren.org)