



COLORADO OFFICE OF
**THE CHILD'S
REPRESENTATIVE**

Performance Plan

Fiscal Year 2025

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.

Vision

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

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, equitable, 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, honesty, and equity. 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.

Overview

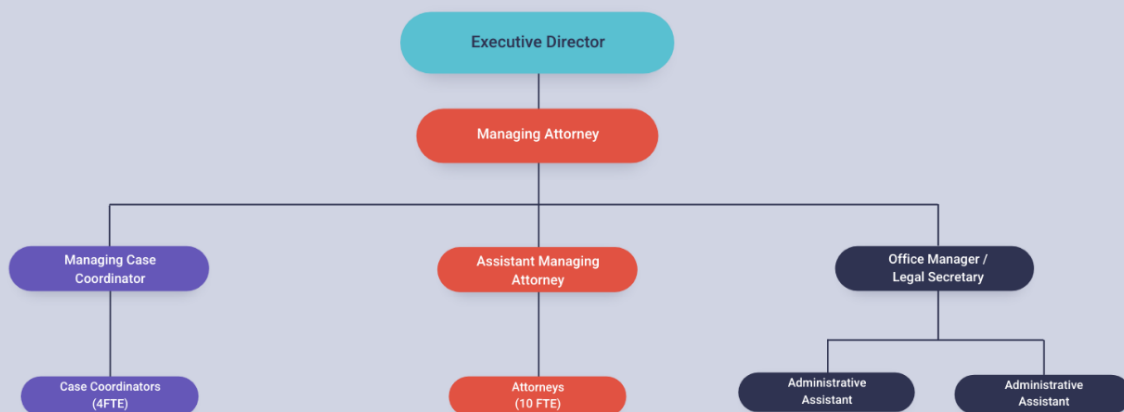
The Office of the Child’s Representative (“OCR”) was created by the Colorado General Assembly in 2000, through House Bill 00-1371, to improve representation for Colorado’s most vulnerable children and youth. OCR’s enabling legislation and mandates are found in Colorado Revised Statute §13-91-101 et seq. and require the OCR to:

- Ensure provision of uniform, high-quality legal representation to children involved in judicial proceedings in Colorado.
- Enhance the provision of guardian ad litem (“GAL”) or Counsel for Youth (“CFY”) services in Colorado.
- Provide high-quality, accessible training throughout the state.
- Make recommendations to the Colorado Chief Justice concerning practice standards.
- Provide oversight to ensure compliance with the established practice standards.
- Establish fair and realistic compensation for state-appointed GALs and CFY sufficient to attract and retain high-quality, experienced attorneys to serve as GALs or CFY.
- Work cooperatively and form partnerships with local judicial districts, attorneys, and children and youth impacted by the child welfare and juvenile justice system.
- Develop measurement instruments to assess and document the effectiveness of various models of representation.

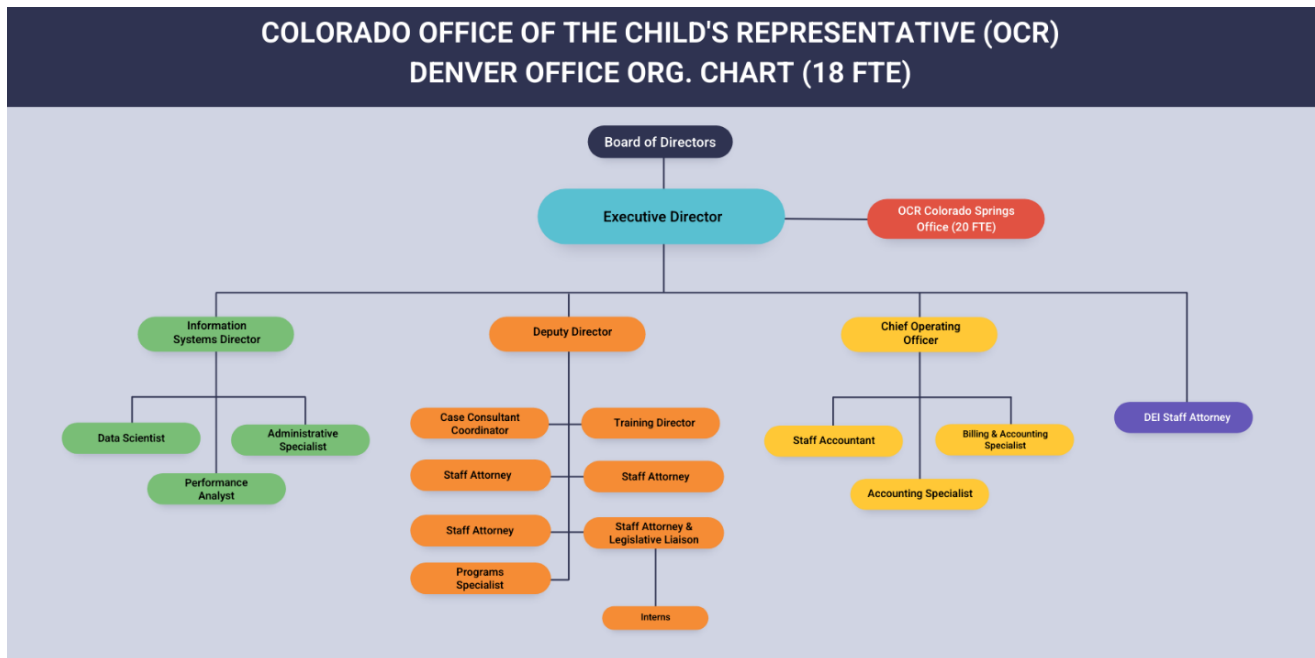
OCR began operating in 2001 and has been in operation since. OCR became a permanent independent state agency in 2010. Over the last 23 years, OCR has worked diligently to fulfill these mandates and improve the quality of legal services and representation of children and youth in Colorado. OCR has two offices:

The Executive Office, located in the Ralph Carr Judicial Center (1300 Broadway, Suite 320, Denver, CO 80203) houses OCR’s Executive Director, Chris Henderson, and his staff:

COLORADO OFFICE OF THE CHILD'S REPRESENTATIVE (OCR) COLORADO SPRINGS OFFICE ORG. CHART (20 FTE)



The Colorado Springs Office operates under OCR and provides high quality GAL and CFY representation to children and youth in the 4th Judicial District through a multidisciplinary legal office model. The Colorado Springs Office is managed by Nicole Lyells:



Attorney Services Provided by OCR

OCR oversees approximately 270 attorneys who serve as GALs, CFY, or Child’s Legal Representatives (“CLR”). These attorneys span the entire state, representing children and youth (or their best interests) in all 22 judicial districts. The Court appoints a GAL or CFY for every child or youth who is a party in a dependency and neglect (“D&N”) or Foster Youth Transition Program case (“FYTP”) as mandated in C.R.S. §19-1-111, §19-3-203, and §19-7-308. OCR is responsible for oversight and payment of these appointments, including any applicable appeal. OCR is responsible for the following mandatory appointments:

CASE TYPE	OCR RESPONSIBILITY
Dependency & Neglect	All GAL and CFY appointments.
Foster Youth in Transition (FYTP)	All CFY assignments or appointments.
Underage Party seeking a Marriage License	All GAL appointments (GAL appointed for all youth 16-17 seeking a marriage license).
Juvenile Delinquency – detained youth only	All GAL appointments for youth who are detained (this appointment is limited to the time of detention and further appointment is guided by §19-1-111)

The court has *discretion* to appoint an OCR attorney in the following proceedings and OCR is responsible for those appointments as follows:

Case Type	OCR Responsibility
Delinquency & Direct File	All GAL appointments.
Truancy	All GAL appointments.
Paternity & Support	GAL appointments where at least one party is indigent.
Probate	GAL appointments where at least one party is indigent.
Adoption & Relinquishment	GAL appointments where at least one party is indigent. (Note: some CFY appointments are mandated, when the CFY represents the youth in a companion D&N case).
Mental Health	All GAL appointments.
Victim Witness	All GAL appointments.
Domestic Relations	Child's Legal Representative ("CLR") appointments when one or both parties are indigent.
D&N GAL for a minor parent	All GAL appointments.

In addition, OCR may be responsible for appointments in other proceedings when the Court deems it necessary.

Attorney Roles

Within each proceeding there are different statutory roles and responsibilities. Overall, however, the roles of the attorneys remain the same. GALs and CLR's represent the best interests of the child or youth they are appointed to and the attorney's professional duties flow to the best interests of the child. GALs are appointed to independently investigate the best interests of the child and advocate for those best interests through all stages of the proceedings. CLR's have a similar role and are appointed only in Domestic Relations (DR) cases. CFYs represent the youth's stated position and the attorney's professional duties directly flow from the youth as a client. CFYs are appointed to independently investigate, counsel the youth, and advocate for the youth's position throughout all stages of the proceedings.

Attorneys that contract with OCR (OCR Attorneys) are held to high practice standards, set forth in Chief Justice Directive 04-06 ("CJD 04-06"). These attorneys are well trained, skilled litigators, who have a specialized knowledge of child welfare and juvenile law. The legal advocacy provided by OCR attorneys plays a critical role in protecting children and youth rights in the state. They promote the safety and well-being of children and youth and ensure children and youth have a voice throughout their legal proceedings.

FY25 Wildly Important Goal (WIG)

OCR will implement recent legislative changes establishing rights for children and youth in OCR cases to ensure that children and youth understand their rights and have attorneys who consistently engage in effective advocacy to seek equitable outcomes and protect and advance their rights.

While implementation of legislation is part of OCR's ongoing efforts each year, the recent volume of new legislation impacting OCR case types has amplified OCR's need to invest additional resources, focus, and time, raising it to a Wildly Important Goal for FY25.

Strategies:

- a. Develop, along with OCR's Lived Expert Action Panel (LEAP) and other youth with lived experience, and disseminate a notice of rights pursuant to HB24-1017.
- b. Update motions and resources on OCR's Litigation Toolkit to ensure they incorporate all applicable legislative changes.
- c. Draft new motions and resources for OCR's Litigation Toolkit to implement legislative changes as needed.
- d. Finalize the rewrite of Colorado's Guided Reference in Dependency (GRID) incorporating and addressing all legal and practice updates.
- e. Analyze changes to OCR CARES to enhance necessary oversight, support, and attorney advocacy for youth rights and needs.
- f. Update OCR's online Youth Page for accessibility and usability to ensure children and youth are aware of their rights.
- g. Provide training to OCR attorneys and case consultants on HB24-1017 and other legislation establishing or enhancing the rights of children and youth in OCR case types.
- h. Monitor and support other agencies and community entities in efforts to fully implement legislation relating to the rights of children and youth in OCR case types.

OCR's Other Performance Goals and Strategies

GOAL 1: PROVIDE CHILDREN AND YOUTH A VOICE IN THE COLORADO LEGAL SYSTEM THROUGH EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT ATTORNEY SERVICES AND ADVOCACY.

Strategies:

- a) *Ensure children's and youth's voice and interests are paramount throughout the proceedings and in the development of policy, law, and practice.*
- b) *Provide and promote effective use of case consultant (CC) support to attorneys.*
- c) *Provide oversight and evaluation of attorney practice.*
- d) *Establish fair and reasonable compensation for OCR attorneys and members of their legal team.*
- e) *Recruit and retain a sufficient pool of qualified attorneys to meet each district's needs.*

GOAL 2: OPTIMIZE EFFICIENCIES IN OCR OVERSIGHT AND BILLING.

Strategies:

- a) *Manage appropriations.*
- b) *Optimize use and effectiveness of CARES.*
- c) *Process, manage, and evaluate attorney 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.

Strategies:

- a) *Cultivate a learning and 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's Core Competencies.*
- c) *Assess attorney and case consultant education and support needs.*
- d) *Maintain and disseminate current and relevant resources for attorney and case consultant use regarding relevant law, social science, and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) strategies.*

Goal 1

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

OCR provides youth a voice in the system through effective attorney services and is the core of our mission and legislative mandates. All of OCR's activities and strategies flow from this vital charge. OCR's oversight, training, resource development, litigation support, work with lived experts, and policy advocacy (whether legislative, through rule, or via amicus briefs and appellate work) all center on this goal. OCR grounds its analysis in all aspects on what OCR attorneys need to effectively advocate for the needs, interests, and voices of children and youth in cases.

OCR continued to advance youth voice and youth rights with its pursuit of House Bill 24-1017, which provides enforceable rights for children and youth in foster care. Youth with lived experience were integral in the passage of this important legislation, signed by the Governor on April 24, 2024, and effective as of August 7, 2024.

OCR has a robust "Engaging and Empowering Youth" program which focuses on increasing youth attendance in court, incorporating youth feedback into OCR policies and programming, disseminating up-to-date and accessible youth resources, and gathering youth surveys. Additionally, OCR reports on state-wide data and provides training to promote youth voice in court proceedings. While youth attendance at court is a complex data point because it is impacted

by judicial officers and other parties as much as youth and OCR attorneys, OCR believes its attorneys are in a strong position to encourage this policy and effectuate change across the state.

OCR uses its case management and billing system, CARES, to report on several areas of youth voice. For example, the youth in court report mentioned above. OCR also runs reports to ensure attorneys are visiting children and youth in their placements within required timeframes. Youth data is reflected below, in Chart A

OCR’s Lived Expert Action Panel (LEAP)

LEAP began in 2021 and is currently comprised of 12 young adults with lived experience in D&N, FYTP, JD, and/or truancy proceedings. LEAP members helped provide training to attorneys and other parties involved in child welfare and delinquency proceedings, as well as to national audiences. In addition, they provide input on legislation, such as their compelling testimony at the Colorado Capitol regarding HB24-1017 (Rights for Youth in Foster Care). LEAP members were very involved in crafting and promoting HB24-1017 this fiscal year. In FY24, LEAP completed a resource titled “9 Things LEAP Wants GALS, CFY, & Judicial Officers to Know about Juvenile Delinquency Adjudications & Sentences” as well as a “Transition to Adulthood Checklist” and online quizzes.

Youth Outreach

As part of the OCR’s Engaging and Empowering Youth program, OCR attends or hosts youth events across the state. At these events, OCR speaks with young people involved in the child welfare and/or juvenile justice system. Thus far in FY24, OCR has completed 9 of these events and has two additional events scheduled. Youth who attend these events are offered the opportunity to provide direct feedback regarding their OCR attorney through an anonymous survey. This survey is also available on the OCR’s youth page, giving OCR direct feedback from youth working with OCR attorneys.

OCR conducts youth reference interviews as part of its contract renewal process for one-third of Colorado’s judicial districts each year. This provides direct youth feedback about current contract attorneys. In FY24, OCR conducted 57 youth reference interviews regarding 66 attorneys up for renewal. This feedback is incorporated into the attorney’s evaluation regarding compliance with OCR practice standards and is discussed with each attorney during their renewal interview. Additional data in the chart below comes from Court Observation forms, Stakeholder feedback surveys, youth events, and youth surveys.

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

CHART A	FY21		FY22		FY23		FY24		FY25		FY26		FY27		FY28	
	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual
# of youth events attended or sponsored	5	4	5	12	8	12	10		10		10		15		15	

# of youth surveys received	100	18	100	140	100	137	100		100		100		100		100
% of renewing attorneys w/ at least 1 youth reference interview	95%	88%	95%	100%	95%	99%	95%	87%	95%		95%		95%		95%
% of youth over 12 who attended a benchmark, permanency, or review hearing	Est. Base line	19%	20%	20%	25%	26%	25%		30%		30%		35%		35%
% of youth report attorney talked to them about the right to go to Court ¹	70%	63%	70%	83%	75%	83%	75%		80%		80%		85%		85%
% of youth report they trusted their OCR attorney always/usually	-	-	Est Base Line	77%	80%	78%	80%		85%		85%		90%		90%
% of youth report their GAL/CFY should continue to represent youth	-	-	Est Base Line	88%	90%	90%	90%		92%		92%		95%		95%
% of initial 30-day visits completed	100%	97%	100%	95%	100%	95%	98%		98%		98%		98%		98%

Case Consultant Support

Multidisciplinary law practice is a well-accepted best practice that the OCR is working to infuse throughout the state. Attorneys may hire their own social work professional, referred to as a case consultant (CC), or they may engage the services of an OCR contract CC to work on specific cases. The use of CCs allows additional work on cases at a lower hourly rate, provides social science expertise to complement the attorney’s expertise, and can enhance attorney contact with children/youth and other parties. Case Consultant I level professionals must have either a license in a relevant field, a Master’s in a relevant field, or a Bachelor’s in a relevant field plus at least 2 years of relevant experience. Case Consultant II level professionals must be licensed as a Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Professional Counselor (LPC), or Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT). In FY24 OCR contracts directly with 16 CCs who are available state-wide. OCR continues to review the CC program and policies, using Title IV-E funds to enhance and update the program when indicated.

¹ This question changed slightly for FY22 when the youth survey was updated and streamlined. The concept in previous year reporting is similar so it is reported in this line.

Attorney Oversight and Evaluation

Child welfare cases are very fact specific and individualized, which means that appropriate results for one child may not be appropriate for another child. Because of this, the practice does not lend itself to simple outcome-based analysis, which is why the OCR concentrates its data collection on compliance with practice standards. Every year OCR establishes lists of attorneys eligible for OCR appointments in each of the 22 judicial districts across the state. OCR uses a comprehensive evaluation strategy and benchmarks to ensure compliance with practice standards and relevant chief justice directives related to the practice as it establishes these eligibility or appointment lists. These benchmarks can be accessed [here](#) by clicking on the Applications timeline, and then clicking on “OCR Verifications and Renewal Information Sources Chart” at the top. This evaluation strategy includes:

- Annual verification process
- Tri-annual renewal process
- New attorney interviews
- Ongoing assessment, periodic reviews, and risk-based sampling of attorney activity

Each year, attorneys contracting with OCR must disclose their disciplinary history, verify fulfillment of OCR training requirements, and verify malpractice insurance requirements. Every three years, OCR requires attorneys to undergo a more involved contract renewal process that includes analysis of additional qualitative data sources. This three-year renewal process is staggered so that one-third of attorneys undergo renewal each year. The Annual Verification and Tri-Annual Renewal process requires a review of the following data sources (those in bold only apply to the Tri-Annual Renewal Process):

- D&N Initial 30-day Visit Report
- Attorney Discipline Report
- Judicial Officer Stakeholder Survey Report
- Training Verification Form
- Malpractice Insurance Verification
- Outstanding Issues Form
- **Court Observation Summary**
- **Case Reference Summary**
- **Writing Sample**
- **One-on-One Interview**
- **Activity in Timeframe Report**
- **Youth Contact Report**
- **Youth in Court Report**
- **Youth Surveys**

Each attorney is reviewed by an OCR staff attorney who assesses any discrepancies between the attorney’s data and the established benchmarks. Attorneys who fall outside of the benchmarks are staffed by the OCR to determine what action is necessary. This process promotes consistency

and transparency in OCR’s contract decisions. In FY24, the OCR processed 235 verifications and renewal applications and received 42 additional new applications.

Judicial Officer Stakeholder Surveys and Case Reference Interviews

OCR seeks judicial feedback for each verifying or renewing attorney through an annual survey administered statewide to Judicial Officers presiding in relevant case types. Responses from this survey are included in various charts in this report and reflect answers of Strongly Agree, Agree, Always or Usually, which are noted as “SA/A”. In FY24, OCR received a total of 348 survey responses concerning 176 attorneys.

OCR also seeks direct feedback from youth, caregivers, and parents for each renewing attorney through case reference interviews. These are done with a standardized script to ensure consistency and provide meaningful feedback directly from parties that are working with OCR attorneys. In FY24, OCR interviewed 184 total references concerning 66 attorneys.

Court Observations

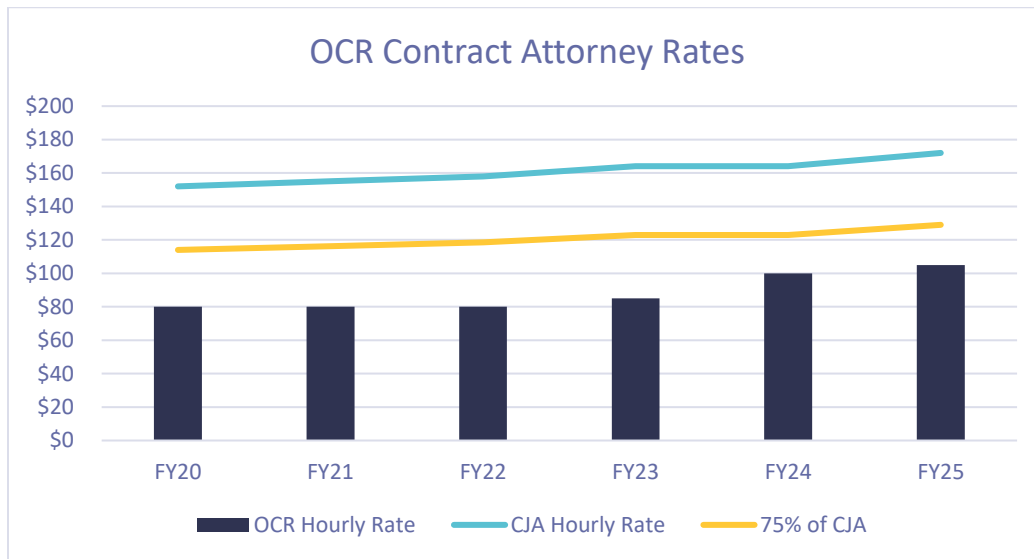
Court observations are done using separate standardized forms for D&N cases and for JD cases. In FY24, OCR conducted 202 observations involving 67 attorneys and 285 children/youth.

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

CHART B	FY21		FY22		FY23		FY24		FY25		FY26		FY27		FY28	
	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual
Judicial Officers report Attny personally attends Always or Usually	97%	99%	100%	99%	100%	92%	100%	97%	98%		98%		98%		98%	
Appointed Attorney Personally Appeared in OCR Court Observations	95%	97%	98%	95%	98%	97%	98%	96%	98%		98%		98%		98%	
Judicial Officers report Attny possesses requisite knowledge and skills to provide effective legal rep (SA/A)	-	-	-	-	Est. Bench mark	97%	98%	98%	98%		98%		98%		98%	

Fair and Reasonable Compensation

OCR is statutorily mandated, in C.R.S. 13-91-105, to establish fair and realistic rates of compensation to enhance the legal representation of children. OCR is grateful to the Joint Budget Committee and the General Assembly for supporting the rate increase pursuant to C.R.S. 21-2-105 (2)(b), that brings the OCR contract attorney hourly rate to \$105/hour beginning July 1, 2024. As a reminder, this statute requires annual increases until the hourly rate is at least 75% of the rate set pursuant to the Federal “Criminal Justice Act Revision of 1986”, which sets rates for indigent representation in federal court. As of January 1, 2024, the CJA rate for non-capitol cases is \$172/hour. With the increase to \$105/hour, OCR attorney rates are at 61% of the CJA rate.



Recruitment and Retention

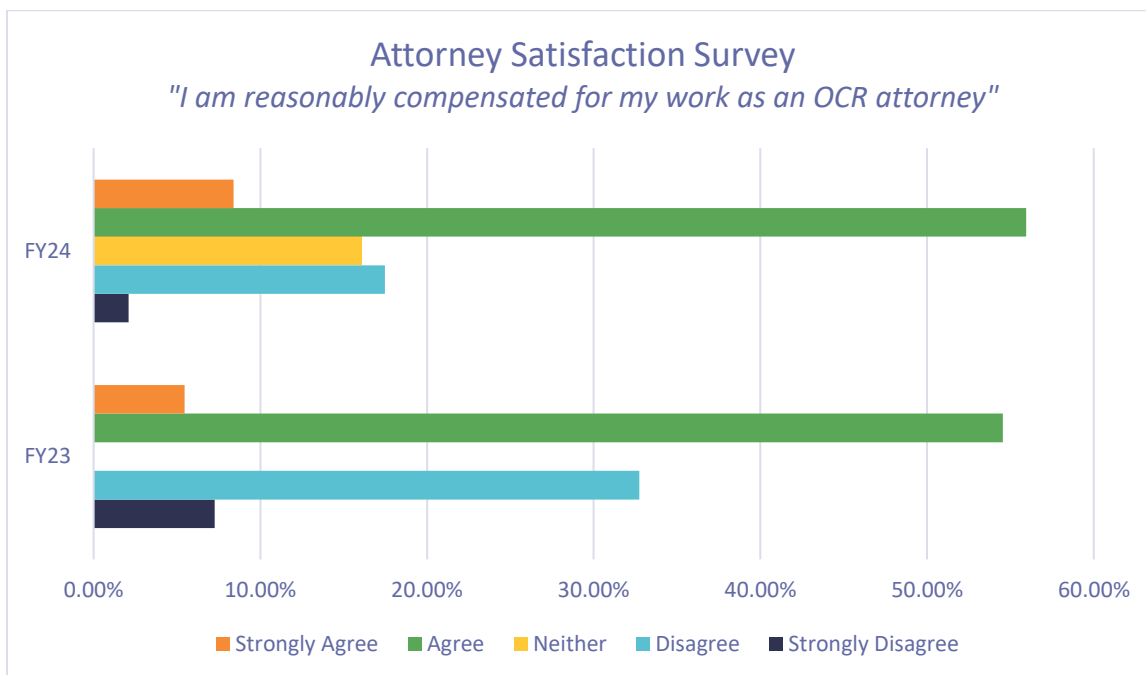
OCR’s efforts to attain a more competitive compensation rate addressed above are a vital piece of the agency’s recruitment and retention strategy. Outside of compensation, the OCR administers an Attorney Satisfaction Survey to all contract attorneys for the year. OCR strives to be responsive to the feedback from these surveys as part of its retention strategy. In FY24, OCR received 146 Attorney Satisfaction Surveys covering all 22 Judicial Districts. OCR acts in a variety of ways that are responsive to the results of the survey. For example, OCR:

- engaged in an attorney wellbeing program,
- launched a new policy to compensate attorneys for up to 10 CLEs of in-person OCR-approved training,
- started a second chair litigation support program,
- expanded payment categories for the CC program,
- and supported HB24-1374 to give contract attorneys the opportunity under new federal guidance to apply for Public Service Loan Forgiveness from the federal government.

OCR’s efforts to recruit and retain a diverse pool of attorneys includes outreach to specialty bar associations and networking, as well as updated applications, interview questions, and job postings. OCR welcomed a new staff attorney this year, who is focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion. This work will include expansion of recruitment and retention efforts.

Additionally, OCR hosts student interns each semester to increase awareness and education about this specialized field of legal practice and to establish relationships with law schools in Colorado, as well as nation-wide.

To further these efforts, OCR assigns staff attorneys as liaisons to specific judicial districts each year. This ensures each district has a contact who can provide support and training, as well as discuss issues specific to the district. The staff attorney liaison also assesses the needs of each district by collaborating with judicial officers, meeting with attorneys, reviewing judicial district filing statistics and OCR appointment data, and engaging in targeted recruitment efforts as indicated. These activities ensure attorneys who contract with the OCR are not overwhelmed by their caseloads and are able to sustain a practice.



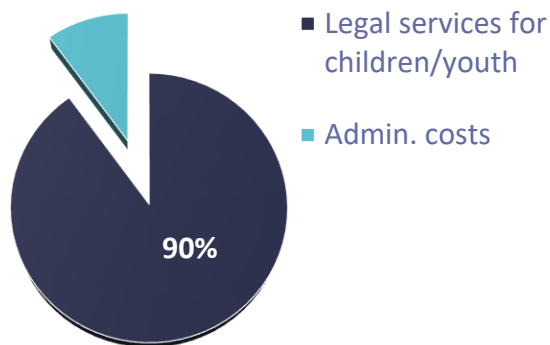
GOAL 2

Optimize efficiencies in OCR oversight and billing.

Manage Appropriations

OCR strives to be efficient and effective in utilizing its annual appropriation. OCR's budget is driven largely by attorney activity and caseloads. For example, the court appointed counsel ("CAC") appropriation is driven strictly by the caseloads and workloads of contractors' billing. OCR does not control the number of appointments,

FY 24 Administrative Expenditures (through 3/31/24)



as these are made by courts. In contrast, OCR does control non-CAC expenditures and endeavors to ensure that these stay within the annual allocation amount. In FY24 (through 3/31/24), OCR used 90% of its expended funds for attorney services (including the CAC line item) and only 10% for administration. Through the first three quarters of the fiscal year, OCR has expended 70% of its appropriation and is currently on track to be within budget by the end of the fiscal year.

Optimize Use and Effectiveness of CARES

The current CARES system was released in 2018, underwent a significant update in 2022, and was updated again in 2023 to support client-directed representation. This proprietary case management and billing system allows for streamlined billing, case management, and oversight reporting. CARES also allows OCR to track IV-E spending through a custom rules-based engine. At the end of June, there were approximately 550 users of CARES with 9,175 open appointments covering all OCR case types.

Through CARES, OCR does periodic reporting that aids in both Goal 1 and Goal 2, with the following reports:

- Child Counts per attorney
- 30-day initial visits in D&N cases
- Potential duplicate entries
- Non-attorney staff in court
- 12+ hours billed per day
- 15+ hours billed on an appointment/month
- Age maximums for D&N cases
- Risk sampling of high-cost contractors/appointments per quarter

Process, Manage, and Evaluate Contractor Billing

As illustrated above, OCR uses CARES to evaluate contractor billing and report on attorney compliance with practice standards. OCR’s Operations Team processes invoices for attorneys each month with a multilevel review/approval system. While OCR has up to 45 days to pay an invoice, it endeavors to pay all undisputed invoices within 30 days of receipt. As of March 31, 2024, OCR staff processed 2,125 invoices through CARES and an additional 576 non-CARES payments. OCR appreciates the support of the General Assembly in authorizing the use of IV-E funds to develop a new generation of CARES that will keep CARES up to date and optimize oversight and billing efficiencies while improving data analyses and reporting.

Goal 2: Optimize efficiencies in attorney oversight and billing.																
CHART C	FY21		FY22		FY23		FY24		FY25		FY26		FY27		FY28	
	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual
Non-CAC expenditures stay within budgeted appropriation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	

Avg. # of days from invoice submission to payment in state financial system	10	10	10	12	14	7	14		14		14		14		14
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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.

Cultivate a learning and practice environment that supports excellence in legal representation.

OCR has developed a learning and practice environment that infuses diversity, equity, and inclusion principles throughout and focuses on four overarching core competencies as the foundation of high-quality representation:

- Ethics/Role of the GAL, CLR, or CFY
- Substantive Knowledge
 - Federal and state law
 - Social science and cultural competency
 - Systems context
- Skills
 - Out-of-court advocacy
 - In court advocacy
 - Effective engagement with youth and professionals
 - Conducting a meaningful independent investigation
- Law Practice Management

To support this learning and practice environment, OCR offers periodic staffings by case type (e.g., FYTP, CFY, youth justice, appellate litigation support, CLR, Probate) where attendees can assess needs and create a community of shared knowledge and information.

In addition to the overarching competencies, OCR focuses on key priorities each fiscal year. These priorities are informed by:

- OCR’s WIG and performance goals
- Contractor needs identified through the Attorney Satisfaction Survey and monthly case-type staffings
- LEAP input and recommendations
- New state and federal legal and practice developments

For FY25, the training priorities are:

- Rights for Youth in Foster Care Implementation
- Education

- Case Consultant Competencies

Deliver high-quality accessible training to advance best practices, address emerging topics in relevant fields, and implement OCR's Core Competencies.

The General Assembly charged OCR with providing high-quality and accessible training throughout the state. OCR contract attorneys are required to complete at least 10 hours of OCR-sponsored or approved training, including at least 2 hours of DEI specific training.

To meet these requirements, OCR hosts an annual conference and provides periodic training throughout the year. It is vital that this training be accessible to attorneys state-wide. To that end, OCR provides webinars at least once per quarter and endeavors to livestream in-person trainings when possible. OCR works with an audio/visual team to record the majority of OCR-sponsored trainings; they are archived and available on OCR's website.

To further enhance learning opportunities and state-wide accessibility, the OCR has developed a curriculum for e-learning through on-demand courses. Currently, the OCR offers:

- Indian Child Welfare Act: Quick Guide
- Special Immigrant Juvenile Status: Quick Guide
- Appellate Certification Course
- Core Competencies training topics: sources of law in dependency & neglect cases; educational advocacy, stages of a dependency & neglect case, stages of a juvenile delinquency case

In FY24, OCR offered 79 CLEs, including:

- 2-day in-person fall conference,
- 1-day virtual spring conference,
- 4 days of in-person new attorney Core Competency trainings,
- 1-day in person trial skills training,
- 7 webinars
- and 1 co-sponsored training with a community partners.

These trainings covered 3 different case types though many of these trainings are applicable to multiple OCR case types. In addition, OCR offered 10 case staffings covering Counsel for Youth, Probate, Domestic Relations, and Foster Youth in Transition cases, as well as monthly Youth Justice case staffings, as an opportunity for attorneys to discuss legal and advocacy strategies with their colleagues and OCR staff. Training in the areas of the law covered by OCR attorneys requires a nimble approach as the law is continually evolving; therefore, the OCR training program must continually change to remain up-to-date and relevant. At the end of FY24, OCR will have a total of 303 current and up to date hours of CLEs available online for easy accessibility across the state.

To further deliver high-quality training, the OCR offers scholarships to state and national conferences to support contractor learning and community building. In FY24, OCR offered a total of 21 scholarships to attorneys.

Maintain and disseminate current and relevant resources for attorney and case consultant use regarding relevant law, social science, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategies.

OCR invests significant staff time to develop and maintain high-quality tools and programs to support Goal 3 such as:

- [Guided Reference in Dependency \(GRID\)](#) – comprehensive advocacy guide published in 2012, rewritten in 2018, updated annually, and rewritten periodically to address comprehensive legal and practice developments. This impressive guide covers 8 hearing specific chapters and 36 factsheets. It also includes practice tips, supporting citations, and case law. OCR is near the finalization of a comprehensive rewrite to incorporate extensive recent legislative changes and infuse practice changes resulting from client-directed representation and elevation of youth voice in proceedings.
- [Litigation Toolkit](#) – comprises pleadings, social science resources, and practice tools maintained throughout the year and periodically updated to reflect legal and practice developments.
- [Litigation Support List](#) – attorneys with subject matter expertise who are approved to consult on cases and assist in high-quality legal representation.
- [Appellate Certification Program](#)—in addition to identifying select attorneys as qualified to consult with case-carrying attorneys about potential appellate matters and handle their cases on appeal, OCR now requires any attorney representing a child or youth in an appeal to have completed OCR’s appellate certification program.
- [Second Chair List](#) – litigation support through a list of experienced attorneys available to second chair specified hearings.
- [Mentoring Program](#) – each OCR contract attorney is assigned a district-specific mentor for the first year of their contract.
- [OCR Listserv](#) – membership is required for OCR contractors and the listserv provides an excellent forum to disseminate and discuss difficult case issues, trends, case law or legislative updates, new case processes, and recent developments. So far, in FY24, OCR attorneys have sent 912 emails via the listserv.
- [Quarterly Newsletters](#) – provides up-to-date information on case law updates, legislative updates, training announcements, attorney shout-outs and more.
- [Westlaw](#) – OCR provides this comprehensive legal research tool to every OCR contract attorney.

Goal 3: The OCR will ensure attorneys remain current in state and federal law and regulations, social science research and evidence-based services.

CHART D	FY21		FY22		FY23		FY24		FY25		FY26		FY27		FY28	
	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual
# new CLE hours sponsored by OCR/Year	80	85	85	83	85	91	85		85		85		85		85	
% of attorneys indicate OCR Training is tailored to meet the specialized needs of OCR attorneys (SA/A)	98%	94%	98%	93%	98%	91%	98%		95%		95%		95%		95%	
% of attorneys indicated very satisfied/satisfied with GRID	95%	100%	95%	96%	95%	90%	95%		95%		95%		95%		95%	
% of attorneys indicated very satisfied/satisfied with OCR Listserv	95%	98%	95%	90%	95%	88%	98%		95%		95%		95%		95%	
% of attorneys indicated very satisfied/satisfied with OCR Litigation Toolkit	95%	94%	95%	89%	95%	88%	95%		95%		95%		95%		95%	

Conclusion

OCR is proud of the progress made by its staff and contract attorneys to further OCR’s Mission and goals and looks forward to another year of working to advance youth rights in Colorado. OCR invites you to look at the [OCR website](#) for updates throughout the year.