



CHILD PROTECTION
OMBUDSMAN
of COLORADO

**Office of Colorado's Child Protection
Ombudsman**

**Fiscal Year 2020-2021
Performance Plan**

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Agency Overview

Background

The Office of Colorado’s Child Protection Ombudsman (CPO) was established in June 2010, under Senate Bill 10-171. This legislation provided that the CPO would operate as a program through a contract with a local non-profit agency, issued and managed by the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS).

Senate Bill 10-171 was passed in response to the deaths of 12 children in Colorado who were known to child protection services. The deaths of these children in 2007 sparked an outcry by the public that there be greater oversight, accountability and transparency of the child protection system in Colorado. The public demanded to know more about how the systems charged with protecting Colorado’s children were keeping them safe and working to prevent such tragedies in the future.

Years after the CPO’s creation, legislators determined that the CPO needed independence from the agencies it was designed to review. So, on June 2, 2015, Senate Bill 15-204, *Concerning the Independent Functioning of the Office of the Child Protection Ombudsman*, was signed into law. This legislation transformed the original “program” into a distinct and independent state agency. The new, independent CPO opened in 2016.

The concept of an ombudsman dates back hundreds of years and is designed to provide citizens with an independent, unbiased and trusted intermediary between the public and an entity. In a similar fashion, the CPO works to provide a clear channel between the citizens of Colorado and the agencies and providers tasked with protecting children. The CPO is guided by standards set by organizations such as the United States Ombudsman Association and the American Bar Association. Using those standards, the CPO serves the public by independently gathering information, investigating complaints and providing recommendations to child protection agencies and providers.

To ensure the accountability and transparency of the CPO and the Ombudsman, the legislature also created the Child Protection Ombudsman Board (CPO Board) in 2015. The CPO Board was the first of its kind in the nation. By law, the CPO Board is required to oversee the Ombudsman’s performance and act as an advisory body on strategic direction and outreach decisions by the CPO.

The CPO is now housed within the Colorado State Judicial Branch and is located at the Ralph L. Carr Judicial Center in Denver. Colorado’s current Child Protection Ombudsman, Stephanie Villafuerte, was appointed in December 2015 by the CPO Board. Ombudsman Villafuerte took office in January 2016.

Mission

We are innovative change agents committed to informing and reforming child protection systems for children, families and communities.

Vision

Ensuring safety for Colorado’s children today and envisioning a stronger child protection system for the future.

Major Agency Functions

Role of the CPO

By design, the CPO serves as an independent, neutral problem solver that helps citizens navigate a complex child protection system in an expert and timely manner. The CPO has independent access to child protection records that are not otherwise available to the public. This allows the CPO to objectively assist citizens with concerns, investigate issues affecting the child protection system, deliver recommendations and drive systemic reform through research and education. Through objective study the CPO works to improve the delivery of services to children and families within the child protection system.

Responsibilities of the CPO

The CPO was established pursuant to C.R.S. 19-3.3-101 and is responsible for responding to complaints concerning actions or inactions by child protection agencies that may adversely impact the safety, permanency or wellbeing of a child. Child protection agencies are those that receive public funds to protect or care for children. This includes law enforcement, mental health agencies, child welfare services and the Division of Youth Services. All services provided to citizens are free and confidential. The three primary services provided to citizens and stakeholders include information and resource referrals, assists and investigations. These terms are defined below in the “Glossary of Terms.”

Additionally, pursuant to C.R.S. 19-3.3-103(2)(e), the CPO is responsible for informing on systemic changes to “...improve the safety of and promote better outcomes for children and families receiving child protection services in Colorado.” Being uniquely situated to gather and share information with state and non-state entities, the CPO helps facilitate work to enhance the state’s child protection system. The CPO shares recommendations and information through Special Initiatives. This term is defined below in the “Glossary of Terms.”

Glossary of Terms

Assist – This is the most common service provided by the CPO. The CPO works with citizens to clarify what is happening in their specific case, including processes and actions taken by an agency or provider. CPO staff will complete an independent review of relevant records, rule and law. Depending on the complexity and nature of the inquiry, the CPO may contact the agency/provider involved to gain a better understanding about a specific situation. In some instances, the CPO may facilitate communication between the caller and the agency involved in the case with the goal of resolving the problem.

Information and Resources Referral – The CPO provides citizens with information, resources and/or education to help resolve their questions regarding the child protection system. The CPO will speak with a citizen on the phone to learn more about their concern. CPO staff may personally connect the caller with a resource that is best suited to address their question.

Investigation – The CPO will open an investigation if it determines a case may result in recommendations for statutory, budgetary and/or administrative changes to improve the child protection system. A comprehensive, independent study of relevant facts, records and law will be completed. The CPO will interview all relevant parties and may interview subject matter experts. The CPO will contact the relevant agency/provider and release a public investigation report.

Special Initiatives – Projects that leverage comprehensive research, and in certain instances stakeholder engagement processes, to identify and address topics relevant to improving the state’s child protection system.

Jurisdiction and Environment

The CPO receives “*complaints concerning child protection services made by, or on behalf of, a child relating to any action, inaction, or decision of any public agency or any provider that receives public moneys that may adversely affect the safety, permanency, or well-being of a child. The Ombudsman may, independently and impartially, investigate and seek resolution of such complaints, which resolution may include but need not be limited to, referring a complaint to the state department or appropriate agency or entity and making a recommendation for action relating to a complaint.*” See C.R.S. 19-3.3-103(1)(a)(I)(A).

Some examples of agencies/providers the CPO has jurisdiction to review include human service agencies, youth corrections, law enforcement, educators, medical professionals and treatment providers.

Pursuant to C.R.S. 19-3.3-101 to 110, the CPO does not have the authority to:

- Investigate allegations of abuse and/or neglect.
- Interfere or intervene in any criminal or civil court proceeding.
- Investigate complaints related to judges, magistrates, attorneys or guardians ad litem.
- Overturn any court order.
- Mandate the reversal of an agency/provider decision.
- Offer legal advice.

What’s New to Our Performance Plan This Year

The CPO is consistently working to update and improve its processes. This is reflected throughout the agency’s work, including this Performance Plan.

Going forward, the CPO will be using updated terminology in its Performance Plans and Performance Evaluations. The term “Key Metrics” that has been used in the past has now been updated to “Key Activities” to better reflect that the information listed showcases *how* the CPO plans to achieve each “Critical Process.” Additionally, the term “Key Metrics,” or the specific *data* the CPO plans to measure to showcase progress toward achieving each “Critical Process,” is now included in the “Key Metrics and Outcome(s)” section at the bottom of each “Critical Process” table. The CPO hopes that these changes will make it clearer to the public and stakeholders what the CPO is doing to accomplish work and the data the CPO is using to assess performance.

It is important to note that several “Critical Processes” outlined in the [CPO’s FY 2019-20 Performance Plan](#) are being carried over to this Performance Plan. This is because the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic created several interruptions to “business as usual” across the state and many in-person meetings and trainings were cancelled and/or postponed. As a result, the CPO will continue focusing on previously identified “Critical Processes” and work toward their completion in accordance with health and safety directives.

Lastly, the CPO has updated its Strategic Policy Initiatives (SPI) this year to better reflect its growth and

development. The CPO has eliminated the SPI *“Increase the expertise and resources needed to investigate and research systemic issues within the child protection system,”* as staff positions have been filled. Additionally, the SPI *“Establish the CPO as a leader in information gathering and dissemination as it relates to issues facing the child protection system”* has been added to reflect the agency’s commitment to leveraging staff expertise and research to identify and address topics relevant to improving the state’s child protection system.

Summary of FY 2019-2020 Quarter 3 Performance Evaluation

2019-2020 Performance Plan	In Progress or Completed
4 Strategic Policy Initiatives	In Progress
12 Critical Processes	In Progress
27 Key Activities	In Progress

During Quarter 3 (Q3), the CPO continued its work on three Strategic Policy Initiatives (SPI) that were developed during Fiscal Year 2018-19 and began working on an additional SPI that was developed during Fiscal Year 2019-20. In concert with one another, the four SPI focused the CPO on the resources and practices needed to address system-wide issues affecting the child protection system, and on providing a high quality of service for citizens seeking one-on-one assistance. The SPI were designed to guide the agency’s work for multiple fiscal years in the areas of communication and outreach, efficient and impactful practices, expanding expertise and promoting best practices, which is why many critical processes continue to be a work in progress.

As highlighted in the CPO’s Q3 Performance Evaluation, the CPO increased its impact and capacity during the quarter. From improving communications to increasing resources, the CPO made progress in each of the SPI defined in the Fiscal Year 2018-19 Performance Plan. Communication between the CPO and the entities that it interacts with – such as agencies/providers, legislators and citizens – was made more accessible, transparent and understandable. This was partly due to the CPO contracting with a local communications firm. The CPO staff had access to better tools and resources, such as Westlaw to help with legal research and Monday.com to coordinate project management efforts. Also, the CPO hired staff, effectively expanding the team’s expertise and capacity. Furthermore, the CPO launched its fourth SPI during Q3, which has the CPO focused on leveraging best practices, the best available data, research, evidence and testimonials to ensure that objective, accurate and reliable information is leveraged to improve Colorado’s child protection system.

The numbers are telling; they show that the CPO’s efforts are on track and making a difference. At the time of publishing the CPO’s Quarter 3 Performance Evaluation, the CPO had served an upwards of 477 citizens, which was on track with projections. This is an indication that the public views the CPO as a vital resource – an entity that can help them navigate the complexities of, resolve issues with and answer questions about the state’s child protection system. Additionally, during FY 2019-20 at the time of publishing the Quarter 3 report, the CPO published two reports, one issue brief and 10 letters of compliance concern, each highlighting issues affecting children and families throughout Colorado and promoting improvements.

SMART Act reports and other CPO planning efforts, such as the [CPO’s Case Practices and Operating Procedures](#), help to ensure the CPO continues to handle the demand for services in an efficient and effective manner. To access the CPO’s full length Q3 Performance Evaluation, please visit either the [CPO’s website](#) or the website of the Governor’s Office of State Planning and Budgeting.

Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Performance Plan

Strategic Policy Initiatives

1 **STRATEGIC POLICY INITIATIVE: Target communications and engagements to better educate and serve citizens and stakeholders.**

The CPO is statutorily required to educate citizens and stakeholders “concerning child maltreatment and the role of the community in strengthening families and keeping children safe.” See C.R.S. 19-3.3-103(2)(c). The CPO has identified the following Strategies and Critical Processes as ways to become more accessible to the public and improve the consistency in which it shares its work with citizens and stakeholders. The Strategies, Critical Processes, Key Activities and Key Metrics and Outcome(s) outlined below are designed to ensure the CPO is fulfilling its mandate to educate the public regarding issues affecting the child protection system.

STRATEGY ONE: Provide consistent, timely and informative communications to citizens and stakeholders on issues facing the child protection system.

By communicating issues plaguing the child protection system, and recommendations for improvement, the CPO continues to fulfill the role the legislature designated for it.

Critical Process – Complete, publish and provide notices of CPO products in a timely fashion.

Key Activities		
<p>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure CPO products are placed on the CPO’s website in a timely manner. • Develop a notification system to notify the public/stakeholders of new products released by the CPO. (E.g. mail chip notification system) 	<p>Fiscal Year 2021-2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the Critical Process was not completed in FY 2020-21, implement any practices or products developed during the previous fiscal year. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2022-2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the Critical Process was not completed in FY 2021-22, implement any practices or products developed during the previous fiscal year.

Key Metrics and Outcome(s): The number of notifications sent to the public/stakeholders will be used to track this critical process. Additionally, the CPO will track that it is posting products to the website in a timely manner. This critical process is ongoing.

Critical Process – Communicate issues the CPO has identified to legislators by providing consistent and timely notices of the CPO’s findings and recommendations.

Key Activities

Fiscal Year 2020-2021	Fiscal Year 2021-2022	Fiscal Year 2022-2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send legislators a survey asking about their interest, and their constituents’ interest, in child protection issues. • Analyze data regarding interests to develop and target communications. • Provide a CPO orientation presentation for new members of the General Assembly during Quarter 2. • Provide all legislators with a presentation detailing the CPO’s work, including issues identified by the CPO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send legislators a survey asking about their interest, and their constituents’ interest, in child protection issues. • Analyze data regarding interests to develop and target communications. • Provide a CPO orientation presentation for new members of the General Assembly during Quarter 2. • Provide all legislators with a presentation detailing the CPO’s work, including issues identified by the CPO, access to benefits/services and a discussion of how Colorado’s child protection system impacts communities of color. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2021-22. • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities.

Key Metrics and Outcome(s): The number of engagements will be used to track this critical process. This critical process is ongoing.

Critical Process – Communicate issues the CPO has identified to stakeholders and/or ensure CPO representation in stakeholder meetings.

Key Activities

Fiscal Year 2020-2021	Fiscal Year 2021-2022	Fiscal Year 2022-2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend stakeholder meetings related to child protection issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend stakeholder meetings related to child protection issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend stakeholder meetings related to child protection issues.

Key Metrics and Outcome(s): The total number of CPO stakeholder meetings per quarter will be used to track this critical process. This critical process is ongoing.

STRATEGY TWO: Engage with communities to expand the CPO’s statewide presence, to identify emerging issues in child protection and to develop community-specific services.

The CPO will work to ensure that all communities in Colorado have equal access to CPO services and information. Expanding engagement with communities less familiar with the CPO’s services – particularly populations which are overrepresented in the child protection system – will be key in creating impactful reform to all areas of Colorado’s child protection system.

Critical Process – Engage directly with youth impacted by the child protection system to increase services provided directly to youth clients.		
Key Activities		
<p>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute youth-specific materials describing the CPO’s services to all agencies, providers and communities serving youth in out-of-home placements. • Distribute youth-specific materials describing the CPO’s services to all DYS youth centers. • Complete outreach campaigns to increase the CPO’s direct contact with youth clients, including those in DYS youth centers and out-of-home placements. • Meet with youth in DYS youth centers, foster homes, group homes and residential facilities to survey how to best communicate with youths. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2021-2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2020-21. • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2022-2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2021-22. • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities.
<p>Key Metrics and Outcome(s): The total number of engagements (e.g. calls from youths, CPO visits, etc.) will be used to track this critical process. This critical process is ongoing.</p>		

Critical Process – Identify and respond to the needs of youth populations throughout Colorado.		
Key Activities		
<p>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze demographic data to identify youth populations that are overrepresented in all areas of the child protection system, including Black, Indigenous, Latino and youth of color. Engage youth in DYS youth centers to discuss their experiences, needs and how the CPO may better serve them. Engage youth in out-of-home placements to discuss their experiences, needs and how the CPO may better serve them. Complete outreach campaigns to distribute the CPO’s Spanish materials to Spanish-speaking youths. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2021-2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze demographic data to identify youth populations that are overrepresented in all areas of the child protection system, including Black, Indigenous, Latino and youth of color. Engage youth in DYS youth centers to discuss their experiences, needs and how the CPO may better serve them. Engage youth in out-of-home placements to discuss their experiences, needs and how the CPO may better serve them. Engage with Spanish-speaking youth to discuss their experiences, needs and how the CPO may better serve them. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2022-2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2021-22. If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Metrics.
<p>Key Metrics and Outcome(s): The number of meetings hosted will be used to track this critical process. This critical process is ongoing.</p>		

Critical Process – Engage directly with parents – including foster parents, adoptive parents and parents of youth in DYS youth centers – to improve the services the CPO provides to parent clients.		
Key Activities		
<p>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete outreach campaigns to increase the CPO’s direct contact with parent 	<p>Fiscal Year 2021-2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 	<p>Fiscal Year 2022-2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year

<p>clients.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update listserv of agencies, providers and organizations that may help the CPO connect with parent clients. • Distribute parent-specific materials describing the CPO's services to all agencies, providers and communities serving parents, including parents of youth in DYS youth centers. • Provide educational opportunities to parents, or entities serving parents, about the CPO's services. 	<p>2020-21.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities. 	<p>2021-22.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities.
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Key Metrics and Outcome(s): The total number of engagements (e.g. calls from parents, trainings, etc.) will be used to track this critical process. This critical process is ongoing.

Critical Process – Identify and respond to the needs of parents – including foster parents, adoptive parents, kinship providers and parents of youth in DYS youth centers – throughout Colorado.

Key Activities

Fiscal Year 2020-2021	Fiscal Year 2021-2022	Fiscal Year 2022-2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze demographic data to identify parent populations that are overrepresented in all areas of the child protection system, including Black, Indigenous, Latino and parents of color. • Engage with parents of youths in DYS youth centers to discuss their experiences, needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze demographic data to identify parent populations that are overrepresented in all areas of the child protection system, including Black, Indigenous, Latino and parents of color. • Engage with parents of youths in DYS youth centers to discuss their experiences, needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2021-22. • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Metrics.

<p>and how the CPO may better serve them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with parents of youth in out-of-home placements to discuss their experiences, needs and how the CPO may better serve them. • Engage with foster parents, adoptive parents and kinship providers to discuss their experiences, needs and how the CPO may better serve them. • Complete outreach campaigns to distribute the CPO's Spanish materials to Spanish-speaking parents. 	<p>and how the CPO may better serve them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with parents of youth in out-of-home placements to discuss their experiences, needs and how the CPO may better serve them. • Engage with foster parents, adoptive parents and kinship providers to discuss their experiences, needs and how the CPO may better serve them. • Engage with Spanish-speaking parents to discuss their experiences, needs and how the CPO may better serve them. 	
<p>Key Metrics and Outcome(s): The number of meetings hosted will be used to track this critical process. This critical process is ongoing.</p>		

<p>Critical Process – Engage mandatory reporters, services providers, educators, medical providers, mental health professionals and the child protection legal community.</p>		
<p>Key Activities</p>		
<p>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete outreach campaigns with four organizations/agencies/providers. • Update listserv of organizations/agencies/providers . • Provide educational opportunities to 	<p>Fiscal Year 2021-2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2020-21. • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key 	<p>Fiscal Year 2022-2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2021-22. • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop

interested entities about the CPO's services.	Activities.	appropriate Key Activities.
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Key Metrics and Outcome(s): The total number of engagements (e.g. calls from organizations/agencies/providers, campaigns, etc.) will be used to track this critical process. This critical process is ongoing.

Critical Process – Engage rural communities to improve and increase the services the CPO provides to clients in those areas.

Key Activities

Fiscal Year 2020-2021	Fiscal Year 2021-2022	Fiscal Year 2022-2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete two outreach campaigns in different rural judicial districts. During those campaigns, engage with entities such as child welfare departments, court improvement programs, school districts, regional hospitals and law enforcement. • Update listserv of agencies, providers and organizations. • Provide educational opportunities to interested entities about the CPO's services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2020-21. • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2021-22. • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities.

Key Metrics and Outcome(s): The total number of engagements will be used to track this critical process. This critical process is ongoing.

2

STRATEGIC POLICY INITIATIVE: Implement practices that ensure the CPO manages its caseload efficiently and effectively, allotting staff the necessary time and resources to research systemic concerns.

The demand for CPO services has increased steadily since the agency’s inception, as has the breadth and complexity of issues presented to the CPO. To facilitate systemic reform, the CPO must recognize complex cases quickly and resolve less complicated cases faster. The strategy below will help the CPO achieve this goal and ensure that the quality of services is maintained.

STRATEGY ONE: Implement practices and procedures that will decrease the amount of Information/Resource Referrals and Assists are open and conversely increase the amount of time CPO staff dedicate to systemic issues affecting the child protection system.

Information/Resource Referrals and Assists are the most common service provided by the CPO. The high demand for these services requires CPO staff to be efficient in contacting citizens, identifying their concerns and determining what is necessary to help citizens resolve their inquiry. Ensuring CPO staff are providing these services in an efficient and effective manner will, in turn, allow the CPO to dedicate the time necessary to study issues affecting the child protection system as a whole. All services provided by the CPO staff should be completed in a timely manner. The Critical Processes below, combined with the CPO’s policies outlined in the CPO’s Case Practices and Operating Procedures, will help the CPO provide all citizens quality services and ensure the agency has time and resources to address systemic issues.

Critical Process – Streamline the process for identifying inquiries that result in Information/Resource Referral or Assists and close such cases in a timely manner.		
Key Activities		
<p>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 percent of inquiries resulting an Information/Resource Referral will be closed within 30 business days of receiving the inquiry. • 90 percent of inquires resulting in Assists will be closed within 60 business days. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2021-2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2020-21. • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2022-2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2021-22. • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities.
<p>Key Metrics and Outcome(s): The number of Information/Resource Referral closed within 30 business days and the number of Assists closed within 60 business days will be used to track this critical process. This critical process is ongoing.</p>		

Critical Process – Develop and execute a project management system to better allocate staff’s time to ensure the timely completion of case management and Special Initiatives projects.		
Key Activities		
<p>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign staff to specific projects strategically to maximize work outputs. • Ensure work products are produced on a consistent basis to mitigate backlog and overload. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2021-2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2020-21. • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2022-2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2021-22. • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities.
<p>Key Metrics and Outcome(s): Backlog and/or overload will be measured and monitored to track this critical process. This critical process is ongoing.</p>		

STRATEGY TWO: Ensure the CPO is continually analyzing pertinent data and demographic information to ensure its services are best serving children, youth and families in Colorado.

To ensure all Colorado citizens have equitable access to the CPO’s services – and to ensure those services are producing similar outcomes for all clients – the CPO will continually work to assess its service delivery. Specifically, the CPO will utilize its case data and demographic data to identify populations that are disproportionately impacted by the child protection system, including the DYS and child welfare services. This information will be used to help guide client analysts working directly with these populations.

Critical Process – Ensure CPO staff are continually evaluating how they may better serve Colorado’s diverse population.		
Key Activities		
<p>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide CPO staff with educational opportunities about ensuring equity in the delivery of CPO services to Colorado citizens. • CPO staff will meet quarterly to analyze 	<p>Fiscal Year 2021-2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide CPO staff with educational opportunities about ensuring equity in the delivery of CPO services to Colorado citizens. • CPO staff will meet quarterly to analyze 	<p>Fiscal Year 2022-2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2021-22. • If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the

demographic information and CPO case data to identify issues disproportionality impacting communities of color.	demographic information and CPO case data to identify issues disproportionality impacting communities of color.	circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities.
Key Metrics and Outcome(s): The total number of educational opportunities offered and attended, along with internal reviews will be used to track this critical process. This critical process is ongoing.		

3

STRATEGIC POLICY INITIATIVE: Establish the CPO as a leader in information gathering and dissemination as it relates to issues facing the child protection system.

The CPO is charged with recommending systemic changes to *“improve the safety of and promote better outcomes for children and families receiving child protection services in Colorado.”* See C.R.S. 19-3.3103(2)(e). As part of this, the CPO is advancing Special Initiatives –projects that leverage comprehensive research, and in certain instances stakeholder engagement processes, to identify and address topics relevant to improving the state’s child protection system. The CPO has identified the following Strategies and Critical Processes to better establish itself as a leader regarding child protection issues and best practices. The Strategies, Critical Processes, Key Activities and Key Metrics and Outcome(s) outlined below are designed to ensure the CPO is fulfilling its mandate to recommend systemic changes regarding issues affecting the child protection system.

The CPO announced in its Q3 Performance Evaluation that this SPI would be developed during the Q4 Performance Evaluation. The CPO is pleased to share developments on this SPI ahead of schedule.

STRATEGY ONE: Identify systemic issues that are pertinent to improving the child protection system.

Critical Process – Determine the potential impact of a proposed Special Initiative.

Key Activities

Fiscal Year 2020-2021	Fiscal Year 2021-2022	Fiscal Year 2022-2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine if a proposed Special Initiative will provide substantive educational content to help inform the public and/or stakeholders. Determine if a proposed Special Initiative will systemically change practice statewide. Determine if a proposed Special Initiative will systemically change systems statewide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the policy implemented during Fiscal Year 2018-19, the CPO will analyze the recommendations from the same period and determine whether they have been implemented. That information will be included in the CPO’s Annual Report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2020-21. If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities.

Key Metrics and Outcome(s): The number of Special Initiative projects proposed versus those completed will be used to track this critical process. This critical process is ongoing.

STRATEGY TWO: Allocate agency and staff resources appropriately to ensure Special Initiatives completion and timely impacts.

Critical Process – Develop and execute a project management system to better allocate staff’s time to ensure the timely completion of case management and Special Initiatives projects.		
Key Activities		
<p>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign staff to specific projects strategically to maximize work outputs. Ensure work products are produced on a consistent basis to mitigate backlog and overload. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2021-2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2020-21. If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2022-2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2021-22. If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities.
<p>Key Metrics and Outcome(s): Backlog and/or overload will be measured and monitored to track this critical process. This critical process is ongoing.</p>		

STRATEGY THREE: Ensure the public and/or stakeholders receive notice of Special Initiatives launches and outcomes.

Critical Process – Complete, publish and provide notices of CPO products in a timely fashion.		
Key Activities		
<p>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure CPO products are placed on the CPO’s website in a timely manner. Develop a notification system to notify the public/stakeholders of new products released by the CPO. (E.g. mail chip notification system) 	<p>Fiscal Year 2021-2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure CPO products are placed on the CPO’s website in a timely manner. Develop a notification system to notify the public/stakeholders of new products released by the CPO. (E.g. mail chip notification system) 	<p>Fiscal Year 2022-2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2021-22. If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Metrics.

Key Metrics and Outcome(s): The number of notifications sent to the public/stakeholders will be used to track this critical process. Additionally, the CPO will track that it is posting products to the website in a timely manner. This critical process is ongoing.

STRATEGY FOUR: Track and analyze recommendations to monitor CPO’s impacts and progress.

The CPO has a statutory responsibility to maintain an accountable and transparent agency. Tracking and reporting the outcomes of its recommendations will provide a strong gauge for determining the CPO’s impact in reforming the child protection system.

Critical Process –Track the uptake and implementation of recommendations.		
Key Activities		
<p>Fiscal Year 2020-2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether recommendations are being acknowledged and/or implemented. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2021-2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the policy implemented during Fiscal Year 2018-19, the CPO will analyze the recommendations from the same period and determine whether they have been implemented. That information will be included in the CPO’s Annual Report. 	<p>Fiscal Year 2022-2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine whether the Critical Process was completed during Fiscal Year 2021-22. If the Critical Process has not been completed, determine the circumstances preventing the CPO from completing the task and develop appropriate Key Activities.
<p>Key Metrics and Outcome(s): The number of recommendations acknowledged and/or implemented will be used to track this critical process. This critical process is ongoing.</p>		

Conclusion

The Child Protection Ombudsman respectfully submits this report to the Joint Budget Committee and the General Assembly, as is required under C.R.S. 2-7-204. The CPO will comply with its requirements under the statute and will submit the required reports and evaluations.