



Position: Child Protection Ombudsman

FLSA Status: Full Time

FLSA Classification: Exempt

Program/Department: Office of the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman

Location: Denver, Colorado

Reports to: Ombudsman Advisory Board

AGENCY STATEMENT

The Office of the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman (CPO) was established to improve the child protection system by serving as a resource to citizens, employing a complaint process for citizens to voice their concerns about child protective services and by making recommendations to the Governor's Office, Colorado State Legislature, and other stakeholders for system improvements.

The CPO serves as an independent voice for children, youth, and families in the state's child protection system. The office operates outside of the agencies it reviews, providing a neutral forum for the public to raise concerns and for government entities to receive constructive, data-driven recommendations for system improvements. The Ombudsman investigates complaints, evaluates system performance, and identifies opportunities for system reform, while remaining accountable to the law and to the people of Colorado. By engaging directly with citizens, service providers, and policymakers the office works to strengthen public trust, promote transparency and ensure that child protection services are responsive, equitable, and effective in every community.

The CPO is housed within the Colorado Judicial Branch and is independent from all other agencies within the child protection system. CPO employees serve at the pleasure of the Ombudsman. The agency has 14 full-time employees and one part-time employee with diverse backgrounds and experience.

EXECUTIVE LEADER PROFILE

The leader in this role is more than an administrator; they are a visionary change agent who blends deep subject-matter expertise with exceptional leadership and diplomacy. They demonstrate moral authority, a deep understanding of Colorado's child protection systems and a fierce commitment to equity and justice. This individual navigates complex political and interagency dynamics with independence, credibility and integrity. This person must be a skilled communicator and a strategic thinker who uses data and community input to drive reform, and a trusted facilitator of diverse voices. The ideal leader will inspire confidence among staff, stakeholders and the public, while ensuring the CPO's independence, transparency, and impact.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

The Child Protection Ombudsman (Ombudsman) serves as the chief executive officer of the CPO. The Ombudsman reports to the CPO Advisory Board and is responsible for the organization's consistent achievement of its mission, strategic goals, legal obligations and financial objectives. The Ombudsman leads the design and implementation of CPO operations and initiatives, ensures statutory duties are met and provides leadership in evaluating and improving Colorado's child protection system. The Ombudsman also represents the agency to the public, other branches of government and the media.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE POSITION

The Ombudsman shall perform the following duties and responsibilities:

1. Organizational Leadership and Supervision

- Provide leadership and overall direction to the CPO in fulfilling its strategic plans, goals and mission.
- Provide appropriate support and guidance to all staff as well as the leadership and management teams.
- Direct the development of new programs and procedures to accommodate trends, community growth and organizational longevity.
- Conduct official business for the organization and execute legal documents when appropriate (contracts, agreements, etc.).
- Provide direct supervision to the Deputy Ombudsman and Director of Client Services.

2. Personal Leadership

- Upholds a workplace culture that is respectful and inclusive. Ensures that the agency acts objectively and abides by all laws and regulatory requirements.
- Understands the role that the agency plays in the child protection system and develops and articulates clearly defined pathways for the agency to meet both current needs and emerging trends.
- Actively listens and communicates effectively through verbal and written methods. Is an active listener and can clearly articulate the agency's vision, values and goals to both internal and external stakeholders.

- Learns from challenges and can adapt to change by focusing on the final goal and leading by example.
- Understands own strengths, weaknesses and how actions impact others.
- Makes effective organizational decisions by considering data, different perspectives and the impact that decisions have on others.
- Creates a culture that empowers others by trusting them, delegating tasks and encouraging their growth.
- Using a collaborative based process, thinks beyond existing ways of doing business to drive innovative solutions to problems.

3. Financial Oversight

- Demonstrated experience in public sector budgeting, including development, management and oversight of complex budgets.
- Initiate and lead the planning process to create and fulfill annual and long-term financial plans.
- Advocate at the General Assembly for office resources and increased budgets, as necessary.
- Ensure financial resources are effectively managed and that internal policies, adequate internal controls and reporting mechanisms are in place.
- Maintain comprehensive understanding of the agency's finances, operating accounts, and expenditures.

4. Oversight of Personnel Management and Administration

- Provide strategic input and oversight into the agency's personnel systems, including recruitment, onboarding, evaluations and retention policies.
- Promote and support human resource practices that enhance morale and support staff development and advancement.
- Build an effective leadership team that can perform the essential functions of the agency.
- Ensure compliance with the agency's human resources policies, state and federal law and contractual obligations.
- Develop and promote equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategies in agency personnel policies.

5. Public Engagement and Communications

- Serve as the primary spokesperson for the agency and ensure the agency maintains a visible and positive profile across Colorado and nationally.
- Represent the organization to the public, nonprofit agencies, media, government entities, elected officials and constituents.
- Develop and implement a strategic communications plan that raises awareness of the agency's services and educates the public, professionals and policymakers on child protection systems.
- Develop and promote EDI communication strategies that are inclusive of communities that are historically underserved by child protection systems.

- Skilled in public speaking, media engagement and communication strategies for diverse audiences.

6. Systemic Reform and Public Policy

- Provides direction for the agency's systemic reform and public policy initiatives.
- Develop and maintain relationships with legislators, policy organizations, agencies, nonprofits and research institutions.
- Write and speak on complex policy issues facing the child protection system.
- Analyze existing and proposed laws and regulations for impact on the child protection system.
- Recommend to the Governor, General Assembly and stakeholders any necessary legislative, regulatory, budgetary or administrative changes to improve child and family outcomes.
- Ensure the agency has appropriate data collection and public reporting processes that provide agency accountability and transparency.
- Develop and promote EDI strategies in stakeholder engagement and public policy recommendations.

7. Board Relations

- Provide timely and transparent updates to the CPO Advisory Board regarding organizational health and progress.
- Collaborate with board members to recruit new members and promote the strategic vision of the agency.
- Support board member engagement in evaluating programs and initiatives.
- Ensure appropriate staff support for board functions and communications.

8. General Duties

- Comply with all office policies and procedures.
- Maintain the skill level necessary to perform all operational and leadership tasks as needed.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- Advanced graduate degree (M.A.) in business administration, public administration, non-profit management, social work, public policy, behavioral sciences or equivalent educational or professional experience.
- Comprehensive knowledge of ombudsman principles and national best practices with demonstrated skill in conflict resolution, mediation and facilitation to address both individual and systemic concerns.
- In-depth understanding of Colorado's child protection systems including child welfare, behavioral health, juvenile justice and their intersection with the legal system.
- Proven ability to lead transformational change — designing, implementing and sustaining system-level reforms that measurably improve outcomes, processes and organizational culture.
- Seven or more years of executive-level leadership with direct accountability for:

- Developing and executing strategic plans aligned with statutory mandates.
- Managing complex, multi-million-dollar public sector budgets.
- Overseeing operations, personnel systems and organizational performance.
- Building high-functioning teams and fostering inclusive workplace culture.
- Leading cross-sector collaborations and public engagement efforts.
- Demonstrated ability to analyze legislation, regulations and policies; produce high-quality written reports and deliver compelling presentations to diverse audiences, including legislative committees and the public.
- Documented commitment to advancing equity, diversity and inclusion in service delivery, policy development and stakeholder engagement.
- High level of integrity, independence and discretion in handling sensitive or confidential matters.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Juris Doctor with bar membership, Ph.D., or Professional Doctorate in business administration, public administration, non-profit management, social work, public policy and relevant behavioral sciences.
- Strong working knowledge of federal and state child protection laws — including child welfare, juvenile justice laws and state regulations.
- Demonstrated expertise in, or knowledge of, state government administration.
- Experience in legislative policymaking and budget processes.
- Experience integrating EDI principles into organizational policies, service delivery or community engagement.
- Skilled in public speaking, media engagement and strategic communications.
- Demonstrated success leading cross-system reform, including convening county, state, judicial and community partners to resolve complex issues and implement sustainable improvements.
- Public reporting and data acumen, including trend analysis, performance measurement and translating findings into actionable recommendations for policymakers and the public.
- Media and issues management including experience responding to sensitive, time-critical matters and explaining complex topics in clear language.
- Independent oversight or ombudsman experience including investigation methods, confidentiality and ethics.
- Resource strategy experience including budget growth planning, grantmaking or philanthropy partnerships aligned to systemic improvement.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to talk or hear. The employee is frequently required to use hands and fingers and reach with hands and arms. The employee is occasionally required to stand and reach with hands and arms. The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 10 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, peripheral vision, and ability to adjust focus.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

This position takes place in a hybrid working environment but requires regular in-person meetings with legislators, stakeholders, community groups and others. This position is subject to varying and unpredictable situations; may handle emergency or crisis situations; is subject to many interruptions: may handle multiple calls and inquiries simultaneously and may occasionally handle absentee replacement on short notice. This position involves occasional travel.

EEO STATEMENT

The Office of Colorado's Child Protection Ombudsman does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, national origin, disability, veteran status, genetic characteristics or information, or any other characteristic protected by law.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have read this Job Description, asked for clarification of any items that are unclear to me, and agree to fulfill my duties as outlined. I understand that this is not all-inclusive and that I may be assigned additional duties. This does not constitute a contract of employment.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____