



Office of the Child's Representative

Legislative Audit Summary (2018)

The OCR recently completed a Legislative Audit and will be working to further improve its practices and policies in order to continue providing high quality legal services for children in Colorado. The audit committee made five recommendations and the OCR has committed to implementing all five.

OCR CURRENT VERIFICATIONS AND TRIANNUAL RENEWAL PROCESS

Each year the OCR conducts a verification process regarding its attorneys which assesses: judicial district needs, stakeholder feedback surveys, certification of CJD requirements, certification of training requirements, recent disciplinary history, costs per case data and a 30-day visit report. OCR's executive director, deputy director and two staff attorneys are each assigned five to seven judicial districts where they serve as the District Liaison. Each District Liaison reviews all of this data carefully, identifies any exemplary practices, deficiencies or anomalies and addresses those individually with the OCR attorneys.

In addition, the OCR does a comprehensive triannual renewal process (renewal) for a third of the judicial districts, completing all 22 Judicial Districts every three years. In addition to the verifications outlined above, OCR reviews for each renewal attorney: renewal application, court observation data, reference interviews (from youth/caregivers/parents), a writing sample and activity reports. District Liaisons personally interview each renewal attorney and review this information with the attorney in detail. If concerns are identified in this review, the OCR follows up as appropriate.

Recommendations

1. Improve attorney Selection and Monitoring

- The OCR will clarify application requirements regarding what constitutes "proof of insurance" and proof of OCR training requirements.
- Improve OCR's written policies and procedures and documentation requirements regarding attorney selection and monitoring.

2. Improve policies and processes for evaluating, overseeing and managing contract attorney performance.

- Obtain and review some evaluation information more frequently than once every three years.
- Enhance written guidance on how information is used and documented.
- Setting benchmarks to evaluate and address attorney performance.

3. CASA Compliance

- Execute contract with state CASA to coordinate and support local CASA programs.
- Seek legislative change to support current practices.

4. Improve Controls for paying expenses of contract attorneys and OCR staff

- Enhance written policies regarding invoicing/payments and review of each.
- Expand monitoring and initiate risk-based reviews.
- Update and centralize OCR policies.
- Implement changes to CARES to better flag/prohibit noncompliant bills.

5. Improve Controls for use of state credit cards.

- Revise and update policies.