

Office of the Child Advocate

Expenditures by Program	FY2020 Actual	FY2021 Enacted	FY2021 Governor	Change from Enacted		FY2022 Governor	Change from Enacted	
Office of the Child Advocate	\$1,028,374	\$1,233,388	\$1,237,225	\$3,837	0.3%	\$1,179,668	(\$53,720)	-4.4%
Expenditures by Source								
General Revenue	\$865,115	\$1,005,223	\$1,008,314	\$3,091	0.3%	\$1,044,909	\$39,686	3.9%
Federal Funds	163,259	228,165	228,911	746	0.3%	134,759	(93,406)	-40.9%
Total	\$1,028,374	\$1,233,388	\$1,237,225	\$3,837	0.3%	\$1,179,668	(\$53,720)	-4.4%
Authorized FTE Levels	10.0	10.0	10.0	-	-	10.0	-	-

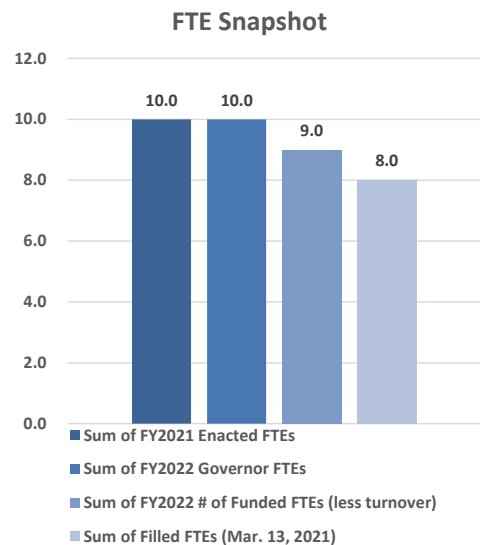
The Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) is mandated by statute to protect the legal, civil, and special rights of all children in the care of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). The Office strives to improve conditions and circumstances through monitoring, intervention, and advocacy. The OCA receives federal funding through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) to provide public education and support services for victims of crime and their families. The Office reviews all youth residential programs, including the Rhode Island Training School, and oversees compliance by all DCYF-contracted providers. The General Assembly amended the Office’s statutory charge in 2016, and again in 2019, further requiring the Child Advocate to investigate any child fatality or near fatality if:

- The child is involved with, or the child’s family previously received services from, DCYF;
- The incident involves alleged abuse or neglect and the child’s family had prior contact with DCYF; or
- The child’s sibling, household member, or daycare provider was the subject of a child abuse or neglect investigation within 12 months of the incident.

MAJOR ISSUES AND TRENDS

In January 2018, the State and DCYF settled a long-standing class action lawsuit. The lawsuit, initially filed in 2007, demanded systemic reforms to the State’s child welfare system and cited deficiencies throughout DCYF, including excessive caseworker assignments and an inappropriate residential service array. The settlement outlined a number of new screening and reporting requirements to be met by the Department and overseen by the Office of the Child Advocate.

The Budget provides \$1.2 million from all funds for the Office of the Child Advocate in FY2022. This represents a modest all funds reduction compared to the Enacted Budget and is related to personnel expenses. The Governor’s Budget increases general revenue spending by \$39,686 (3.9 percent) and reduces federal funding by \$93,406 (40.9 percent) for a net reduction of \$53,720 relative to the Enacted level. The Budget authorizes 10.0 FTE positions in both FY2021 and FY2022.



Office of the Child Advocate	General Revenue
FY2021 Enacted	\$1,005,223
<i>Target and Other Adjustments</i>	
	8,079
Personnel	31,607
FY2022 Governor	\$1,044,909

Personnel **\$31,607**

The Governor's Budget adds \$31,607 from general revenues for personnel expenses compared to the FY2021 Enacted level. This is the net of the following changes:

- **Case Management Coordinator:** Due to a reduction in federal VOCA grant funding, the Office's FY2022 request shifted 20.0 percent of the expenses associated with the Case Management Coordinator position to general revenues. This position was previously funded entirely with federal VOCA funds. The Governor's Budget includes funding for the position as requested, adding \$17,233 from general revenues to cover 20.0 percent of the \$86,164 for salaries and benefits for this employee.
- **Workshare:** The Governor's Budget adds \$12,825 to restore one-time savings that were included in the Enacted Budget due to staff participation in the Workshare program. The Workshare program allowed the State to achieve savings in the wake of the devastating financial impact of COVID-19. Through this program, eligible full-time employees were allowed to work 60.0 percent of their regular weekly hours (three business days) from June 14, 2020, to September 5, 2020. Three employees within the Office of the Child Advocate participated in Workshare. The program is not occurring in FY2022.
- **Update Benefits:** The Governor's Budget adds \$1,549 from general revenues to update healthcare, retirement, and other benefits expenses for the Office's remaining positions in FY2022.
- **Grants Manager:** The Governor's Budget freezes the Office's vacant Grants Manager position in FY2022. While this results in general revenue savings relative to the Office's FY2022 request, the position was 100.0 percent federally-funded in FY2021 and there are no general revenue savings compared to the Enacted Budget. Due to a reduction in federal VOCA grant funding, the Office requested \$18,658 from general revenues to cover 20.0 percent of the \$93,291 for salaries and benefits for this position in FY2022. The Governor's Budget does not include the funding.