

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON FOR CHILDREN (OFC)

Agency Organization and Objectives

1. Identify the agency's overall mission statement.

OFC Mission Statement:

The Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (OFC) is committed to working collaboratively across systems that impact CFSA children to foster improved outcomes, strengthen service delivery and increase accountability.

2. Please provide a current organizational chart for the office. If there are vacancies, discuss hiring challenges and what steps have been taken to fill the position, whether the agency plans to fill the position, and whether the position has been filled.

The enabling legislation for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children allotted for five (5) Full-Time employees, three (3) of which are specified in legislation by title: Ombudsperson; Chief Deputy Ombudsperson; and Deputy CFSA Ombudsperson. The remaining two (2) non-specified positions will be classified as Program Analysts. Organizational chart is attached.

3. Identify the Strategic Objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Office. Explain why each KPI was selected and how it supports both the overall mission of the agency and the success of this division.

Strategic Objectives/Core Duties of the Office of the Ombudsperson:

- **Receive complaints through online complaint form, by phone, email and in-person.**
- **Make recommendations for resolution of complaints from CFSA constituents involving an administrative act of CFSA or a CFSA affiliate;**
- **Facilitate interagency communication and coordination related to issues impacting CFSA children;**
- **Investigate, on its own initiative, systemic concerns related to CFSA children, including issues relating to interagency communication and coordination;**
- **Review policies, procedures, regulations, and directives as established, implemented, or practiced by CFSA or a CFSA affiliate;**
- **Provide recommendations to policies and procedures, staff training, regulations, and strategies based on investigations performed;**
- **Notify the appropriate CFSA contact, including the Agency Director and Office of General Counsel (OGC), if necessary, of identified concerns and make recommendations for improvement;**
- **Facilitate communication between CFSA and CFSA constituents as needed;**
- **Offer voluntary conflict resolution services; and**
- **Provide education, information, and referrals to individuals as appropriate**

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Engage CFSA and other child and family serving agencies to address systemic issues impacting CFSA children.
- Monitor outcomes for CFSA children and hold agencies accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Timely response to acknowledge complaints within (2) business days of receipt.
- Information and Referral Services will be provided within (5) business days of assignment.
- Case Review and Investigations will be initiated within (2) business days of assignment.
- Investigations will be completed within (15) business days of assignment.
- Annual report submitted to the Council every December 31 covering the prior fiscal year. *First full report will be submitted December 31, 2023.

These Key Performance Indicators support the overall mission of OFC by focusing on outcomes for CFSA children and families served through engaging and responding to concerns of constituents; identifying and addressing systemic issues; working collaboratively across systems and holding agencies accountable for providing services that are equitable, high quality, responsive to the needs of those served and foster improved outcomes for CFSA children.

4. Please include the outcomes for FY22 and FY23 to date for each KPI measure.

The Office of the Ombudsperson for Children is a new agency in the early stages of development and implementation. Report will be compiled on the above KPIs in the first full annual report for the agency and submitted on December 31, 2023.

5. Please provide an update on any achievements in FY22 and FY 23 to date.
 - Agency established in District Government system August 2022
 - Chief Deputy Ombudsperson onboarded December 5, 2022
 - Deputy CFSA Ombudsperson selected and will onboard February 27, 2023
 - Core Policy developed effective February 1, 2023
 - Website, database and online complaint form developed and went live February 6, 2023
 - Partnered with CFSA to transition CFSA internal ombuds functions from CFSA to OFC effective February 9, 2023
 - Worked with DGS to identify and secure office space
 - Facilitating interagency communication between CFSA and DYRS to identify population of cross over youth, share data between (2) agencies and produce reports that will allow the tracking of outcomes and identification of service gaps and opportunities to collaborate towards improved outcomes for these youth.

6. Please provide an update on the office's location and efforts to secure physical office space.

Office space located at 955 L'Enfant Plaza SW, 3rd Floor has been identified with scheduled move in date set for March 1, 2023.

7. Please provide an update on the office's website, helpline, and database to process complaints.

**OFC Website and database– ofc.dc.gov – went live February 6, 2023
Helpline/central phone system has been requested and is pending**

Spending – AFO will take this

8. Provide the amount budgeted and spent in FY22 and to date in FY23 for the agency and its programs and activities. The Committee's preference is to receive this as an Excel spreadsheet.

Please see attached

9. Provide a list of all Memoranda of Understanding ("MOUs") currently in place and any MOUs planned for the coming year. Provide copies of all such MOUs.

MOA between CFSA and OFC is attached.

No MOUs have been executed for the OFC to date.

Duties of the Office

10. What is the procedure for processing complaints regarding CFSA?
 - A. **The OFC will receive and process complaints from CFSA constituents.**
 - B. **OFC will receive complaints through (1) the online complaint form, (2) phone, (3) email or (4) in person. Furthermore, access to the online complaint form will be included on the OFC's website (ofc.dc.gov).**

- C. Each complaint received by the OFC will be assigned an intake number.**
- D. During the Intake Process, OFC will gather information from the complainant. All information gathered during the intake will be entered into the OFC database system.**
- E. The Ombudsperson maintains discretion regarding how to handle intakes, as well as decline the acceptance of an intake if it is reasonably believed that:**
- 1) The complaint alleges an emergency situation regarding the safety of a child. *OFC will immediately refer the complainant, if by phone or in person, to contact the CFSA child abuse hotline and/or OFC will make a report to CFSA child abuse hotline if such complaint is received by OFC through online complaint form or by email;**
 - 2) It is plain on the face of the complaint that an adequate remedy is presently available such that an investigation by OFC is unwarranted, and information can be provided to the complainant about the remedy;**
 - 3) The complaint relates to a matter that is outside the purpose of OFC (i.e., does not relate to an involved, previously involved or otherwise known child of CFSA);**
 - 4) The complaint is not made in good faith;**
 - 5) The complaint is against a court decision, court order, or the actions of judges or attorneys;**
 - 6) The complaint regards a personnel matter of CFSA or affiliate;**
 - 7) The complaint has been too long delayed to justify present examination;**
 - 8) Legal advice or legal representation is requested of OFC.**
- F. The OFC will respond to a complainant within two (2) business days of receiving the complaint.**

G. Intakes will undergo a Next Level Review in order to determine whether the Intakes will be (1) Screened Out as not appropriate for OFC to accept due to reasons included above under section E. (2) Accepted and Assigned for Information & Referral or (3) Accepted and Assigned for Investigation & Resolution.

11. Please discuss the amount of time it may take to investigate and provide recommendations on resolving complaints, and the factors affecting how quickly complaints are investigated and recommendations provided.

Policy drafted to allot for 15 days. However, agency has not had investigation yet to truly assess amount of time it may take.

12. List all reports (annual or otherwise) published by the office, citing statutory authority. Highlight the report deadline as well as the date of actual submission for FY22 and to date in FY23.

Statutorily, the Ombudsperson was required to submit an annual report to the Council on December 31, 2022 and every December 31 thereafter containing information collected over the course of the prior fiscal year (D.C. Law 23-270, Sec. 108). However, the report that was submitted on December 31, 2022 as considered an *Inaugural Report* in that the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children had only been in existence for five months at time report was due. The *Inaugural Report* provided an update regarding work completed within the first five-months of implementation of OFC (July 25, 2022 - December 29, 2022).

Therefore, the December 31, 2023 Annual Report submission will be the report that covers the first full year of implementation of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (fiscal year 2023). Therefore, December 31, 2023 and every December 31 thereafter an annual report will be submitted containing information collected over the course of the prior fiscal year.

13. Outline how the agency engages with the community and other District government agencies. Please discuss regular meeting schedules and plans for FY22 and FY23 to date.

OFC engages in regular meetings with CFSA. Meetings have also been held with key agencies within District government including DYRS and DHS, child welfare advocates, community stakeholders and contract agencies of CFSA.

OFC will continue to engage with community stakeholders and the remaining contract agencies of CFSA to ensure that those stakeholders and constituents are aware of services that the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children provides. OFC is also exploring hosting community meetings.

OFC also conducted outreach through email blasts and phone tree to reach out to stakeholders and inform of the existence of our website and availability to receive and respond to constituent complaints.

14. Please provide any plans regarding outreach to the community and District government agencies once the Agency is fully operational.

See above response.

