



2024 Annual Accountability Report

Department of Children's Advocacy

Agency Code: L080

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AGENCY’S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Organization

The Department of Children’s Advocacy is an independent state agency that administers advocacy, accountability, and care coordination programs for children and youth in addition to examining, on a system-wide basis, the care and services state agencies provide children. Pursuant to Act 160 of 2018, the Department was established effective July 1, 2019, and the enabling legislation is codified in S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Section 63-11-2210. The Act transferred to the Agency the Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program (S.C. Code of Laws Ann. 63-11-500, et. seq.), Continuum of Care for Emotionally Disturbed Children (S.C. Code of Laws Ann. 63-11-1310, et. seq.), and Division for Review of the Foster Care of Children (S.C. Code of Laws Ann. 63-11-700, et. seq.), all of which were former divisions of the Office of Executive Policy and Programs within the Department of Administration.

In addition, the State Child Advocate is responsible for ensuring that children receive adequate protection and care from services or programs offered by the Department of Social Services, the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Health and Environmental Control, the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, the Governor’s School Agriculture at John de la Howe, the Will Lou Gray Opportunity School, and the School for the Deaf and the Blind.

The Act requires the agency to establish a toll-free public telephone number and an electronic complaint submission form on the agency’s website for the purpose of receiving complaints relative to the provision of services to children by these agencies. The enabling legislation also requires these agencies to inform the Agency within 24 hours of a critical incident, and, thereafter, the State Child Advocate may perform an independent investigation or review a completed investigation. Initially, an Investigations Unit was established to address the statutory requirements associated with receipt, review, referral, monitoring and investigation of complaints. During FY23, based on an increase in critical incident notifications in FY22, a Critical Investigations Unit was established. To align with the agency’s overall organizational structure, a System Improvement Division was created which includes both the Investigations Unit and Critical Investigations Unit in FY24.

The Department of Children’s Advocacy is led by the State Child Advocate who is the Director of the Agency. The State Child Advocate (hereinafter called Agency Director) is appointed by the Governor from among three candidates recommended by the Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children for a term of six (6) years.

Mission

The Department of Children’s Advocacy champions advocacy, accountability, and service to improve outcomes for children served by state agencies in South Carolina.

Vision

Growing a community where children thrive.

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Strategic Plan

The agency's strategic goals, strategies, and performance measures for FY24 are included in the Agency's Annual Accountability Report, and several of the specific performance measures are highlighted here:

Strategic Goal 1: Serve as advocates for timely, safe, and effective services for children

1.1. Establish, maintain, and continue to improve innovative and competitive recruitment efforts

Highlighted Performance Measure:

1.1.1. Increase the number of active volunteers

The Guardian ad Litem Program has continued its commitment to recruit additional volunteers to serve as best interest advocates for children. The Guardian ad Litem Program set its goal at 55% for FY24 and exceeded that goal by recruiting additional volunteers such that 56% of children were assigned volunteer guardians ad litem who were trained and supported by Guardian ad Litem Program staff.

1.1.2. Review (and revise/implement as appropriate) salary structures and policies related to flexible work hours to improve staff retention

The goal for this performance measure was to reduce the agency's turnover rate to 25% (or less) for FY23, and, when it was surpassed that goal at 21.27% at the end of FY23, the goal was changed to 15% for FY24. That goal was met during FY24 with a turnover rate of 15%. During FY23, the agency analyzed salaries, developed new salary structures for certain positions, created performance pay increases, implemented equity increases, provided salary adjustments based on additional duties, and developed and implemented an agency-wide telework plan. Additionally, vacancies were filled, and new positions were created to streamline processes and provide staff with clear expectations of their job duties. FY24 was the first full year that the agency's telework policy was implemented. The agency plans to maintain a low turnover rate with continued efforts to recruit, train, retain, and support staff.

1.2. Support our employees with clear expectations, measurable and achievable success criteria, and regular feedback to help them be successful in the workplace

Highlighted Performance Measure:

1.2.1. Reduce existing vacancies by recruiting and retaining staff in an effort to reduce existing workloads for staff; improve staff's ability to actively recruit volunteers; and to provide additional support for volunteers and the court system

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Guardian ad Litem Program Director LaDara Depugh continued to lead the program in FY24 through tracking vacancies, monitoring the process to fill the vacancies, and having regular communication with her team to ensure the process was consistently moving. Her intentionality and focus brought the vacancy rate from 18% at the end of FY22 to 11% at the end of FY23 and to 6% at the end of FY24. This is even more impactful considering the vacancy rate for this program at the end of FY20 was almost 40%.

1.3 Foster innovation in retention methods for volunteers

Highlighted Performance Measure:

1.3.1. Survey volunteer Guardians ad Litem regarding their satisfaction with their relationship with the Guardian ad Litem Program

Goal was 83% and exceeded that goal with 93%, up from 80% in the preceding fiscal year. The Guardian ad Litem Program had been struggling to meet this goal, because the staff’s responsibility and appointment for best-interest advocacy competed with the targets in this measure. The FY23 goal was 85%, and that goal was reduced for FY24 to 83% when the actual performance for FY23 was 80%. The reduced goal was in an effort to focus on increasing staff levels which would then allow staff to focus more attention on volunteers. Despite the reduced goal of 83% which GAL identified as being a more realistic goal, the GAL Program exceeded not only the FY24 goal but also the FY23 goal with an 93% satisfaction rate among volunteer guardians ad litem.

1.3.2. Increase the completion rate of potential volunteers from the 30-hour Pre-service Training

In FY23, the Guardian ad Litem Program established a goal of publishing 100 volunteer highlights and surpassed this goal by 600% with 647, thanks in large part to the program’s recruiters and trainers who are led by GAL Program employee Christy Vinson. After exceeding that goal at such a high rate without a commensurate increase in volunteer recruitment, Guardian ad Litem Program Director LaDara Depugh established a new goal for FY24 to improve the rate at which potential volunteer guardians ad litem completed preservice training. At that time, volunteers were completing at a rate of 40%, and the program sought to increase completion by 5%. This new performance measure was exceeded, and 56% of potential volunteers completed preservice training during FY24. The GAL Program will continue to address the issue of recruiting and retaining volunteers to advocate for children by amending the measure and target for FY25.

Strategic Goal 2: Ensure that children, parents, and concerned citizens in South Carolina know how to connect children in need to the right services

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2.1 Educate the public about state agency services

Highlighted Performance Measures:

2.1.2. Develop and deliver or attend and participate in at least 4 public or community meetings or events to share information about accessing and/or navigating services provided by state agencies for children

Agency Director Amanda Whittle and Deputy Director Kayla Capps attended more than 143 meetings during FY24 (up from 125 in FY23) during which there were discussions about access to children’s services. For this measure, meetings which were attended by only state agency employees were not included in the count. The number included in the count for this target includes presentations at forums which had an audience that included individuals other than or in addition to state agency employees. Such events included press conferences, media interviews, public forums, and community presentations.

2.1.3. Increase the number of 1915(c) Waiver Youth enrollment to 350 by June 2024

Continuum of Care did not meet the goal for this measure. For FY24, a new goal was added to reduce Continuum of Care’s vacancy rate to improve the division’s ability to partner with youth and families through the Waiver. Strategies to recruit and retain staff were implemented, and, although the vacancy rate decreased during FY24, the number of youth served did not increase.

This includes assessing the number and source of referrals received, data concerning how referrals are received and processed, whether eligibility requirements are a barrier, the prevalence of wait lists, and the caseload/workloads of staff. An early observation suggested that the program should track and respond to this data throughout the year and that the program may need to engage in targeted, consistent, and ongoing communication with referral sources throughout the state.

During FY24, the Agency Director initiated the development of an online secure form and worked with Continuum of Care Director Greg Wright and Department of Children’s Advocacy Communications Director Rob Schaller to create regional email addresses for electronic referrals to replace or at least supplement the program’s paper and fax/mail referral process.

Continuum of Care Director Greg Wright reassessed this measure and established a new goal for FY25 to align with staff levels. Based on the number of staff currently employed by Continuum of Care, 180 youth could be served, and, based on filling the existing vacancies within the program, an additional 125 youth could be served for a total of 305, if all vacancies were filled and if all wrap facilitators and wrap team leads had full caseloads. Based on this information and the current baseline, Continuum of Care’s goal for FY25 is to serve 250 youth through the waiver. This is in addition to youth who are served without the waiver.

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2.2 Develop process to provide an excellent customer experience

Highlighted Performance Measures:

2.2.2. Ensure 87% of Continuum of Care parents interviewed will feel satisfied with the services they receive overall each fiscal year

The Continuum of Care (COC) had difficulty during FY23 with capturing satisfaction data due to a change in the electronic system for reporting this information. During FY24, the National Wraparound Implementation Center (NWIC) reported that COC made strides in their WFI-EZ evaluation protocol. COC employee Christina Davis was reported by NWIC as leading the effort such that monthly meetings with the trainer were no longer needed to manage the WrapStat issues concerning satisfaction surveys. NWIC also reported that COC employee Christina Davis “developed a QR code to scan for the survey as another method for access to caregivers.” These efforts are intended to improve family participation in the survey as well as satisfaction.

2.2.4. Initial response to complaints occurs within one business day of the Investigation Unit’s receipt of telephone, website-submitted, or emailed complaints for FY24

The Investigations Unit, led by Laurie Davidson, surpassed its goal with a 100% timely response rate. This is particularly significant when considering the increase in complaints and call volume both in FY23 and again in FY24. Complaint submissions increased by 38.9% during FY23 and by an additional 18% during FY24. Phone calls increased by 25% in FY24. The addition of an Intake Specialist has been a great asset to the Investigations Unit, and the agency continues to analyze and address workloads to ensure staff have the time and resources they need to perform their job duties, including but not limited to responding to complaints within 24 business hours.

2.2.5. Review and update 100% of FCRD/FCRB policies and procedures to streamline and improve consistency across the state

Foster Care Review Division leadership made progress on this objective, but updates were not completed. Importantly, during FY24, the Foster Care Review Division launched a new case management system with the OnBase platform. Discussions about creating a new system had been ongoing for a decade. Led by Division Director Lindsey Taylor, the Foster Care Review Division led the effort to work with the Department of Social Services and Foster Care Review Board State Board and local board members to transform the boards’ “Areas of Concern” to “Barriers to Permanency” to provide more intentionality during and after foster care reviews. Although this particular target was not reached during FY24, significant progress was made to improve Foster Care Review Board’s and Foster Care Review Division’s processes and case management system, and this capacity-building work is necessary to drive permanency advocacy

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for children. The division continues to work closely with the State Board, led by State Board Chair Andrea McCoy, and the foster care review boards throughout the state.

Strategic Goal 3: Develop and promote a broad vision for reform, driven by the values and goals of child-serving agencies, to make the services and programs provided by state agencies more effective for children, youth, families and communities.

3.1 Examine, on a system-wide basis, the care and services that state agencies provide children

Highlighted Performance Measure:

3.1.2. Review and report on services that state agencies provide to children to the General Assembly and Governor.

The agency publishes an Annual Report regarding its review of the services provided by state agencies. Rob Schaller was hired as the agency’s Communications Director in FY23, and he redesigned the format for the agency’s Annual Report and worked with agency leadership for content in FY23 and FY24. His creative and engaging design won the attention of the State Library and earned the agency a Notable State Document Award during this fiscal year. The FY23 Annual Report was published online during FY24. Information concerning FY24 was captured through June 30, 2024 and will be reported in the 2024 Annual Report during FY25.

3.1.3. Evaluate services of state agencies within the scope of the Department of Children's Advocacy with target of completing evaluations of all 9 agencies by FY24

The Department of Children’s Advocacy has evaluated services provided by the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs with a focus on capacity for residential habilitation services, autism, and Intellectual Disabilities/Related Disabilities assessment services (particularly pertaining to wait lists), and day treatment services. DCA has also evaluated the Department of Health and Human Services pertaining to DHHS’s Medical Care Advisory Committee (MCAC) and Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC) as well as the Department of Juvenile Justice concerning its facilities and services. The agency has evaluated the services of Department of Health and Environmental Control (now Department of Public Health) pertaining to notifying the agency of critical incidents and monitoring child-serving facilities.

The Department of Children’s Advocacy evaluated the services of the Department of Social Services concerning the state’s placement and service array and evaluated the Department of Mental Health concerning the need for state-operated facilities to serve seriously mentally ill youth along a continuum of care, from least restrictive to most restrictive, based on children’s and youth’s needs. These evaluations and recommendations are included in the agency’s Annual Reports which are available on the Department of Children’s Advocacy’s website. The remaining three agencies (Governor’s School at John de la Howe, School for the Deaf and the Blind, and Wil

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Lou Gray Opportunity School) were concluded in FY24 and will be included in the FY24 Annual Report.

3.3 Establish the capacity to manage, monitor, and report on statewide and/or internal projects

Highlighted Performance Measures:

3.3.1. Monitor and report progress quarterly and annually in achieving permanent plans for children in foster care through an external system of accountability and advocacy by the Foster Care Review Division/Foster Care Review Board.

This Foster Care Review Division goal was not met for FY24 due to challenges with the new case management system and turnover for the data position. In FY22, the Agency requested the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to conduct an efficiency study of the Foster Care Review Division and Foster Care Review Boards. The OIG study validated inefficiencies with the CASPER case management system which adversely affected timely reports and staff morale. The Agency requested and received funding to replace the CASPER system in FY22, received the funding and worked with a vendor in FY23 to create the new system, and launched the new system in FY24. The Foster Care Review Board Annual Report was published on the website in July of 2024, just outside of the June 30, 2024 deadline.

3.3.2. Monitor and report total number and typology trends of critical incident notifications received by the Department of Children’s Advocacy within a fiscal year.

The Deputy Child Advocate worked with externs to develop the initial notification logs and dashboards. During this fiscal year, Lead Child Advocate Melissa Pettinato-Irby and Assistant Child Advocate Wanda Banker assisted Deputy Child Advocate Kayla Capps in continuing to modify and advance the critical investigations data in an effort to track current notifications and investigations and to also identify trends.

Budget and Finance

The Department of Children’s Advocacy strives to be fiscally responsible by monitoring spending, maximizing funding, analyzing trends, and anticipating the agency’s immediate and future needs. Pursuant to state law, the Department of Children’s Advocacy shares budget and finance services with the Department of Administration. This is an effective and efficient relationship which benefits the Department of Children’s Advocacy. Tom Kaminer is the Department of Administration Budget Director who works closely with the Department of Children’s Advocacy through providing monthly spending reports and projections for the agency throughout the year, and he provided the Budget Data for the Department of Children’s Advocacy’s Annual Accountability Report. The following is a highlight of the Department of Children’s Advocacy’s coordination, outcomes, analysis, accountability, prioritizing, and projections regarding budget and finance in FY24:

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Coordination. To ensure the Foster Care Review Division is maximizing funding opportunities and complying with federal funding requirements, the Agency Director requested an extended internal audit by the Office of the State Auditor to begin in FY25 for the Foster Care Review Division. The Department of Children’s Advocacy is working with the Office of the State Auditor for this voluntary extended audit.

Outcomes. Additional state allocations in FY23 supported Foster Care Review Division’s replacement of its 16-year-old database which was no longer supported by IT/DTO due to its age. New case management systems for the Guardian ad Litem Program (procured without the necessity of requesting additional state funding) and for the Foster Care Review Division launched during FY24, and the systems not only improve the divisions’ abilities to track, analyze and use their data to advocate for children but also improve employee morale and efficiency.

Analysis. Continuum of Care was experiencing significant year-end fiscal deficits when the Department of Children’s Advocacy launched on July 1, 2019. In the year prior to Children’s Advocacy’s launch, Continuum of Care ended FY2017-2018 with a deficit (revenue under expenses) of \$1,246,377.00 and FY1018-19 with a deficit (revenue under expenses) of (\$892,893.00). The Department of Children’s Advocacy worked closely with the Department of Health and Human Services to obtain a sustainable reimbursement rate to continue to provide intensive care coordination. The waiver and rate were based on the high fidelity model adopted by Continuum of Care to provide evidence-based intensive care coordination for children and youth experiencing serious emotional and behavioral challenges. In FY21, Continuum of Care was identified as the provider of High Fidelity Wraparound for intensive care coordination through a 1915(C) Medicaid Waiver. Continuum of Care is the only state program that provides High Fidelity Wraparound as part of the system of care. In FY22, COC had a balance at the end of FY22 of \$487,225.00 revenue over expenses with ending cash of \$3,422,978.00 and had a balance of \$12,550.00 revenue under expenses at the end of FY23 with ending cash of \$3,410,959.00. COC ended FY24 with \$369,107 expenses over revenue. Since expenses were comparable from FY23 to FY24 at \$3,649,395 and \$3,687,308 respectively, the difference is directly attributable to the Medicaid reimbursement which was \$1,092,939 in FY23 and \$611,509 in FY24. Reimbursement rates are based on the number of youth with whom Continuum of Care partners pursuant to the waiver. Despite successful efforts to increase and stabilize the Continuum of Care workforce through reducing vacancies and reducing the division’s turnover rate, the number of youth served has steadily declined over the past five years. As outlined in the explanation about performance measure 2.1.3. in this discussion summary, the Agency Director asked the Office of Inspector General to conduct an efficiency study to address the downward trend of youth served through the waiver and to improve the effectiveness and efficiencies of Continuum of Care. As immediate measures, the division will continue its work to create regional email addresses for electronic referrals to replace or at least supplement the program’s paper and fax/mail referral process and will assess its ability to reclassify a vacant position to create a position to hire an employee to focus on creating and building sustainable relationships and connections with referral sources.

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Accountability. The Agency Director recognized the agency’s need for a dedicated and qualified employee to complement the work of Admin Shared Services to organize and supervise program compliance and financial audits for the diverse budgets within the agency. The General Assembly allocated a new FTE to the agency for a Senior Accountant/Fiscal Analyst in response to the agency’s request for this position in its budget request which was submitted during FY24. This position will provide capacity for fiscal analysis and budget support within the agency, and that employee will be hired and onboarded during FY25.

Prioritizing. The Department of Children’s Advocacy has sequenced and prioritized its budget requests after first assessing whether there are resources within the agency that can be repurposed to eliminate or offset a request for additional state funding. For both the System Improvement Division and the Guardian ad Litem Program, unfilled vacancies in other divisions were re-classified to hire additional staff for these programs, but new FTEs were and are necessary to provide quality review and response to complaints and critical incident notifications and to provide best-interest advocacy for abused and neglected children. During FY24, the agency received additional state allocations to address Guardian ad Litem Program, Heart Gallery, Administration, and System Improvement Division workloads. A total of 33 FTEs were requested, and 15 were received for the FY25 budget. 23 FTEs will be requested in the agency’s FY26 budget.

Projections. The vacancy rate for the Guardian ad Litem Program was 6% at the end of FY24. Since the agency’s launch, the Guardian ad Litem Program has received a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) or Sexual Assault Victim Services (SAVS) grant, but the award amounts have significantly decreased over the past five years. The result has meant that staff hired by the Guardian ad Litem Program through this funding source has decreased from 10 employees to 3 employees as shown here:

<u>Award Year</u>	<u>Grant Award Amount</u>	<u>Number of Positions</u>
2019-2020	\$429,984	10 positions/rental car
2020-2021	\$352,585	7 positions/cellphones/service/laptops
2021-2022	\$317,327	6 positions with mileage/cell phone
2023-2024	\$317,098	6 positions with mileage
2024-2025	\$180,398	3 positions with mileage

Source: Lela Allen Barnes, MPA, Guardian ad Litem Program Director of Data and Grants (9/04/2024)

In FY24, the Guardian ad Litem Program served 11,577 children with an average of 6,600 children served per month. At the end of fiscal year 2024, 56% of children had a volunteer guardian ad litem appointed for them with each volunteer providing advocacy for approximately two children each. Staff provided best-interest advocacy for the 44% of children who did not have a volunteer appointed. This results in average caseloads of 21 children per month when considering 44% of the total number of children served monthly divided by approximately 135 FTEs. This number is higher if there are vacancies or if there are fewer than 135 FTEs who are assigned as guardians ad litem for children.

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At the beginning of FY24, approximately twenty (20) unfilled time-limited positions were reclassified from Continuum of Care to the Guardian ad Litem Program in response to the workloads for Guardian ad Litem Program staff. The Guardian ad Litem Program continues to recruit and train volunteers but, until there are a sufficient number of volunteers to serve all of the children in DSS abuse and neglect court proceedings, additional staff are needed to ensure children are receiving best-interest advocacy as required by law and best practice.

The agency requested 21 FTEs for the GAL Program for FY25 and received 8. Among other budget items, the agency will request 14 FTEs for the Guardian ad Litem Program for FY26 to phase out and replace the time-limited positions which are not supported by recurring state funding. The new FTE positions are essential to support the agency in fulfilling its statutory duties to meet with children, to conduct an independent investigation, to attend meetings and hearings about children, and to issue reports and recommendations to the Court.

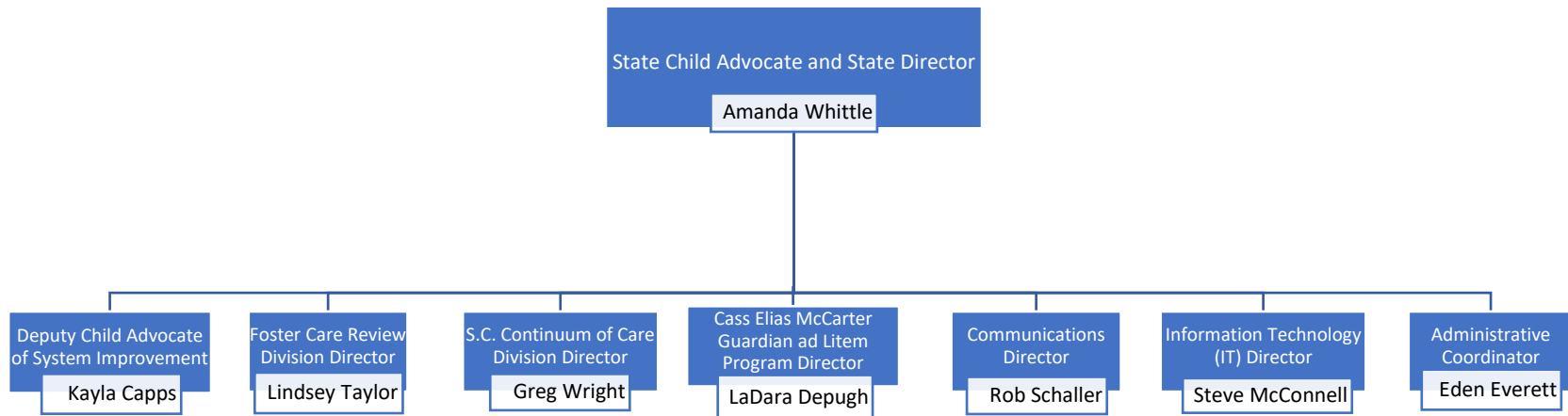
Conclusion

The Department of Children’s Advocacy’s broad vision for reform continues to focus on advocacy, accountability, and service with a sense of urgency, empathy, and sustainability. The Department of Children’s Advocacy promotes communication, collaboration, and coordination and is an integral part of South Carolina’s work to create a system of care which includes a robust array of integrated services and placement for children and youth. In addition to the strategic goals and targets contained in the Annual Accountability Report, a comprehensive review of the Department of Children’s Advocacy’s goals and accomplishments is contained in the Agency’s Annual Report which can be accessed through the Agency’s website at www.childadvocate.sc.gov. This includes the agency’s advocacy and engagement both internally and externally regarding suicide prevention, Safe Babies Courts, mental health, disabilities, child wellbeing, juvenile justice, child fatality prevention, and service and placement array. The Agency has published four Annual Reports which are available on the agency’s website and in print.

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South Carolina Department of Children's Advocacy

State Child Advocate and State Director



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Department of Children's Advocacy

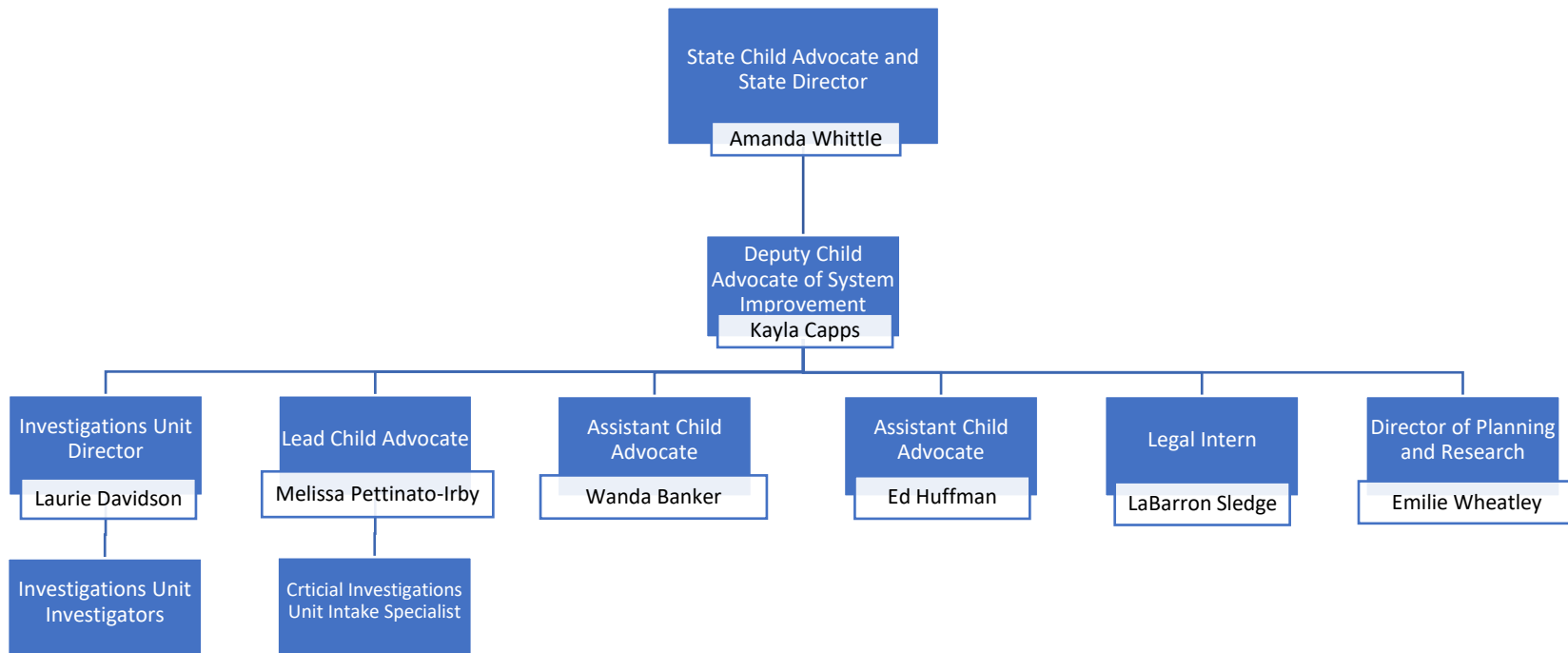
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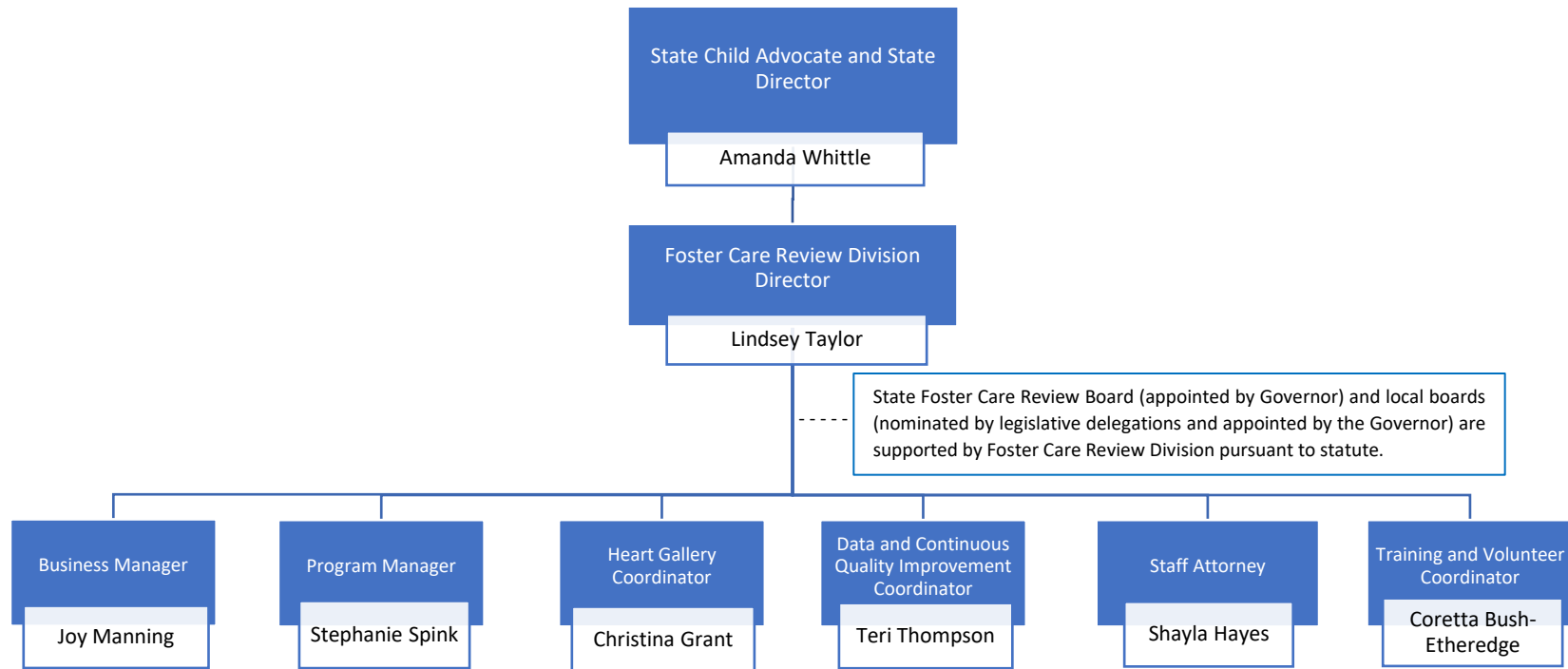
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South Carolina Department of Children's Advocacy System Improvement



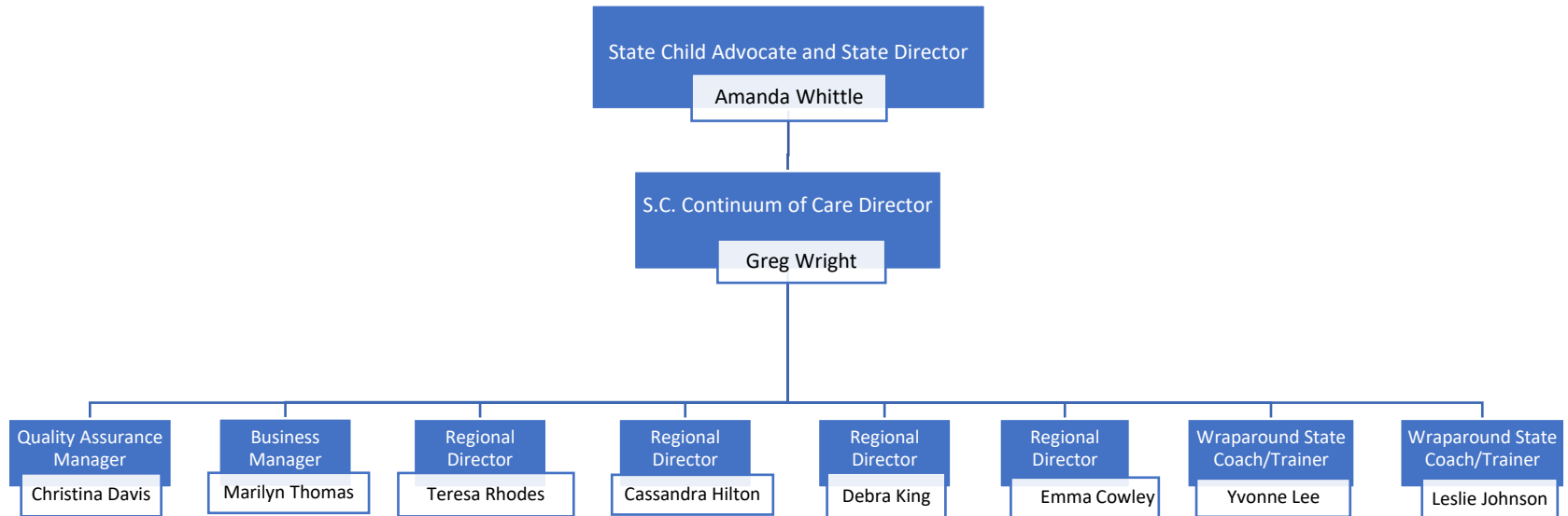
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South Carolina Department of Children's Advocacy Foster Care Review Division



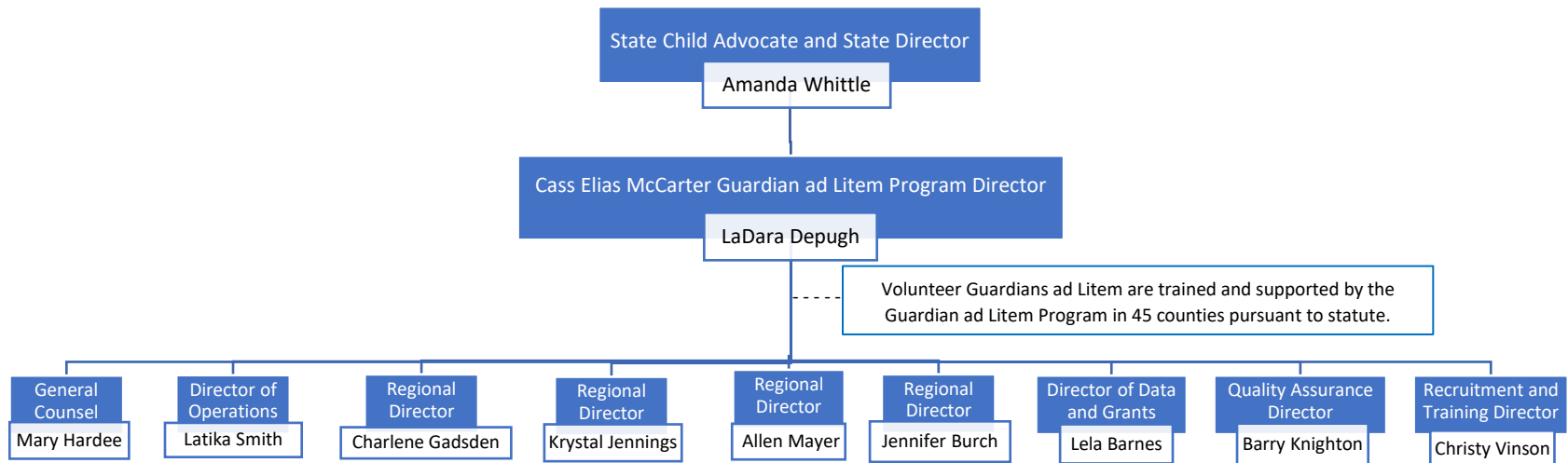
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South Carolina Department of Children's Advocacy S.C. Continuum of Care



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South Carolina Department of Children's Advocacy Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program



2024

Reorganization and Compliance

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:

L080 - Department of Child Advocacy

Primary Contact

First Name	Last Name	Role/Title	Email Address	Phone
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Agency Mission

Adopted in:

2019

The S.C. Department of Children's Advocacy champions advocacy, accountability, and service to improve outcomes for children served by state agencies in South Carolina

Agency Vision

Adopted in:

2019

Growing a Community Where Children Thrive

Recommendations for reorganization requiring legislative change:

(1) Division of Foster Care Review Division Director: Revision of S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Section 63-11-700 to align with the existing practice of hiring division directors within the agency. The practice that occurred prior to the creation of the Department of Children's Advocacy (DCA) on 7/1/2019 was that the Division Director position for the Division of Foster Care Review was posted through careers.sc.gov. Interviews were held and a candidate was offered the position with a salary that was determined based on the candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities as well as the pay band in consultation with HR. The current statute provides that the FCRD Director is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor, who also establishes the Director's pay. (2.) Continuum of Care Division Director: Revision of S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Section 63-11-1340 to align with the existing practice of hiring division directors at DCA and for this person to serve in a capacity consistent with other division directors at the agency as opposed to being an at-will employee. The provision of the statute regarding the Continuum of Care Director currently provides that this division director serves at the pleasure of the State Child Advocate; (3) Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) and Division of Foster Care Review (FCRD): Revision of S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Section 63-7-700, et.seq. in an effort to improve the effectiveness of providing advocacy and accountability to improve outcomes for children who are in foster care; (4) a proviso request for funding to offset mileage costs for volunteer Guardians ad Litem. This request would help recruit and retain volunteers who, unlike members of boards and commissions, do not receive mileage or per diem and are required to visit children and attend court hearings.

Agency intentions for other major reorganization to divisions, departments, or programs to allow the agency to operate more effectively and efficiently in the succeeding fiscal year:

(1) The agency has created a System Improvement Division and will hire a System Improvement Division Director in FY25 which will result in changes to the organizational structure; (2) The agency intends to fill a Chief of Staff position in FY25 which will result in changes in the organizational structure.

Significant events related to the agency that occurred in FY2024

Description of Event	Start	End	Agency Measures Impacted	Other Impacts
<p>LAUNCH OF NEW CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO SUPPORT BEST-INTEREST ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN: After a rigorous and competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process, the Guardian ad Litem Program, led by Division Director LaDara Depugh, selected CasaManager for its new case management solution. Implementation and training for the new system occurred during FY24 to increase efficiency, improve quality assurance, support staff morale, and strengthen advocacy for children and supervise volunteers.</p>	July	June	Reduce existing vacancies by recruiting and retaining staff in an effort to reduce existing workloads for staff; improve staff's ability to actively recruit volunteers; and to provide additional support for volunteers and the court system	Annual Accountability Measure 1.2.1.

<p>AWARD-WINNING CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO IMPROVE ADVOCACY FOR PERMANENCY FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE: After working with a state-approved vendor to create a case management system to replace its slow and inefficient 16-year old legacy database which was no longer supported by DTO, the Foster Care Review Division, led by Division Director Lindsey Taylor, launched its new Child Advocacy Management System (CAMS) to increase efficiency, improve staff morale, and, more importantly, drive advocacy for children and youth in foster care. After launching the new system in July 2023, the agency was recognized nationally based on FCRD's new system, winning the inaugural Hyland Customer Innovation Award for Environmental and Social Impact.</p>	July	June	Monitor and report progress quarterly and annually in achieving permanent plans for children in foster care through an external system of accountability and advocacy.	Annual Accountability Report 3.3.1.
<p>SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN STAFF RETENTION: During FY24, the agency's telework plan was fully implemented in an effort to reduce staff turnover and reduce employee vacancies. These goals were aligned with strengthening the agency's workforce and strengthening the agency's ability to advocate for improved outcomes for children. The turnover rate decreased from 34% at the end of FY22, to 21.27% at the end of FY23, and to 15% at the end of FY24. The vacancy rate was decreased to 11% at the end of FY24. Department of Children's Advocacy leadership worked closely with Department of Administration's HR Shared Services Spencer Miller and Christa Wiebelt to create, implement, and monitor the agency's telework plan.</p>	July	June	Review (and revise/implement as appropriate) onboarding and ongoing training to improve staff retention	Annual Accountability Report 1.1.2.
<p>ANNUAL REPORT EARNS NOTABLE STATE DOCUMENT AWARD: During FY24, the Department of Children's Advocacy's Communications Director Rob Schaller's re-designed and engaging format for the Annual Report won the attention of the State Library. The agency was awarded with a Notable State Document Award in February of 2024 for its 2022 Annual Report. The FY23 Annual Report was published online during FY24. Information concerning fiscal year 2024 was captured through June 30, 2024 and will be reported in the 2024 Annual Report which will be published in FY25.</p>	July	June	Review and report on services that state agencies provide to children to the General Assembly and Governor.	Annual Accountability Report 3.1.2.
<p>SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN STAFF VACANCY RATE: The Guardian ad Litem Program continues to be led by Division Director LaDara Depugh who developed a tool for tracking vacancies, monitoring the process to fill the vacancies, and having regular communications with her team to ensure the process was consistently moving. Her intentionality and focus brought the vacancy rate from 18% at the end of FY22 to 11% at the end of FY23 and to 6% at the end of FY24.</p>	July	June	Reduce existing vacancies by recruiting and retaining staff in an effort to reduce existing workloads for staff; improve staff's ability to actively recruit volunteers; and to provide additional support for volunteers and the court system	Annual Accountability Report 1.2.1.

<p>EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ABOUT SERVICES BY STATE AGENCIES: Director Amanda Whittle and Deputy Director Kayla Capps attended more than 143 meetings during FY24 (up from 125 in FY23) during which there were discussions about access to children's services. For this measure, meetings which were attended by only state agency employees were not included in this count. The number included in the count for this target for FY24 (like FY23) includes presentations at forums which had an audience of more than state agency employees. Such events included press conferences, media interviews, public forums, agency/non-agency attendees, and community presentations.</p>	July	June	Develop and deliver or attend and participate in at least 4 public or community meetings or events to share information about accessing and/or navigating services provided by state agencies for children	Annual Accountability Report 2.1.2.
<p>EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE: The Investigations Unit, led by Laurie Davidson, surpassed its goal with a 100% timely response rate. This is particularly significant when considering the increase in complaints and call volume both in FY23 and again in FY24. Complaint submissions increased by 38.9% during FY23 and by an additional 18% during FY24. Phone calls increased by 25% in FY24. The addition of an Intake Specialist has been a great asset to the Investigations Unit, and the agency continues to analyze and address workloads to ensure staff have the time and resources they need to perform their job duties, including but not limited to responding to complaints within 24 business hours.</p>	July	June	Initial response to complaints occurs within one business day of the Agency's receipt of telephone, website-submitted, or emailed complaints for FY24.	Annual Accountability Report 2.2.4.
<p>SIGNIFICANT CAPACITY-BUILDING: Deputy Child Advocate Kayla Capps worked with legal externs to develop the initial notification logs and dashboards for tracking critical incident notification. During this fiscal year, Lead Child Advocate Melissa Pettinato-Irby and Assistant Child Advocate Wanda Banker assisted the Deputy Child Advocate in continuing to modify and advance the critical investigations data in an effort to track current notifications and investigations and to also identify trends. A budget request was submitted in FY24 for an FTE to serve as the System Improvement Director to supervise the Investigations Unit and Critical Investigations Unit.</p>	July	June	Monitor and report progress quarterly and annually in achieving permanent plans for children in foster care through an external system of accountability and advocacy each fiscal year.	

<p>ENGAGING IN CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH: Continuum of Care data indicates a 29-point improvement in functionality assessments for youth served by COC in FY24. The goal was 30, so COC did not meet its annual goal. Toward the end of FY24, Department of Children's Advocacy's Agency Director asked the Office of Inspector General to conduct an efficiency study to improve the effectiveness and efficiencies of Continuum of Care. Aside from this data, there are other ways that COC's effectiveness can be measured. For example, during FY23 (July, 2022 through June, 2023), COC tracked data regarding the number of youth who safely remained in their home, school, and community. 81% of youth who partnered with COC in FY23 remained in the home during the entire time COC was involved, and 19% were placed out of the home for a higher level of care at some point during COC's involvement. COC will track this information for July, 2024 through June, 2025 and will report this information for the FY25 AAR in a new measure, 3.1.5. The agency will also review and incorporate recommendations from the Office of Inspector General's study to improve practice and efficacy for children and youth.</p>	July	June	Maintain or improve efficacy of Continuum of Care's services for children and youth as measured through dashboard data.	Annual Accountability Report 2.2.3.
<p>Is the agency in compliance with S.C. Code Ann. § 2-1-220, which requires submission of certain reports to the Legislative Services Agency for publication online and the State Library? (See also S.C. Code Ann. § 60-2-20).</p>				Yes
<p>Reason agency is out of compliance: (if applicable)</p>				
<p>Is the agency in compliance with various requirements to transfer its records, including electronic ones, to the Department of Archives and History? See the Public Records Act (S.C. Code Ann. § 30-1-10 through 30-1-180) and the South Carolina Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (S.C. Code Ann. § 26-6-10 through 26-10-210).</p>				Yes
<p>Does the law allow the agency to promulgate regulations?</p>				Yes
<p>Law number(s) which gives the agency the authority to promulgate regulations:</p>	<p>S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Section 63-11-700(E) for Foster Care Review Division; S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Section 63-11-1340 for Continuum of Care</p>			
<p>Has the agency promulgated any regulations?</p>				Yes
<p>Is the agency in compliance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-120 (J), which requires an agency to conduct a formal review of its regulations every five years?</p>				No
<p>(End of Reorganization and Compliance Section)</p>				

FY2024

Strategic Plan Results

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:

L080 - Department of Child Advocacy

- Goal 1** To serve as advocates for timely, safe, and effective services for children
- Goal 2** To ensure that children, parents, and concerned citizens in South Carolina know how to connect children in need to the right services
- Goal 3** Develop and promote a broad vision for reform, driven by the values and goals of child-serving agencies, to make the services and programs provided by state agencies more effective for children, youth, families and communities

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Actual	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number Responsible	Notes
I.1 Establish, maintain, and continue to improve innovative and competitive recruitment efforts														
State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families														
1.1.1	Increase the number of active volunteers	52%	55%	56%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Number of children served by volunteer Guardian ad Litem/Total number of children served by the Guardian ad Litem program.	GAL ETO System "Case Listing by Volunteer" or another case management created to track this information	GAL ETO System "Case Listing by Volunteer" or another case management created to track this information	Children will have trained, volunteer Guardian ad Litem appointed whose sole role is to advocate for their best interests. Staff are also served, because, without sufficient volunteers, staff are assigned to serve as Guardians ad Litem.	Abused and neglected children who are named in DSS abuse and neglect actions filed in Family Court and Guardian ad Litem Program staff	0500.050100.000	The Guardian ad Litem Program committed in 2019 to recruiting additional volunteers to serve as best interest advocates for children. The GAL Program set its goal at 55% for FY24 and exceeded the goal.
1.1.2	Review (and revise/implement as appropriate) onboarding and ongoing training to improve staff retention	21%	15%	15%	Percent	Equal to or less than	State Fiscal Year	(number of separations / average number of employees) / 100 = Staff Turnover Rate NOTE: Baseline was 34% for FY22 with baseline data calculated with 165.75 as the average number of employees with 55 separations. As staff are hired, the average number of employees may change and may affect the turnover data	The DCA will track progress on this measure with State HR/Admin HR Shared Services; Turnover rate is calculated by Admin HR Shared Services.	Dept. of Admin. Human Resources Vacancy Turnover Report	Staff and the public benefit from having a stable workforce of quality, trained individuals who have a positive relationship with their employer.	Staff: Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	The goal for this performance measure was 25% for FY23, and, when it was surpassed at 21.27% at the end of FY23, the goal was changed to 15% for FY24. That goal was met during FY24. During FY23, the agency analyzed salaries, developed new salary structures for certain positions, created performance pay increases, implemented equity increases, provided salary adjustments based on additional duties, and developed and implemented an agency-wide telework plan. Additionally, vacancies have been filled, and new positions were created to streamline processes and provide staff with clear expectations of their job duties. FY24 was the first full year that the agency's telework policy was implemented. The agency hopes to maintain a low turnover rate with continued efforts to recruit, train, retain, and support staff.
I.2 Support our employees with clear expectations, measurable and achievable success criteria, and regular feedback to help them be successful in the workplace.														
State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families														
1.2.1	Reduce existing vacancies by recruiting and retaining staff in an effort to reduce existing workloads for staff; improve staff's ability to actively recruit volunteers; and to provide additional support for volunteers and the court system	11%	10%	6%	Percent	Equal to or less than	State Fiscal Year	Current Guardian ad Litem vacancies/Total FTEs	Dept. of Admin. Human Resources Vacancy Turnover Report	Dept. of Admin. Human Resources Vacancy Report	Staff currently serve as advocates for 4237 children even with 37% of FTE positions unfilled. Filling these positions will reduce caseloads and provide support for volunteers. According to Admin HR Shared Services data, by June 30, 2020, there were 120 FTE positions and 96 were filled, leaving 24 vacancies. As a result, as shown in Measure 1.1.1, the number of staff serving as advocating for children decreased which allowed staff to focus on their job descriptions of recruiting, training, and supporting volunteer Guardians ad Litem.	Staff: Public; children; other agencies	0500.050100.000	The Guardian ad Litem Program continues to be led by Division Director LaDara Depugh who developed a tool for tracking vacancies, monitoring the process to fill the vacancies, and having regular communications with her team to ensure the process was consistently moving. Her intentionality and focus brought the vacancy rate from 18% at the end of FY22 to 11% at the end of FY23 and to 6% at the end of FY24.
1.2.2	Develop and deliver one annual topical training and four regional trainings for FCRB board members and FCRD staff to improve the quality of case reviews.	0	5	15	Count	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Count of Trainings	FCRD regional and annual training dates	FCRD will maintain records of dates, locations, times, and attendance regarding completed training sessions.	Regular trainings provide an opportunity for relevant legislative and caselaw updates in addition to strengthening ongoing mission objectives and focus.	Staff: Public; children; other agencies	0502.100100.000	The Foster Care Review Division developed and delivered 1 annual professional development day, 4 regional trainings, and 10 additional trainings for board members and staff during FY24.

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Actual	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number	Notes
1.2.3	Augment existing policies and procedures for the Investigations Unit and Critical Investigations Unit to ensure clear expectations for staff and alignment with the agency's mission and duties.	0%	100%	100%	Percent	Complete	State Fiscal Year	Percent Completion	Department of Children's Advocacy policy and procedure; SCEIS database	Department of Children's Advocacy policy and procedure; SCEIS database	The Investigations Unit was created when the agency became effective on July 1, 2019. This policies that have been created should be reviewed and augmented to meet the increased capacity of the unit to ensure that staff know what the expectations are and to ensure alignment of policy and practice with the agency's mission and duties.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	The Investigations Unit and Critical Investigations Unit created and augmented policies during FY24 including the development of decision trees to ensure quality and consistency.
1.3 Foster innovation in retention methods for volunteers													State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families	
1.3.1	Survey volunteer guardians ad litem regarding their satisfaction with their relationship with the Guardian ad Litem Program.	80%	83%	93%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Number of volunteer guardians ad litem who report being "pleased" or "very pleased" in response to Question #10 of the survey.	GAL Program/Survey Monkey	GAL Program/Survey Monkey	For the success of the GAL Program, it is imperative to have volunteer GALs who are satisfied with the support and guidance they receive from GAL Program staff. Volunteer GALs contribute to advocacy for children through direct involvement with children and through providing their feedback about systemic improvements.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0500.050100.000	The GAL Program had been struggling to meet this goal, because the staff's responsibility and appointment for best-interest advocacy competed with the targets in this measure. The FY23 goal was 85%, and that goal was reduced for FY24 to 83% when the actual performance for FY23 was 80%. The reduced goal was in an effort to focus on increasing staff levels which would then allow staff to focus more attention on volunteers. Despite the reduced goal of 83% which GAL leadership identified as being a more realistic goal, the GAL Program exceeded not only the FY24 goal but also the FY23 goal with a 93% satisfaction rate among volunteers.
1.3.2	Increase the completion rate of potential volunteers from the 30-hour Pre-Service Training.	40%	45%	56%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	The number of volunteers completed Pre-service training / the number of completed applications	Case management system	Case management system	Collecting and considering this type of information will help the Guardian ad Litem Program increase the number of qualified volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0500.050100.000	This goal was created for FY24 after GAL Program leadership recognized that one of the most prevalent concerns was getting applicants who were interested to complete the Preservice training. This new performance measure was exceeded during FY24, and the GAL Program will continue to address the issue of recruiting and retaining volunteers to advocate for children by amending the measure and target for FY25.
1.3.3	Reduce the existing staff vacancies within Continuum of Care.	40%	15%	35%	Percent	Equal to or less than	State fiscal year	The number of vacant positions divided by the number of FTE positions	Continuum of Care will track progress on this measure both within its division and with State HR/Admin HR Shared Services; Vacancy rate is calculated by Admin HR Shared Services.	Dept. of Admin. Human Resources Vacancy Report	The Waiver allows Continuum of Care to serve up to 350 children during the fourth year of the waiver, and serving youth and families promotes youth safely remaining in their homes and communities by reducing foster care entry, juvenile justice involvement, and trauma for youth and families. Continuum of Care must have a trained and consistent workforce to provide High Fidelity Wraparound for children and youth. Otherwise, there will be waitlists and inadequate Wrap Facilitators and Wrap Team Leads for the intensive care coordination.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0500.150100.000	The vacancy rate was reduced during this fiscal year. This was a new measure and goal for FY24 based on the Continuum of Care's high vacancy rate and the need for the program to partner with more youth and families to improve outcomes by safely maintaining children in their homes, schools, and communities when appropriate. Toward the end of FY24, the Dept of Children's Advocacy Agency Director asked the Office of Inspector General to conduct an efficiency study to improve the effectiveness and efficiencies of Continuum of Care. During FY24, staff vacancies existed at the regional level such that COC Director Greg Wright served not only as the Division Director but also as the Regional Director for two regions. By the end of FY24, all regional leadership positions and all state leadership positions were filled. Having these key positions filled is critical to hiring and onboarding additional staff.

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Actual	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number	Notes
2.1 Educate the public about state agency services		State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families												
2.1.1	Review and update the agency's online resource directory of state services and resources for children	0%	100%	100%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Percent completion	Department of Children's Advocacy's website	Department of Children's Advocacy's website	One of the statutory duties of the Dept. of Children's Advocacy includes educating the public about state agency services. Providing easily-accessible online information to the public about the availability of services could reduce incidences of abuse, neglect and institutionalization of children by apprising families of services available to them in their homes and communities. It also improves awareness, accessibility and relationships with child-serving agencies and organizations.	Staff; Public; children, other agencies	0100.000000.000	The agency's online resource library was initially published in 2021 with an initial focus on the nine agencies which are statutorily listed in the agency's enabling legislation. During this fiscal year and last fiscal year, additional vetted resources were added.
2.1.2	Develop and deliver or attend and participate in at least 4 public or community meetings or events to share information about accessing and/or navigating services provided by state agencies for children	0	4	143	Count	Complete	State Fiscal Year	Count of meetings with 100% representing 4 meetings.	Department of Children's Advocacy will maintain a count	Department of Children's Advocacy will maintain a count	Creating a forum for members of the community to hear about how to access and navigate through services and programs will not only help people know what services are available but also help them feel less intimidated, confused, and overwhelmed by applying for and accessing services available to children.	Staff; Public; children, families, other agencies	0500.150100.000	Director Whittle and Deputy Capps attended more than 143 meetings during FY24 (up from 125 in FY23) during which there were discussions about access to children's services. For this measure, meetings which were attended by only state agency employees were not included in this count. The number included in the count for this target for FY24 (like FY23) includes presentations at forums which had an audience of more than state agency employees. Such events included press conferences, media interviews, public forums, agency/non-agency attendees, and community presentations.
2.1.3	Increase the number of 1915(c) Waiver Youth enrollment to 350 by June 2024.	151	350	107	Count	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Count will be determined by the number of children/youth entered as enrolled in the Phoenix Electronic Health Record and served by Continuum of Care.	Phoenix Electronic Health Record maintained by Continuum of Care	Phoenix Electronic Health Record maintained by Continuum of Care	In FY21, Continuum of Care was identified as the provider for intensive care coordination through a 1915(C) Medicaid Waiver. The Waiver allows Continuum of Care to serve up to 350 children during the fourth year of the waiver, and serving youth and families promotes youth safely remaining in their homes and communities by reducing foster care entry, juvenile justice involvement, and trauma for youth and families.	Staff; Public; children, families, other agencies	0500.150100.000	The actual number of youth served by Continuum of Care through the Palmetto Coordinated System of Care (PCSC) waiver has declined each year, even as the target has increased in alignment with the 1915(c) Medicaid waiver requirements. In an effort to address this trend, a new goal was added for FY24 to commit to filling vacancies and hiring additional staff to partner with youth and families. The vacancy rate decreased during this fiscal year, yet the number of youth continued to decrease. Toward the end of FY24, the Dept of Children's Advocacy Agency Director asked the Office of Inspector General to conduct an efficiency study to improve the effectiveness and efficiencies of Continuum of Care. This includes assessing the number and source of referrals received, data concerning how referrals are received and processed, whether eligibility requirements are a barrier, the prevalence of wait lists, and the caseload/workloads of staff. An early observation has suggested that the program should track and respond to this data throughout the year and that the program may need to engage in targeted, consistent, and ongoing communication with referral sources throughout the state. During FY24, the Dept of Children's Advocacy Agency Director initiated the development of an online secure form and worked with Division Director Greg Wright and Dept of Children's Advocacy Communications Director Rob Schaller to create regional email addresses for electronic referrals to replace or at least supplement the program's paper and fax/mail referral process. The goal for this measure will be changed for FY25 to align with staff levels.
2.2 Develop process to provide an excellent customer experience.		State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families												

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Actual	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number	Notes
2.2.1	Create and disseminate effective and engaging training material for all Department of Children's Advocacy programs.	20%	100%	20%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Percent Completion	Department of Children's Advocacy online training modules; SCEIS database	Department of Children's Advocacy online training modules; SCEIS database	Dept. of Children's Advocacy includes three divisions (Continuum of Care, Foster Care Review Division, and Guardian ad litem) which were part of the Department of Administration prior to DCA's effective date of July 1, 2019. At its launch, DCA adopted then-existing Admin policy. This policy should be reviewed to ensure that ongoing policy is consistent with DCA's specific child-focused and improvement-oriented mission and duties.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	This was a new measure and goal established for FY24. For FY25, the goal related to this measure has been modified to establish more specific objectives to create creative and relevant training modules. Specifically, the goal for FY25 is to upload at least one training video for each division with a total goal of 4.
2.2.2	Ensure 87% of Continuum of Care parents interviewed will feel satisfied with the services they receive overall each fiscal year.	0%	87%	67%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Number of parents who report being satisfied with the services they receive overall from the Continuum of Care program/total number of parents who complete the survey.	Customer satisfaction surveys submitted by families/guardians of children served by Continuum of Care	Continuum of Care's subscription program	DCA seeks to develop processes to provide excellent customer service through measuring customer service and establishing a customer feedback process which guides service improvements.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	050.150100.000	The Continuum of Care had difficulty during FY23 with capturing satisfaction data due to a change in the electronic system for reporting this information. During FY24, the National Wraparound Implementation Center (NWIC) reported that COC made strides in their WFL-EZ evaluation protocol. COC employee Christina Davis was reported by NWIC as leading the effort such that monthly meetings with the trainer were no longer needed to manage WrapStat issues. NWIC also reported COC employee Christina Davis also "developed a QR code to scan for the survey as another method for access to caregivers." These efforts are intended to improve family participation in the survey as well as satisfaction.
2.2.3	Maintain or improve efficacy of Continuum of Care's services for children and youth as measured through dashboard data.	32.5	30	29	Rank	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Comparison of youths' beginning and ending CAFAS scores - the measure shows as a percentage but is actually a point measurement rather than a percentage measurement	Phoenix Electronic Health Record maintained by Continuum of Care	Phoenix Electronic Health Record maintained by Continuum of Care	A child's improvement is the single-most important goal of DCA. Continuum of Care's ability to objectively measure a youth's improvement is fundamental to the effectiveness of COC's model and professionals.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0500.150150.000	Continuum of Care data indicates a 29-point improvement in functionality assessments for youth served by COC. The goal was 30, so COC did not meet its goal for FY24. Toward the end of FY24, the Dept of Children's Advocacy Agency Director asked the Office of Inspector General to conduct an efficiency study to improve the effectiveness and efficiencies of Continuum of Care. During FY23 (July, 2022 through June, 2023), COC tracked data regarding the number of youth who safely remained in their home, school, and community. 81% of youth who partnered with COC in FY23 remained in the home during the entire time COC was involved, and 19% were placed out of the home for a higher level of care at some point during COC's involvement. COC will track for July, 2024 through June, 2025 and will report this information for the FY25 AAR in a new measure, 3.1.5.
2.2.4	Initial response to complaints occurs within one business day of the Agency's receipt of telephone, website-submitted, or emailed complaints for FY24.	100%	98%	100%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Number of complaints for which agency's initial response was within one business day of agency's receipt of the complaint/total number of complaints received by the agency.	Investigations Unit electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	Investigations Unit electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	DCA shall respond to complaints within one business day, not counting holidays or weekends, to determine which matters require an agency referral or an investigation.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	The Investigations Unit, led by Laurie Davidson, surpassed its goal with a 100% timely response rate. This is particularly significant when considering the increase in complaints and call volume both in FY23 and again in FY24. Complaint submissions increased by 38.9% during FY23 and by an additional 18% during FY24. Phone calls increased by 25% in FY24. The addition of an Intake Specialist has been a great asset to the Investigations Unit, and the agency continues to analyze and address workloads to ensure staff have the time and resources they need to perform their job duties, including but not limited to responding to complaints within 24 business hours.

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Actual	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number	Notes
2.2.5	Review and update 100% of FCRD/FCRB policies and procedures to streamline and improve consistency across the state.	90%	100%	90%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Percent Completion	Foster Care Review Division policies; SCEIS database	Foster Care Review Division policies; SCEIS database	The Foster Care Review Board and Foster Care Review Division have established policies and procedures which are outlined in separate formats for staff and volunteers. FCRD/FCRB operations will perform more smoothly and interact more efficiently with volunteers and other offices with more streamlined and updated office management policy and procedure.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0502.100100.000	FCRD leadership has reviewed the staff handbook and the manual for FCRB members, but updates have not been completed. During FY24, the FCRD launched a new case management system with the OnBase platform. Discussions about creating a new system had been ongoing for a decade. The FCRD also worked with DSS and board members to transform the historical "Areas of Concern" to "Barriers to Permanency" in an effort to provide more intentionality during reviews. Although this target was not reached during FY24, the progress outlined in this column was significant.
3.1	Examine, on a system-wide basis, the care and services that state agencies provide children												State Objective: Government and Citizens	
3.1.1	Review and improve the agency's tracking system for reviewing and evaluating services for children.	50%	100%	75%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Percent completion - Explore modification of current case management system to add fields for automated reports and/or development of an evaluation tool and report development process	Investigations Unit electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	Investigations Unit electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	One of the statutory duties of the Dept. of Children's Advocacy includes examining, on a system-wide basis, the care and services that state agencies provide children.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	The Deputy Child Advocate worked closely with Leidos to modify the Investigations Unit's case management system by adding a Critical Investigations Unit system. This modification was significant, and the agency hired and onboarded a Director of Planning and Research to continue to improve its tracking system for reviewing and evaluating services for children and to create, manage, monitor and report statewide and internal projects to evaluate program efficacy and outcomes. The employee will also be engaged in establishing baselines, benchmarking progress, managing regular reporting, and providing updates regarding targets.
3.1.2	Review and report on services that state agencies provide to children to the General Assembly and Governor.	0	1	1	Count	Complete	State Fiscal Year	Report submission or delivery	Department of Children's Advocacy records and data/information from other agencies/sources as noted in the report	Department of Children's Advocacy website and in print; Department of Archives; S.C. State Library	One of the statutory duties of the Dept. of Children's Advocacy includes providing a report to the General Assembly regarding the activities of the SCA.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	A Communications Director was hired and onboarded during FY23. He re-designed the format of the Annual Report and worked with Agency leadership for content during FY23 and FY24. His creative and engaging design won the attention of the State Library and earned the agency a Notable State Document Award during this fiscal year. The FY23 Annual Report was published online during FY24. Information concerning FY24 was captured through June 30, 2024 and will be reported in FY25.
3.1.3	Evaluate services of state agencies within the scope of the Dept of Children's Advocacy with target of completing evaluations of all 9 agencies by FY24	66%	100%	100%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Percent of completion with interim targets of 3 agencies or 33% for FY22; 66% for FY23; and 100% for FY24.	Department of Children's Advocacy records	Department of Children's Advocacy website and in print; Department of Archives; S.C. State Library	Establish other mechanisms to evaluate services that are not limited to the IU complaint system. The first part of creating the evaluation process was creating an inventory of services, and this was accomplished during FY21. Reviewing other State Office of Children's Advocacy may reveal evaluation and review methods.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	The Department of Children's Advocacy has previously evaluated services provided by the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs with a focus on capacity for residential habilitation services, autism, and Intellectual Disabilities/Related Disabilities assessment services (particularly pertaining to wait lists), and day treatment services. DCA has also evaluated the Department of Health and Human Services pertaining to DHHS's Medical Care Advisory Committee (MCAC) and Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC) as well as the Department of Juvenile Justice concerning its facilities and services. The agency has evaluated the services of Department of Health and Environmental Control (now Department of Public Health) pertaining to notifying the agency of critical incidents and monitoring child-serving facilities. The Department of Children's Advocacy has evaluated the services of the Department of Social Services concerning the state's placement and service array and has evaluated the Department of Mental Health concerning the need for state-operated facilities to serve seriously mentally ill youth along a continuum of care, from least restrictive to most restrictive, based on children's and youth's needs. These evaluations and recommendations are included in the agency's Annual Reports which are available on the agency's website. The remaining three agencies (Governor's School at John de la Howe, School for the Deaf and the Blind, and Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School) were concluded in FY24 and will be included in the FY24 Annual Report.

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Actual	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number	Notes
3.1.4	Complete annual audits for local county offices to ensure quality standards are met	0%	100%	100%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Percent of completion for 35 local county offices	Case management system	Case management system	Collecting, reviewing, and considering this type of information will help the Guardian ad Litem Program provide better advocacy for children	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0500.050100.000	This was a new measure and target for FY24 that was reached. GAL leadership will continue to engage in quality assurance and continuous quality improvement by modifying this measure and target for the next fiscal year.
3.2 Receive, refer, monitor and investigate complaints regarding state agencies														
State Objective: Government and Citizens														
3.2.1	Provide data and analysis regarding complaint dispositions in an effort to inform recommendations for improvement.	50%	100%	50%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Electronic network database captures which agencies receive complaints against their services or programs, how complaints are categorized internally, and how our complaints are resolved and coded.	Investigations Unit electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	Investigations Unit electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	Collecting, reviewing, and considering this type of information will help DCA and other agencies provide better services for children and families and will assist in the State Child Advocate in developing a broad vision for reform that includes recommendations for improvement.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	The State Director and Deputy Child Advocate made progress on this measure during FY23 and plan to continue the work during FY24 through the creation of a new position. The agency created a position to hire a Director of Planning and Research. That role was filled during FY24 to include creating, managing, monitoring and reporting statewide and internal projects to assist with providing data to inform recommendations for this measure and target. The employee should be engaged in establishing baselines, benchmarking progress, managing regular reporting, and providing updates regarding targets.
3.2.2	Encourage a culture of collaboration and coordination among state agencies which serve children by developing relationships and communicating regularly in a professional and respectful manner. Regular meetings should occur, with a minimum of one virtual or in-person meeting occurring with each of the nine state agencies each fiscal year.	0	1	1	Count	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Count of meetings	Department of Children's Advocacy will keep records of the number of meetings that occur	Department of Children's Advocacy will keep records of the number of meetings that occur	DCA should be involved in regular conversations with agency leadership to inform their help and cooperation in resolving issues, and to learn more about other agencies' processes and resources to better-assist DCA with assisting callers and with making recommendations and advocating for systemic improvement.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	DCA had communication with all nine agencies during the fiscal year thanks to the coordination of the Investigations Unit and Critical Investigations Unit. When this goal was not met during FY23, processes were put into place to ensure face-to-face in-person or virtual contact occurs each fiscal year with each agency for future reporting periods. Investigations Unit Director Laurie Davidson ensured her team made visits and Deputy Child Advocate Kayla Capps coordinated numerous visits as well for the System Improvement Division.
3.3 Establish the capacity to manage, monitor, and report on statewide and/or internal projects.														
State Objective: Government and Citizens														
3.3.1	Monitor and report progress quarterly and annually in achieving permanent plans for children in foster care through an external system of accountability and advocacy each fiscal year.	0	1	0	Count	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Count of annual report	Foster Care Review Division case management system; DSS Child and Adult Protective Services Systems (CAPSS)	Foster Care Review Division website and in print	Foster Care Review Division will track and report the achievement of timely permanence for children by permanence type and by time achieved.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0502.100100.000	This goal was not met this year due to challenges with the new case management system and turnover for the data position. The Foster Care Review Board Annual Report was published on the website in July of 2024, just outside of the June 30, 2024 deadline.
3.3.2	Monitor and report total number and typology trends of critical incident notifications received by the DCA within a fiscal year.	0%	100%	100%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Percentage completed	Investigations Unit electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	Investigations Unit electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	DCA of Investigations will monitor and compile data trends within CI notifications from CI dashboard	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	The Deputy Child Advocate worked with externs to develop the initial notification logs and dashboards. During this fiscal year, the Lead Child Advocate and Assistant Child Advocate assisted the Deputy Child Advocate in continuing to modify and advance the critical investigations data in an effort to track current notifications and investigations and to also identify trends.

FY2025

Strategic Plan Development

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:

L080 - Department of Child Advocacy

- Goal 1** To serve as advocates for timely, safe, and effective services for children
- Goal 2** To ensure that children, parents, and concerned citizens in South Carolina know how to connect children in need to the right services
- Goal 3** Develop and promote a broad vision for reform, driven by the values and goals of child-serving agencies, to make the services and programs provided by state agencies more effective for children, youth, families and communities

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number Responsible	Notes
1.1 Establish, maintain, and continue to improve innovative and competitive recruitment efforts													
State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families													
1.1.1	Increase the number of active volunteers	56%	60%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Number of children served by volunteer Guardians ad Litem/Total number of children served by the Guardian ad Litem program.	GAL Casa Manager System "Case Listing by Volunteer" or another case management created to track this information	GAL Casa Manager System "Case Listing by Volunteer" or another case management created to track this information	Children will have trained, volunteer Guardian ad Litem appointed whose sole role is to advocate for their best interests. Staff are also served, because, without sufficient volunteers, staff are assigned to serve as Guardians ad Litem.	Abused and neglected children who are named in DSS abuse and neglect actions filed in Family Court and Guardian ad Litem Program staff	0500.050100.000	
1.1.2	Improve or maintain agency turnover rate through effective recruitment and retention	15%	15%	Percent	Equal to or less than	State Fiscal Year	(number of separations / average number of employees) / 100 = Staff Turnover Rate NOTE: Baseline was 34% for FY22 with baseline data calculated with 165.75 as the average number of employees with 55 separations. As staff are hired, the average number of employees may change and may affect the turnover data	The DCA will track progress on this measure with State HR/Admin HR Shared Services; Turnover rate is calculated by Admin HR Shared Services.	Dept. of Admin. Human Resources Vacancy Turnover Report	Staff and the public benefit from having a stable workforce of quality, trained individuals who have a positive relationship with their employer.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	
1.1.3	Reduce the existing staff vacancies within Continuum of Care.	35%	15%	Percent	Equal to or less than	State fiscal year	The number of vacant positions divided by the number of FTE positions	Continuum of Care will track progress on this measure both within its division and with State HR/Admin HR Shared Services; Vacancy rate is calculated by Admin HR Shared Services.	Dept. of Admin. Human Resources Vacancy Report	The Waiver allows Continuum of Care to serve up to 350 children during the fourth year of the waiver, and serving youth and families promotes youth safely remaining in their homes and communities by reducing foster care entry, juvenile justice involvement, and trauma for youth and families. Continuum of Care must have a trained and consistent workforce to provide High Fidelity Wraparound for children and youth. Otherwise, there will be waitlists and inadequate Wrap Facilitators and Wrap Team Leads for the intensive care coordination.	Staff; Public children; other agencies	0500.150100.000	

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number Responsible	Notes
1.1.4	Increase the diversity of GALs who serve as best interest advocates for children.	19%	21%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	(Total number of volunteer GALs divided by total number of minorities) + (Total number of GALs divided by total number of males) divided by 2 = combined percentage for this goal. Diversity will include increasing the percentage of minorities and male population. Currently the Baseline is 16% for male and 22% for minorities. The Target for FY25 is 18% male and 24% minorities.	GAL Casa Manager System "Case Listing by Volunteer" or another case management created to track this information	GAL Casa Manager System "Case Listing by Volunteer" or another case management created to track this information	Children will have trained, volunteer Guardian ad Litem appointed whose role is to advocate for their best interests. A diverse pool of volunteer GALs provides a greater opportunity for children and youth to feel comfortable with the GAL that is assigned to them.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0500.050100.000	
1.2 Support our employees with clear expectations, measurable and achievable success criteria, and regular feedback to help them be successful in the workplace. State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families													
1.2.1	Foster innovation in retention methods for staff. Survey Guardian ad Litem staff regarding their satisfaction with their relationship with leadership	0%	80%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Number of staff answering "pleased" or "very pleased" to question #10 of a survey developed for staff divided by total number of staff participating in survey	GAL staff survey results	GAL staff survey results	Revising the former goal which was related to reducing the GAL staff vacancy rate since that goal was met, exceeded, and consistently stable for the last 7 months of FY24. Replacing with a goal for FY25 to foster innovation in retention methods for staff. Survey Guardian ad Litem staff regarding their satisfaction with their relationship with leadership. This survey will be similar to the volunteer survey with a 360 survey to focus on GAL leadership. The survey will only be sent to staff only. Questions will be developed and disseminated to staff with one question related to an employee's direct supervisor. "Base: 0 Target 80%" Calculation: Number of staff who report being "pleased" or "very pleased" in response to Question #10 of the survey. This goal will assist with identifying training needs to strengthen and support the work of managers and supervisors.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0500.050100.000	
1.2.2	Develop and deliver one annual topical training and four regional trainings for FCRB board members and FCRD staff to improve the quality of case reviews.	0	5	Count	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Count of Trainings	FCRD regional and annual training dates	FCRD will maintain records of dates, locations, times, and attendance regarding completed training sessions.	Regular trainings provide an opportunity for relevant legislative and caselaw updates in addition to strengthening ongoing mission objectives and focus.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0502.100100.000	
1.2.3	Augment existing policies and procedures for the System Improvement Division to ensure clear expectations for staff and alignment with the agency's mission and duties.	0%	100%	Percent	Complete	State Fiscal Year	Percent Completion	Department of Children's Advocacy policy and procedure; SCEIS database	Department of Children's Advocacy policy and procedure; SCEIS database	The Investigations Unit was created when the agency became effective on July 1, 2019. This policies that have been created should be reviewed and augmented to meet the increased capacity of the unit to ensure that staff know what the expectations are and to ensure alignment of policy and practice with the agency's mission and duties.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	
1.3 Foster innovation in retention methods for volunteers State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families													

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number Responsible	Notes
1.3.1	Increase the completion rate of potential volunteers from the 30-hour Pre-service Training.	62%	65%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Number of volunteers who completed pre-services training/ the number of enrollees -- Note: The formula for this target is revised for FY25 to include the number of enrollees instead of the number of applications	Case management system	Case management system	Collecting and considering this type of information will help the Guardian ad Litem Program increase the number of qualified volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0500.050100.000	
2.1 Educate the public about state agency services													
State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families													
2.1.1	Review and update the agency's online resource directory of state services and resources for children	0%	100%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Percent completion	Department of Children's Advocacy's website	Department of Children's Advocacy's website	One of the statutory duties of the Dept. of Children's Advocacy includes educating the public about state agency services. Providing easily-accessible online information to the public about the availability of services could reduce incidences of abuse, neglect and institutionalization of children by apprising families of services available to them in their homes and communities. It also improves awareness, accessibility and relationships with child-serving agencies and organizations.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	
2.1.2	Develop and deliver or attend and participate in at least 4 public or community meetings or events to share information about accessing and/or navigating services provided by state agencies for children	0	4	Count	Complete	State Fiscal Year	Count of meetings with 100% representing 4 meetings.	Department of Children's Advocacy will maintain a count	Department of Children's Advocacy will maintain a count	Creating a forum for members of the community to hear about how to access and navigate through services and programs will not only help people know what services are available but also help them feel less intimidated, confused, and overwhelmed by applying for and accessing services available to children.	Staff; Public; children, families, other agencies	0500.150100.000	
2.1.3	Increase the number of youth enrolled in the 1915(c) waiver	107	250	Count	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Count will be determined by the number of children/youth entered as enrolled in the Phoenix Electronic Health Record and served by Continuum of Care.	Phoenix Electronic Health Record maintained by Continuum of Care	Phoenix Electronic Health Record maintained by Continuum of Care	In July of 2020 (FY21), Continuum of Care was identified as the provider for intensive care coordination through a 1915(C) Medicaid Waiver. The Waiver allows Continuum of Care to serve up to 350 children during the 4th year which was FY24 of the waiver and up to 400 youth during year 5. Serving youth and families promotes youth safely remaining in their homes and communities by reducing foster care entry, juvenile justice involvement, and trauma for youth and families.	Staff; Public; children, families, other agencies	0500.150100.000	
2.2 Develop process to provide an excellent customer experience.													
State Objective: Healthy and Safe Families													
2.2.1	Create and disseminate at least 4 effective and engaging training modules for Department of Children's Advocacy staff and volunteers by the end of FY25.	20%	100%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Number of training modules completed/4	Department of Children's Advocacy online training modules; SCEIS database	Department of Children's Advocacy online training modules; SCEIS database	The agency will create and launch training modules for staff and volunteers.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	
2.2.2	Ensure 87% of Continuum of Care parents interviewed will feel satisfied with the services they receive overall each fiscal year.	67%	87%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Number of parents who report being satisfied with the services they receive overall from the Continuum of Care program/total number of parents who complete the survey.	Customer satisfaction surveys submitted by families/guardians of children served by Continuum of Care	Continuum of Care's subscription program	DCA seeks to develop processes to provide excellent customer service through measuring customer service and establishing a customer feedback process which guides service improvements.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	050.150100.000	

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number Responsible	Notes
2.2.3	Maintain or improve efficacy of Continuum of Care's services for children and youth as measured through dashboard data.	29	30	Rank	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Comparison of youths' beginning and ending CAFAS scores - the measure shows as a percentage but is actually a point measurement rather than a percentage measurement	Phoenix Electronic Health Record maintained by Continuum of Care	Phoenix Electronic Health Record maintained by Continuum of Care	A child's improvement is the single-most important goal of DCA. Continuum of Care's ability to objectively measure a youth's improvement is fundamental to the effectiveness of COC's model and professionals.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0500.150150.000	
2.2.4	Initial response to complaints occurs within one business day of the Agency's receipt of telephone, website-submitted, or emailed complaints for FY25.	100%	98%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Number of complaints for which agency's initial response was within one business day of agency's receipt of the complaint/total number of complaints received by the agency.	Investigations Unit electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	Investigations Unit electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	DCA shall respond to complaints within one business day, not counting holidays or weekends, to determine which matters require an agency referral or an investigation.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	
2.2.5	Review and update 100% of FCRD/FCRB policies and procedures to streamline and improve consistency across the state.	90%	100%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Percent Completion	Foster Care Review Division policies; SCEIS database	Foster Care Review Division policies; SCEIS database	The Foster Care Review Board and Foster Care Review Division have established policies and procedures which are outlined in separate formats for staff and volunteers. FCRD/FCRB operations will perform more smoothly and interact more efficiently with volunteers and other offices with more streamlined and updated office management policy and procedure.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0502.100100.000	
3.1 Examine, on a system-wide basis, the care and services that state agencies provide children													
State Objective: Government and Citizens													
3.1.1	Review and improve the agency's tracking system for reviewing and evaluating services for children.	50%	100%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Percent completion - Explore modification of current case management system to add fields for automated reports and/or development of an evaluation tool and report development process	Investigations Unit electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	Investigations Unit electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	One of the statutory duties of the Dept. of Children's Advocacy includes examining, on a system-wide basis, the care and services that state agencies provide children.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	
3.1.2	Review and report on services that state agencies provide to children to the General Assembly and Governor.	0	1	Count	Complete	State Fiscal Year	Report submission or delivery	Department of Children's Advocacy records and data/information from other agencies/sources as noted in the report	Department of Children's Advocacy website and in print; Department of Archives; S.C. State Library	One of the statutory duties of the Dept. of Children's Advocacy includes providing a report to the General Assembly regarding the activities of the SCA.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	
3.1.3	Monitor and report audits scores for local county offices to ensure quality standards are met.	86%	88%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Average final audit score for all county offices; weight of QA scores of volunteer files is 25% and weight of actual case files is 75% Calculation: Average final audit score for all county offices.	Case management system	Case management system	Collecting, reviewing, and considering this type of information will help the Guardian ad Litem Program provide better advocacy for children	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0500.050100.000	

Perf. Measure Number	Description	Base	Target	Value Type	Desired Outcome	Time Applicable	Calculation Method	Data Source	Data Location	Stakeholder Need Satisfied	Primary Stakeholder	State Funded Program Number Responsible	Notes
3.1.4	Maintain youth in their homes, schools, and communities through High Fidelity Wraparound intensive care coordination	new goal	80%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	Number of youth who remain at home/total number of youth partnered by COC	Continuum of Care's electronic health record systems	COC's electronic health record systems' custody report which calculates the number of days each youth remains in the community	The stakeholder need most satisfied by the agency meeting this measure is improving youth functionality through decreasing emotional and behavioral challenges. This measure is a percentage of youth who remain at home in the community compared with youth who are placed in a residential facility. Youth outcomes are improved when they can safely and appropriately live at home and have access to their family and friends.	Staff; public; children; other agencies	0500.150150.000	
3.1.5	Increase the number of adoption referrals received by Heart Gallery by 10%	855	940	Count	Equal to or greater than	State fiscal year	Number of referrals received by Heart Gallery	Foster Care Review Division will track the number of times	Foster Care Review Division will track the number of times	The stakeholder need most satisfied by the agency meeting this measure is permanency for children who are in foster care awaiting adoption.	Staff, board members, public, children, other agencies	0502.100100.000	
3.2 Receive, refer, monitor and investigate complaints regarding state agencies												State Objective: Government and Citizens	
3.2.1	Provide data and analysis regarding complaint dispositions in an effort to inform recommendations for improvement.	0.5	1	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Electronic network database captures which agencies receive complaints against their services or programs, how complaints are categorized internally, and how our complaints are resolved and coded.	Investigations Unit electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	Investigations Unit electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	Collecting, reviewing, and considering this type of information will help DCA and other agencies provide better services for children and families and will assist in the State Child Advocate in developing a broad vision for reform that includes recommendations for improvement.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	
3.2.2	Encourage a culture of collaboration and coordination among state agencies which serve children by developing relationships and communicating regularly in a professional and respectful manner. Regular meetings should occur, with a minimum of one virtual or in-person meeting occurring with each of the nine state agencies each fiscal year.	0	9	Count	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Count of meetings	Department of Children's Advocacy will keep records of the number of meetings that occur	Department of Children's Advocacy will keep records of the number of meetings that occur	DCA should be involved in regular conversations with agency leadership to inform agencies of issues, to enlist their help and cooperation in resolving issues, and to learn more about other agencies' processes and resources to better-assist DCA with assisting callers and with making recommendations and advocating for systemic improvement.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	
3.3 Establish the capacity to manage, monitor, and report on statewide and/or internal projects.												State Objective: Government and Citizens	
3.3.1	Monitor and report progress quarterly and annually in achieving permanent plans for children in foster care through an external system of accountability and advocacy each fiscal year.	0	5	Count	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	Count of annual report (1) and count of (4) quarterly reports during FY25	Foster Care Review Division case management system; DSS Child and Adult Protective Services Systems (CAPSS)	Foster Care Review Division website and in print	Foster Care Review Division will track and report the achievement of timely permanence for children by permanence type and by time achieved.	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0502.100100.000	
3.3.2	Monitor and report total number and typology trends of complaints and critical incident notifications received by the DCA within a fiscal year.	0%	100%	Percent	Equal to or greater than	State Fiscal Year	System Improvement Division section regarding complaints and critical incident notifications in agency's Annual Report	System Improvement Division electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	System Improvement Division electronic case management system (Intranet Quorum)	DCA of Investigations will monitor and compile data trends within CI notifications from CI dashboard and provide a report to be included in the agency's Annual Report	Staff; Public; children; other agencies	0100.000000.000	

2024

Budget Data

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:

L080 - Department of Child Advocacy

State Funded Program No.	State Funded Program Title	Description of State Funded Program	(Actual) General	(Actual) Other	(Actual) Federal	(Actual) Total	(Projected) General	(Projected) Other	(Projected) Federal	(Projected) Total
0100.000000.000	Administration and Investigations Unit	Provides support for the agency as a whole; includes the Investigations Unit which receives, refers, monitors and investigates complaints; develops and promotes a broad vision for reform to improve services provided by child-serving agencies in South Carolina	\$ 467,113.36	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 467,113.36	\$ 690,225.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 690,225.00
0119.100000X000	Network of Children's Advocacy Centers		\$ 80,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 80,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 80,000.00
0121.050000X000	Children's Trust Fund	Provides prevention services for children and families	\$ 200,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 200,000.00
0500.050100.000	Guardian ad Litem Program	Advocates for abused and neglected children	\$ 3,751,825.71	\$ 5,678,370.00	\$ 63,412.00	\$ 9,493,607.71	\$ 4,237,909.00	\$ 6,183,998.00	\$ -	\$ 10,421,907.00
0500.150100.000	Continuum of Care	Assists children with emotional and behavioral needs	\$ 2,020,352.53	\$ 732,146.42	\$ -	\$ 2,752,498.95	\$ 2,259,819.00	\$ 1,285,863.00	\$ -	\$ 3,545,682.00
0501.200100.000	Investigations Unit		\$ 501,124.92	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 501,124.92	\$ 847,387.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 847,387.00
0502.100100.000	Foster Care Review Division	Provides accountability for children in foster care	\$ 563,250.76	\$ 869,124.81	\$ -	\$ 1,432,375.57	\$ 654,237.00	\$ 946,850.00	\$ -	\$ 1,601,087.00
9500.050000.000	State Employer Contributions	To provide state employer contribution funding source	\$ 2,675,879.34	\$ 2,418,170.59	\$ 28,693.33	\$ 5,122,743.26	\$ 3,373,300.00	\$ 3,054,887.00	\$ -	\$ 6,428,187.00
9817.310000X000	South Carolina Network for Children's Advocacy Centers (SCNCAC)	SCNCAC is the coordinating entity for the 17 Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) in South Carolina. SCNCAC provides support, advocacy, quality assurance, and statewide leadership for CACs. CACs provide a coordinated, evidence-based response to children who have been abused in all 46 counties of South Carolina.	\$ 1,080,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,080,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
9828.050000X000	AGENCY WORKSTATIONS		37847	\$ -	\$ -	37847	278053	\$ -	\$ -	278053
9829.010000X000	Foster Care Review Board N/R		150000	\$ -	\$ -	150000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
9837.060000X000	EVERY 1 VOICE MATTER		45000	\$ -	\$ -	45000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
9838.020000X000	Investigations Unit N/R		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	25000	\$ -	\$ -	25000

2024

Legal Data

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:

L080 - Department of Child Advocacy

Law number	Jurisdiction	Type	Description	Purpose the law serves:	Notes:	Changes made during FY2024
2022-23 Appropriations Act Section 41	State	FY23-24 Proviso	Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad litem Program	Funding agency deliverable(s)		No Change
2022-23 Appropriations Act Section 41	State	FY23-24 Proviso	Foster Care Review Board	Requires a service	May suspend reviews of children in certain settings	No Change
2022-23 Appropriations Act Section 41	State	FY23-24 Proviso	Continuum of Care for Emotionally Disturbed Children	Funding agency deliverable(s)		No Change
63-11-2410(2)	State	Statute	S.C. Child Abuse Response Protocol	Requires a service	Requires agency to convene the first meeting and to provide staff support for the committee	No Change
63-11-2420	State	Statute	S.C. Child Abuse Response Protocol	Requires a service	Requires agency to maintain the protocol and the committee's updates	No Change
Proviso 103.3	State	FY23-24 Proviso	Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office: S.C. Health and Human Services Data Warehouse	Report our agency may/must provide	Provides that Continuum of Care and Foster Care Review Division should submit data; conversations occurred with RFA during FY22	No Change
Proviso 35.1	State	FY23-24 Proviso	Department of Mental Health Transfer	Funding agency deliverable(s)	Authorizes DMH to transfer funds to Continuum of Care	No Change
Proviso 41.2	State	FY23-24 Proviso	Guardian ad Litem Trust Proviso	Funding agency deliverable(s)		No Change
2022-23 Appropriations Act Section 41	State	FY23-24 Proviso	Administration/Investigations Unit	Funding agency deliverable(s)	Provides funding for Administration division of agency as well as statutory requirements associated with Investigations Unit	No Change

Law number	Jurisdiction	Type	Description	Purpose the law serves:	Notes:	Changes made during FY2024
S. C. Code of Regs. 31-10	State	Regulation	Office of the Governor - Continuum of Care for Emotionally Disturbed Children	Requires a service	Minimum eligibility requirements and application process for selection as a client of Continuum of Care	No Change
S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Section 63-11-1310, et.seq.	State	Statute	Continuum of Care for Emotionally Disturbed Children	Requires a service	Enhances the delivery of services to severely emotionally disturbed children and youth	No Change
S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Section 63-11-1900, et.seq.	State	Statute	Department of Child Fatalities and State Child Fatality Advisory Committee	Board, commission, or committee on which someone from our agency must/may serve	State Child Advocate serves on committee to review child fatalities	No Change
S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Section 63-11-2210, et.seq.	State	Statute	Department of Children's Advocacy	Requires a service	Duties regarding reviewing and making recommendations regarding services provided to children by state agencies	No Change
S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Section 63-11-2210, et.seq.	State	Statute	Department of Children's Advocacy	Report our agency must/may provide	Participates in or leads investigations regarding critical incidents; provides an annual report to General Assembly, JCCLC and Governor	No Change
S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Section 63-11-500, et.seq.	State	Statute	Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad litem Program	Requires a service	Recruiting, training and supervising volunteer guardians ad litem	No Change
S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Section 63-11-700, et.seq.	State	Statute	Foster Care Review Board	Requires a service	Monitoring progress in achieving permanent placements for children in foster care	No Change
S.C. Code of Regs. 24-1	State	Regulation	Office of the Governor-Division for Review of the Foster Care of Children	Requires a service	Monitoring progress in achieving permanent placements for children in foster care	No Change
Proviso 117.19	State	FY23-24 Proviso	Per Diem for Boards, Commissions and Committees	Distribute finding to another entity	Increased the authorized payment of per diem to Foster Care Review Board members	Amended

Law number	Jurisdiction	Type	Description	Purpose the law serves:	Notes:	Changes made during FY2024
Proviso 117.20(E)	State	FY23-24 Proviso	Meals and mileage reimbursement for Board members	Distribute finding to another entity	Authorizes reimbursement of mileage and meals to Foster Care Review Board members	No Change
S.C. Code of Laws Ann. 63-1-50(A)	State	Statute	Addition to Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children (JCLCC)	Board, commission, or committee on which someone from our agency must/may serve	Adds State Child Advocate as ex officio, non-voting member of the Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children (JCLCC) also known as The Children's Committee	Added
S.C. Code of Laws Ann. 63-7-2750(C)	State	Statute	Extension of foster care	Requires a service	Requires the appointment (or ongoing appointment) of a guardian ad litem with the Guardian ad Litem Program beyond the child's 18th birthday if the young adult remains in foster care. Prior to this change, guardian ad litem appointments ended at the child's 18th birthday.	Added

2024

Services Data

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:
L080 - Department of Child Advocacy

Description of Service	Description of Direct Customer	Customer Name	Others Impacted by Service	Division or major organizational unit providing the service.	Description of division or major organizational unit providing the service.	Primary negative impact if service not provided.	Changes made to services during FY2024	Summary of changes to services
The Foster Care Review Division provides support and coordination to local review board member volunteers and State Board of Directors	Agency FTEs with the Foster Care Review Division work with appointed local FCRB members in each county in South Carolina and State Board of Directors representing each Congressional District in South Carolina	DSS, Judicial System, federal oversight, children/families	foster parents, family members, fictive kin	Foster Care Review Board	Monitors progress in achieving permanent placements for children in foster care	lack of accountability or reliability for reviews and recommendations	No Change	
The Foster Care Review Board conducts periodic case review of children residing in foster care in South Carolina	Children and families involved in South Carolina's foster care system	DSS, Judicial System, federal oversight, children/families	foster parents, family members, fictive kin	Foster Care Review Board	Monitors progress in achieving permanent placements for children in foster care	lack of accountability or reliability for reviews and recommendations	No Change	
The FCRB provides the Family Court in every county in South Carolina a child-specific written recommendation following each case review of a child in foster care	Family Court Judges who are making decisions about permanency for children in foster care	DSS, Judicial System, federal oversight, children/families	foster parents, family members, fictive kin	Foster Care Review Board	Monitors progress in achieving permanent placements for children in foster care	lack of accountability or reliability for reviews and recommendations	No Change	
The FCRB provides the S.C. Dept. of Social Services and Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program in every county in South Carolina a child-specific written recommendation following each case review of a child in foster care	Department of Social Services and Guardians ad litem who are making decisions about permanency for children in foster care	DSS, Judicial System, federal oversight, children/families	foster parents, family members, fictive kin	Foster Care Review Board	Monitors progress in achieving permanent placements for children in foster care	lack of accountability or reliability for reviews and recommendations	No Change	
The S.C. Heart Gallery maintains photo exhibits and an interactive website for enhanced targeted adoption recruitment	Legally free children in foster care in South Carolina; interested families approved to adopt; interested families not yet approved to adopt; and South Carolina families assigned for completion of adoptive home studies	DSS, Judicial System, federal oversight, children/families	foster parents, family members, fictive kin	Foster Care Review Board - Heart Gallery	Provides enhanced child-specific adoption recruitment services	lack of recruitment and advocacy for youth in foster care who are awaiting adoption	No Change	

Description of Service	Description of Direct Customer	Customer Name	Others Impacted by Service	Division or major organizational unit providing the service.	Description of division or major organizational unit providing the service.	Primary negative impact if service not provided.	Changes made to services during FY2024	Summary of changes to services
Evidenced-based, intensive care coordination with a Medicaid waiver or Medicaid Targeted Case Management	South Carolina youth under age 18 with severe emotional disturbance and/or behavioral health challenges; may serve up to age 21 if youth is in special education	children, families	emergency departments, DJJ, DSS, DMH, DHHS	Continuum of Care	Serves children with the most severe and complex emotional or behavioral health challenges whose needs are not being adequately met by existing services or programs	lack of appropriate services for children, youth and families such that youth suicide, foster care entry, juvenile justice entry and hospitalizations may increase	Amend	Continuum of Care also served young adults up to age 25 who were enrolled in Roads of Independence (ROI) Program, a pilot program in Lee, Kershaw, and Sumter counties through a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant with the Department of Mental Health. Continuum of Care's involvement in the ROI program ended during FY24.
Establish capacity to examine nine specific state agencies	Child-recipients of state services and families who need to access services	children, families, General Assembly, Governor, DHHS, DMH, DDSN, DSS, DJJ, DHEC, John de la Howe, Wil Lou Gray, School for the Deaf and for the Blind	communities, service providers, placement providers, other agencies	State Child Advocate and Investigations	Examine adequacy of services for children by nine specific state agencies	lack of appropriate oversight and improvements such that access and availability to quality services may harm or increase problems for children and families	No Change	
Online directory, public forums or other methods of informing public	Child-recipients of state services and families who need to access services	children, families	emergency departments, DJJ, DSS, DMH, DHHS	State Child Advocate and Investigations	Educate public about services available to children by state agencies	lack of appropriate oversight and improvements such that access and availability to quality services may harm or increase problems for children and families	No Change	
Attend public forums, speak with members of community and research availability of services to determine service array	Members of the community and families who benefit from coordination of services and processes	children, families		State Child Advocate and Investigations	Educate public about services available to children by state agencies	lack of awareness, access and availability to quality services may harm or increase problems for children and families	No Change	
Attend public forums, speak with members of community, research availability of services, and collaborate with agency leadership to coordinate service array	State agencies which function better as a result of coordination of services and processes	DHHS, DMH, DDSN, DSS, DJJ, DHEC, John de la Howe, Wil Lou Gray, School for the Deaf and for the Blind	communities, service providers, placement providers, other agencies	State Child Advocate and Investigations	Educate public about services available to children by state agencies	lack of awareness, access and availability to quality services may harm or increase problems for children and families	No Change	
Establish capacity to receive, refer, monitor, review, and/or investigate complaints regarding 9 specific state agencies	Child-recipients of state services and families who are dissatisfied with state agency services	children, families	communities, service providers, placement providers, other agencies	State Child Advocate and Investigations	Receive, refer, monitor, review, and/or investigate complaints against 9 specific state agencies	lack of appropriate oversight and improvements such that access and availability to quality services may harm or increase problems for children and families	No Change	

Description of Service	Description of Direct Customer	Customer Name	Others Impacted by Service	Division or major organizational unit providing the service.	Description of division or major organizational unit providing the service.	Primary negative impact if service not provided.	Changes made to services during FY2024	Summary of changes to services
Establish capacity to receive, refer, monitor, review, and/or investigate complaints regarding 9 specific state agencies	State agencies who are seeking to improve the delivery of their services	DHHS, DMH, DDSN, DSS, DJJ, DHEC, John de la Howe, Wil Lou Gray, School for the Deaf and for the Blind	communities, service providers, placement providers, other agencies	State Child Advocate and Investigations	Receive, refer, monitor, review, and/or investigate complaints against 9 specific state agencies	lack of appropriate oversight and improvements such that access and availability to quality services may harm or increase problems for children and families	No Change	
Prepare and submit annual report	State agencies and state leadership who are seeking to improve the delivery of their services	DHHS, DMH, DDSN, DSS, DJJ, DHEC, John de la Howe, Wil Lou Gray, School for the Deaf and for the Blind	communities, service providers, placement providers, other agencies	State Child Advocate and Investigations	Submit annual report with activities of State Child Advocate	lack of appropriate oversight and improvements such that access and availability to quality services may harm or increase problems for children and families	No Change	
Prepare and submit annual report	Legislators who are seeking to determine the efficacy of state agencies' services to determine whether legislative changes are necessary to improve access, quality and delivery of services	General Assembly	communities, service providers, placement providers, other agencies	State Child Advocate	Submit annual report with activities of State Child Advocate	lack of appropriate oversight and improvements such that access and availability to quality services may harm or increase problems for children and families	No Change	
Prepare and submit annual report	General public who seeks to better-understand, access, or improve state agencies' services	children, families and concerned citizens	children, families, General Assembly, Governor, DHHS, DMH, DDSN, DSS, DJJ, DHEC, John de la Howe, Wil Lou Gray, School for the Deaf and for the Blind	State Child Advocate and Investigations	Submit annual report with activities of State Child Advocate	lack of appropriate oversight and improvements such that access and availability to quality services may harm or increase problems for children and families	No Change	
Maintain the Child Abuse Response Protocol; convene the first meeting of the Protocol Review Committee	Children and families who will have consistent access and availability to services; agencies who will have a clear understanding of expectations and	children, families and concerned citizens	Law enforcement, Child Advocacy Centers, Judicial Branch, General Assembly, Governor, DMH, DSS, DJJ, Attorney General's Office/Human Trafficking Task Force	State Child Advocate/Administration	Maintain the Child Abuse Response Protocol; convene the first meeting of the Protocol Review Committee	lack of awareness, access and availability to quality services may harm or increase problems for children and families	No Change	
Serve on the State Child Fatality Advisory Committee	Review child fatalities in the state and make recommendations to prevent future child deaths	children, families and concerned citizens	Law enforcement, emergency departments, coroners, and other agencies	State Child Advocate	State Child Advocate	The committee serves as a cross-section to provide recommendations and raise awareness about child fatalities and prevention opportunities.	Add	Agency Director was elected Chair of this statewide committee in October of 2022.
Serve on the Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children	Serve as an ex officio member of the JCLCC also known as the Children's Committee	children, families and concerned citizens	Law enforcement, foster parents, kinship providers, juvenile correctional officers, Judicial Branch, General Assembly, Governor, DMH, DSS, DJJ, DDSN, DHHS, providers, schools, Attorney General's Office/Human Trafficking Task Force	State Child Advocate and Deputy Child Advocate	State Child Advocate and Deputy Child Advocate	The JCLCC "is a consortium of appointed citizens, legislators, and agency directors charged with the critical responsibility of identifying and studying key issues facing South Carolina's children, then promoting sound strategies for the development of children's policy. The Committee makes recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly to use in consideration of policy, funding, and legislation to benefit our children's future."	Add	State Child Advocate was added as an ex officio member of the Committee effective May 8, 2023 when the Governor signed S.299 into law. S.C. Code of Laws Ann. 63-1-50(A)

Description of Service	Description of Direct Customer	Customer Name	Others Impacted by Service	Division or major organizational unit providing the service.	Description of division or major organizational unit providing the service.	Primary negative impact if service not provided.	Changes made to services during FY2024	Summary of changes to services
Provide Guardians ad Litem for children who turn 18 years of age and remain in foster care pursuant to "extension of foster care" statute	Provide Guardians ad Litem for children who turn 18 years of age and remain in foster care pursuant to "extension of foster care" statute	children in foster care from ages 18 to 21	foster parents, family members, fictive kin, DSS, DDSN, DMH, DHHS	Guardian ad Litem Program	The Guardian ad Litem Program provides best-interest advocates for children and youth in foster care.	The young adult will not have someone to advocate for their best interests as required by law and best practice.	Add	This is a new law. S.C. Code of Laws Ann. 63-7-2750©

2024

Partnerships Data

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:
L080 - Department of Child Advocacy

Type of Partner Entity	Name of Partner Entity	Description of Partnership	Change to the partnership during the past fiscal year
State Government	Department of Health and Human Services	Continuum of Care (Coordination for Medicaid reimbursement)	No Change
State Government	Department of Mental Health (DMH)	Continuum of Care (funding for services/operations and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association grant)	No Change
Non-Governmental Organization	National CASA	Guardian ad litem Program	No Change
Individual	Professional and Non-Professional Photographers	Foster Care Review Board/Heart Gallery	No Change
State Government	S.C. Attorney General's Office	Guardian ad litem Program (VOCA grant)	No Change
State Government	S.C. Dept. of Social Services	Foster Care Review Board (Title IVe and IVb funding regarding review of foster care placements)	No Change
State Government	S.C. Dept. of Social Services	Foster Care Review Board/Heart Gallery (contract for enhanced for adoption recruitment)	No Change
State Government	S.C. Dept. of Social Services	Guardian ad litem Program (Title IVe funding for training of volunteer guardians ad litem)	No Change
Non-Governmental Organization	S.C. Heart Gallery Foundation	Foster Care Review Board/Heart Gallery	No Change
Non-Governmental Organization	S.C. Network of Children's Advocacy Centers	SC Child Abuse Response Protocol implementation and maintenance	No Change
State Government	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA)	Continuum of Care (SAMHSA grant with DMH)	No Change
Higher Education Institute	University of Maryland	Continuum of Care	No Change

Type of Partner Entity	Name of Partner Entity	Description of Partnership	Change to the partnership during the past fiscal year
Non-Governmental Organization	Various Child Welfare Organizations	Foster Care Review Board	No Change
Non-Governmental Organization	Various Child Welfare Organizations-	Guardian ad litem Program	No Change
Private Business Organization	Various Continuum of Care Qualified Providers	Continuum of Care	No Change
Federal Government	Various Federal Agencies	Continuum of Care	No Change
Local Government	Various Local Agencies	Foster Care Review Board	No Change
Local Government	Various Local Agencies	Guardian ad litem Program	No Change
Private Business Organization	Various Medicaid Contracted Care Organizations	Continuum of Care	No Change
Non-Governmental Organization	Various South Carolina and National Adoption Recruitment Organizations	Foster Care Review Board/Heart Gallery	No Change
State Government	Various State Agencies	Continuum of Care	No Change
State Government	Various State Agencies	Foster Care Review Board	No Change
State Government	Various State Agencies	Guardian ad litem Program	No Change
Higher Education Institute	Various State Agencies	Guardian ad litem Program (Training providers)	No Change
State Government	Various State Agencies, Legislators, and Gubernatorial Appointees from the Community	Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children regarding legislation affecting children	No Change

Type of Partner Entity	Name of Partner Entity	Description of Partnership	Change to the partnership during the past fiscal year
State Government	Various State Agencies, Legislators, and Gubernatorial Appointees from the Community	State Child Fatality Advisory Committee	No Change
Non-Government Organization	Various State Agencies, Legislators, and Gubernatorial Appointees from the Community	State Child Fatality Advisory Committee	No Change
Local Government	Various State Agencies, Legislators, and Gubernatorial Appointees from the Community	State Child Fatality Advisory Committee	No Change

Reports Data

as submitted for the Accountability Report by:
L080 - Department of Child Advocacy

Report Name	Law Number (if applicable)	Summary of information requested in the report	Date of most recent submission DURING the past fiscal year	Reporting Frequency	Type of entity/entities	Method to access the report	Direct access hyperlink or agency contact (if not provided to LSA for posting online)	Changes to this report during the past fiscal year	Explanation why a report wasn't submitted
Agency Annual Accountability Report	§1-1-810	The report "must contain the agency's or department's mission, objectives to accomplish the mission, and performance measures that show the degree to which objectives are being met." Agencies must "identify key program area descriptions and expenditures and link these to key financial and performance results measures."	September 2023	Annually	Governor or Lt. Governor AND Legislative entity or entities	Provided to LSA for posting online	www.admin.sc.gov	No Change	
Annual Report of Continuum of Care	§63-11-1360	The Continuum of Care Division shall submit an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly on its activities and recommendations for changes and improvements in the delivery of services by public agencies serving children.	June 2024	Annually	Governor or Lt. Governor AND South Carolina state agency or agencies	Available on agency's website	https://childadvocate.sc.gov/sites/cdca/files/Documents/Dept_Childrens_Advocacy_22-23_Annual_Report.pdf	No Change	Individual Continuum of Care annual reports have not been submitted for at least a decade, but information for COC (activities, recommendations, improvement) was included in the Agency's Annual Report.
Annual Report of State Child Advocate	§63-11-2270(7)	The State Child Advocate is to annually submit a report to the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children detailing the State Child Advocate's activities.	June 2024	Annually	Governor or Lt. Governor AND Legislative entity or entities AND South Carolina state agency or agencies	Available on agency's website	https://childadvocate.sc.gov/sites/cdca/files/Documents/Dept_Childrens_Advocacy_22-23_Annual_Report.pdf	No Change	
Budget	§11-11-30	Budget and proviso requests	September 2023	Annually	South Carolina state agency or agencies	Available on another website	admin.sc.gov	No Change	
Continuum of Care Annual Cost Report		Reports concerning Targeted Case Management	December 2023	Annually	South Carolina state agency or agencies	Electronic copy available upon request	n/a	No Change	
Continuum of Care Annual Cost Report		Reports concerning Medicaid Waiver	December 2023	Annually	South Carolina state agency or agencies	Electronic copy available upon request	n/a	No Change	
Foster Care Review Board quarterly reports to DSS		Quarterly reports are prepared by the Foster Care Review Division regarding Foster Care Review Board reviews. These reports are sent to DSS quarterly.	June 2024	Quarterly	South Carolina state agency or agencies	Hard copy available upon request.	n/a	No Change	

Report Name	Law Number (if applicable)	Summary of information requested in the report	Date of most recent submission DURING the past fiscal year	Reporting Frequency	Type of entity/entities	Method to access the report	Direct access hyperlink or agency contact (if not provided to LSA for posting online)	Changes to this report during the past fiscal year	Explanation why a report wasn't submitted
Foster Care Review Board Annual Report	§63-11-700(D)	The FCRB prepares an annual report with data regarding case reviews of children in foster care. Reports for the previous year are prepared and published in September or October after gathering the fiscal year's data.		Annually	Governor or Lt. Governor AND South Carolina state agency or agencies	Available on agency's website	fcrb.sc.gov	No Change	The FY23 Annual Report was published to the agency's website in early July, 2024. Efforts to prepare and publish the Annual Report were underway during FY24, but, due to staff and data-capturing transitions, the report was not published on or before June 30, 2024.
Minority Business Enterprise Utilization Plan	§11-35-5240	Utilization plan for the procurement of materials, supplies, and services from small and minority businesses pursuant to S.C. Code Section 11-35-5240	July 2023	Annually	Governor or Lt. Governor AND Legislative entity or entities	Electronic copy available upon request	Amanda Whittle amanda.whittle@childadvocate.sc.gov	No Change	
Travel Summary	Proviso 117.26	Travel summary for Travel Report pursuant to Proviso 117.26	September 2023	Annually	South Carolina state agency or agencies	Available on another website	www.cg.sc.gov/financial-reports/travel-reports	No Change	
Agency Head Performance Evaluation	§8-11-160	Evaluation of Performance of the Agency Director	July 2023	Annually	Governor or Lt. Governor AND Legislative entity or entities AND South Carolina state agency or agencies		State Fiscal Accountability Authority, Agency Head Salary Commission	No Change	n/a
Agency Head Planning Stage	§8-11-160	Performance Expectations of the Agency Director	August 2023	Annually	Governor or Lt. Governor AND Legislative entity or entities AND South Carolina state agency or agencies		State Fiscal Accountability Authority, Agency Head Salary Commission	No Change	n/a
IT Data Collection Survey	Proviso 117.114 IT Data Collection	IT Employee Salary and Position Information	July 2023	Annually	South Carolina state agency or agencies	Available on another website	admin.sc.gov	No Change	
Federal Project Review Report	South Carolina Federal and Other Funds Oversight Act (Title 2, Chapter 65 of the SC Code of Laws, 1976 as amended)	Financial information on federal projects/federal grants	March 2024	Annually	South Carolina state agency or agencies	Available on another website	admin.sc.gov	No Change	
Annual Comprehensive Financial Reporting (ACFR, formerly CAFR) Reports	S.C. Code of Laws Ann. § 11-3-175	Closing packages for GASB, leases, and other reporting	June 2024	Other	South Carolina state agency or agencies	Available on another website	admin.sc.gov	No Change	

Report Name	Law Number (if applicable)	Summary of information requested in the report	Date of most recent submission DURING the past fiscal year	Reporting Frequency	Type of entity/entities	Method to access the report	Direct access hyperlink or agency contact (if not provided to LSA for posting online)	Changes to this report during the past fiscal year	Explanation why a report wasn't submitted
Telecommute Business Case Report			September 2023					Add	
Year-End Inventory			May 2024					Add	
Earmarked Appropriations Reporting	Proviso 117.21 of the FY 2023-24 Appropriations Act and Governor McMaster's Executive Order 2022-19	Quarterly reports on the website and an annual report to report whether the organizations receiving earmarked state appropriations are in compliance with submitting their Expenditure Reports	June 2024	Quarterly	Governor or Lt. Governor AND Legislative entity or entities AND South Carolina state agency or agencies	Available on agency's website	https://childadvocate.sc.gov/resources	Add	

AGENCY NAME:	Department of Children's Advocacy		
AGENCY CODE:	L080	SECTION:	41

**2024
Accountability Report**

SUBMISSION FORM

I have reviewed and approved the data submitted by the agency in the following templates:

- Data Template
 - Reorganization and Compliance
 - FY2024 Strategic Plan Results
 - FY2025 Strategic Plan Development
 - Legal
 - Services
 - Partnerships
 - Report or Review
 - Budget
- Discussion Template
- Organizational Template

I have reviewed and approved the financial report summarizing the agency’s budget and actual expenditures, as entered by the agency into the South Carolina Enterprise Information System.

The information submitted is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

AGENCY DIRECTOR <i>(SIGN AND DATE):</i> (TYPE/PRINT NAME):	SIGNATURE ON FILE	Signature Received: 09/08/2024
	Amanda F. Whittle	

BOARD/CMSN CHAIR <i>(SIGN AND DATE):</i> (TYPE/PRINT NAME):	N/A	