

Agency Name:	Department of Children's Advocacy		
Agency Code:	L080	Section:	41



## Fiscal Year FY 2024-2025

## Agency Budget Plan

### FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

<b>OPERATING REQUESTS</b>  <i>(FORM B1)</i>	<b>For FY 2024-2025, my agency is (mark "X"):</b>	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting General Fund Appropriations.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Federal/Other Authorization.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

<b>NON-RECURRING REQUESTS</b>  <i>(FORM B2)</i>	<b>For FY 2024-2025, my agency is (mark "X"):</b>	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Non-Recurring Appropriations.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Non-Recurring Federal/Other Authorization.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.


<b>CAPITAL REQUESTS</b>  <i>(FORM C)</i>	<b>For FY 2024-2025, my agency is (mark "X"):</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting funding for Capital Projects.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

<b>PROVISOS</b>  <i>(FORM D)</i>	<b>For FY 2024-2025, my agency is (mark "X"):</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting a new proviso and/or substantive changes to existing provisos.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Only requesting technical proviso changes (such as date references).
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any proviso changes.

Please identify your agency's preferred contacts for this year's budget process.

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
<b>PRIMARY CONTACT:</b>	Amanda F. Whittle	(803) 734-3176	amanda.whittle@childadvocate.sc.gov
<b>SECONDARY CONTACT:</b>	Thomas Kaminer	(803) 737-0526	thomas.kaminer@admin.sc.gov

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2024-2025 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

<b>SIGN/DATE:</b>  <b>TYPE/PRINT NAME:</b>	<u>Agency Director</u>	<u>Board or Commission Chair</u>
	 9/20/2023	
	Amanda F. Whittle	

*This form must be signed by the agency head – not a delegate.*

Agency Name:	Department of Children's Advocacy
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BUDGET REQUESTS			FUNDING					FTES				
Priority	Request Type	Request Title	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total
1	B1 - Recurring	Advocating for System Improvement	1,013,517	0	0	0	1,013,517	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
2	B1 - Recurring	Advocating for the Best Interests of Abused and Neglected Children	1,843,300	0	0	0	1,843,300	22.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	22.00
3	B1 - Recurring	S.C. Continuum of Care Transfer Alignment Request (Related to Proviso 35.1)	400,000	0	0	0	400,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	B1 - Recurring	Senior Accountant/Fiscal Analyst for the Agency	98,691	0	0	0	98,691	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
5	B1 - Recurring	Microsoft Office 365/IT Licensing	85,000	0	0	0	85,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6	B2 - Non-Recurring	Workstations and equipment for New FTEs (related to recurring priorities #1, #2, and #4)	82,400	0	0	0	82,400	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
7	B1 - Recurring	Realignment of Earmarked FTE Authorization	0	0	0	0	0	16.79	0.00	-16.79	0.00	0.00
TOTALS			3,522,908	0	0	0	3,522,908	49.79	0.00	-16.79	0.00	33.00

Agency Name:	Department of Children's Advocacy		
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## **FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST**

<b>AGENCY PRIORITY</b>	<b>1</b>
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*Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.*

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Advocating for System Improvement</b>
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*Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.*

<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>General: \$1,013,517</b> <b>Federal: \$0</b> <b>Other: \$0</b> <b>Total: \$1,013,517</b>
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*What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2024-2025? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.*

<b>NEW POSITIONS</b>	<b>10.00</b>
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*Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.*

<b>FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST</b>	<b>Mark "X" for all that apply:</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority # 6	

<b>STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens

<b>ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS</b>	<p>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</p> <p>2.1.1. - Review and update the agency's online resource directory of state services and resources for children</p> <p>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</p> <p>2.2.5. - Initial response to complaints occurs within one business day of the Agency's receipt of telephone, website-submitted, or emailed complaints for FY23.</p> <p>3.1.1. - Review and improve the agency's tracking system for reviewing and evaluating services for children.</p> <p>3.1.2. - Review and report on services that state agencies provide to children to the General Assembly and Governor</p> <p>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</p>
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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.

The advancement of these strategies is dependent upon a well-trained, appropriately resourced workforce within the Investigations Unit and Critical Investigations Unit. These ten (10) FTES and accompanying resources will allow staff to have responsible workloads to not only respond to complaints and notifications but also to capture, track, and analyze quantitative and qualitative data that will inform system improvement recommendations and initiatives. Each strategy has measurable goals in the agency's most recent Annual Accountability Report.

*What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?*

## RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

These funds would be used for salaries within the System Improvement Division and for equipment and resources to support new staff. Salary and fringe are estimated at \$937,436.60, and operational costs are estimated at \$76,080.

### **Salary costs were estimated as follows:**

AH35 Program Coordinator I

(Midpoint: \$53,957 plus fringe .45 \$24,280.65 = \$78,237.65 x 3 FTEs = \$234,712.95)

AH40 Program Coordinator II

(Midpoint: \$64,885 plus fringe .45 \$29,198.25 = \$94,083.25 X 6 = \$564,499.50)

AH50 Program Manager II

(Midpoint: \$95,327 plus fringe .45 \$42,897.15 = \$138,224.15)

### **Operational costs were estimated as follows:**

*Rent: \$30,080*

Based on rent at the Edgar Brown building (\$147,390.85 /49 offices = \$3008/year per office

*Cell phone: \$6,000*

Estimated at \$50/month per employee or \$600/year

*Travel and training: \$40,000*

Estimated at \$4000/year for 10 FTEs

Recurring operational costs: \$76,080

Recurring salary and fringe: \$937,436.60

**Total recurring costs: \$1,013,516.60**

*What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?*

### **Complaint submissions to the Investigations Unit increased by 38.9% during FY23, and the unit conducted 606 investigations in FY22.**

What? The Investigations Unit receives complaints from parents, foster parents, other agencies, and providers regarding services provided to children by child-serving agencies. This Unit provides an independent resource for the public. With reasonable workloads, the Investigators are able to thoroughly review and/or investigate complaints and work on solutions to the complex matters that are presented.

How? Three (3) new Program Coordinator I positions (AH35) for the Investigations Unit would add two investigators and one intake specialist to the unit. During FY23, the unit had two full-time investigators, an intake specialist, and a unit director. The staff to complaint and investigations ratio required the Investigations Unit

## JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

investigators, director, and Deputy Child Advocate to carry significant caseloads, and the State Child Advocate assigned complaints to herself for monitoring and investigations. The additional staff supports a more sustainable structure for the Investigations Unit. The goal is for all cases to be assigned to Investigators and to reduce Investigator caseloads to between 25 and 30 cases per Investigator. The goal is also to allow the Director and Deputy to provide coaching, training, and support for the Investigations Team.

(Midpoint: \$53,957 plus fringe .45 \$24,280.65 = \$78,237.65 x 3 = \$234,712.95)

### **Critical incident notifications increased by 250% in FY23 after an increase of 542% in FY22.**

What? The Critical Investigations Unit receives notifications of fatalities and near fatalities from nine (9) child-serving agencies. During FY23, the existing staff struggled to keep pace with the rising number of notifications which included making site visits, meeting with youth at DJJ, PRTFs, and group homes, and communicating with agency leadership. This is an impactful resource for South Carolina, and this request supports having a staff that is capable of meeting the increased notifications.

How? Six (6) Program Coordinator IIs (AH40) would serve as Critical Investigations Unit investigators to respond to critical incident notifications. The Critical Investigations Unit received a total of 1463 critical incidents in FY23 and had one full-time investigator with a significant portion of investigations assigned to the Deputy Child Advocate. This unit received 32 notifications in FY20, 77 in FY21, 417 in FY22 and 1141 in FY23. It is anticipated that notifications will continue to increase in FY24 and FY25. During FY23, positions from other divisions were re-classified to hire additional staff for this unit, but new FTEs are necessary to provide quality review and response to the critical incident notifications the agency receives from nine other child-serving agencies.

(Midpoint: \$64,885 plus fringe .45 \$29,198.25 = \$94,083.25 X 6 = \$564,499.50)

### **It is essential to create capacity to fulfill the agency's statutory duties regarding receipt and response of complaints and critical incident notifications from nine child-serving agencies.**

What? The Department of Children's Advocacy is comprised of three divisions which have existed since the 1980s, and, by statute, each division has a division director. The enabling legislation for the Department of Children's Advocacy required the receipt, review, monitoring and/or investigation of complaints regarding nine child-serving agencies and critical incident notifications regarding nine child-serving agencies. Since 2019, the agency has built capacity to fulfill these duties - from the creation of a toll-free number and the agency's initial investigators to this year's budget request which seeks to fully staff a System Improvement Division, similar to the other divisions within the agency.

How? Along with the aforementioned requests, one Program Manager II position (AH50) would support a System Improvement Director to supervise the Critical Investigations Unit and Investigations Unit. This position aligns with the existing division structure within the agency for the Continuum of Care, Foster Care Review Division, and Guardian ad Litem Program.

(Midpoint: \$95,327 plus fringe .45 \$42,897.15 = \$138,224.15)

**There is no additional capacity within the agency to meet the needs of the Investigations Unit and Critical Investigations Unit. The Investigations Unit and Critical Investigations Unit did not have any vacancies as of June 30, 2023.** The agency's overall vacancy rate is 19.91%. Positions within the agency have been reclassified to create capacity for these units, and the new FTE positions are essential for creating capacity and sustainability, for recruiting and retaining staff with reasonable workloads, and for ensuring quality work product to improve outcomes for children and families in South Carolina.

*Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.*

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## **FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST**

<b>AGENCY PRIORITY</b>	2
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*Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.*

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Advocating for the Best Interests of Abused and Neglected Children</b>
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*Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.*

<b>AMOUNT</b>	<p><b>General: \$1,843,300</b></p> <p><b>Federal: \$0</b></p> <p><b>Other: \$0</b></p> <p><b>Total: \$1,843,300</b></p>
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*What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2024-2025? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.*

<b>NEW POSITIONS</b>	22.00
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*Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.*

<b>FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST</b>	<b>Mark "X" for all that apply:</b>	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority # 6

<b>STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens

<b>ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS</b>	<p>1.1.1 - Increase the number of active volunteers</p> <p>1.1.3. - Review (and revise/implement as appropriate) onboarding and ongoing training to improve staff retention</p> <p>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</p> <p>1.3.1. - Survey volunteer Guardians ad Litem regarding their satisfaction with their relationship with the Guardian ad Litem Program</p> <p>1.3.3. - Increase the completion rate of potential volunteers from the 30-hour Pre-Service Training</p> <p>3.1.5 - Complete annual audits for local county offices to ensure quality standards are met</p> <p>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.</p>
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The advancement of these strategies is dependent upon a well-trained, appropriately resourced workforce within the Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program and Heart Gallery. These twenty-two (22) FTES and accompanying resources will allow staff to have responsible workloads to advocate for abused and neglected children who have pending legal actions with the Department of Social Services in Family Courts throughout the state. Each strategy has measurable goals in the agency's most recent Annual Accountability Report.

*What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?*

These funds would be used for salaries and resources primarily for the Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program but also one position for the Heart Gallery (which is within the Foster Care Review Division) and for equipment and resources to support new staff. Salary and fringe are estimated at \$1,648,751.50, and operational costs are estimated at \$ 210,948.

**Salary costs were estimated as follows:**

AH30 Program Assistants

(Midpoint \$44,977 plus fringe .45 \$20,239.65 = \$65,216.65 X 8 = \$521,733.20)

AH35 Program Coordinator Is

(Midpoint: \$53,957 plus fringe .45 \$24,280.65=\$78,237.65 X 12 =\$938,851.80)

AH40 Program Coordinator IIs

(Midpoint: \$64,885 plus fringe .45 \$29,198.25= \$94,083.25 X 2 =\$188,166.50)

**Operational costs for new FTES were estimated as follows:**

*Rent for new FTES: \$63,168*

Based on rent for the Edgar Brown building (\$147,390.85 / 49 offices = \$3008/year per office x 21

*Cell phones for new FTES: \$12,600*

Estimated at \$50/month per employee or \$600/year

*Travel and training for new FTES: \$21,000*

Estimated at \$1000/year

Recurring salary and fringe for new FTES: \$1,648,751.50

Recurring operational costs for new FTES: \$96,768.00

**Increased operational Costs for Existing Staff/Program are as follows:**

*Lease Increases for County Office Space: \$57,780*

*Attorney's Fees for Additional Legal Support: \$40,000*

**Total recurring costs: \$1,843,299.50 (\$1,745,519.50 + \$97,780)**

*What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?*

**RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS**

The Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program's model is to have volunteers to serve as best-interest advocates for abused and neglected children. At the end of FY2023, 52% of children had a volunteer appointed for them. At the end of FY2022, 56% of children had a volunteer Guardian ad Litem appointed for them.

What? Guardian ad Litem Program staff recruit and train volunteers. In an effort to recruit volunteers, the Guardian ad Litem Program established a goal of sharing 100 volunteer highlights to raise awareness about the impact of Guardians ad Litem and to recruit volunteers. The Program surpassed the goal by 600% with 647 in FY23. Nevertheless, the number of children served by volunteers decreased by 4% from FY22 to FY23. In assessing the strategy, the Program identified a barrier with volunteer recruitment at the pre-service training point, and 1.3.2. goal was replaced by a new FY24 goal (1.3.3.) related to recruitment. T

How? Among other job duties, seven (7) Guardian ad Litem Program Assistants (AH30) would work directly with identified counties to assist with ensuring continuing education trainings for volunteers, facilitating volunteer appreciation/recruitment events, and performing direct child advocacy as court-appointed Guardians ad Litem when appropriate staff or volunteers are not available. The Program Assistants would be assigned and responsible for casework, court preparation and court attendance for up to five (5) cases.

**In FY20, the Heart Gallery's contract with the Department of Social Services was significantly reduced, and the Heart Gallery's ability to host photo shoots was further inhibited by the Covid-19 pandemic in FY20 and FY21. Additional support for the Heart Gallery will allow the Heart Gallery to create and support additional beautiful exhibits like the one which launched in September of 2023 at the Columbiana Mall.**

What? The Heart Gallery currently has one (1) FTE who serves as the Program Coordinator to raise awareness and recruit adoptive resources for children in foster care who are awaiting their forever home.

How? One (1) Heart Gallery Program Assistant (within the Foster Care Review Division) would work with the Heart Gallery Coordinator to assist with developing and monitoring photo exhibits which are created to promote awareness and connections for children who are in foster care and are legally free for adoption.

(Midpoint \$44,977 plus fringe .45 \$20,239.65 = \$65,216.65 X 8 = \$521,733.20)

**In FY22, the Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program served 14,425 children with 8,468 served per month. Staff were court-appointed to provide best-interest advocacy for all children who did not have a volunteer appointed which was 48% in FY23 and 44% in FY22.**

How? Twelve (12) new Program Coordinator I (AH35) positions for the Guardian ad Litem Program would provide staff in identified counties to ensure children have quality best-interest representation, and timely reports are submitted for the Court's consideration in making decisions regarding children's placement and services. These FTEs would provide approximately 12,000 hours of direct child advocacy services for children in abuse and neglect cases when a volunteer Guardian ad Litem is not available.

(Midpoint: \$53,957 plus fringe .45 \$24,280.65=\$78,237.65 X 12 =\$938,851.80)

How? Among other job duties, two (2) Program Coordinator IIs (AH40) would serve as Regional Quality Assurance Coordinators who would work with the Statewide QA Coordinator to develop and implement a plan for process improvements based on quality results; oversee regional continuous improvement projects and data integrity for the program; conduct regional auditing of the case management system/statistical data; and review case management system reports and statistical data for accuracy for monthly reporting to senior management.

(Midpoint: \$64,885 plus fringe .45 \$29,198.25= \$94,083.25 X 2 =\$188,166.50)

**The Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program has experienced increased costs related to office space, moving expenses, and legal representation.**

*Lease Increases for County Office Space: \$57,780*

Leases have increased in several locations and some offices have been relocated.

There will be a **\$57,780** annual increase in leases for the Guardian ad Litem Program. Net changes will occur as follows:

Horry +\$275

Anderson +2,072

Sumter +620

Berkley +2,000 (current location is free)

Aiken +1,275

Kershaw +1,075

Spartanburg -2,502 (rent will be free at new location)

*Attorney's Fees for Additional Legal Support: \$40,000*

## JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST



The Guardian ad Litem Program contracts with attorneys throughout the state to represent Guardians ad Litem in Family Court. There are frequently times when attorneys are unavailable, and the Program needs additional legal services to support the program across the state. Specifically, the Program needs **\$40,000** in state allocations to support additional legal services across the state.

**There is no additional capacity within the agency to meet the needs of the Guardian ad Litem Program.** The agency's overall vacancy rate is 19.91%. The vacancy rates for Guardian ad Litem was 11% at the end of FY23. At the beginning of FY24, approximately twenty (20) time-limited positions were reclassified from Continuum of Care to the Guardian ad Litem Program in an effort to support the Guardian ad Litem Program. 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.

*Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.*

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## **FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST**

<b>AGENCY PRIORITY</b>	<b>3</b>
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*Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.*

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>S.C. Continuum of Care Transfer Alignment Request (Related to Proviso 35.1)</b>
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*Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.*

<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>General: \$400,000</b> <b>Federal: \$0</b> <b>Other: \$0</b> <b>Total: \$400,000</b>
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*What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2024-2025? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.*

<b>NEW POSITIONS</b>	<b>0.00</b>
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*Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.*

<b>FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST</b>	<b>Mark "X" for all that apply:</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #	

<b>STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens

<b>ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS</b>	<p>1.3.4. - Reduce the existing staff vacancies within Continuum of Care</p> <p>2.1.3. - Increase the number of 1915(c) Waiver Youth enrollment to 350 by June 2024</p> <p>2.2.3. - Ensure 87% of Continuum of Care parents interviewed will feel satisfied with the services they receive overall each fiscal year</p> <p>2.2.4. - Maintain or improve efficacy of Continuum of Care's services for children and youth as measured through dashboard data</p> <p>The request supports the FY24 Strategic Planning and Performance Measurements of the Department of Children's Advocacy (DCA)'s Annual Accountability Report. The S.C. Continuum of Care provides intensive care coordination for children and youth with serious emotional and behavioral challenges to help them remain in their homes, schools and communities. The use of these funds will be evaluated through measurable targets as outlined in the Annual Accountability Report, assessments to determine the efficacy of the Continuum of Care's services, and program review by the University of Maryland to ensure program integrity.</p>
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*What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?*

**RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS**

If Proviso 35.1 is modified to discontinue the Department of Mental Health (DMH)'s transfer of funds to Continuum of Care, then these funds should be allocated to S.C. Continuum of Care's existing budget which primarily consists of salaries, operational expenses, and goods and services. If Proviso 35.1 is not modified, then the Department of Children's Advocacy would rescind this request. The purpose of this request is to ensure the transfer of \$400,000 to Continuum of Care, either through the existing language of Proviso 35.1 or through a direct state allocation.

*What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?*

**JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST**

The S.C. Continuum of Care has been receiving \$400,000 per year from the Department of Mental Health (DMH) for approximately twenty years pursuant to Proviso 35.1. If DMH seeks modification of Proviso 35.1 to delete the portion of the proviso which requires DMH to forward \$400,000 to S.C. Continuum of Care, then this request is that the funding be directed by the General Assembly to Continuum of Care. The \$400,000 recurring funding is built into Department of Children's Advocacy/S.C. Continuum of Care's recurring budget, and a budget alignment is sought in the event of a modification of Proviso 35.1. When the Department of Children's Advocacy became effective on July 1, 2019, Continuum of Care's expenditures exceeded its appropriations and reimbursement by almost \$1 million annually.

Based on spending at that time and based on Continuum of Care's carryforward funds, it was anticipated that Continuum of Care would not be soluble by July of 2021.

Director Whittle worked with agency leadership and DHHS to obtain a 1915C Medicaid Waiver in July of 2020 which allowed Continuum of Care to move away from sole reliance on Targeted Case Management (TCM), its unit billing structure, to instead have a sustainable reimbursement rate for providing High Fidelity Wraparound services. The program's financial projections are based on a continuation of existing funding streams, including the \$400,000 transfer from the Department of Mental Health.

Ongoing budget projections include the \$400,000 DMH transfer. Department of Children's Advocacy requests the \$400,000 be allocated by the General Assembly directly to the S.C. Continuum of Care's budget if Proviso 35.1 is modified to no longer require DMH to transfer funds to S.C. Continuum of Care.

*Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.*

Agency Name:	Department of Children's Advocacy		
Agency Code:	L080	Section:	41

## **FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST**

<b>AGENCY PRIORITY</b>	<b>4</b>
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*Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.*

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Senior Accountant/Fiscal Analyst for the Agency</b>
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*Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.*

<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>General: \$98,691</b> <b>Federal: \$0</b> <b>Other: \$0</b> <b>Total: \$98,691</b>
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*What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2024-2025? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.*

<b>NEW POSITIONS</b>	<b>1.00</b>
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*Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.*

<b>FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST</b>	<b>Mark "X" for all that apply:</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority # 6	

<b>STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens	

<b>ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS</b>	<p>1.1.3. - Review (and revise/implement as appropriate) onboarding and ongoing training to improve staff retention</p> <p>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</p> <p>1.3.4. - Reduce the existing staff vacancies within Continuum of Care</p> <p>2.2.2. - Create and disseminate effective and engaging training material for all Department of Children's Advocacy programs</p> <p>3.1.1. - Review and improve the agency's tracking system for reviewing and evaluating services for children</p> <p>3.1.2. - Review and report on services that state agencies provide to children to the General Assembly and Governor</p> <p>The advancement of these strategies is dependent upon a Senior Accountant/Fiscal Analyst who has the knowledge, skills and abilities to serve as a liaison with Shared Services Budget and Finance and as the point of contact and designated lead for duties assigned to the agency regarding preparation, analysis, and interpretation of annual and interim financial reports. This employee would assist agency leadership in</p>
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income and expense monitoring, budget projections, fiscal decision-making, and budget preparation. Each strategy has measurable goals in the agency's most recent Annual Accountability Report.

*What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?*

## RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

These funds would be used for salaries within the System Improvement Division and for equipment and resources to support new staff. Salary and fringe are estimated at \$94,083.25, and operational costs are estimated at \$4,608.00 in addition to \$2,000.00 in non-recurring costs.

### **Salary costs were estimated as follows:**

AN07 Senior Accountant/Fiscal Analyst

(Midpoint: \$64,885.00 plus fringe .45 (\$29,298.25) = \$94,083.25)

### **Operational costs were estimated as follows:**

*Rent: \$3,008.00*

Based on rent for the Edgar Brown building (\$147,390.85 / 49 offices = \$3008/year per office

*Cell phone: \$600.00*

Estimated at \$50/month per employee or \$600/year

*Travel and training: \$1,000*

Estimated at \$1000/year

*Recurring salary and fringe: \$94,083.25*

*Recurring operational costs: \$4,608.00*

**Total recurring costs: \$98,691.25**

*What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?*

## JUSTIFICATION OF

Children's Advocacy does not have a budget liaison within the agency other than the Agency Director who is the State Child Advocate. A Senior Accountant/Fiscal Analyst, in concert with Shared Services, State Child Advocate, and agency leadership, would organize and supervise program compliance and financial audits for the diverse budgets within the agency.

What? The Department of Children's Advocacy is a Shared Services agency which benefits from sharing services with the Department of Administrations Budget office, among other services. This statutory arrangement undoubtedly benefits the Department of Children's Advocacy. Currently, the State Child Advocate, as the Director of the Agency, is the primary point of contact for the budgetary process and leads the budget analysis, preparation, submission, and presentation for the agency. The primary role of the State Child Advocate is to ensure children receive adequate services from state agencies and to create and promote a broad vision of reform. The budgetary process is essential to the agency, and a person with budgetary expertise should be part of the Children's Advocacy internal team to work alongside Shared Services and Agency leadership.

How? The employee (**AN07 Senior Accountant/Fiscal Analyst**) would be a liaison with Shared Services Budget and Finance and would serve as the point of contact and designated lead for duties assigned to the agency regarding preparation, analysis, and interpretation of annual and interim financial reports to assist agency leadership in decision-making. This position would support the agency's financial planning,

## REQUEST

monitoring, and compliance. The Senior Accountant/Fiscal Analyst would confer with executive about budgetary goals and objectives, prepare appropriate reports and projections, plan large, complex, and interrelated projects, and recommend policies and program objectives impacting agencywide management, organization, and processes. The employee would be responsible for reviewing, analyzing, and evaluating existing policies, programs, plans, systems, operations, procedures, and documents to develop improvements in efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity. The employee would assist in developing program performance standards in addition to collecting, assimilating, and ensuring the accuracy of financial data for internal and external reporting requirements. The Senior Accountant/Fiscal Analyst would reconcile situations when files are out of balance, research errors, and ensure corrective action is taken.

(Midpoint: \$64,885.00 plus fringe .45 (\$29,298.25) = \$94,083.25)

**This new FTE position is essential to create capacity for the agency to fulfill its statutory duties, and this request has been prepared and submitted with collaboration with the agency's Shared Services Budget Analyst.** The agency's overall vacancy rate is 19.91%. The vacancy rate for Guardian ad Litem was 11% at the end of FY23, and active efforts are being made to fill those vacancies. The Investigations Unit and Critical Investigations Unit did not have any vacancies as of June 30, 2023. Filling Continuum of Care vacancies is an accountability goal for FY24, and those positions are necessary for the division's mission.

*Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.*

Agency Name:	Department of Children's Advocacy		
Agency Code:	L080	Section:	41

## **FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST**

<b>AGENCY PRIORITY</b>	5
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*Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.*

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Microsoft Office 365/IT Licensing</b>
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*Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.*

<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>General: \$85,000</b> <b>Federal: \$0</b> <b>Other: \$0</b> <b>Total: \$85,000</b>
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*What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2024-2025? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.*

<b>NEW POSITIONS</b>	0.00
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*Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.*

<b>FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST</b>	<b>Mark "X" for all that apply:</b>	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #	

<b>STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens

<b>ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS</b>	<p>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</p> <p>2.1.1. - Review and update the agency's online resource directory of state services and resources for children</p> <p>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</p> <p>3.1.1. - Review and improve the agency's tracking system for reviewing and evaluating services for children.</p> <p>3.1.2. - Review and report on services that state agencies provide to children to the General Assembly and Governor</p> <p>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</p> <p>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</p>
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one virtual or in-person meeting occurring with each of the nine state agencies each fiscal year.

The advancement of these strategies is dependent upon the ability to communicate and collaborate effectively, both internally and externally. Many state agencies began using the Microsoft Teams virtual platform. Children’s Advocacy was not able to have Teams disseminated to staff in 2020 and subscribed to Webex. In 2022, the Department of Administration notified Children’s Advocacy (as a shared services agency) that Admin DTO would be providing Teams access to all Children’s Advocacy staff, and Children’s Advocacy would be responsible for the costs. Having Teams and the Microsoft Suite will benefit Children’s Advocacy, and Children’s Advocacy needs state allocations to pay for the services.

Having access to Teams, One Drive, and SharePoint are related to strategies with measurable goals in the agency’s most recent Annual Accountability Report.

*What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency’s accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?*

## RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

Staff with the Department of Children’s Advocacy will use Teams and the Microsoft Suite, Access to these tools will also benefit other agencies, because many agencies are already using this platform. It will improve the ability to coordinate and communicate. Children’s Advocacy also communicates with individuals and organizations which will benefit from having an assessable platform for virtual meetings.

*What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?*

## JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

The South Carolina Department of Administration (Admin) conducted an audit of its Division of Technology Operations (DTO)-provided Microsoft Office 365 licensing. While in the past Admin assumed Office 365 licensing costs for its customers, DTO has been working with agencies to pass on this fee as it engages with customers in other activities.

What? Agencies which had not been previously charged for Office 365 licensing costs became responsible for their Office 365 licensing costs effective July 1, 2023. These charges will be invoiced on a yearly basis each July.

How? Licensing costs are determined by multiplying the number of accounts by the current license cost as summarized below. The cost for the Department of Children’s Advocacy was estimated to be \$77,711.40 based on 195 users with licensing costs at \$398.52 each. The July 1, 2023 bill was actually \$84,669.36.

**It is anticipated that having additional employees will increase the number of Office 365 accounts. The budget request for Microsoft Office 365 licensing is \$85,000, because the July 1, 2023 bill was \$84,669.36. This billing change results in additional functionality such as Teams, One Drive and SharePoint licensing will be available for all staff. Our agency has not had Teams, One Drive or SharePoint.**

*Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.*



Agency Name:	Department of Children's Advocacy		
Agency Code:	L080	Section:	41

## **FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST**

<b>AGENCY PRIORITY</b>	7
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*Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.*

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Realignment of Earmarked FTE Authorization</b>
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*Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.*

<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>General: \$0</b> <b>Federal: \$0</b> <b>Other: \$0</b> <b>Total: \$0</b>
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*What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2024-2025? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.*

<b>NEW POSITIONS</b>	0.00
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*Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.*

<b>FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST</b>	<b>Mark "X" for all that apply:</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #	

<b>STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens	

<b>ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS</b>	N/A
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*What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?*

<b>RECIPIENTS OF</b>	This request is related to position reclassifications based on the agency's needs. Individuals making complaints through the agency's Investigations Unit and children receiving services from child-serving agencies benefited from the allocation of funds
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**FUNDS**

through re-classification of positions to create capacity to receive, refer, monitor, and/or investigate complaints.

*What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?*

**JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST**

This is not a request for fund transfer but a request for realignment of earmarked FTE authorization. In response to the agency's needs and based on the divisions' funding, positions were reclassified from Foster Care Review Division and Continuum of Care to positions for Guardian ad Litem Program and Investigations Unit. There needs to be a realignment of earmarked FTE authorizations to reflect these positions transfers. Specifically, Foster Care Review Divisions earmarked FTE authorization should be changed from 19.19 to 14.40, and Continuum of Care's earmarked FTE authorization should be changed from 42 to 30, for a net change of 16.79 as seen below.

	Current FTEs	Required FTEs	Reduction
FCRD	19.19	14.4	4.79
COC	42	30	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>61.19</b>	<b>44.4</b>	<b>16.79</b>

*Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.*

Agency Name:	Department of Children's Advocacy		
Agency Code:	L080	Section:	41

## **FORM B2 – NON-RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST**

<b>AGENCY PRIORITY</b>	6
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*Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.*

<b>TITLE</b>	Workstations and equipment for New FTEs (related to recurring priorities #1, #2, and #4)
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*Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.*

<b>AMOUNT</b>	\$82,400
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*What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2024-2025? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.*

<b>FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST</b>	<b>Mark "X" for all that apply:</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Non-Recurring Appropriations
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Request for Federal/Other Authorization to spend existing funding	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Recurring request – If so, Priority # Advocating for System Improvement	

<b>STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens	

	<p>1.1.3. - Review (and revise/implement as appropriate) onboarding and ongoing training to improve staff retention</p> <p>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</p> <p>1.3.4. - Reduce the existing staff vacancies within Continuum of Care</p> <p>2.2.2. - Create and disseminate effective and engaging training material for all Department of Children's Advocacy programs</p> <p>3.1.1. - Review and improve the agency's tracking system for reviewing and evaluating services for children</p> <p>3.1.2. - Review and report on services that state agencies provide to children to the General Assembly and Governor</p> <p>The advancement of these strategies is dependent upon a Senior Accountant/Fiscal Analyst who has the knowledge, skills and abilities to serve as a liaison with Shared Services Budget and Finance and as the point of contact and designated lead for duties assigned to the agency regarding preparation, analysis, and interpretation of annual and interim financial reports. This employee would assist agency leadership in income and expense monitoring, budget projections, fiscal decision-making, and budget preparation. Each strategy has measurable goals in the agency's most recent Annual Accountability Report.</p> <p>1.1.1. - Increase the number of active volunteers</p> <p>1.1.3. - Review (and revise/implement as appropriate) onboarding and ongoing training to improve staff retention</p>
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## ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS

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

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

1.3.3. - Increase the completion rate of potential volunteers from the 30-hour Pre-Service Training

3.1.5 - Complete annual audits for local county offices to ensure quality standards are met

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.

The advancement of these strategies is dependent upon a well-trained, appropriately resourced workforce within the Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program and Heart Gallery. These twenty-two (22) FTES and accompanying resources will allow staff to have responsible workloads to advocate for abused and neglected children who have pending legal actions with the Department of Social Services in Family Courts throughout the state. Each strategy has measurable goals in the agency's most recent Annual Accountability Report.

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

2.1.1. - Review and update the agency's online resource directory of state services and resources for children

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

2.2.5. - Initial response to complaints occurs within one business day of the Agency's receipt of telephone, website-submitted, or emailed complaints for FY23.

3.1.1. - Review and improve the agency's tracking system for reviewing and evaluating services for children.

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

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

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.

The advancement of these strategies is dependent upon a well-trained, appropriately resourced workforce within the Investigations Unit and Critical Investigations Unit. These ten (10) FTES and accompanying resources will allow staff to have responsible workloads to not only respond to complaints and notifications but also to capture, track, and analyze quantitative and qualitative data that will inform system improvement recommendations and initiatives. Each strategy has measurable goals in the agency's most recent Annual Accountability Report.

*What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?*

## RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

This funding would be used to purchase equipment, including workstations, for 33 new FTEs to be divided among Guardian ad Litem Program (21 FTEs), Investigations Unit (3 FTEs), Critical Investigations Unit (6 FTEs), System Improvement Division (1 FTE), Heart Gallery (1 FTE), and Administration (1 FTE).

The funding is also to support existing county staff regarding new office space and accompanying changes in lease prices, moving costs and IT cabling and expenses.

*What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?*

## JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

**Moving and IT Set Up for New Office Space: \$16,400 Non-Recurring as outlined in Priority #2:** Based on four additional offices to be relocated with additional costs of \$6,000 for moving expenses and \$10,400 for IT expenses for a total of **\$16,400** (Horry, Berkeley, Florence and Hampton/Allendale).

**Equipment for New Employees: \$66,000 Non-Recurring as outlined in Priorities #1, #2, and #4: Based on \$2000 per employee for laptops, monitors, desks, and other equipment for 33 new FTEs:**

**AH30 Program Assistants (Total of 8):** Among other job duties, seven (7) Guardian ad Litem Program Assistants would work directly with identified counties to assist with ensuring continuing education trainings for volunteers, facilitating volunteer appreciation/recruitment events, and performing direct child advocacy as court-appointed Guardians ad Litem when appropriate staff or volunteers are not available. The Program Assistants would be assigned and responsible for casework, court preparation and court attendance for up to five (5) cases. One (1) Heart Gallery Program Assistant would work with the Heart Gallery Coordinator to assist with developing and monitoring photo exhibits which are created to promote awareness and connections for children who are in foster care and are legally free for adoption.

**AH35 Program Coordinator I (Total of 15):** Three new Program Coordinator I positions for the Investigations Unit would add two investigators and one intake specialist to the unit. Complaint submissions to the Investigations Unit increased by 38.9% during FY23, and the unit conducted 606 investigations in FY22. During FY23, the unit had two full-time investigators, an intake specialist, and a unit director. The staff to complaint and investigations ratio required the Deputy Child Advocate to carry a significant caseload, and the State Child Advocate and Investigations Unit Director also investigated and monitored complaints. The additional staff supports a more sustainable structure for the Investigations Unit. Twelve (12) new Program Coordinator I positions for the Guardian ad Litem Program would provide staff in identified counties to ensure children are seen on a consistent basis, and timely reports are submitted for the Court's consideration in making decisions regarding children's placement and services. These FTEs would provide approximately 12,000 hours of direct child advocacy services for children in abuse and neglect cases when a volunteer Guardian ad Litem is not available. In FY22, the program served 14,425 children with 8,468 served per month. At the end of fiscal year 2022, 56% of children had a volunteer Guardian ad Litem appointed for them, and 52% of children had a volunteer appointed for them at the end of FY23. Staff provided this best-interest advocacy for all children who did not have a volunteer appointed which was 48% in FY23 and 44% in FY22.

**AH40 Program Coordinator II (Total of 8):** Six (6) PCIIs would serve as Critical Investigations Unit investigators to respond to critical incident notifications. Critical incident notifications increased by 250% in FY23 after an increase of 542% in FY22. The Critical Investigations Unit received a total of 1463 critical incidents in FY23 and currently has only one full-time investigator with a significant portion of investigations assigned to the Deputy Child Advocate. This unit received 32 notifications in FY20, 77 in FY21, 417 in FY22 and 1141 in FY23. It is anticipated that notifications will continue to increase in FY24 and FY25. During FY23, positions from other divisions were re-classified to hire additional staff for this unit, but new FTEs are necessary to provide quality review and response to the critical incident notifications the agency receives from nine other child-serving agencies. Among other job duties, two (2) Program Coordinator IIs would serve as Regional Quality Assurance Coordinators who would work with the Statewide QA Coordinator to develop and implement a plan for process improvements based on quality results; oversee regional continuous improvement projects and data integrity for the program; conduct regional auditing of the case management system/statistical data; and review case management system reports and statistical data for accuracy for monthly reporting to senior management.

**AH50 Program Manager II (Total of 1):** This position would support the formal creation of a new division within the agency. This position would serve as the Systems Improvement Division Director and would oversee the Critical Investigations Unit and Investigations Unit. The structure for the creation of this division and this position aligns with the division structure with the existing divisions and their supervision. This is an essential piece of creating capacity to fulfill the statutory duties regarding receipt and response of complaints and critical incident notifications concerning nine child-serving agencies.

**AN07 Senior Accountant/Fiscal Analyst (Total of 1):** This position would support the agency's financial planning and compliance, which are duties currently performed by the Agency Director in coordination with Shared Services Budget and Finance. The advancement of these strategies is dependent upon a Senior Accountant/Fiscal Analyst who has the knowledge, skills and abilities to serve as a liaison with Shared Services Budget and Finance and as the point of contact and designated lead for duties assigned to the agency regarding preparation, analysis, and interpretation of annual and interim financial reports. This employee would assist agency leadership in income and expense monitoring, budget projections, fiscal decision-making, and budget preparation. Each strategy has measurable goals in the agency's most recent Annual Accountability Report

*Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been*

*requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.*

Agency Name:	Department of Children's Advocacy		
Agency Code:	L080	Section:	41

## **FORM E – AGENCY COST SAVINGS AND GENERAL FUND REDUCTION CONTINGENCY PLAN**

<b>TITLE</b>	Agency Cost Savings and General Fund Reduction Contingency Plan
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<b>AMOUNT</b>	\$297,636
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*What is the General Fund 3% reduction amount? This amount should correspond to the reduction spreadsheet prepared by EBO.*

<b>ASSOCIATED FTE REDUCTIONS</b>	5 FTEs
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*How many FTEs would be reduced in association with this General Fund reduction?*

<b>PROGRAM / ACTIVITY IMPACT</b>	<p>These FTEs are needed to provide High Fidelity Wraparound to children and youth with serious emotional and behavioral challenges. The core mission of the Continuum of Care is to help maintain children and youth in their homes, schools, and communities to avoid higher levels of care and to reduce children’s functional impairment related to mental and behavioral challenges. Continuum of Care is also able to request a reimbursement rate for the intensive care coordination provided to families by Continuum of Care staff. Not filling these positions would impact the number of children, youth and families with whom Continuum of Care partners and could result in the child or youth needing to enter a higher level of care such as an emergency department, psychiatric rehabilitation treatment facility or acute care setting without in-home intensive care coordination that Continuum of Care provides.</p> <p>A general fund reduction would be achieved by maintaining five (5) vacancies within the Continuum of Care (COC) Program. The vacancy rate was at 40% as of June 30, 2023, and, based on Continuum of Care’s budget and youth’s needs, Continuum of Care has committed to reduce the vacancy rate to 15% as outlined in the agency’s FY24 Annual Accountability Report goals.</p>
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*What programs or activities are supported by the General Funds identified?*

<b>SUMMARY</b>	<p>5 GA15 FTEs @ \$43,000 = \$215,000</p> <p><u>Employer Contributions (@ 41.2%) = \$88,580</u></p> <p><b>Total Savings = \$303,580</b></p> <p>Continuum of Care employees in the GA15 classification are Wrap Facilitators who provide High Fidelity Wraparound to children, youth and families in an effort to maintain children in their homes, schools, and communities. For the work performed by employees in this job classification, the agency is able to submit reimbursement requests to Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) through the 1915(C) Medicaid waiver for children who qualify for the Palmetto Coordinated System of Care (PCSC) waiver. This funding provides fiscal sustainability for Continuum of Care. Thus, not filling these positions inhibits the division’s ability to maximize federal funding.</p> <p>Not providing this evidence-based practice places children at greater risk of entering higher levels of care such as emergency departments, juvenile justice, foster care, and acute care settings.</p> <p>Filling vacancies within the Continuum of Care division aligns with the goals, strategies and measures of 1.3.4, 2.1.3, 2.2.3, and 2.2.4 of the agency’s Annual Accountability Report which was submitted on September 15, 2023. FTEs within this program are identified for the agency cost savings plan based on the total number of existing FTE vacancies for this division as compared with other divisions within the agency as well as this program’s ability to offset the impact of a General Fund decrease through use of its carryforward funds for a limited period of time.</p>
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*Please provide a detailed summary of service delivery impact caused by a reduction in General Fund Appropriations and provide the method of calculation for anticipated reductions. Agencies should prioritize reduction in expenditures that have the least significant impact on service delivery.*

**AGENCY COST SAVINGS PLANS**

The Department of Children’s Advocacy recognizes the need to maintain all of the Continuum of Care’s FTE positions and continues to assess and explore ways to use state allocations more efficiently. One such way is through the development of a new telework policy and business case plan. The telework policy and business case plan were developed to reduce recruitment and training costs associated with high turnover by incentivizing recruitment and retention through more flexible work schedules. These plans are projected to reduce costs and operating expenses by more than \$50,000. Those savings will then be used to support staff development, training, and retention through performance pay increases and increased training opportunities as the budget permits. The agency’s overall turnover rate has already been reduced from 34% at the end of FY22 to 21.27% at the end of FY23. Department of Children’s Advocacy contemplates that South Carolina’s financial forecast is such that this cost savings plan will not need to be implemented; however, in the event it is necessary, eliminating 5 FTE positions would reduce operating expenses by at least 3%.

*What measures does the agency plan to implement to reduce its costs and operating expenses by more than \$50,000? Provide a summary of the measures taken and the estimated amount of savings. How does the agency plan to repurpose the savings?*



Agency Name:	Department of Children's Advocacy		
Agency Code:	L080	Section:	41

## **FORM F – REDUCING COST AND BURDEN TO BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS**

<b>TITLE</b>	N/A
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*Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.*

<b>EXPECTED SAVINGS TO BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS</b>	N/A
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*What is the expected savings to South Carolina's businesses and citizens that is generated by this proposal? The savings could be related to time or money.*

<b>FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST</b>	<b>Mark "X" for all that apply:</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Repeal or revision of regulations.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reduction of agency fees or fines to businesses or citizens.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater efficiency in agency services or reduction in compliance burden.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

<b>METHOD OF CALCULATION</b>	N/A
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*Describe the method of calculation for determining the expected cost or time savings to businesses or citizens.*


<b>REDUCTION OF FEES OR FINES</b>	N/A
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*Which fees or fines does the agency intend to reduce? What was the fine or fee revenue for the previous fiscal year? What was the associated program expenditure for the previous fiscal year? What is the enabling authority for the issuance of the fee or fine?*

<b>REDUCTION OF REGULATION</b>	N/A
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*Which regulations does the agency intend to amend or delete? What is the enabling authority for the regulation?*

<b>SUMMARY</b>	N/A
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*Provide an explanation of the proposal and its positive results on businesses or citizens. How will the request affect agency operations?*