

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
FY 2026-2027 BIENNIUM

FORM D – ACTIVITY LEVEL-Prioritized Special & Problematic Needs

D	ACTIVITY LEVEL- Prioritized Special & Problematic Needs			Code	DESCRIPTION
		CATEGORY	010		General Government
(These are additional budget requests in priority order, list top priority first)		DEPARTMENT	014		Administrative Services Dept
		AGENCY	088		Office of the Child Advocate
		ACTIVITY	OCA88001		Office of the Child Advocate
PRIORITIZED NEEDS	AMOUNT	SOURCE OF FUNDS	EXPLANATION		
1	FY26 \$17,336 FY27 \$21,014	100% G	<p>Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 010-Regular Officers And Employees and 060-Benefits There is a demonstrated need to reclassify positions within the Office due to the growth the Office has had since its inception in 2018. The Governor recognized this and funded this prioritized need in her budget. The Office began very small with only 2 staff members and we are now a team of 9. With that growth and increase in responsibilities, restructuring is necessary to ensure proper supervision and review of staff. Currently all staff report directly to the Child Advocate with the exception of one. The Associate Child Advocate, and second in command as mandated in RSA 21-V:3 IV, does not have the management responsibilities of a typical agency second in command, frequently titled “Deputy.” The Child Advocate would like to restructure the agency, assigning the Associate Child Advocate management level responsibilities to allow for the Child Advocate to focus more efforts on collaborative system reforms. Given the unmanageable caseloads currently assigned to the 2 Assistant Child Advocates, the Legal Aide, and the Child Advocate, this reclassification would allow the Associate Child Advocate to take a more active role and focus the majority of their time in supervising casework as well as agency policy review and recommendations. With this reclassification, we are also requesting that the current Legal Aide be restructured to become a Case Aide Supervisor, with direct oversight of the Case Aide position(s), allowing for more timely critical incident entry, consistency in data entry, and better tracking of trends to identify gaps and areas that require system review/reform. This restructuring would allow for more efficiency and effective practices within the office and have a great impact on our</p>		

			mandates under RSA 21-V:2, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII and to achieve our office goals (Goal# OCA 1-7). FY26 = \$17,366, FY27 = \$21,014
2	FY26 \$92,345.37 FY27 \$97,068.87	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 010-Regular Officers And Employees and 060-Benefits There is a demonstrated need to add a third full-time Assistant Child Advocate/Ombudsman . Pursuant to RSA 21-V, the Office of the Child Advocate is required to take calls from the public with concerns for child safety, service delivery and accessibility, and provide information and referral services to the public regarding all child-serving state agencies. The aforementioned is the primary role of the Assistant Child Advocates, although they also travel in and out of state to meet with children placed in residential care or juvenile detention, conduct outreach and education activities, and occasionally testify in the legislature. Currently there are 2 FTE Assistant Child Advocates in the Office; these positions have consistently been filled. As of January 2025, the Assistant Child Advocates and the Legal Aide are managing approximately 50 cases each with duties similar to those of a DCYF CPSW, such as, collateral contacts, meeting with children and families, attending meetings pertaining to the specific child, reviewing records, and maintaining a record of casework tasks in our Salesforce case management system. DCYF CPSWs are currently managing approximately 15 cases each. The Office has spent a significant amount of time enhancing our outreach to community providers, social media presence, and education to the public about our role and how we can assist. Given this outreach, we expect the caseloads to continue to rise throughout FY25. As caseloads rise, the response time from Assistant Child Advocates to concerned citizens becomes delayed potentially leaving children in unsafe situations or with unmet needs that can impact long term outcomes. This position will ensure proper oversight of DCYF casework, inform on accessibility of services for children in need, advocate for the best interest of children involved with executive branch child-serving agencies, and better assist children and families to navigate child-serving systems most effectively. This position is necessary for the Office to meet its statutorily mandated responsibilities under RSA 21-V:2 II, III, IV, V, VI, VII and to achieve our office goals (Goal# OCA 1, 2, 6, 7). This request includes the pay and benefits FY26 \$92,345.37, FY27 \$97,068.87
3	FY26 \$71,675.18 FY27 \$75,402.66	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 010-Regular Officers And Employees and 060-Benefits There is a demonstrated need to add a full time Case Aide . The Office requires an additional full time Case Aide position. The primary responsibilities for this role are: manage data entry and analysis of incident reports, including all restraints/seclusions at residential facilities serving NH children; support the work of the Assistant Child Advocates by conducting case review summaries, attending child specific meetings, both internal and external, and contacting collaterals; and, responding to inquiries to the office by speaking with callers, assessing their concerns, providing referrals when necessary, and assigning to an Ombudsman if further review and outreach is necessary. Over FY24 and early FY25, the Office has observed an increase in incident reports, in part due to the addition of Hampstead Hospital as a state-run facility. In addition, the Office uncovered that the State agency responsible for compliance with incident reporting has not been

			holding facilities to the required reporting per RSA 126-U. Once all facilities are in compliance, the number of reports received are expected to increase by a significant amount. In addition, with the increase in critical incident reports received, it is impossible to review and enter each immediately, which decreases the Office's capacity to provide timely, relevant data analysis for system support and reform. This position would optimize the data analysis and further support the mission of the Office. Without this position the Office will have delayed data capture and less timely investigations related directly to children's current safety and wellbeing. As noted above, another primary function of this role is supporting the Assistant Child Advocates who are currently carrying an excessive caseload that is unmanageable. The addition of this position would also make the caseloads more manageable for the Assistant Child Advocates and allow them to respond timely to safety concerns. This position is necessary for the Office to meet its statutorily mandated responsibilities under RSA 21-V:2 II, III, IV, V, VII and to achieve our office goals (Goal# OCA 1, 2, 3, 6). This request includes the pay and benefits FY26 \$71,675.18, FY27 \$75,402.66
4	FY26 \$24,000 FY27 \$26,950	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 080-Out-Of State Travel Over the past 2 years the Office has traveled to several out-of-state facilities to assess and monitor the safety and wellbeing of NH children placed thousands of miles away from their home communities and support networks. This led the Office to uncover cruel and harmful treatment of NH children in facilities in Tennessee and Oklahoma. The children sent out-of-state are among the most high-needs and vulnerable children, who have been denied admission by all local placements due to an inability to meet their needs and keep them safe. Although staff from BCBH and DCYF had visited these facilities, they did not appropriately or effectively assess for safety, and the concerns were not highlighted until the OCA visited. Visiting facilities in person allows the Office opportunities to fully assess and monitor these facilities, as well as ascertain if NH children's needs are being met. These in person visits also allow the Office to educate children and facility leadership/staff as to the OCA's role and statute. Many of these states do not have a Child Advocate, so it is critical to build these relationships and educate on our mandate, so when children are in need they or their families reach out for support. The office also receives many complaints about facilities out of state as they often are in states with less protective and trauma-informed regulations. When we can visit facilities and gain a better understanding of their mission and therapeutic modality, we can better manage and resolve complaints about inadequate care. This ensures children's safety and best interests are being met. This request is necessary so that the Office can meet its mandates under RSA 21-V:2, II (a), (c), (d), III (a)-(c), V, VI, VII; RSA 21-V:4, III and to achieve our office goals (Goal# OCA 1, 2 & 4-7) FY26 \$24,000, FY27 \$26,950
5	FY26 \$3,000 FY27 \$5,000	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 070-In-State Travel Reimbursement The Office has made it a priority to visit with children in placement, attend in-person meetings, engage in events where we can educate on the OCA statute, and testify regularly at legislative sessions. To do so, significant travel is required in personal vehicles as well as parking expenses incurred at specific locations. Visiting children, facilities and offices in

			person allows OCA staff opportunities to monitor facilities, ensure children's needs are being met, and educate children, facility leadership/staff, stakeholders, and providers as to the OCA's role and statute. With the expanded outreach over the past 2 years, the Office has become a well-known resource in the State. With that comes requests to meet with children in residential placements and invitations to engage in critical stakeholder meetings to inform on system barriers and necessary reforms. This request ensures the Office meets its mandates under RSA 21-V:2, II (a), (c), (d), (e), III (a)-(c), VI, VII; RSA 21-V:4, III and to achieve our office goals (Goal# OCA 1, 2 & 4-7). FY26 = \$3,000, FY26 = \$5,000
6	FY26 \$5,000 FY27 \$5,000	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 018-Overtime The workloads for all positions within the Office have increased over the past two years. This is due to efforts to increase compliance with mandatory reporting from child-serving agencies and providers, becoming a well-known resource to the general public, increased presence in the legislature, as well as the continuously rising needs of our children. The Office has also experienced prolonged periods with vacant positions and staff members on medical leave. This has led to distribution of tasks to other staff members, who are already carrying heavy workloads of their own, resulting in slower response times by the Office. Given the high volume of work to be completed, offering overtime would allow for the Office to continue to maintain a reasonable response time, while also compensating staff for the extra time spent on tasks that typically would not be assigned to them. This request ensures the Office can meet its mandates under RSA 21-V:2, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII and to achieve our office goals (Goal# OCA 1-7). FY26 = \$5,000, FY26 = \$5,000
7	FY26 \$2,000 FY27 \$3,000	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 066-Employee Training The Office relies heavily on research about child psychology, including child development, brain science, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Positive Childhood Experiences (PACES), evidenced-based practices, etc. to inform on best interest of children. To stay up to date on current research, data and trends, including best practice, the OCA staff attends multiple trainings per year. We often work to reduce costs by sending 1 or 2 staff members who can then bring resources and information back to the group. We participate in professional organizations that offer free trainings and resources along with their membership fees. With that said, we still need funds for critical trainings that we are not able to receive without paying. In maintaining the plan to be fiscally conservative with our training funds, the Office is seeking the minimal amount necessary to ensure staff remain up to date on children's issues in order to make recommendations to the State about the best interests of children. This request is necessary so that the Office can meet its mandates under RSA 21-V:2, II (a), (c-f), III, V, VI, VII and to achieve our office goals (Goal# OCA 1, 2 & 4-7) FY26 = \$2,000, FY27 = \$3,000
8	FY26 \$6,000 FY27 \$7,000	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 020-Current Expenses Due to an increase in staffing and the current economic climate, the Office sees an increased need in consumable supplies funds. The Office strives to reduce waste and only consume expenses that are necessary to the mission of the Office. With the reduction in the target budget this cycle, the Office had to reduce the efficiency budget for this class, leaving

			minimal funds, not enough to cover current expense costs from prior fiscal years. With that said, increase in the number of staff and cost of goods in this current climate leads to a need for additional funds for current expenses in order to fulfill our mandates under RSA 21-V:2, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII and to achieve our office goals (Goals# OCA 1-7). FY26 = \$6,000, FY27 = \$7,000
9	FY26 \$400 FY27 \$500	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 022-Rents-Leases Other Than State To reduce the cost of expensive printing through Graphic Services, the Office utilizes an in-house printer for a large amount of promotional and marketing materials, as well as to provide testimony and educational materials to the legislature, share reports, provide referral forms and information to children and families, etc. The printer currently in use is a leased multipurpose machine which also scans and copies. The Office continues to strive to reserve paper and utilize electronic copies and emailing whenever possible to keep costs low. Given that we expect costs to continue to rise in the next biennium, we will require additional funds in this class to maintain the current unit we are leasing. This very conservative request would provide the bare minimum necessary for the Office to meet its mandates under RSA 21-V:2, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII and to achieve our office goals (Goal# OCA 2-7). FY26 \$100, FY27 \$200
10	FY26 \$6,000 FY27 \$7,000	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 069-Promotional - Marketing Expense In the Strategic planning process, one of the noted items was a lack of community and partner understanding of the office and its role. In the past two years we have focused on updating promotional materials and dispersing them to community partners, children, and the public. Materials are distributed across the state, displayed in children's facilities, made available at the Office and partner agencies, and distributed at events. This has proven to be successful as we have received an increase in callers when we attend events and/or stakeholder meetings, and there is a greater understanding of the Office and our mandate in the community at large. With the cost of all materials increasing, we are finding that it is just as expensive to create and print our own materials. We work to reduce printed copies as much as possible with the use of social media and email, but that is not always an option when trying to reach children in programs or through their schools. Additional funds are required in order to fulfill our mandates under RSA 21-V:2, II (a-e), III, V, VI, VII and to achieve our office goals (Goals# OCA 5-7). FY26 = \$6,000, FY27 = \$7,000
11	FY26 \$900 FY27 \$1,000	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 026-Organizational Dues Staying informed about current research on children's best interest is essential to the work of the Office. To do so, we participate in professional organizations that offer free trainings and resources along with their membership fees. Many of these organizations also help the Office stay informed about policies, practices and trends nationally to improve outcomes for children. It is important to learn from others about what is working well to ensure the State is not wasting critical resources. With the reduction in the target budget this cycle, the Office had to reduce the efficiency budget for this class, leaving minimal funds, not enough to cover a single organizational membership. Funding this class allows the Office to fulfill statutory mandates in RSA 21-V:2 II, III (a) (c), IV, V, VI, VII and achieve our

			office goals (Goals# OCA 3-7). FY26 = \$900, FY27 = \$1,000
12	FY26 \$1,500 FY27 \$2,500	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 046-Consultants The Office has the ability to hire consultants to share their expert knowledge with the OCA staff through class 046, which often provides opportunities for the Office to complete special projects that otherwise would not be attainable with the current staffing. Funding these positions would assist the Office in meeting the mandates of RSA 21-V:2 II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII and achieving our goals (Goals# 1-7). FY26 = \$1,500, FY27 = \$2,500
13	FY26 \$4,708 FY27 \$5,804	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 038-Technology – Software This request is necessary for any new positions that will potentially be added to the Office. The OCA utilizes Salesforce as our case management system and each staff member is required to have an individual Salesforce license assigned to them. The FY26 & FY27 requested amounts would cover the cost of the Salesforce licenses for the two positions requested as prioritized need 1 & 2 and would be necessary for those staff to meet the Office mandates in RSA 21-V:2 II, III, V and meet our office goals (Goal# OCA 1-4, 6, 7). FY26 \$4,708, FY27 \$5,804
14	FY26 \$1,600 FY27 \$2,000	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 039-Telecommunications This request is necessary to secure phones and phone lines for the current vacant position, and any new positions that will potentially be added to the Office. The OCA does not have extra phones available as we operate on a very conservative budget, with most staff members utilizing a cell phone to allow for telework and due to the nature of our work travelling around the state to meet with children and key stakeholders. The current vacant position would need to be added back to the current phone plan, and each of the new positions would require a new cell phone to be purchased along with adding existing lines to the Office's current T-Mobile plan. The amounts would cover the costs for the two positions requested as prioritized need 1 & 2 and would be necessary for those staff to meet the Office mandates in RSA 21-V:2 II, III, IV, V, VI, VII and meet our office goals (Goal# OCA 1-7). FY26 = \$1,600, FY27 = \$2,000
15	FY26 \$450 FY27 \$600	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 057-Books, Periodicals, Subscriptions This request is necessary for the Office to have access to e-subscriptions for both local news sites such as the Concord Monitor and Seacoast Online, which all have a paywall now, as well as select national journals and publications. With the reduction in the target budget this cycle, the Office had to reduce the efficiency budget for this class, leaving minimal funds, not enough to cover a single subscription. It is crucial to the Office's work to have access to local news, as well as to stay up to date on current research, data and trends, including best practices. This request is necessary so that the Office can meet its mandates under RSA 21-V:2, II (a), (c-f), III, V, VI, VII and to achieve our office goals (Goal# OCA 1, 2 & 4-7) FY26 = \$450, FY27 = \$600
16	FY26 \$14,000 FY27 \$14,000	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 050-Personal Services-Temp/Appointed The Office maintains several intern positions which require funding through class 050. Although these positions are not always filled, these interns bring a fresh perspective to the Office, allow staff to mentor not only about our Office but about the importance of increasing workforce in this area, and provide opportunities for the Office to complete

			special projects that otherwise would not be attainable with the current staffing. The Office also has a part-time position which is not currently funded. If funded in the next biennium, the Office could bring on a part-time staff member to assist with rising casework, and other administrative tasks currently being covered by other positions. Funding these positions would assist the Office in meeting the mandates of RSA 21-V:2 II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII and achieving our goals (Goals# 1-7). FY26 = \$14,000, FY27 = \$14,000
17	FY26 \$8,750 FY27 \$0	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 037-Technology – Hardware This request is necessary for any new positions that will potentially be added to the Office. The OCA does not have extra hardware as we operate on a very conservative budget, with each staff member utilizing a laptop which allows for telework and is to be transitioned between home offices and the office headquarters. Each new employee would require a new laptop to be purchased along with monitors and docking stations for their office space at headquarters. Given the laptops have all been purchased within the past 3 years, there is no need to purchase replacement hardware this biennium. The FY26 amount would cover the cost of hardware for the two positions requested as prioritized need 1 & 2 and would be necessary for those staff to meet the Office mandates in RSA 21-V:2 II, III, IV, V, VI, VII and meet our office goals (Goal# OCA 1-7). FY26 \$7,668, FY27 \$0
18	FY26 \$3,000 FY27 \$500	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 030-Equipment New/Replacement This request is necessary for any new positions that will potentially be added to the Office. The OCA maintains a very minimal workspace and only purchases equipment such as desks and chairs for current employees. If the new positions are allocated to the office, additional furniture would need to be purchased which is why a larger amount would be required for FY26. The lesser amount requested for FY27 would cover the cost of any replacements or repairs to current employee’s equipment. Equipment is necessary for staff to function within their roles to meet the Office mandates in RSA 21-V:2 II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII and meet our office goals (Goal# OCA 1-7). FY26 \$3,000, FY27 \$500
19	FY26 \$102,308 FY27 \$108,106	100% G	Office of the Child Advocate (88010) 010-Regular Officers And Employees and 060-Benefits Due to the 4% decrease in the budget, the target Efficiency Budget projection for the Office did not cover the cost of current employee salaries and benefits. This created a need to unfund the Office Coordinator position (#44349) to ensure funding in other class lines critical to the functions of the Office. The Office Coordinator is also an integral position to ensure the Office functions properly. This is an administrative role which includes budget development and management, purchasing and procurement of office supplies, recruitment and hiring, policy maintenance and drafting, and inventory. If this position is not funded moving forward, these tasks will fall to the Child Advocate and Associate Child Advocate, both of whom focus their work in the legislature to create systemic improvements for the best interest of children, meeting with agency leadership to ensure safe and dignified treatment for all children, advocating on individual cases involved with DCYF, educating the public about our State’s child-serving systems, trauma-informed care, and children’s best interest, and preparing reports and reviews to provide transparency to the public. Losing this position would lead to slower response

			times to concerned citizens and an inability to address child safety timely. This position is necessary for the Office to meet its statutorily mandated responsibilities under RSA 21-V:2 II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII and to achieve our office goals (Goal# OCA 1-7). This request includes the pay and benefits FY26 \$102,308, FY27 \$108,106
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