

2024-2025

ANNUAL REPORT



The Honourable Ric McIver
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Office of the Speaker
325 Legislature Building
10800 97 Avenue NW
Edmonton AB T5K 2B6

Dear Mr. Speaker:

It is my privilege to submit to you the 2024–2025 Annual Report of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

The Report has been prepared in accordance with Section 21(1) of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* and covers the activities of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate for the period April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025.

Respectfully,

[Original signed by Terri Pelton]

Terri Pelton
Child and Youth Advocate

Land Acknowledgement

The mandate of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate extends throughout the province of Alberta. We respectfully acknowledge that Alberta is the traditional and ancestral territory of many Indigenous peoples of Treaties 6, 7, and 8, including the Nehiyaw (Cree), Denesuliné (Dene), Nakota Sioux (Stoney), Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Îyâxe Nakoda (Stoney), and Tsuut'ina Nations, the Métis Settlements, and the Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Métis Nation within Alberta.

We are honoured to work, live, learn, and play on the lands of those whose ancestors have walked this earth since time immemorial.



MESSAGE FROM THE ADVOCATE



As we mark the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate's 35th anniversary, I am proud of how we continue to stand up for young people in the child intervention and youth justice systems. Since 1989, we have helped ensure vulnerable young people's voices are heard and their rights are considered in the decisions that shape their lives.

This past year, we developed a plan to engage young people and stakeholders for our upcoming special report on youth houselessness. I am looking forward to hearing directly from young people about their lived experiences on this issue—their perspectives will help inform our recommendations to government.

It was also another successful year for our youth council, which has developed and grown considerably over the past several years with the help of a staff position dedicated to youth engagement. One highlight was their winter gathering at Fort Edmonton Park, where council members and staff connected, visited the Indigenous Peoples Experience, and shared sleigh rides and hot chocolate. The day reminded us of the importance of building relationships and fostering a sense of belonging for young people involved with our work.

Planning is also underway for our International Youth Day celebration. This year's theme is *Advocacy Through Storytelling*. The event will highlight the strength, creativity, and resilience of young people with lived experience in government systems, reminding us of the importance of listening to their perspectives and experiences.

Going forward, we will continue to help young people not only be heard, but be active participants in the services and systems that impact their lives. Their perspectives make our advocacy stronger and helps them to be successful in their lives and communities.

Terri Pelton

Child and Youth Advocate

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ABOUT THE OCYA

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) is an independent office of the Alberta Legislature. Our role, as outlined in the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, is to represent the rights, interests and viewpoints of young people. We have offices in Edmonton and Calgary, and we work with children and youth across the province.

We work directly with young people to help them exercise their rights when decisions are being made about them, when they are:

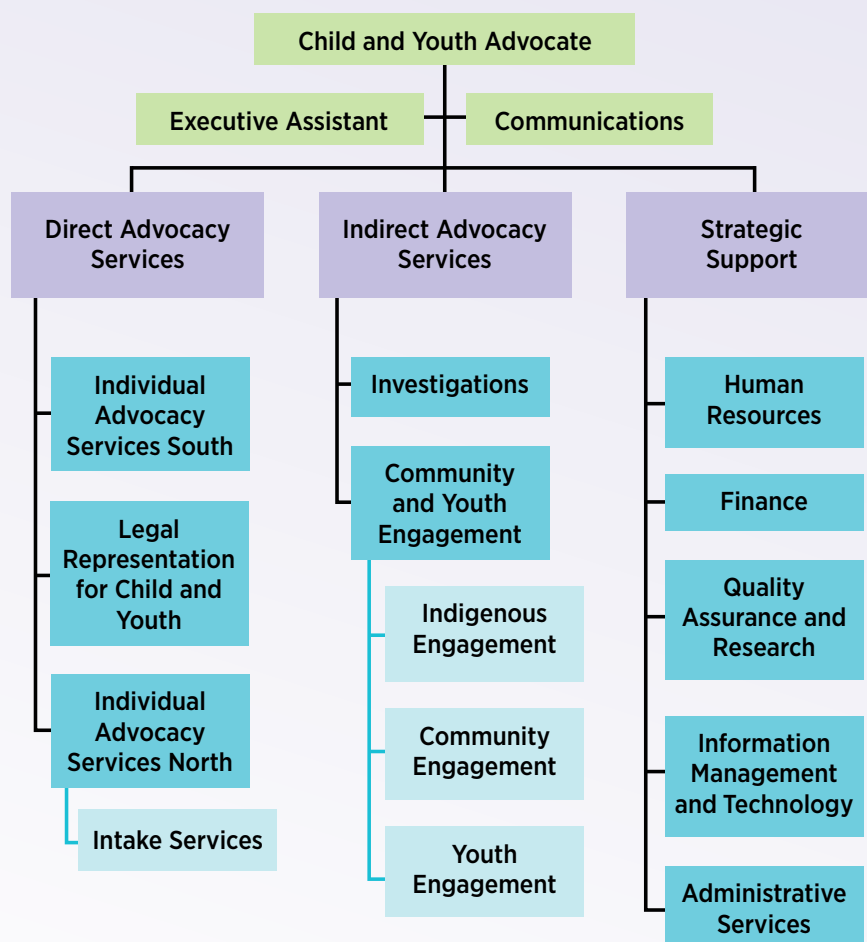
- receiving (or seeking to receive) services under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (CYFEA)*;
- receiving services under the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act (PSECA)*; or,
- involved with the youth justice system.

We also:

- educate young people and adults about the rights of children, the role of our office, and advocacy strategies;
- engage with young people, community stakeholders, and decision-makers;
- investigate the serious injuries and deaths of children and youth who meet the criteria for an investigative review, as determined by our legislation; and,
- make recommendations to government about issues affecting young people's lives.

To learn more about our programs and services, please visit our website: ocya.alberta.ca

Organizational Structure





Standing up for young people

An unwavering commitment to young people is at the heart of our work and extends beyond any single role or team. Whether working directly with children and youth or supporting our efforts behind the scenes, every member of our team makes an important contribution to our mandate.

Our all-staff meeting theme this year was Generations. Staff dressed in outfits representing different decades from the 70s through the 2000s and had a fun day of connection and revitalization.



JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION

Building strong, meaningful relationships with Indigenous young people, families, and communities is prioritized in our work. We strive to ensure these relationships are reciprocal and sustainable, honouring the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples and valuing the opportunities to connect when invited.

Our team includes a Knowledge Keeper who helps us navigate our work responsibly, sustainably, and grounded in ceremony, and two Indigenous Engagement Consultants who help us build relationships across the province. We are guided by Elders who remind us that reconciliation is a generational process, and the full impact may not be realized in our lifetimes.

We are grateful to the Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and leaders who guide us on this journey. Their support is invaluable in helping us move forward in a good way.



The OCYA Appreciates...

Elder Ruth Ann Linklater, a proud Anishinaabe quay from Couchiching First Nation in Treaty 3 Territory. Ruth Ann brings over 30 years of experience in marriage and family therapy and supports our staff and young people through ceremony, story, and community connection.

Did You Know...?

In September 2024, we opened a ceremonial room within our Edmonton office. To honour its opening, we hosted a pipe ceremony with Elders Casey Eaglespeaker, Colleen Mustus, Ruth Ann Linklater, and Wilson Bearhead. This space now offers staff and visitors a place for grounding, cultural connection, and healing.

This year we...

- Participated in land-based training at University nuhelot'jine thaiyots'j nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills. Led by Sharon Steinhauer and Elder Leo McGilvery, staff received teachings on Indigenous healing and trauma recovery and toured the former residential school with a survivor.
- Attended the University of Calgary's Grandmother's Tea ceremony with Elder Kerri Moore at the Kiipitakyoyis (Grandmothers' Lodge).
- Deepened our knowledge about Indigenous ways of knowing and being by participating in sweats, medicine picking, and pipe ceremonies.
- Learned teachings from Elder Ruth Ann Linklater and Elder Brenda Roland over tea and Bannock.
- Attended Sundances in Calling Lake, Alexis, and Kootenay Plains.
- Participated in ribbon skirt making.

“

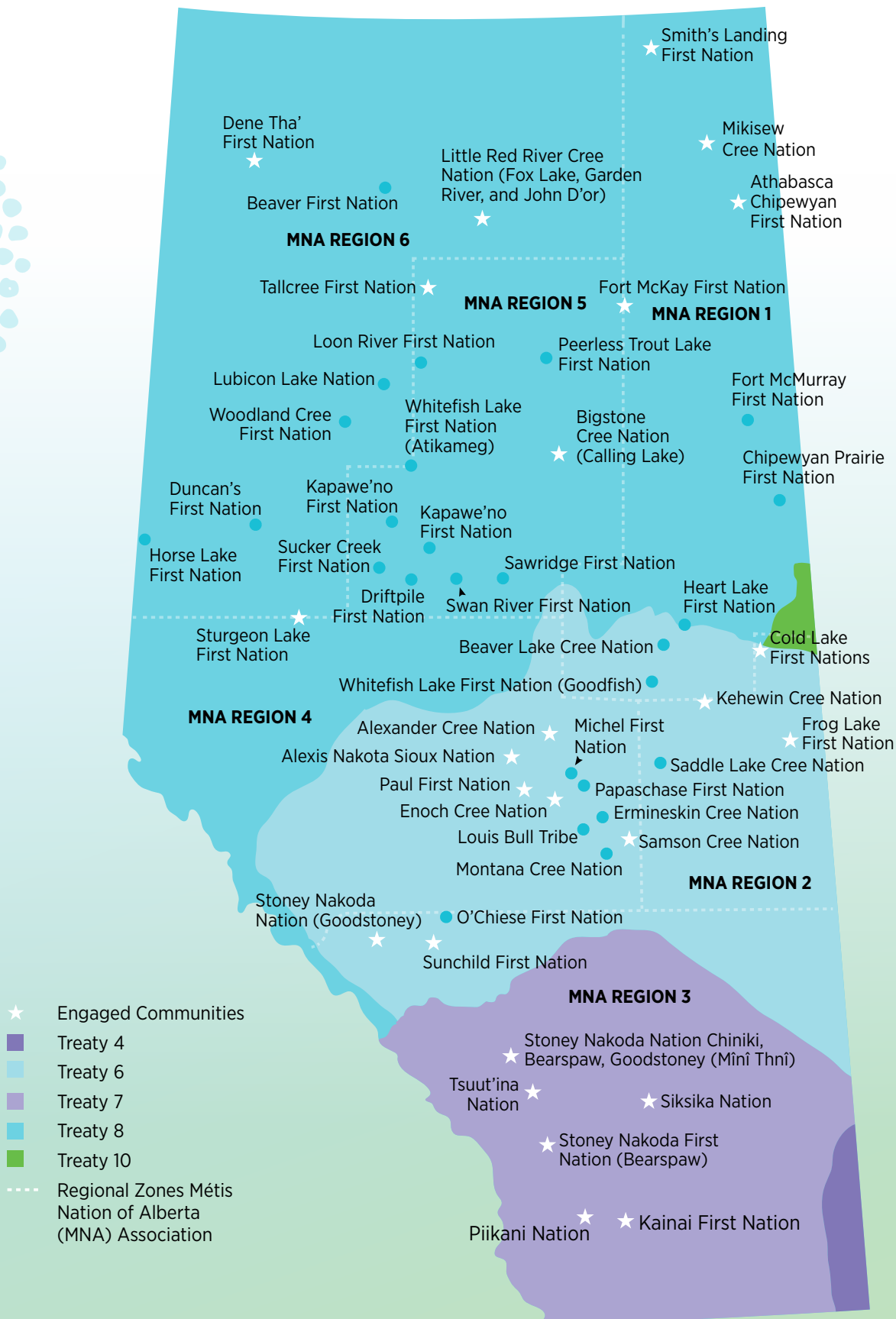
Put more into the circle than you take out.

- Teaching shared with staff during medicine picking.

”



Engaged with Indigenous communities:



YEAR AT A GLANCE

April 2024

- Engaged with students and teachers from across the province at the Alberta Gay Straight Alliance Network.
- Attended the Native Information Exchange at Mount Royal University.

May 2024

- Presented our *Beyond Barriers* special report to the Alberta Ability Network, a province-wide collaborative focused on addressing systemic barriers faced by persons with disabilities.
- Participated in Red Dress Day events to honour Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people.



November 2024

- Celebrated National Child Day at events across the province.
- Launched the new OCYA website, which improves accessibility, user experience, and digital engagement.
- Released our *Calling for Change* report, which made five recommendations to government.

October 2024

- Connected with young people and professionals at the Alberta Mentoring Partnership Summit.
- Participated in a pipe ceremony as part of our work on an upcoming special report about unhoused young people.

December 2024

- Welcomed Elder Ruth Ann Linklater to our office, where she shared winter stories and cultural teachings during Tea and Bannock.
- Participated in the *Crossroads of Care Conference* to support newcomer youth and promote awareness of their rights.

January 2025

- Attended the Yellowhead Tribal Council's *National Child & Family Services Conference*, connecting with service providers who support Indigenous youth.
- Kicked off planning for our 2025 International Youth Day event.





June 2024

- Hosted the *Best Practices in Child Legal Representation* conference in Canmore, a professional development event for those working in legal representation for children and youth.
- Celebrated National Indigenous Peoples Day.
- Recognized the work of our youth council with a year-end Sweat Lodge Ceremony held in Enoch, led by Elder Rocky Morin.

July 2024

- Picked traditional medicines and received teachings on protocol.
- Shared information and resources with Family Information Liaison Units.

August 2024

- Attended Bigstone Cree Nation Treaty Days.
- Hosted a booth at a community event to mark International Youth Day.

September 2024

- Celebrated the opening of our ceremonial room with a pipe ceremony and feast.
- Attended the Tallcree Cultural Camp.
- Recognized National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.



February 2025

- Presented at the Bow Valley College capstone event, where students explored systemic issues and proposed youth-centred solutions.

March 2025

- Participated in land-based training at University nuhelot'ine thaiyots'j nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills, including a tour of the former residential school.

FRONTLINE ADVOCACY SERVICES

Young people have the right to be involved in decisions that impact them. They tell us that when they are included, the outcomes are better, even if things don't go exactly as they hoped.

We help ensure their rights are respected, their voices are heard, and their interests are considered through our three frontline advocacy services:

Intake

**Individual
Advocacy**

**Legal Representation
for Children and
Youth (LRCY)**



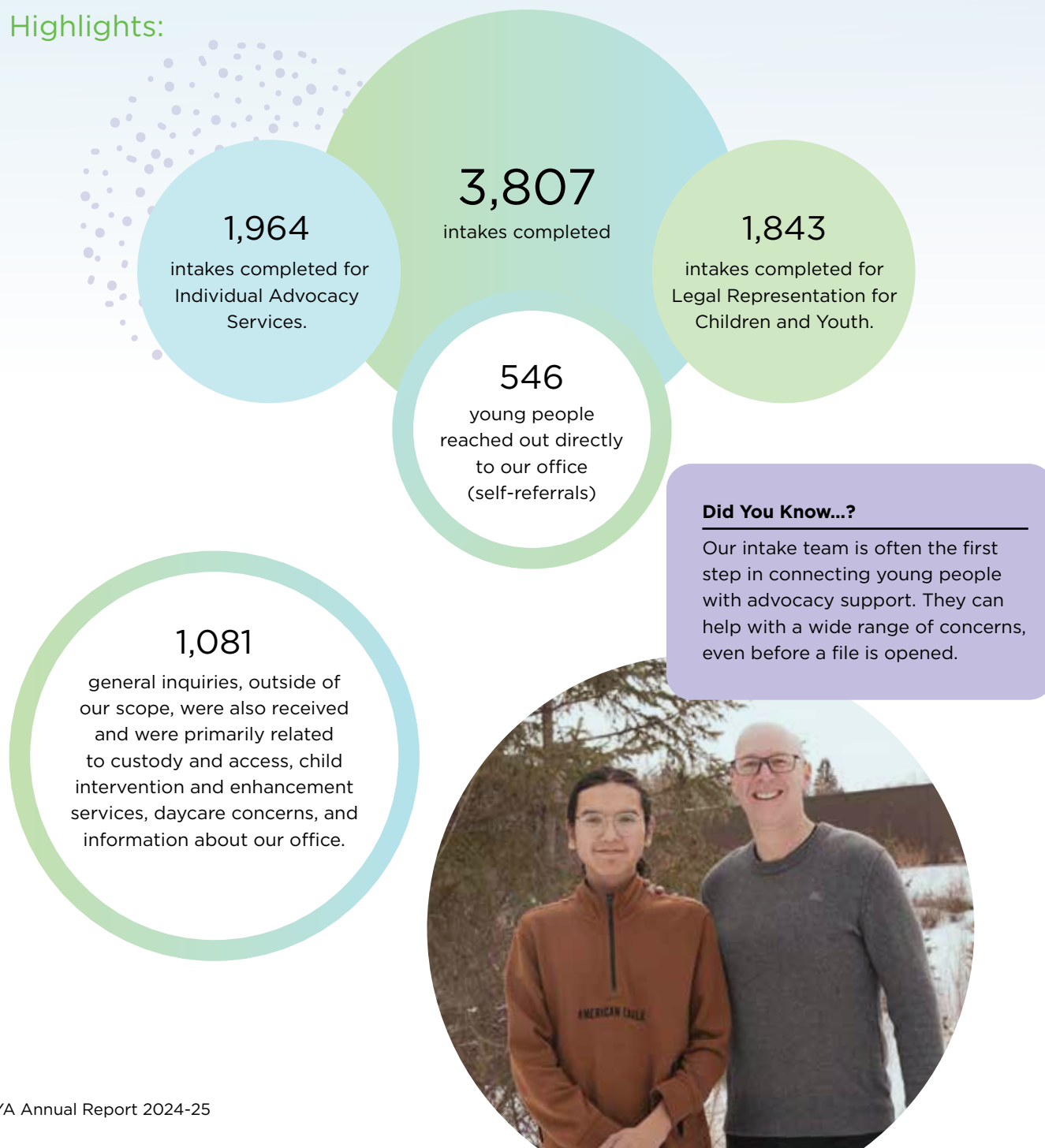
INTAKE

When someone reaches out to our office, we work with them to identify and clarify their concerns and determine whether an advocate or a lawyer may be able to help. Most calls are from young people or others who are concerned about a young person. If the services and supports the young person needs fall outside of what we can do, then we refer the caller to community or government resources.

Some of the issues young people call us about include:

- Participation – when their voice isn't being heard in decisions.
- Connections – if they're not seeing people who are important to them.
- Culture & Spirituality – when they don't have the opportunity to participate in cultural and spiritual activities.
- Health Needs – if they're struggling to access health services (including for their mental health).
- Placement – if their placement feels unsafe or disrespectful.

Highlights:



INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

Highlights:

We help young people involved with the child intervention and youth justice systems to understand their rights, to exercise those rights, and to have their viewpoints and interests meaningfully considered in decisions that affect them. This may include decisions about where they are going to live, the level of contact they have with family and other significant people in their lives, and how their individual needs, such as connection to their cultural identity, will be supported.

Advocates work directly and in partnership with children and youth, whenever possible. Young people identify the issues they want help with, and the advocate determines if they are within our scope. If they are, the advocate helps the young person address these matters.

When a young person is unable to express a viewpoint or share their interests, an advocate will act on their behalf, guided by the young person's particular rights and interests, to identify and address concerns. In these circumstances, an advocate will meet with the young person, gather information from those who know them, their community and their interests, and will consider relevant policies and legislation when advocating for them.

1,592
young people worked
with an advocate

12-17
year-olds were the
largest age group
served

59%
were Indigenous

This year, we saw a significant increase in young people seeking support to have a file opened with Children and Family Services (CFS). The increase reflects the concerns raised by young people, families, service providers, and communities about children and youth who may be at risk of harm.



Top five advocacy matters for young people

Connections & Contact Arrangements:

- Separation from siblings with limited or no contact.
- Maintaining connections with other family members and community.

Placement:

- Placement breakdowns leading to frequent moves and instability.
- A lack of appropriate placements that meet the needs of young people.

Case Planning & Implementation:

- Case plans are delayed or not implemented for a number of reasons including differences of opinion.

Health Services & Supports:

- An increasing number of young people asked for advocacy support to access mental health care, treatment programs, and specialized supports.

Assigned Worker & Office:

- Concerns about frequent caseworker changes, not knowing who their worker was, or not having a designated worker at all.
- Requests to change workers.

There have been occasions where young people have spent the night in CFS offices and shelters, and stayed in hospital longer than necessary due to a lack of appropriate placements.

Experiences of young people who received advocacy services

The following stories highlight how we help young people with various advocacy issues.

To protect their privacy and identities, all names are pseudonyms, and some details have been changed.

17-year-old Kyla was in an inpatient mental health program after being unhoused for several years. Her guardian lived out of province, and the hospital refused to discharge Kyla without a place to go. While Kyla had previous child intervention involvement, CFS indicated they did not have a placement and did not know if they could help. An advocate helped Kyla voice what she hoped would happen and what she needed from CFS and the medical team. Kyla was taken into care, a placement was found, and supports were provided.

4-year-old Addy and 5-year-old Trayvon's father was concerned that he was not getting consistent visits with them. An advocate followed up with the case team, who advised that they were trying to work with the father on regular visits; however, there were some challenges around communication and scheduling. The team was committed to continuing to provide access in a manner that was safe for everyone involved.

14-year-old Konrad had been unhoused since he was 12 years old and had been living in a shelter for the past year. An advocate helped Konrad prepare to talk about his experiences with Child Intervention staff. Konrad is now receiving supports.

5-year-old Lexie was referred for advocacy services due to concerns with approval delays for dental surgery. During the referral process, we learned Lexie had four young siblings also in care, who were living separately and had not had a visit together in two years. An advocate was assigned to both follow up on the delayed dental work and advocate for connections with her siblings. Approvals for Lexie's surgery were confirmed, and the advocate continues to advance Lexie's right to sibling contact.

17-year-old Mitchell felt he had been unfairly treated after being pepper-sprayed by staff in a youth justice facility. An advocate supported him through the review process and collaborated with facility staff to address the issue. Although Mitchell did not get the outcome he hoped for, he felt heard and satisfied with the process.

15-year-old Sasha and 17-year-old Alana did not feel safe at home. CFS did not intervene in a manner that the girls felt would keep them safe. With the support of an advocate, they met with CFS staff to clarify their concerns. They have now been provided a place to live where they feel safe and supported.



The OCYA Appreciates...

Units 23 and 26 at Foothills Hospital, and Unit 56A at South Health Campus, for their advocacy on behalf of young people with mental health complexities and their commitment to working in a collaborative and respectful way.

In October 2024, we released our updated Individual Advocacy Services policy manual, replacing the previous version that had been in place for over a decade. The revised policy emphasizes both the individual rights of young people and the collective rights of groups they belong to.



Did You Know?

Our advocates work with young people living out of province if they are receiving Alberta child intervention services.

Living arrangements of young people who worked with an advocate

Seeking designated services-location unknown	78
Young person living at home or independently	173
Foster care	466
Kinship care/relatives/community member/pre-adoptive placement	402
Community group care	262
Youth justice placement	53
Campus-based care	53
Other facility-based placements (includes Secure Services, PSECA, hospital)	47
Independent living (under 18 yrs)	29
Personalized community care	20
Absent from placement	6
Shelter	3
Total	1,592

* Please see Appendix A on page 56 for definitions of terms contained in the above chart.

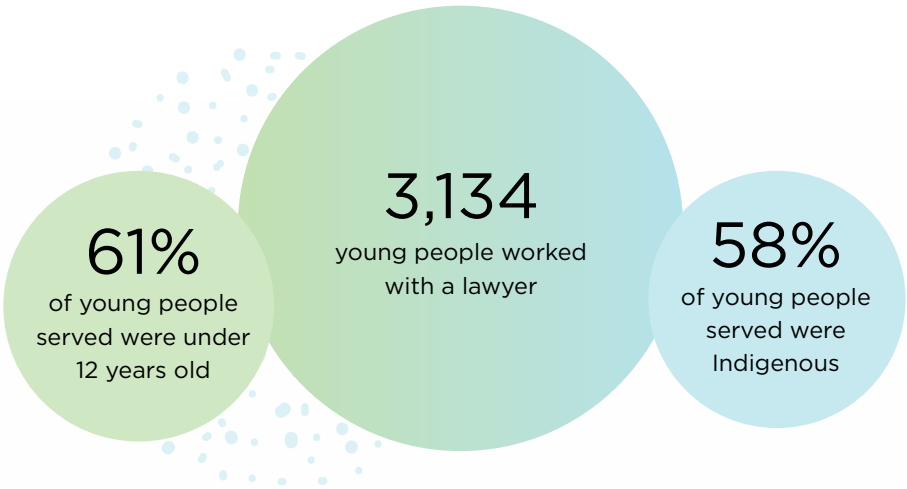
The OCYA Appreciates...

Staff at the young offender centres in Edmonton and Calgary for working collaboratively with Alberta Registries to ensure that detained young people can obtain official identification. This important work is key to supporting their reintegration into the community upon release.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Our Legal Representation for Children and Youth (LRCY) program provides independent lawyers for young people in child intervention court matters. A lawyer from our roster meets with the young person to explain the court process, ensure their voice is heard in court, and help them understand the court decisions. Whenever possible, the lawyer takes instruction from the young person. If they are unable to provide direction, the lawyer presents their legal entitlements, interests, and rights to the court. The judge is the final decision-maker in all cases.

Highlights:



Court Matter

Temporary Guardianship Order	1,379
Permanent Guardianship Order	1,178
Secure Services	311
Private Guardianship Order	162
Supervision Order	101
PSECA	97
Termination of Permanent Guardianship Order/Agreement	27
Appeals to Court	23
Other*	60
Total	3,338

Lawyers may work with young people on multiple matters.

* Other: may include court matters such as health care orders, a review of an unspecified order, *Family Law Act*, and the *Citizenship Act*.

Please see Appendix A on page 56 for definitions of terms contained in the above chart.



Best Practices in Child Legal Representation conference

Our biennial conference was held in Canmore on June 5 and 6, 2024, bringing together over 200 in-person and online participants. We connected with attendees to share legal advocacy approaches, strengthen partnerships, and promote best practices in supporting young people's rights.

Keynote speakers included Elder Casey Eagle Speaker, Dr. Cindy Blackstock, and Dr. Michael Ungar.

Providing access to legal representation for Indigenous and rural young people

This year, we welcomed one additional Indigenous lawyer and one new roster lawyer from a remote community. As of March 31, 2025, we have 72 lawyers on our roster, including 10 Indigenous lawyers. Of these, 53 are based in Edmonton, Calgary or Red Deer and 19 are based across the rest of the province.

Advancing excellence in legal representation

Throughout the year, our staff and LRCY lawyers participated in professional development sessions and networked with community partners to strengthen their advocacy for young people, including:

- Training on the Role of Counsel, which focused on best practices to ensure children's voices are meaningfully included in legal proceedings.
- A crisis de-escalation session, which offered strategies for managing high-stress situations with young people and families.
- Training on working with Band Designates, which enhanced our understanding of how to collaborate respectfully with First Nations representatives.
- Participating in a session with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, emphasizing the lasting impacts of residential schools and the need for trauma-informed approaches.

Did You Know?

Anyone can refer a young person for legal representation in a child intervention matter. Common referrals come from judges, caseworkers, caregivers, parents, and young people themselves.

“

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to support our young people during these very pivotal parts of their lives. It remains one of the most gratifying parts of my legal career.

– Yemi Philips,
LRCY Roster Lawyer

”

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Our education and engagement work is a vital link between the OCYA and the young people, services, and communities who support them. This includes having specialized roles for Indigenous engagement consultants because of the over-involvement of the child intervention and youth justice systems in the lives of Indigenous young people, families, and communities.

Some of the ways we engage communities are:

Facilitating culturally relevant workshops and self-advocacy trainings.

Raising awareness about children's rights, the issues facing young people, and how to ask for help.

Fostering relationships between our office and those who interact with young people, including members of Indigenous communities, representatives of government ministries, and staff in non-profit organizations.



The OCYA Appreciates...

the 70 Family Resource Networks that operate across Alberta, which provide prevention and early intervention services to foster the well-being of children and build healthy families. These community hubs offer in-person and virtual support through information sharing and referrals to meet the diverse needs of families.

Highlights:

Increased outreach and connections with rural and remote communities.



158

presentations, workshops, booths, and events.



Refreshed our Children & Youth Rights handbooks.



ocya.alberta.ca/resources



Engaged with attendees at numerous Indigenous community events, including the Indigenous Child Welfare Conference and Aboriginal Awareness Week in Calgary, sharing resources and raising awareness about our work.

Coordinated lighting the Calgary Tower and High Level Bridge blue in celebration of National Child Day.



Supported the United Voices Wellness Summit, an annual event focused on newcomer youth mental health.

Launched “This is Me” video recognizing National Child Day.



bit.ly/national-child-day-video

Engaged hundreds of students and service providers through School at the Legislature, post-secondary education events, and professional training sessions.

FACILITATING YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Young people benefit when their voices are heard and their perspectives are considered. This is particularly critical for those involved in the child intervention and youth justice systems, where decisions made about them have a profound impact.

We uphold young people's right to participate throughout the work of our office:

- Our advocates and roster lawyers engage directly with children and youth to understand what is important to them and centre their voices.
- Young people co-develop resources and help organize, promote, and speak at events.
- They share their perspectives on our work through participation on our youth council, advisory groups, and hiring panels.
- We support youth to speak directly with elected officials about their experiences in government systems.

Advisory groups

This year, we strengthened our commitment to youth participation by convening several youth advisory groups that helped shape key initiatives. Their input informed a new consent process for special reports, the design of rights booklets, and content for our youth newsletter.



Self-advocacy toolkit

Five young leaders partnered with us to form the *Our Voices* committee, a youth-led self-advocacy initiative aimed at empowering their peers involved in the child intervention and youth justice systems. They connected with over 100 youth across the province, gathering the real-life strategies they use to advocate for themselves. The initiative is the first step in building stronger, youth-driven advocacy tools while inspiring young people to find and use their voice.

Check out the self-advocacy video series here:



bit.ly/self-advocacy-videos



OCYA YOUTH COUNCIL

Our youth council is made up of diverse young people from across Alberta who have lived experience with the child intervention or youth justice systems. They provide insight and feedback on our work and share their perspectives on issues affecting young people. The council amplifies young people's voices, helps increase our understanding of their lived experiences within systems, and leads positive change. Their work strengthens our advocacy with and on behalf of young people.

During their 2024-2025 term, council members brought energy, creativity, and a deep commitment to positive change. From engaging directly with government officials to team building through bowling nights and karaoke, council members created lasting connections, shared their perspectives, and built leadership skills and confidence that will serve them now and in the future.

Highlights

Participated in a Sweat Lodge ceremony and helped with its preparation.

Participated in various workshops, including cooking and ribbon hoodie making.

Reconnected with nature during an overnight trip to Métis Crossing.

Met with government officials, including the Minister of Children and Family Services, to share their experiences in the child intervention system.

Attended the Mayor's Pride Brunch and celebrated 2SLGBTQ+ youth visibility.



The OCYA Appreciates...

Heather Frayne for providing invaluable support to the OCYA Youth Council. Heather has offered professional debrief sessions using arts-based approaches for council members and mentors over the past three years to help them process their experiences working on the council. Thank you, Heather, for your dedication, care, and passion.



"I was that group home kid that stayed in her room and got in trouble a lot, so even sitting at a table together and feeling like I'm able to do that now is nice."

"I've become more confident. I can speak about my experience and use it to help others."

"I've learned how to be a better listener, holding space for others while also being there for them."

WHAT OCYA YOUTH COUNCIL MEMBERS SAY

"Growing up in care, I felt as if I never truly had a voice. The OCYA taught me my voice exists and it's valuable."

"I've learned more about what is genuinely important to me and how things affect me and my day-to-day life."

COUNCIL MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: AUTUMN & TJ



Autumn

Autumn (she/her) knows what it feels like to grow up in care and fight to be heard. Since joining our youth council in 2022, she has used her voice to make a difference for other young people, especially racialized youth who face added barriers in the system. Autumn has spoken openly about her experiences with decision-makers, on youth rights panels, in the media, and as an emcee at the LRCY Conference.

She's helped lead projects like Diverse Paths, worked on major reports, and welcomed new youth to the table so they know they're not alone. People describe her as warm, curious, and determined—a leader who speaks up because she knows change is possible.



TJ

TJ knows what it's like to need a voice and to find one through art. He started with poetry, turning his own truths into lyrics that spoke about resilience and hope. Over time, those words grew into music, and music grew into a purpose—to uplift others, share lived experiences and create space for local talent that deserves to be heard.

Through River City Radio and his creative work with Vintage \$oul, TJ has built more than a platform; he's built a community where young people and artists can connect and feel understood. As a member of our youth council, he's used that same energy to push for change, making sure youth in care have a say in the decisions that shape their lives.

Autumn and TJ will bring their lived experience, creativity, and powerful voices to the stage as emcees during our International Youth Day event in August 2025. The theme for the event is advocacy through storytelling.

HONOURING YOUTH VOICE

"I had an amazing lawyer who helped me get access to my family. My lawyer went above and beyond."

"My advocate was supportive and always there for me."

"I like that my advocate understood me and helped me say what I wanted to say, but in different words."

"My advocate taught me how to effectively talk about what I was looking for from my caseworker."

"Maybe my lawyer could have told me more about my rights."

"My advocate took the time to get to know me and helped me voice my needs when I couldn't."

"Our lawyer treated us with respect and did not judge our choices."

"I would have liked if my advocate came to see me more."

What young people have to say about working with us...

"Thank you for all the work you've done with me. You have no idea how much support it has been. I really wouldn't have been able to get as far as I did without you by my side! I'm so glad that you were the one who helped me along this journey! I won't hesitate to call in the future."

"My lawyer was really good at making sure I understood everything going on, and updated me on everything."

"My lawyer was very kind and respectful."

"I was really scared the first time I went to jail, but my advocate helped me a lot. She made sure that my worries and concerns were taken seriously and addressed by young offender centre staff. She also helped when I was having problems with my lawyer - I didn't know that I have the right to have my voice heard in court. She made sure I was heard, helped prepare me for meetings and supported me in planning for when I was released into the community."

Did You Know...?

We surveyed 779 young people about their experiences working with an advocate or lawyer, attending an OCYA presentation, or participating in a youth engagement initiative.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

Systemic advocacy is about working towards broad changes in policy, practice and legislation that will benefit many young people now and in the future.

This may include:

- Engaging communities on issues affecting young people (e.g. youth opioid use).
- Encouraging and supporting the child and youth advocacy work of other organizations.
- Organizing opportunities for young people to speak to decision-makers (e.g. through participation on our youth council).
- Educating the public on the rights of children and youth and the issues that matter to them.

We also raise concerns to public bodies about issues affecting the rights, interests, and well-being of children and youth. We make recommendations and provide advice on how services and supports for young people could be improved. This is sometimes done through investigative or special reports. Following a report release, we also track and report on the government's progress toward meeting the recommendations.

Calling attention to youth houselessness

Work began this year on our next special report, focused on youth houselessness. For this report, "unhoused" is defined as being without stable, permanent, and appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means, and ability to secure it.

In alignment with our commitment to reconciliation, we are guided in this work by Cree Elder Ted Quinney, who has asked that the process follow the teachings of the four directions and seasons.

To help shape our approach with young people, we partnered with PolicyWise to develop *A Guide to Engaging Youth Experiencing Houselessness*. To read the guide, visit **resourcesforpractice.policywise.com** or scan the QR code.



Did You Know...?

A reference document that outlines what to expect if you are involved in an investigative review is available for the public. It can be found at: ocya.alberta.ca/investigations



The OCYA Appreciates...

Dr. Peter Choate, a leading expert in assessment issues and child and adolescent mental health. In March 2025, Peter provided an in-service on employing systems approaches when conducting investigative reviews. This training gave us valuable learning to approach our work from a systems perspective.

Systemic Issues we worked on in 2024-2025

1 Houselessness (special report anticipated release mid-2026):

Young people have told us that the lack of stable, safe housing is a critical issue. Our upcoming special report will explore these concerns and offer recommendations for change.

2 Child Intervention intake process (in progress):

We have heard from youth, professionals, and community members about difficulties accessing services and concerns not being taken seriously when reporting safety issues. Work is underway to address these barriers.

3 Lack of placement (in progress):

Young people have shared experiences of instability, extended stays in temporary spaces, or being placed far from their communities.

4 Transition to adulthood (in progress):

Young people have raised concerns about gaps in post-18 supports and confusion about eligibility. We continue to advocate for clarity and consistency.

5 Youth justice - access to identification (closed February 2025):

Young people involved in the justice system raised concerns about not being able to obtain government-issued ID while incarcerated. Through collaboration with ministry leaders, this issue was addressed, and the process for accessing identification has been resolved.

Our commitment to continually learning and improving

This year we:

- Implemented bi-weekly investigations practice meetings to share learnings, trends and processes.
- Met bi-monthly with our child-serving ministry partners to streamline processes, share learnings and provide updates.
- Updated our investigations policy and procedures manuals.
- Participated in land-based learning and other Indigenous ceremonies.

Investigative reviews

We review the circumstances of young people who were seriously injured or passed away and were involved with the child intervention or youth justice system. These reviews include information about the services and supports the young person received, findings, and themes. Investigative reviews are intended to improve the lives of young people by identifying ways to enhance services and supports. This leads to systems improvements and better outcomes for young people and their families. We strive to post completed reviews to our website within one year of being notified that a young person has been seriously injured or passed away.

Individual investigative reviews can be found at: ocya.alberta.ca/individual-investigative-reviews/

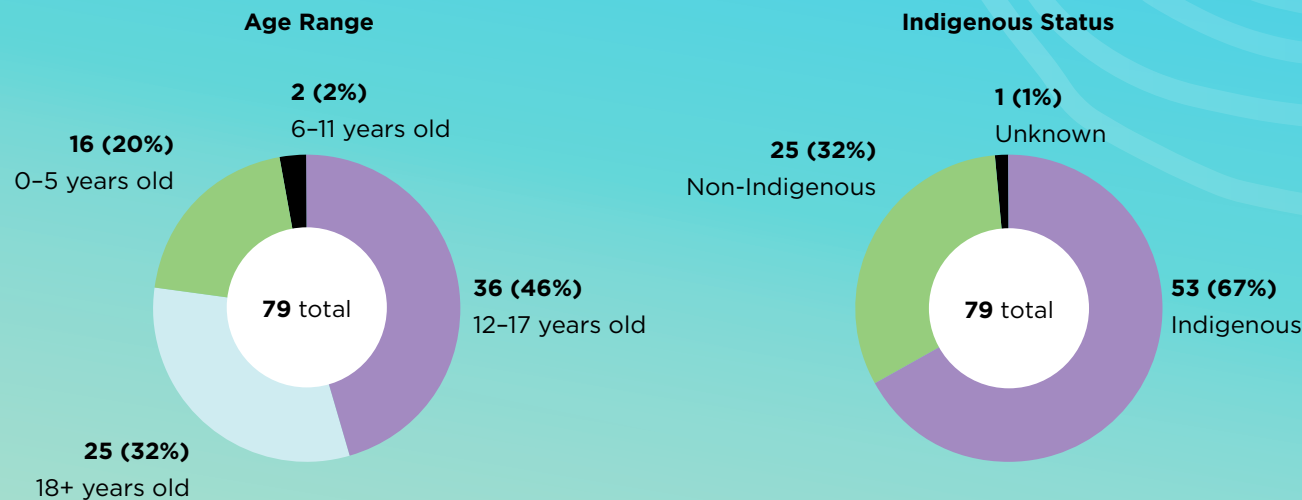
The findings of individual investigative reviews inform an annual consolidated investigative reviews report, which explores key themes and makes recommendations to public bodies. Released in November 2024, *Calling for Change: Investigative Reviews Consolidated Report 2023-2024* highlighted the circumstances of 48 young people and made five recommendations to government. It explored the importance of providing early supports at a community level to build resilience and address mental health and substance use concerns; the relationship between substance use, mental health, and placement stability; and the importance of appropriate post-18 supports. You can read the full report here: ocya.alberta.ca/reports

In the 2024-2025 fiscal year, we completed and publicly released 69 individual investigative reviews. Sixty were for young people who were receiving child intervention services at the time, or within two years, of their death; nine were for young people who were receiving child intervention services when they were seriously injured. These will inform our next *Calling for Change* report, which we anticipate will be released in November 2025.



Notifications of death and serious injury received in 2024-2025

In 2024-2025, we received 79 notifications for young people who were seriously injured or who had passed away. Of these, 65 were for young people receiving child intervention services at the time of, or within two years of their death, and 14 were for young people who were seriously injured while receiving child intervention services.



53 young people were receiving child intervention services at the time or their death or serious injury.

Living arrangements of young people who died while receiving child intervention services	Number
Young people living at home or independently	20
Group Care	6
Independent Living (under 18)	4
Foster Care	3
Kinship Care Relatives/Community members	3
Campus-based Care	2
Unapproved placement	1
Total	39

Living arrangements of young people who were seriously injured while receiving child intervention services	Number
Young people living at home or independently	3
Shelter	4
Group Care	3
Kinship Care	2
Campus-based Care	1
Personalized Community Care	1
Total	14

The remaining 26 young people who passed away had previously received child intervention services (within two years) and, therefore, are not included in the placement data.

2024–2025 Recommendations

This year, **five** new recommendations were made to government through *Calling for Change: Investigative Reviews Consolidated Report 2023–2024*, released in November 2024.

*Recommendation 1:

The Ministries of Education, Health, Justice, Children and Family Services, Mental Health and Addiction, Public Safety and Emergency Services, and Seniors, Community and Social Services should each conduct an annual assessment to identify the supports they fund that are provided at a community level.

*Recommendation 2:

The Ministries of Education, Health, Justice, Children and Family Services, Mental Health and Addiction, Public Safety and Emergency Services, and Seniors, Community and Social Services should each strengthen coordination between funded services that are provided at a community level both within their respective ministry and between ministries.

*Recommendation 3:

The Ministries of Education, Health, Justice, Children and Family Services, Mental Health and Addiction, Public Safety and Emergency Services, and Seniors, Community and Social Services should each strengthen navigation between funded services that are provided at a community level both within their respective ministry and between ministries.

Recommendation 4:

The Ministry of Mental Health and Addiction should publicly post mental health and addiction service options available to children and youth along with their wait times.

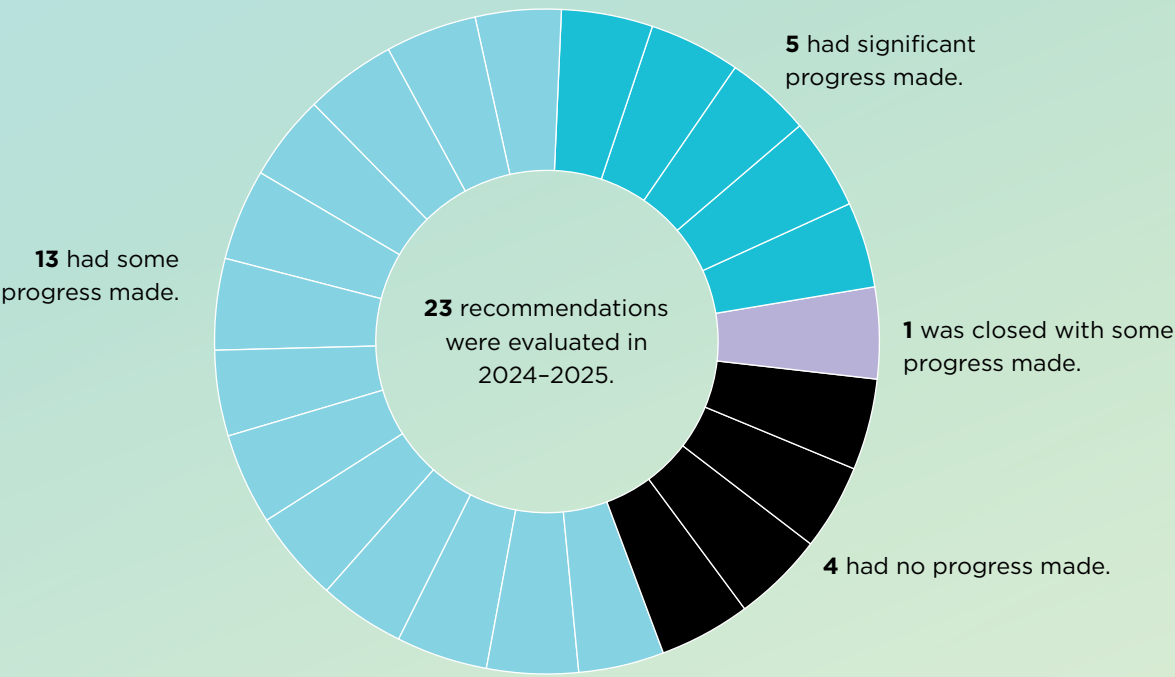
Recommendation 5:

The Ministry of Children and Family Services should review and revise the supports provided under the Transition to Adulthood Program (TAP).

* Recommendations 1, 2, and 3 will be evaluated separately for each ministry during the 2025–2026 evaluation cycle.



Status of Recommendations



The following box details the recommendation that was closed. Please see Appendix C for a full breakdown of all recommendations evaluated in 2024-2025.

Status: Closed (Some Progress)

Mandatory Reviews into Child Deaths: April 1, 2020-September 30, 2020

Libby: Recommendation 1

The Ministries of Health and Children’s Services should host a forum or other event that engages relevant stakeholders to highlight the actions taken and results achieved in the first two years of the province’s five-year youth suicide prevention plan (*Building Strength, Inspiring Hope: A Provincial Action Plan for Youth Suicide Prevention 2019-2024*), as well as steps for action to be taken in the coming two years. The ministries responsible should include a written summary of proceedings so there is a document for future public reference.

Status: Closed (Some Progress)

The Advocate continues to be concerned with the number of youth suicides. While it is appreciated there have been steps taken to address youth suicide, *Building Strength, Inspiring Hope: A Provincial Action Plan for Youth Suicide Prevention 2019-2024* is now concluded. It is troubling that there hasn’t been interim or final publicly accessible information, highlighting the actions taken and results achieved through this plan.

2024-2025

Key Performance Indicators

To foster continuous improvement, we establish, measure, and evaluate several performance indicators. Our three strategic priorities, which are detailed in our 2024-2027 business plan, are the basis for the outcomes measured through these indicators.

OUTCOME 1: We are guided by both individual and collective rights.

It is important that young people are aware of their rights and how to exercise them. When they work with an advocate or lawyer, or attend one of our presentations or workshops, it is an opportunity to help them learn about their rights. Stakeholders are also engaged through presentations and workshops that share information about the rights of children and youth and how they can help young people exercise them.

a) Percentage of young people involved with the OCYA who are more aware of their rights.¹

Our advocates, lawyers, and community engagement staff help young people learn about their rights through one-to-one conversations and educational presentations. As part of our quality assurance process, young people are asked if they are more aware of their rights after working with an advocate or lawyer. Those who attend our educational presentations are asked about their knowledge of their rights as part of a survey at the end of the presentation.

Of those surveyed, 94% said they became more aware of their rights through interacting with an advocate or lawyer, or attending a presentation. When young people are aware of their rights, they are better equipped to advocate for themselves and share their knowledge with others.

	Target 2024-25	Actual 2024-25
Percentage of young people involved with the OCYA who are more aware of their rights.	95%	94%

b) Percentage of young people involved with the OCYA who are able to exercise their rights.²

After learning about their rights, the next step for young people is to understand how to use these rights now and in the future. We asked those who had worked with an advocate, attended an educational presentation or participated in an OCYA initiative if they felt more capable of exercising their rights, and 93% said they did.

	Target 2024-25	Actual 2024-25
Percentage of young people involved with the OCYA who are able to exercise their rights.	90%	93%

1 663 young people completed a survey for this performance measure: 150 worked with a lawyer, 204 worked with an advocate, and 309 attended an educational presentation.

2 321 young people completed the survey for this performance measure: 193 worked with an advocate, 106 attended an educational presentation, and 22 participated in OCYA initiatives.

c) Percentage of stakeholders involved with the OCYA who are more aware of young people’s rights.³

Following attendance at one of our presentations or workshops, all stakeholders were surveyed to determine whether they were more aware of young people’s rights. Of the stakeholders who completed a survey, 100% indicated they were more aware.

	Target 2024-25	Actual 2024-25
Percentage of stakeholders involved with the OCYA who are more aware of young people’s rights.	95%	100%

OUTCOME 2: We are a model of youth participation.

Young people are the foundation of our work; their voice and involvement strengthen our advocacy. Young people continue to be engaged and participate in the work of our office in various ways, including through the OCYA Youth Council, advisory groups, and hiring panels.

a) Percentage of young people involved with the OCYA who felt their participation was valued and meaningful.⁴

Young people involved with the OCYA through the youth council or one of several committees were asked whether they felt staff at the OCYA cared about their opinions and took their ideas seriously. All indicated they felt their participation was valued and meaningful.

	Target 2024-25	Actual 2024-25
Percentage of young people involved with the OCYA who feel their participation is valued and meaningful.	95%	100%

OUTCOME 3: We are meaningfully involved with communities.

The communities that young people belong to play a vital role in their lives. By building meaningful relationships with these communities, we can advocate more effectively and build the capacity of others to do the same.

a) Percentage of community stakeholders who have a better understanding of the role of the OCYA.⁵

Through building relationships with community stakeholders, we receive feedback in both formal and informal ways. This helps inform our future planning and strengthen our connection to communities. Surveys are used after presentations to assess whether community stakeholders have a better understanding of the role of the OCYA. All those surveyed indicated they had a better understanding of the OCYA after attending a presentation.

	Target 2024-25	Actual 2024-25
Percentage of community stakeholders who have a better understanding of the role of the OCYA.	95%	100%

3 87 adult stakeholders who attended educational presentations completed surveys on this performance measure question

4 22 young people involved in OCYA initiatives (including the youth council and one of several committees) completed surveys related to this performance measure question.

5 85 adult stakeholders who attended an educational presentation completed surveys related to this performance measure.

The Year Ahead

International Youth Day 2025

On August 12, 2025, we will host a special youth day event for young people involved in the child intervention and youth justice systems. This year's theme is *Advocacy Through Storytelling*.

Engagement on youth houselessness

As part of the work on our next special report, we will be meeting with young people and stakeholders to learn more about the experiences young people in the child intervention and youth justice systems face related to housing.

Modernizing information systems

The database for our Legal Representation for Children and Youth program will be updated with a modernized system to support our staff and lawyers in their work with young people.

Calling for change

We will continue to make recommendations about issues impacting young people involved with the child intervention and youth justice systems. In the Fall of 2025, we will release our 2024-2025 consolidated investigative reviews report.



National Child Day

For National Child Day on November 20, 2025, we will host a digital art showcase highlighting young people's creative expressions and celebrating their religions, cultures, and traditions.

Video projects

We will be developing two new videos highlighting young people's right to participate when decisions are made about them and our advocacy role in the youth justice system.

Continuing our journey of reconciliation

We will continue to prioritize reconciliation in our work including by providing land-based learning opportunities, participating in ceremony, and strengthening relationships with Indigenous young people, families, and communities.



Management's Responsibility for Financial Reporting

The financial statements of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (the "OCYA"), including the performance measures, are the responsibility of the Child and Youth Advocate.

Responsibility for the integrity and objectivity of the financial statements and performance results for the OCYA rests with the Child and Youth Advocate. I oversee the preparation of the OCYA's annual report, including financial statements and performance results. The financial statements and the performance results, of necessity, include amounts that are based on estimates and judgments. The financial statements are prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

The performance measures are prepared in accordance with the following criteria:

- Reliability – information used in applying performance measure methodologies agrees with the underlying source of data for the current and prior years' results.
- Understandability – the performance measure methodologies and results are presented clearly.
- Comparability – the methodologies for performance measure preparation are applied consistently for the current and prior years' results.
- Completeness – outcomes, performance measures and related targets match those included in the OCYA's 2024-2027 Business Plan.

As the Child and Youth Advocate, in addition to program responsibilities, I am responsible for the OCYA's financial administration and reporting functions. The OCYA maintains systems of financial management and internal control, which consider costs, benefits, and risks that are designed to:

- provide reasonable assurance that transactions are properly authorized, executed in accordance with prescribed legislation and regulations, and properly recorded so as to maintain accountability of public money;
- provide information to manage and report on performance;
- safeguard the assets and properties of the province under the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate's administration; and
- facilitate preparation of the OCYA's business plan and annual report.

In fulfilling my responsibilities for the OCYA, I have relied, as necessary, on the management of the OCYA.

[Original signed by Terri Pelton]

Child and Youth Advocate
Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
July 2, 2025

Financial Highlights

Budget estimates for the OCYA for the 2024-2025 fiscal year were allocated as follows:

	Voted Estimate	Adjustments ⁽¹⁾	Adjusted Voted Estimate
Voted Operating	\$16,445,305	-	\$16,445,305
Voted Capital Investment	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$200,000
Non-voted non-cash Disbursements	\$176,000	-	\$176,000

(1) Adjustments include capital carry-over amounts from previously approved capital budget.

The non-voted non-cash disbursements are for the amortization of capital assets and valuation adjustments related to changes in employee vacation liability, year-over-year.

The approved adjusted voted operating and capital budget totals \$16,645,305. Actual spending (voted actuals) was approximately \$16,040,000, which was \$605,000 or 4% below the approved amounts, and \$154,000 or 1% above the prior fiscal year's spending.

For purposes of financial accountability, the OCYA distributes its voted budget across six program areas, and the office reported approximately \$467,000 in operational savings for the fiscal year 2024-25. Operational spending in the Child and Youth Advocate's Office, Direct Advocacy Services, LRCY, and Strategic Support were under budget by approximately \$4,000 (0.5%), \$43,000 (1%), \$239,000 (5.3%), and \$278,000 (8.7%) respectively. Spending was higher than budgeted in Indirect Advocacy Services by \$97,000 (4%). Variances between budget and actuals were primarily related to savings in the supplies and services category, partially offset by an increase in salaries and benefits.

The LRCY program was allocated a budget of \$4.5 million (28%) of the voted operating budget and incurred \$4.3 million or 27% of the total voted operating expenditures. Legal fees and disbursements paid to lawyers representing young people on matters under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act or the Protection of Sexually Exploited Children's Act account for 93% of the total LRCY program spending.

Total non-cash disbursements (amortization and valuation adjustments) were \$7,000 lower than the budget. The capital project for the ceremonial space was completed in September 2024, later than anticipated, resulting in a lower amortization expense, which was partially offset by an increase in vacation liability.

The \$467,000 operational savings was from lower than budgeted costs of \$107,000 in travel, \$208,000 in legal fees and disbursements under the LRCY program and \$152,000 from other expense categories.

The voted capital investment budget for 2024-25 was \$200,000, which included \$100,000 in unused capital budget carry forward from 2023-24 fiscal year approved by the Treasury Board and Finance. Actual capital costs was \$61,000.

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE

Financial Statements
Year Ended March 31, 2025

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2025

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Schedule 3 - Salary and Benefits Disclosure

Schedule 4 - Related Party Transactions

Schedule 5 - Allocated Costs

To the Members of the Legislative Assembly

Report on the Financial Statements

Opinion

I have audited the financial statements of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (the OCYA), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2025, and the statements of operations, change in net debt, and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the OCYA as at March 31, 2025, and the results of its operations, its changes in net debt, and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of my report. I am independent of the OCYA in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in Canada, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Other information

Management is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the *Annual Report*, but does not include the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The *Annual Report* is expected to be made available to me after the date of this auditor's report.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information identified above and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work I will perform on this other information, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to communicate the matter to those charged with governance.

Responsibilities of management and those charged with governance for the financial statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the OCYA's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless an intention exists to liquidate or to cease operations, or there is no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the OCYA's financial reporting process.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the OCYA's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the OCYA's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the OCYA to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

[Original signed by W. Doug Wylie FCPA, FCMA, ICD.D]

Auditor General

July 2, 2025
Edmonton, Alberta

**OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2025**

	2025		2024
	Budget	Actual	Actual
Revenues (Note 2)			
Other Revenue	\$ -	\$ 116,940	\$ 191,528
Total Revenues	-	116,940	191,528
Expenses - Directly Incurred (Note 2 and Schedules 1 and 5)			
Programs			
Child and Youth Advocate's Office	976,915	954,419	1,002,834
Direct Advocacy Services	4,052,800	3,969,684	3,939,858
Legal Representation for Children and Youth	4,527,432	4,284,615	4,454,191
Indirect Advocacy Services	2,449,962	2,570,708	2,404,162
Youth and Community Engagement	1,335,092	1,328,477	1,220,676
Strategic Support	3,279,104	3,039,673	2,799,141
Total Expenses	16,621,305	16,147,576	15,820,862
Net Cost of Operations	\$ (16,621,305)	\$ (16,030,636)	\$ (15,629,334)

The accompanying notes and schedules are part of these financial statements.

**OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT MARCH 31, 2025**

	2025	2024
Financial Assets		
Accounts Receivable	\$ 15,286	\$ -
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Other Accrued Liabilities	1,625,503	1,789,400
Accrued Vacation Pay	1,149,373	1,080,024
	<u>2,774,876</u>	<u>2,869,424</u>
Net Debt	<u>(2,759,590)</u>	<u>(2,869,424)</u>
Non-Financial Assets		
Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	453,497	491,577
Prepaid Expenses	3,700	37,741
	<u>457,197</u>	<u>529,318</u>
Net Liabilities	<u>\$ (2,302,393)</u>	<u>\$ (2,340,106)</u>
Net Liabilities at Beginning of Year	\$ (2,340,106)	\$ (2,332,773)
Net Cost of Operations	(16,030,636)	(15,629,334)
Net Financing Provided from General Revenues	16,068,349	15,622,001
Net Liabilities at End of Year	<u>\$ (2,302,393)</u>	<u>\$ (2,340,106)</u>

Contractual Obligations (Note 5)

The accompanying notes and schedules are part of these financial statements.

**OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
STATEMENT OF CHANGE IN NET DEBT
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2025**

	2025		2024
	Budget	Actual	Actual
Net Cost of Operations	\$(16,621,305)	\$(16,030,636)	\$(15,629,334)
Acquisition of Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	(100,000)	(61,365)	(194,643)
Amortization of Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	111,000	99,445	84,137
Decrease/(Increase) in Prepaid Expenses		34,041	(30,483)
Net Financing Provided from General Revenues		16,068,349	15,622,001
Decrease/(Increase) in Net Debt		109,834	(148,322)
Net Debt at Beginning of Year		(2,869,424)	(2,721,102)
Net Debt at End of Year		\$ (2,759,590)	\$ (2,869,424)

The accompanying notes and schedules are part of these financial statements.

**OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2025**

	2025	2024
Operating Transactions		
Net Cost of Operations	\$ (16,030,636)	\$ (15,629,334)
Non-Cash Items Included in Net Operating Results:		
Amortization of Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	99,445	84,137
Valuation Adjustments	69,349	45,753
	<u>(15,861,842)</u>	<u>(15,499,444)</u>
(Increase) in Accounts Receivable	(15,286)	-
Decrease/(Increase) in Prepaid Expenses	34,041	(30,483)
(Decrease)/Increase in Accounts Payable and Other Accrued Liabilities	(163,897)	102,569
Cash Applied to Operating Transactions	<u>(16,006,984)</u>	<u>(15,427,358)</u>
Capital Transactions		
Acquisition of Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	<u>(61,365)</u>	<u>(194,643)</u>
Cash Applied to Capital Transactions	<u>(61,365)</u>	<u>(194,643)</u>
Financing Transactions		
Net Financing Provided from General Revenues	<u>16,068,349</u>	<u>15,622,001</u>
Increase in Cash	-	-
Cash at Beginning of Year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Cash at End of Year	<u><u>\$ -</u></u>	<u><u>\$ -</u></u>

The accompanying notes and schedules are part of these financial statements.

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2025

Note 1 AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE

The Child and Youth Advocate is an officer of the Legislature operating under the authority of the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, Chapter C-11.5, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2011. General Revenues of the Province of Alberta fund both the cost of operations of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (the Office) and the purchase of tangible capital assets. The all-party Standing Committee on Legislative Offices reviews and approves the Office's annual operating and capital budgets.

The Office represents the rights, interests and viewpoints of children and youth who receive designated services under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* and the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act*, and youth involved with the youth justice system.

Note 2 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND REPORTING PRACTICES

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards, which use accrual accounting. The Office has adopted PS3450 Financial Instruments. As the Office does not have any transactions involving financial instruments that are classified in the fair value category, there is no statement of remeasurement gains and losses.

Basis of Financial Reporting

Revenues

All revenues are reported on the accrual basis of accounting. Other revenue includes prior year expenditure refunds. Cash received for which goods or services have not been provided by year end is recognized as unearned revenue.

Expenses

Expenses are reported on an accrual basis. The cost of all goods consumed and services received during the year are expensed.

Directly Incurred

Directly incurred expenses are those costs the Office has primary responsibility and accountability for, as reflected in the Offices of the Legislative Assembly budget documents.

In addition to program operating expenses such as salaries, supplies, etc., directly incurred expenses also include:

- amortization of tangible capital assets;
- pension costs which comprise the cost of employer contributions for current service of employees during the year;
- valuation adjustments which include changes in the valuation allowances used to reflect financial assets at their net recoverable or other appropriate value. Valuation adjustments also represent the change in management's estimate of future payments arising from accrued liabilities, including vacation pay; and
- transfer of tangible capital assets to other government departments/entities.

Incurred by Others

Services contributed by other related entities in support of the Office's operation are not recognized but disclosed in Schedule 5.

Financial Assets

Financial assets are assets that could be used to discharge existing liabilities or finance future operations and are not for consumption in the normal course of operations.

Financial assets are the Office's financial claims, such as advances to and receivables from other organizations, employees and other individuals.

Note 2 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND REPORTING PRACTICES
(Continued)

Accounts Receivable

Accounts receivable are recognized at the lower of cost or net recoverable value. A valuation allowance is recognized when recovery is uncertain.

Liabilities

Liabilities are present obligations of the Office to external organizations and individuals arising from past transactions or events occurring before the year end, the settlement of which is expected to result in the future sacrifice of economic benefits. They are recognized when there is an appropriate basis of measurement and management can reasonably estimate the amounts.

Non-Financial Assets

Non-financial assets are acquired, constructed, or developed assets that do not normally provide resources to discharge existing liabilities, but instead:

- (a) are normally employed to deliver government services;
- (b) may be consumed in the normal course of operations; and
- (c) are not for sale in the normal course of operations.

Non-financial assets are limited to tangible capital assets and prepaid expenses.

Tangible Capital Assets

Tangible capital assets of the Office are recognized at cost less accumulated amortization and amortized on a straight-line basis over the estimated useful lives of the assets. The threshold for capitalizing new systems development is \$250,000 and the threshold for major systems enhancements is \$100,000. The threshold for all other tangible capital assets is \$5,000.

Amortization is only charged if the tangible capital asset is put into service.

The cost, less residual value, of the tangible capital assets is amortized on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Furniture and office equipment	3 - 10 Years
Computer hardware and software	5 - 10 Years
Leasehold improvements	0 - 5 Years

Prepaid Expenses

Prepaid expenses are recognized at cost and amortized based on the terms of the agreement.

Net Debt

Net debt indicates additional cash required from General Revenues to finance the Office's cost of operations to March 31, 2025.

Note 3 FUTURE CHANGES IN ACCOUNTING STANDARDS

On April 1, 2026, the Office will adopt the following new conceptual framework and accounting standard approved by the Public Sector Accounting Board.

• **The Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting in the Public Sector**

The Conceptual Framework is the foundation for Public Sector financial reporting standard setting. It replaces the conceptual aspects of Section PS 1000 Financial Statement Concepts and Section PS 1100 Financial Statement Objectives. The conceptual framework highlights considerations fundamental for the consistent application of accounting issues in the absence of specific standards.

• **PS 1202 Financial Statement Presentation**

Section PS 1202 sets out general and specific requirements for the presentation of information in general purpose financial statements. The financial statement presentation principles are based on the concepts within the Conceptual Framework.

Management is currently assessing the impact of the conceptual framework and the standard on the financial statements.

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2025

Note 4 TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS

	Furniture and Office Equipment	Computer Hardware and Software	Leasehold Improvements	2025 Total	2024 Total
Estimated Useful Life	3 - 10 years	5 - 10 years	0 - 5 years		
Historical Cost ⁽¹⁾					
Beginning of Year	\$ 242,547	\$ 1,447,769	\$ 224,095	\$ 1,914,411	\$1,719,768
Additions	-	27,439	33,926	61,365	194,643
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
	<u>242,547</u>	<u>1,475,208</u>	<u>258,021</u>	<u>1,975,776</u>	<u>1,914,411</u>
Accumulated Amortization					
Beginning of Year	\$ 217,254	\$ 1,201,402	\$ 4,178	\$ 1,422,834	\$1,338,697
Amortization Expense	11,280	60,435	27,730	99,445	84,137
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
	<u>228,534</u>	<u>1,261,837</u>	<u>31,908</u>	<u>1,522,279</u>	<u>1,422,834</u>
Net Book Value at March 31, 2025	\$ 14,013	\$ 213,371	\$ 226,113	\$ 453,497	
Net Book Value at March 31, 2024	\$ 25,293	\$ 246,367	\$ 219,917		\$ 491,577

(1) Historical cost includes work-in-progress at March 31, 2025 totaling \$61,365 comprised of leasehold improvements and IT equipment (2024 - \$194,643 comprised of leasehold improvements and IT equipment).

Note 5 CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

Contractual obligations are obligations of the Office to others that will become liabilities in the future when the terms of the contracts or agreements are met.

	2025	2024
Obligation under Operating Leases	\$ 12,955	\$ 27,088
Obligations under Contracts	1,559,110	772,796
	<u>\$ 1,572,065</u>	<u>\$ 799,884</u>

Estimated payment requirements for each of the next five years are as follows:

	Operating Leases	Contracts	Total
2025-26	\$ 12,955	\$ 480,610	\$ 493,565
2026-27	-	256,500	256,500
2027-28	-	265,000	265,000
2028-29	-	273,900	273,900
2029-30	-	283,100	283,100
	<u>\$ 12,955</u>	<u>\$ 1,559,110</u>	<u>\$ 1,572,065</u>

**OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2025**

Note 6 BENEFIT PLANS

The Office participates in the multi-employer pension plans: Management Employees Pension Plan (MEPP), Public Service Pension Plan (PSPP) and Supplementary Retirement Plan for Public Service Managers (SRP). The expense for these pension plans is equivalent to the annual contributions of \$891,758 for the year ended March 31, 2025 (2024 - \$836,018). The Office is not responsible for future funding of the plan deficit other than through contribution increases.

At December 31, 2024, the MEPP reported a surplus of \$1,865,997,000 (2023: surplus \$1,316,313,000), the PSPP reported a surplus of \$6,473,956,000 (2023: surplus \$4,542,500,000), and the SRP reported a deficit of \$25,325,000 (2023: deficit \$21,343,000).

The Office also participates in a multi-employer Long Term Disability Income Continuance Plan. At March 31, 2025, the Management, Opted Out and Excluded Plan reported a deficit of \$775,000 (2024: Deficit \$6,855,000). The expense for this plan is limited to the employer's annual contributions for the year.

Note 7 APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Child and Youth Advocate and the Senior Financial Officer approved these financial statements.

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
EXPENSES - DIRECTLY INCURRED DETAILED BY OBJECT
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2025

Schedule 1

	2025		2024
	Budget	Actual	Actual
Salaries, Wages and Employee Benefits	\$ 9,913,239	\$ 10,081,050	\$ 9,477,613
Supplies and Services	6,597,066	5,967,081	6,259,112
Amortization of Tangible Capital Assets (Note 4)	111,000	99,445	84,137
Total Expenses	\$ 16,621,305	\$ 16,147,576	\$ 15,820,862

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
LAPSE/ENCUMBRANCE
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2025

Schedule 2

	2025				
	Voted Estimate (1)	Adjustments (2)	Adjusted Voted Estimate	Voted Actuals (3)	Unexpended (Over Expended)
Program - Operating Expense					
Child and Youth Advocate's Office	\$ 930,915	\$ -	\$ 930,915	\$ 926,671	\$ 4,244
Direct Advocacy Services	4,024,800	-	4,024,800	3,981,736	43,064
Legal Representation for Children and Youth	4,525,432	-	4,525,432	4,286,261	239,171
Indirect Advocacy Services	2,437,962	-	2,437,962	2,534,949	(96,987)
Youth and Community Engagement	1,328,092	-	1,328,092	1,328,594	(502)
Strategic Support	3,198,104	-	3,198,104	2,920,321	277,783
Program - Capital					
Child and Youth Advocate's Office	50,000	100,000	150,000	44,038	105,962
Strategic Support	50,000	-	50,000	17,327	32,673
Total	\$ 16,545,305	\$ 100,000	\$ 16,645,305	\$ 16,039,897	\$ 605,408
Lapse					\$ 605,408

- (1) As per Voted Spending by Program page of 2024-25 Offices of the Legislative Assembly Estimates, presented December 1, 2023.
(2) Adjustments include capital carry-over amounts from previously approved capital budget.
(3) Actuals exclude non-voted amounts such as amortization and valuation adjustments.

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
SALARY AND BENEFITS DISCLOSURE
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2025

Schedule 3

	2025				2024
	Base Salary ⁽¹⁾	Other Cash Benefits ⁽²⁾	Other Non-Cash Benefits ⁽³⁾	Total	Total
Senior Official					
Child and Youth Advocate ⁽⁴⁾	\$257,811	\$ 19,756	\$ 75,435	\$353,002	\$ 345,879
Deputy Advocates:					
Direct Advocacy Services	185,993	-	39,358	225,351	207,204
Indirect Advocacy Services	162,813	-	36,499	199,312	172,021
Executive Director					
Strategic Support	155,188	-	35,962	191,150	172,720
	<u>\$761,805</u>	<u>\$ 19,756</u>	<u>\$187,253</u>	<u>\$968,814</u>	<u>\$ 897,824</u>

⁽¹⁾ Base salary is comprised of regular salary.

⁽²⁾ Other cash benefits include vacation payouts, employee service milestone cash awards and lump sum payments. There is no bonus paid in FY2025.

⁽³⁾ Other non-cash benefits include the Office's share of all employee benefits and contributions or payments made on behalf of employees including pension, supplementary retirement plans, health care, health spending account, dental coverage, group life insurance, short and long term disability plans, fair market value of parking benefits, and professional memberships.

⁽⁴⁾ Other non-cash benefits for the Child and Youth Advocate paid by the Office also include \$13,196 (2024: \$12,975) for the lease, fuel, insurance and maintenance expenses for an automobile provided. The Child and Youth Advocate receives an automobile taxable benefit based on personal usage.

**OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2025**

Schedule 4

Related parties are those entities consolidated or accounted for on the modified equity basis in the Government of Alberta Consolidated Financial Statements. Related parties also include key management personnel in the Office and their close family members.

The Office and its employees paid or collected certain taxes and fees set by regulation for premiums, licences and other charges. These amounts were incurred in the normal course of business, reflect charges applicable to all users, and have been excluded from this schedule.

The Office had the following transactions with related parties reported on the Statement of Operations and the Statement of Financial Position at the amount of consideration agreed upon between the related parties:

	Other Entities	
	2025	2024
Expenses - Directly Incurred		
Other Services	\$ 75,416	\$ 87,298
Total	\$ 75,416	\$ 87,298

Other Services includes insurance, leased vehicles, information technology consumption and licenses, printing, postage and training.

The Office also had transactions with related parties for which no consideration was exchanged. The amounts for these related party transactions are estimated based on costs incurred by the service provider to provide the service. These amounts are not reported in the financial statements but are disclosed in Schedule 5.

OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCATE ALBERTA
SCHEDULE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
ALLOCATED COSTS
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2025

Schedule 5

	2025				2024
	Expenses - Incurred by Others				
Program	Expenses ⁽¹⁾	Accommodation Costs ⁽²⁾	Business Services ⁽³⁾	Total Expenses	Total Expenses
Child and Youth Advocate's Office	\$ 954,419	\$ 34,559	\$ -	\$ 988,978	\$ 1,036,593
Direct Advocacy Services	3,969,684	250,556	-	4,220,240	4,193,048
Legal Representation for Children and Youth	4,284,615	17,280	-	4,301,895	4,471,070
Indirect Advocacy Services	2,570,708	146,878	-	2,717,586	2,539,197
Youth and Community Engagement	1,328,477	69,119	-	1,397,596	1,288,193
Strategic Support	3,039,673	138,238	118,000	3,295,911	3,038,147
Operations	\$ 16,147,576	\$ 656,630	\$ 118,000	\$ 16,922,206	\$ 16,566,248

(1) Expenses - Directly incurred as per Statement of Operations.

(2) Costs shown for Accommodation (include grants in lieu of taxes), allocated by square metre.

(3) Business Services costs, including charges for information technology, finance services and training, allocated by costs in certain programs.

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Appeals to Court: Appeal of court orders.

Campus-Based Care: Residential care settings that provide services, such as intensive mental health supports and educational programming, on-site with the goal of transitioning the young person to a community-based setting with the skills and tools to be successful.

Foster Care: A family home licensed under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* that provides a placement for a young person in government care.

Group Care: A residential placement staffed by childcare workers that provides an approved placement for a child or youth in government care.

Independent Living: The young person is living independently and may receive a range of supports and services to prepare them to transition into adulthood.

Kinship Care: An approved placement with relatives or close community members for a young person in government care.

Parental Care: The young person is in the care and custody of their parent(s). The parent(s) make decisions about the child, including education, health care, cultural or religious upbringing, and place of residence. In specific circumstances, decision-making may be the responsibility of, or shared with, the Director.

Permanent Guardianship Order (PGO): Under this order, the “Director” as defined in the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (CYFEA)* becomes the sole guardian of a child. The order is sought when it is believed that the child cannot be safely returned to their guardian within a specified time frame.

Personalized Community of Care (PCC) Program: An intensive treatment program for youth in care who have significant addiction, mental health, and behavioural needs. The program is run in collaboration between Children and Family Services, Alberta Health, AHS, and two community organizations.

Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act (PSECA): Legislation pertaining to sexually exploited youth. Young people can be placed in secure services facilities or receive service through a voluntary agreement under this legislation.

Secure Services: The *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (CYFEA)* allows for the confinement of a child for up to 30 days for stabilization and assessment when the child is found to be an immediate danger to themselves or others.

Supervision Order: A court order granting the “Director” as defined in the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (CYFEA)* mandatory supervision of a young person. Guardians retain custody.

Temporary Guardianship Order (TGO): The court grants the “Director” as defined in the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (CYFEA)* custody and guardianship of a child for a specific period. The child is in the care of Child Intervention Services, and guardianship is shared with the parent/legal guardian.

Unapproved Placement: A placement for a child in government care that is not approved by the Director.

Unknown/No Placement: The young person did not have a placement and could not be located by the caseworker.

APPENDIX B

Notifications of Death and Serious Injury Closed in 2024-2025

A review is completed for each notification of serious injury or death. This includes reviewing file information from Children and Family Services, Alberta Health, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and other information sources. Contact with someone close to the young person (whenever possible, a family member) also occurs.

In October 2022, we started publicly releasing investigative reviews for each young person whose serious injury or death we are notified of. While we have always completed individual reviews for each young person, only those meeting certain circumstances were previously made public. The shift in reporting provides additional transparency and public accountability regarding our investigative reviews and ensures that each young person's circumstance is reflected in a consistent manner.

During 2024-2025, 16 notifications were concluded that were received prior to the October 2022 change in public reporting and that did not meet the criteria for a mandatory review.

Of these notifications:

- 9 carried forward from 2022-2023 (received prior to October 2022)
- 6 carried forward from 2021-2022, and,
- 1 carried forward from 2020-2021.

Notifications of death received in 2022-2023 and closed on or before March 31, 2025.

1. A 19-day-old infant passed away from medical causes. She was receiving services through a Safety Assessment at the time of her death.
2. A 2-year-old child passed away from medical causes. He had received services through a Safety Assessment that closed approximately 4 months prior to his death.
3. 14-year-old adolescent passed away from an ATV accident. She had received services through a Safety Assessment approximately 1 year prior to her death.
4. A 15-year-old adolescent died by suicide. She had received services through an Intake approximately 5 months prior to her death.
5. A 17-year-old adolescent died by suicide. He had received services through a Safety Assessment approximately 2 weeks prior to his death.
6. An 18-year-old young adult passed away from fentanyl toxicity. He had received services through Intake approximately a year prior to his death.
7. A 20-year-old young adult passed away from the toxic effects of carfentanil, fentanyl, and methamphetamine use. She was receiving services through a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement at the time of her death.
8. A 21-year-old young adult passed away from medical causes. She was receiving services through a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement at the time of her death.

Notifications of serious injury received in 2022-2023 and closed on or before March 31, 2025.

1. An 18-year-old young adult was involved in a motor vehicle accident. At the time of his injury, he was receiving services through a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement.

Notifications of death received in 2021–2022 and closed on or before March 31, 2025.

1. A 6-month-old infant passed away from medical causes. He had received services through Intake approximately 2 months before his death.
2. An 18-year-old young adult passed away from the toxic effects of ethanol, fentanyl, and methamphetamine use. She had received services through a Safety Assessment 7 months prior to her death.
3. A 20-year-old young adult passed away from fentanyl and methamphetamine toxicity. He was receiving services through a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement at the time of his death.
4. A 20-year-old young adult passed away from combined opioid (carfentanil and fentanyl) and methamphetamine intoxication. She was receiving services through a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement at the time of her death.
5. A 20-year-old young adult passed away from the toxic effects of carfentanil, fentanyl, and methamphetamine use. She was receiving services through a Support and Financial Assistance Agreement at the time of her death.

Notifications of serious injury received in 2021–2022 and closed on or before March 31, 2025.

1. A 17-year-old adolescent was injured in a car accident. She was receiving services through a Permanent Guardianship Order at the time of her injury.

Notifications of death received in 2020–2021 and closed on or before March 31, 2025.

1. An 11-month-old baby passed away from fentanyl toxicity. He was receiving services through a Safety Assessment at the time of his death.

APPENDIX C

Status of Recommendations Evaluated in 2024-2025

		Recommendation	Comments
1	<p>Report Name: <i>Beyond Barriers: A Special Report on Young People with Disabilities in the Child Intervention and Youth Justice Systems</i></p> <p>Released: January 2024</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (some progress)</p>	<p>Recommendation 1 “The Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services should publicly release their plan to address the challenges that were identified by families in the 2021 report on the Family Support for Children with Disabilities program review engagement.”</p>	<p>The Advocate appreciates that the Ministry has taken some action to address the challenges that were identified by families in the 2021 report on the Family Support for Children with Disabilities. The Advocate is looking forward to seeing a public action plan outlining how they will address the concerns identified so that families are aware of the actions being taken.</p> <p>The recommendation has been assessed as some progress.</p>
2	<p>Report Name: <i>Beyond Barriers: A Special Report on Young People with Disabilities in the Child Intervention and Youth Justice Systems</i></p> <p>Released: January 2024</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (no progress)</p>	<p>Recommendation 2 “The Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services should provide families involved with the Family Support for Children with Disabilities program direct services when they require urgent supports, including access to a continuum of services from in-home support to emergency out-of-home living arrangements.”</p>	<p>The Advocate looks forward to seeing how the Ministry addresses urgent supports including direct services as required for families involved with the Family Support for Children with Disabilities program.</p> <p>The recommendation has been assessed as no progress.</p>
3	<p>Report Name: <i>Beyond Barriers: A Special Report on Young People with Disabilities in the Child Intervention and Youth Justice Systems</i></p> <p>Released: January 2024</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (no progress)</p>	<p>Recommendation 3 “The Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services should increase the availability of out-of-home living arrangements provided by the Family Support for Children with Disabilities program.”</p>	<p>The Advocate looks forward to seeing how the Ministry will increase availability, reducing barriers, for out-of-home living arrangements, for families in urgent need.</p> <p>This recommendation has been assessed as no progress.</p>
4	<p>Report Name: <i>Beyond Barriers: A Special Report on Young People with Disabilities in the Child Intervention and Youth Justice Systems</i></p> <p>Released: January 2024</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (no progress)</p>	<p>Recommendation 4 “The Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services should accept and action the Persons with Developmental Disabilities steering committee’s 2021 recommendation about increasing eligibility.”</p>	<p>The Advocate is disappointed that the Ministry is not taking action on the Persons with Developmental Disabilities steering committee’s 2021 report recommendation to increase the eligibility for young people with disabilities.</p> <p>This recommendation has been assessed as no progress.</p>

		Recommendation	Comments
5	<p>Report Name: <i>Beyond Barriers: A Special Report on Young People with Disabilities in the Child Intervention and Youth Justice Systems</i></p> <p>Released: January 2024</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (some progress)</p>	<p>Recommendation 5 “The Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services should accept and action the Persons with Developmental Disabilities steering committee’s 2021 recommendations about alternative home living supports.”</p>	<p>The Advocate appreciates that some actions have been taken and looks forward to further updates from the Ministry. It is important to understand how the actions will directly meet the Persons with Developmental Disabilities steering committee’s 2021 recommendations about alternative home living supports.</p> <p>This recommendation has been assessed as some progress.</p>
6	<p>Report Name: <i>Beyond Barriers: A Special Report on Young People with Disabilities in the Child Intervention and Youth Justice Systems</i></p> <p>Released: January 2024</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (some progress)</p>	<p>Recommendation 6 “The Ministry of Children and Family Services should partner with external disability experts and young people to review and identify actions to meet the needs of young people with disabilities in placements.”</p>	<p>The Advocate appreciates that there is some work being done regarding out-of-home placements for young people, however it is not clear how disability experts and young people were involved in this work, and as such whether it will meet the needs of young people with disabilities.</p> <p>This recommendation has been assessed as some progress.</p>
7	<p>Report Name: <i>Beyond Barriers: A Special Report on Young People with Disabilities in the Child Intervention and Youth Justice Systems</i></p> <p>Released: January 2024</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (no progress)</p>	<p>Recommendation 7 “The Ministry of Children and Family Services should partner with external disability experts and young people to complete a review and identify actions to meet the needs of young people with disabilities involved with the Support for Permanency program.”</p>	<p>The Advocate would like to see the Ministry’s collaboration with disability experts and young people in the completion of a review that identifies actions to meet the needs of young people with disabilities involved with the Support for Permanency program.</p> <p>This recommendation has been assessed as no progress.</p>
8	<p>Report Name: <i>Beyond Barriers: A Special Report on Young People with Disabilities in the Child Intervention and Youth Justice Systems</i></p> <p>Released: January 2024</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (some progress)</p>	<p>Recommendation 8 “The Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services should partner with external disability experts and young people to complete a review and identify actions to improve supports for young people with disabilities involved in the youth justice system.”</p>	<p>The Advocate is pleased with the preliminary steps taken to set up the review and the collaborative approach; and looks forward to the completion of the review and the identification of actions.</p> <p>This recommendation has been assessed as some progress.</p>
9	<p>Report Name: <i>Mandatory Reviews into Child Deaths: April 1, 2022 - September 30, 2022</i></p> <p>Released: March 2023</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (some progress)</p>	<p>Recommendation 1 “The Ministry of Children’s Services should examine the connections for each Indigenous child in the care of the Director, and identify tailored actions that build and strengthen connections with their family, community, and culture.”</p>	<p>The Advocate is concerned that there was not more attention paid to including young people and Indigenous communities in the review, given the continued high number of Indigenous young people in care.</p> <p>This recommendation remains at some progress.</p>

		Recommendation	Comments
10	<p>Report Name: <i>Mandatory Reviews into Child Deaths: April 1, 2022 - September 30, 2022</i></p> <p>Released: March 2023</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (some progress)</p>	<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>“The Ministry of Children’s Services should publicly report on summary findings from their examination of all Indigenous children and their unique connections to their families, communities, and cultures within 12 months and provide ongoing annual updates.”</p>	<p>The Advocate appreciates that the Ministry is exploring ways to publicly share results and findings from the review of Indigenous young people and their connection to culture and looking at ongoing annual reporting.</p> <p>This recommendation remains at some progress.</p>
11	<p>Report Name: <i>Mandatory Reviews into Child Deaths: April 1, 2021 - September 30, 2021</i></p> <p>Released: March 2022</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (significant progress)</p>	<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>“The Ministries of Health, Education, and Community and Social Services should develop a process to ensure collaborative and coordinated service delivery for young people with intellectual and behavioural challenges and their families.”</p>	<p>The Advocate is pleased to see the continued expansion of services, understanding that it takes time to implement across the province; and is hopeful this continues so all young people have access.</p> <p>This recommendation remains at significant progress.</p>
12	<p>Report Name: <i>Strengthening Foundations: Assessment, Information-Sharing, and Collaboration</i></p> <p>Released: September 2021</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (some progress)</p>	<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>“The Ministry of Children’s Services should review and adjust their quality assurance processes to include both qualitative and quantitative measures that regularly evaluate service delivery within their systems.”</p>	<p>The Advocate is concerned that there was no new information provided by the Ministry in this update and no plan for the ongoing use of qualitative and quantitative information, including feedback from young people.</p> <p>This recommendation remains at some progress.</p>
13	<p>Report Name: <i>Strengthening Foundations: Assessment, Information-Sharing, and Collaboration</i></p> <p>Released: September 2021</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (some progress)</p>	<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>“The Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General should review and adjust their quality assurance processes to include both qualitative and quantitative measures that regularly evaluate service delivery within their systems.”</p>	<p>While the Advocate appreciates the actions taken, more information is required about which programs/initiatives related to young people the Ministry is assessing, how young people’s feedback is being incorporated into their evaluation activities, as well as whether results related to service delivery to young people will be publicly reported.</p> <p>This recommendation remains at some progress.</p>
14	<p>Report Name: <i>Strengthening Foundations: Assessment, Information-Sharing, and Collaborations</i></p> <p>Released: September 2021</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (some progress)</p>	<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>“The Ministry of Community and Social Services should collaborate and coordinate with Service Alberta to regularly communicate where to access reference and training materials to those responsible for providing services under the <i>Children First Act</i>. Furthermore, these ministries should offer service providers opportunities for ongoing, interactive, cross-systems training on the act.”</p>	<p>The Advocate appreciates the actions taken and once a plan for the ongoing training for service providers, both for Assisted Living and Social Services and agency staff, is shared this recommendation will be met.</p> <p>This recommendation remains at some progress.</p>

		Recommendation	Comments
15	Report Name: Strengthening Foundations: Assessment, Information-Sharing, and Collaboration Released: September 2021 Evaluation: Ongoing (some progress)	Recommendation 2 The Ministry of Children's Services should collaborate and coordinate with Service Alberta to regularly communicate where to access reference and training materials to those responsible for providing services under the <i>Children First Act</i> . Furthermore, these ministries should offer service providers opportunities for ongoing, interactive, cross-systems training on the act."	The Advocate is concerned that there was no plan or new information provided by the Ministry for the ongoing training for service providers, both Children and Family Services and agency staff. This recommendation remains at some progress.
16	Report Name: Strengthening Foundations: Assessment, Information-Sharing, and Collaboration Released: September 2021 Evaluation: Ongoing (significant progress)	Recommendation 2 "The Ministry of Education should collaborate and coordinate with Service Alberta to regularly communicate where to access reference and training materials to those responsible for providing services under the <i>Children First Act</i> . Furthermore, these ministries should offer service providers opportunities for ongoing, interactive, cross-systems training on the act."	While the Advocate appreciates that access to training and reference materials on the <i>Children's First Act</i> have been provided, an expectation that all staff complete the training on an ongoing basis is also needed. This recommendation remains at significant progress.
17	Report Name: Mandatory Reviews into Child Deaths: October 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021 Released: September 2021 Evaluation: Ongoing (significant progress)	Brooklyn & Cindi: Recommendation 1 "The Ministries of Children's Services and of Justice and Solicitor General should develop a protocol that requires Child Intervention Services be informed prior to the release of an individual who has been incarcerated for family violence where the family was involved with Child Intervention Services."	The Advocate appreciates that collaborative work has occurred and looks forward to the implementation of a notification process to support the safety of young people and their families when a family violence offender is being released. Once the policy manual update has been received and reflects the notification process this recommendation will be met. This recommendation is assessed at significant progress.
18	Report Name: Mandatory Reviews into Child Deaths: October 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021 Released: September 2021 Evaluation: Ongoing (some progress)	Brooklyn & Cindi: Recommendation 2 "The Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General should reassess the risk offenders pose and offer to safety plan with victims of family violence when offenders are released from incarceration."	The Advocate acknowledges the work that has been done to support children and families impacted by family violence. Young people and those who care about them need to be aware of the risk posed by the offender (who is being released) and have the supports necessary to effectively plan for their safety. Unfortunately, the intent of this recommendation has not been addressed. This recommendation remains at some progress.
19	Report Name: Renewed Focus: A Follow-up Report on Youth Opioid Use in Alberta Released: June 2021 Evaluation: Ongoing (significant progress)	Recommendation 1 "The Government of Alberta, with leadership from the Ministry of Health, should establish a dedicated body such as a panel, committee, or commission to develop and support implementation of a youth opioid and substance use strategy."	The Advocate appreciates that much action has been taken to address opioid and substance use, including cross ministry collaboration. Once this is articulated in a strategy specific to the developmental stage of young people, this recommendation will be met. This recommendation is assessed at significant progress.

		Recommendation	Comments
20	<p>Report Name: Mandatory Reviews into Child Deaths: April 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020</p> <p>Released: March 2021</p> <p>Evaluation: Closed (unmet-some progress)</p>	<p>Libby: Recommendation 1 “The Ministries of Health and Children’s Services should host a forum or other event that engages relevant stakeholders to highlight the actions taken and results achieved in the first two years of the province’s five-year youth suicide prevention plan (<i>Building Strength, Inspiring Hope: A Provincial Action Plan for Youth Suicide Prevention 2019–2024</i>), as well as steps for action to be taken in the coming two years. The ministries responsible should include a written summary of proceedings so there is a document for future public reference.”</p>	<p>The Advocate continues to be concerned with the number of youth suicides. While it is appreciated there have been steps taken to address youth suicide, <i>Building Strength, Inspiring Hope: A Provincial Action Plan for Youth Suicide Prevention 2019–2024</i> is now concluded. It is troubling that there hasn’t been interim or final publicly accessible information, highlighting the actions taken and results achieved through this plan.</p> <p>This recommendation has been closed as unmet with some progress.</p>
21	<p>Report Name: Mandatory Reviews into Child Deaths: October 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020</p> <p>Released: September 2020</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (some progress)</p>	<p>Cora & Elliot: Recommendation 1 “The Ministry of Community and Social Services should strengthen its capacity to promote collaborative practice between community-based agencies to address the needs of vulnerable young people in the context of their families and communities.”</p>	<p>While some progress has been made at a higher level to promote connection between agencies, the Advocate would like to see the development of policy and directives to encourage collaboration between agencies at the client level to address the needs of vulnerable young people in the context of their families and communities.</p> <p>This recommendation remains at some progress.</p>
22	<p>Report Name: Mandatory Reviews into Child Deaths: April 1, 2019 - September 30, 2019</p> <p>Released: March 2020</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (some progress)</p>	<p>Penny: Recommendation 1 “The Ministry of Community and Social Services should ensure that the Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) program pays for services upfront and provides key workers, who help with accessing resources and supports, to families facing financial and social barriers.”</p>	<p>While the Advocate acknowledges that some changes have been made, having to pay for services up front is still negatively impacting families and services to young people. The Advocate is extremely worried about this and is again asking to see policy that provides families with ease of access to the resources they require.</p> <p>This recommendation remains at some progress.</p>
23	<p>Report Name: Mandatory Reviews into Child Deaths: April 1, 2018 - September 30, 2018</p> <p>Released: June 2019</p> <p>Evaluation: Ongoing (significant progress)</p>	<p>Andy: Recommendation 1 “Child Intervention Services should include young people, who are living in a foster home, in the annual foster home assessment process.”</p>	<p>The Advocate is concerned that the new assessment and process has not yet been implemented as the recommendation was made in 2019. The voice of young people still isn’t included in annual caregiver assessments. The Advocate is hopeful that this will be implemented soon, and it will clearly describe how the voice of all young people in the home is incorporated.</p> <p>This recommendation remains at significant progress.</p>

Appendix D

Recommendation Evaluation Framework

Purpose

The Child and Youth Advocate makes recommendations to public bodies about issues that affect the lives of young people. Recommendations aim to improve the services and supports young people in child- and youth-serving systems receive. This framework is intended to help public bodies and stakeholders understand the recommendation cycle.

Principles

Recommendations and their evaluation are based on the following principles: balance, accountability, integrity, and collaboration.

BALANCE

Recommendations and their evaluation are based on the research and findings from investigative reviews and special reports.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Recommendations and expected outcomes are clearly articulated.

INTEGRITY

Evaluation of responses follows a robust process that measures responses against expected outcomes.

COLLABORATION

Conversations occur with public bodies so that there is a shared understanding, transparency, and clarity about the rationale/intent of each recommendation.

The Advocate may make recommendations through investigative reviews and special reports. They may be made to any public body whose policies, practices, and procedures impact the lives of young people. After making a recommendation, progress is evaluated on a regular basis.

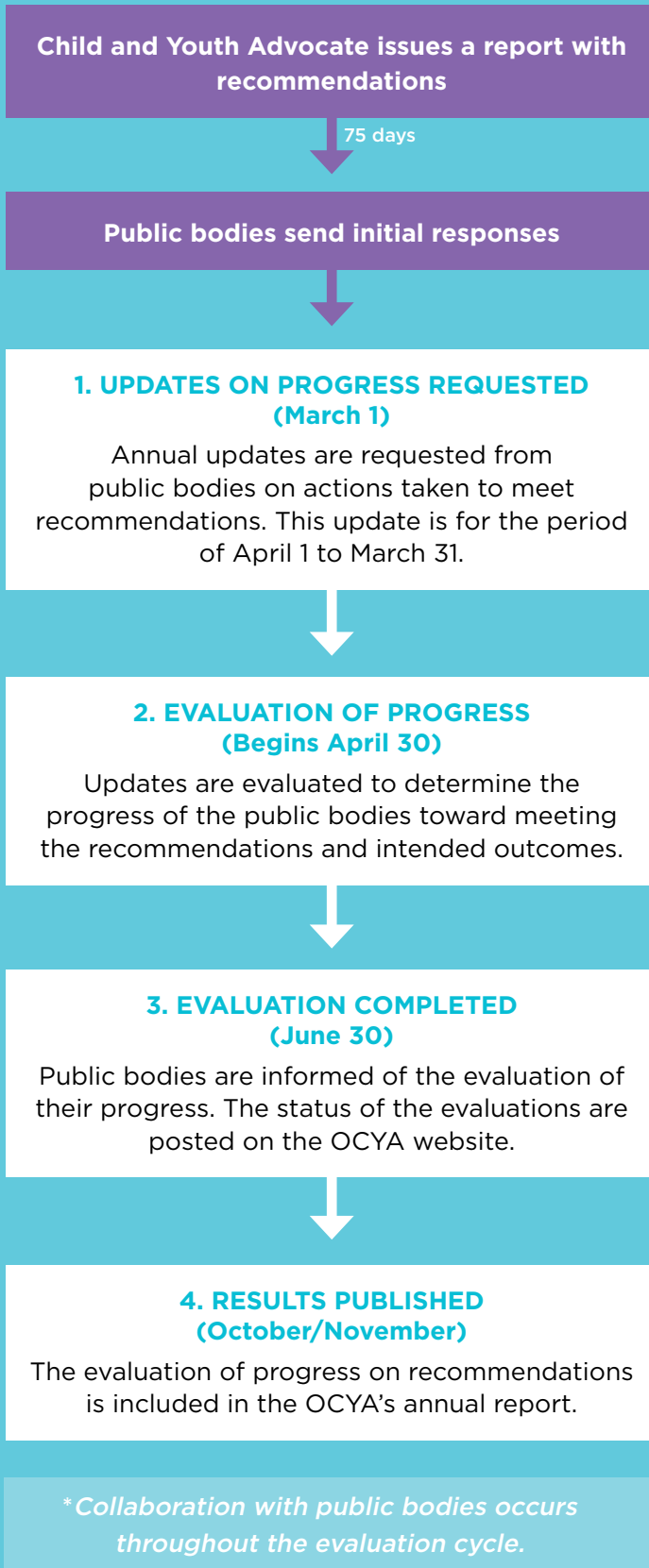
Recommendation Evaluation Cycle

- The evaluation cycle begins when the Child and Youth Advocate releases a report that contains recommendations.
- Public bodies provide an initial response within 75 days.
- Progress toward meeting the recommendations is evaluated on an annual basis.
- The evaluation process includes an in-depth analysis of the update provided by each public body.
- An internal committee that includes the Advocate reviews the analysis and evaluates the progress.
- Recommendations continue to be evaluated until they are deemed met or unmet, at the discretion of the Advocate.

The evaluation process has several intentional points of collaboration with public bodies, including opportunities for informal conversations as questions arise throughout the process.

Discussions are intended to be an open dialogue to clarify progress and identify actions that will meet the recommendation.

Recommendation Evaluation Cycle



Progress Status Definitions

No progress



Update(s) have not included actions that would meet the recommendation and expected outcomes.

Some progress



Update(s) have included some actions that are aligned with meeting the recommendation and expected outcomes. Significant actions are needed before the recommendation is met.

Significant progress



Update(s) have included many actions that are aligned with meeting the recommendation and expected outcomes. There are specific actions needed before the recommendation can be met.

Met



The Advocate is satisfied that the actions taken meet the recommendation and expected outcomes.

Unmet



The Advocate is not satisfied that the actions taken meet the recommendation and expected outcomes. It will remain at its last progress status.

Note: Recommendations that are still in progress after five years will be reviewed for contextual significance and applicability.

Appendix E

Investigative Review Framework

Purpose

The Child and Youth Advocate conducts investigative reviews when a young person is seriously injured or passes away who was involved with the child intervention or youth justice systems.

Investigative reviews are designed to improve the lives of young people by identifying ways to enhance services and supports, leading to system improvements and better outcomes for young people and their families.

This document is intended to help public bodies and stakeholders understand the investigative review cycle.

Principles

Investigative reviews are based on the following principles: balance, integrity, respect, and collaboration.

BALANCE

We believe that each young person's life is unique and that they live within the context of their family, community, and culture.

Reports consider each unique experience to inform systemic change.

INTEGRITY

We combine the experience of a young person with a review of the services and supports they received and research into leading practices to inform our recommendations.

Reports are subjected to rigorous checks and balances to ensure privacy and accuracy.

RESPECT

We consider the impact of our work on young people, their families, communities, and the public.

COLLABORATION

We involve people who were close to the young person in our reviews.

We are committed to engaging with service providers to increase our understanding of the young person's circumstances.

We engage government ministries and other public bodies to ensure our recommendations are accurate and the intent is clear.

Rights and Responsibilities

The *Child and Youth Advocate Act* says that:

- We can collect information from any public body.
- The information gathered is privileged.
- The reports we write must be non-fault finding and non-identifying.
- We must inform and involve relevant parties as appropriate, which may include, but is not limited to, ministries, families, Bands, Delegated First Nation Agencies, community or cultural groups, law enforcement agencies, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, and Alberta Health Services.

Young people have the right to be heard, as described in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

We involve young people who were seriously injured in their investigative reviews, and consult with those who have lived child welfare and youth justice experience in reviews of young people who have died.

We may release a public report within one year from receipt of notification of death or serious injury.

Investigative Review Cycle

The investigative review cycle begins when the OCYA receives a notification of a serious injury or death of a young person.



We receive notifications from four sources: Children and Family Services, Justice, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, and Vital Statistics.



We notify Children and Family Services or Justice that an investigative review will be completed. The young person's family, community, caregivers, and service providers are involved in the review.



An investigative review is completed for each young person, highlighting findings and themes.



We regularly review these themes and assess if identified gaps in services and supports and/or systemic issues require further exploration.



A consolidated investigative review report is released with our annual report each year.



The Child and Youth Advocate makes recommendations through investigative review reports.

Collaborative Process

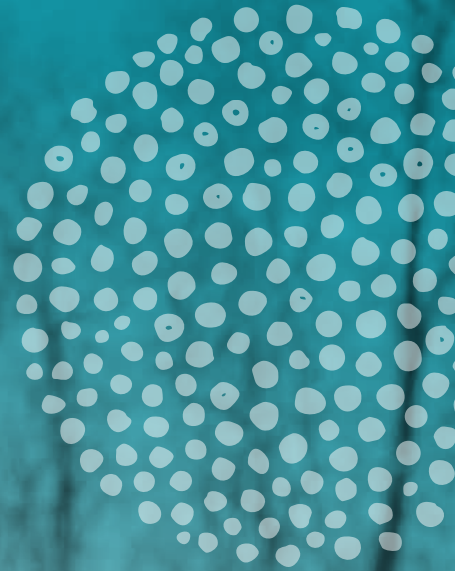
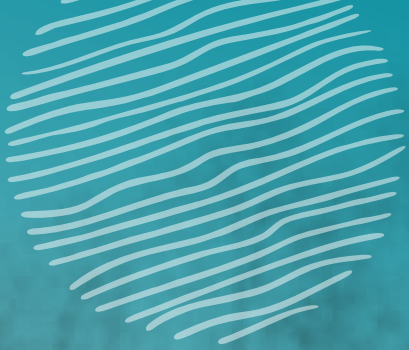
The investigative review process has several points of collaboration with public bodies, including connecting with service providers about their work with a young person and with staff who oversee the policies, practices, and processes.

These discussions are intended to ensure that investigative reviews reflect practices and policies in place when the young person received services and to learn about future programs and initiatives.

To inform recommendations made to public bodies, we connect with child-serving systems when a potential gap in services and supports or systemic barriers are identified.

Once the Child and Youth Advocate has made a recommendation, progress is evaluated on a regular basis.

To view our investigative review reports, please visit ocya.alberta.ca.



Cover photo credit: Ken Armstrong



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