

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



Fiscal Year FY 2026-2027

Agency Budget Plan

FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

OPERATING REQUESTS <i>(FORM B1)</i>	For FY 2026-2027, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	☒	Requesting General Fund Appropriations.
	☐	Requesting Federal/Other Authorization.
	☐	Not requesting any changes.
NON-RECURRING REQUESTS <i>(FORM B2)</i>	For FY 2026-2027, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	☒	Requesting Non-Recurring Appropriations.
	☐	Requesting Non-Recurring Federal/Other Authorization.
	☐	Not requesting any changes.
CAPITAL REQUESTS <i>(FORM C)</i>	For FY 2026-2027, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	☐	Requesting funding for Capital Projects.
	☒	Not requesting any changes.
PROVISOS <i>(FORM D)</i>	For FY 2026-2027, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	☐	Requesting a new proviso and/or substantive changes to existing provisos.
	☐	Only requesting technical proviso changes (such as date references).
	☒	Not requesting any proviso changes.

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

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
PRIMARY CONTACT: SECONDARY CONTACT:	Margaret Bodman	(803) 315-2251	Margaret.bodman@childadvocate.sc.gov
	Jasmine Dubose	(803) 722-8857	Jasmine.dubose@childadvocate.sc.gov

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2026-2027 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent

	<u>Agency Director</u>	<u>Board or Commission Chair</u>
SIGN/DATE:	Margaret F Bodman 9/26/2025	
TYPE/PRINT NAME:	Margaret F. Bodman	

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

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

BUDGET REQUESTS			FUNDING					FTES				
Priority	Request Type	Request Title	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total
1	B1 - Recurring	System Improvement FTE's Request (recurring)	506,746	0	0	0	506,746	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00
2	B1 - Recurring	Guardian Ad Litem - FTE's Request (recurring)	278,725	0	0	0	278,725	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.00
3	B1 - Recurring	Foster Care Review Board FTE's Request (recurring)	84,105	0	0	0	84,105	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
4	B2 - Non-Recurring	Continuum of Care (non-recurring)	1,500,000	0	0	0	1,500,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5	B1 - Recurring	Guardian ad Litem "Best Interest of the Child" Operating Funding (recurring)	1,500,000	0	0	3,428,597	4,928,597	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6	B1 - Recurring	IT Operations Software Licensing	50,841	0	0	0	50,841	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
7	B2 - Non-Recurring	New Hire Equipment (non-recurring)	13,500	0	0	0	13,500	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
8	B1 - Recurring	Continuum of Care Transfer Alignment	400,000	0	0	0	400,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
9	B1 - Recurring	Guardian ad Litem & Foster Care Review Board Pay Disparity (recurring)	377,555	0	0	0	377,555	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
10	B2 - Non-Recurring	Children's Trust (non-recurring)	750,000	0	0	0	750,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
11	B2 - Non-Recurring	South Carolina Network of Children's Advocacy Centers (non-recurring)	1,500,000	0	0	0	1,500,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTALS			6,961,472	0	0	3,428,597	10,390,069	9.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.00

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

AGENCY PRIORITY	1
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	System Improvement FTE’s Request (recurring)
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	General: \$506,746 Federal: \$0 Other: \$0 Total: \$506,746
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	5.00
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Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark “X” for all that apply:	
	☐	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	☒	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	☐	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	☐	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	☐	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	☐	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	☐	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	☐	IT Technology/Security related
	☒	HR/Personnel Related
	☐	Consulted DTO during development
☒	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority # 7	

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark “X” for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	☐	Education, Training, and Human Development
	☒	Healthy and Safe Families
	☐	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	☐	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	☐	Government and Citizens

	1.2.3 - Review and augment existing policies and procedures for the System Improvement Division to ensure clear expectations for staff and alignment with the agency's mission and duties. 2.2.4 - Initial response to complaints occurs within one business day of the Agency's receipt of telephone, website-submitted, or emailed complaints for FY26. 3.1.1 - Review and improve the agency's tracking system for reviewing and evaluating services for children. 3.2.1 - For all cases that are closed as "inadequate," System Improvement will provide to the agency in question a data and analysis report informing them of the investigation outcome and recommendations for improvement.
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ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS

3.2.2 Encourage a culture of collaboration and coordination among state agencies which serve children by developing relationships and communicating regularly in a professional and respectful manner. Regular meetings should occur, with a minimum of one virtual or in-person meeting occurring with each of the nine state agencies each fiscal year.

3.3.2 - Monitor and report total number and typology trends of complaints and critical incident notifications received by the DCA within a fiscal year.

The requested FTEs will strengthen the System Improvement Division's capacity to achieve goals outlined in the FY25-26 Annual Accountability Report, particularly ensuring initial complaint responses occur within one business day (Goal 2.2.4) and enhancing the agency's tracking and reporting systems for children's services (Goal 3.1.1).

Funds will support staff dedicated to timely complaint resolution, data analysis and reporting on inadequate case closures, and ongoing interagency collaboration.

The use of these funds will be evaluated through quarterly monitoring of complaint timeliness, number of data analysis reports generated, and the frequency of collaborative meetings with partner agencies, ensuring accountability and measurable outcomes that align with the agency's mission.

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

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

The recipients of funds will be newly established full-time equivalent (FTE) positions within the System Improvement Division. Funds will be allocated to cover salaries, fringe benefits, and recurring costs necessary for employees to successfully perform their duties. These recurring costs include office space, cell phones, and required software subscriptions to support communication, data analysis, and reporting functions. Allocation will be managed internally through the agency's established hiring, payroll, and procurement processes to ensure compliance with the state personnel and budgetary requirements.

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

The System Improvement Division is experiencing an increase in workload that directly impacts its ability to fulfill the agency's mission of protecting children and ensuring accountability in services.

- In FY25, the division received 5,941 notifications and complaints, more than double the 2,894 received in FY24.
- This unprecedented increase has caused investigators to carry caseloads exceeding 60, far beyond the recommended maximum of 25 per staff member.
- At the same time, the division has faced the highest turnover rate of any division within the agency of 37.5% over the past year with 6 staff members leaving, despite 11 new hires during the same period. Each separation creates costly recruitment and training needs, extends vacancy periods, and forces remaining staff to absorb an additional 15-20 cases each.
- Without additional staff, these challenges will continue to delay investigations, increase staff burnout, and limit the division's ability to conduct comprehensive, trauma-informed oversight.

The request for the three Program Coordinator I and two Program Coordinator II positions is necessary to ensure that the division can provide timely, high-quality services. These additional positions will:

- Improve timeliness and responsiveness in investigations, ensuring complaints are addressed within one business day as outlined in the FY 25-26 Annual Accountability Report.
- Reduce the current case backlog, ensuring children and families receive prompt attention and resolution.

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

- Stabilize staffing levels, reducing the burden on existing investigators and lowering turnover caused by burnout.
- Strengthen compliance with internal guideline, state mandates, and best practices, thereby improving outcomes for vulnerable children.

The return on investment is clear: funding these positions now will prevent costly delays, reduce investigator burnout and turnover, and improve service quality for children who rely on agency oversight. If funds are not received, caseloads will remain at unsustainable levels, critical complaints may go unresolved, and the agency risks noncompliance with statutory requirements and its own accountability targets.

Funds requested are reasonable and directly tied to personnel and recurring costs required to support these positions, including office space, cell phones, and essential software subscriptions. These investments are critical to ensure staff are equipped to perform their duties effectively. The request aligns directly with the agency's mission by improving accountability, ensuring timely responses, and enhancing the quality of services delivered to children and families across the state.

Salary: \$323,900

Fringe: \$154,305.96

Estimated Recurring Operating Expenses: \$28,540

Total: \$506,745.96

Non-Recurring: \$7,500 (separate priority #7)

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

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FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	2
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Guardian Ad Litem - FTE’s Request (recurring)
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	General: \$278,725 Federal: \$0 Other: \$0 Total: \$278,725
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	3.00
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Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark “X” for all that apply:	
		Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	X	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
		Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
		Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
		Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
		Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
		Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
		IT Technology/Security related
	X	HR/Personnel Related
		Consulted DTO during development
	X	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority # 7

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark “X” for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
		Education, Training, and Human Development
	X	Healthy and Safe Families
		Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
		Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
		Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	1.1.1 - Increase the number of children served by volunteer guardian’s ad litem. 1.1.4 - Decrease the attrition rate of active volunteers 1.2.1 - Foster innovation in retention methods for staff. Survey Guardian ad Litem staff regarding their satisfaction with their relationship with leadership 1.3.1 - Increase the completion rate of potential volunteers from the 30-hour pre-service training The requested funds will be used to support additional FTEs and resources for the Guardian ad Litem Division to strengthen recruitment, training, and retention of volunteer advocates. This investment directly supports FY 2025-26 accountability goals, including increasing the number of children served by volunteer guardians
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(Goal 1.1.1), decreasing the attrition rate of active volunteers (Goal 1.1.4), and improving staff and volunteer satisfaction with leadership support (Goal 1.2.1). Funds will be allocated toward personnel, training resources, and operational support needed to increase volunteer capacity, expand pre-service training completion rates (Goal 1.3.1), and ensure consistent quality oversight through audit monitoring (Goal 3.1.3).

The use of funds will be evaluated through measurable outcomes such as: (1) the number of children appointed a volunteer Guardian ad Litem, (2) volunteer retention and attrition rates, (3) completion rates of the 30-hour pre-service training, and (4) results from staff and volunteer satisfactions surveys.

Tracking these outcomes ensures that resources are tied directly to improvements in capacity, accountability, and the agency's mission of providing quality representation and oversight for children across South Carolina.

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

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

The recipient of funds will be newly established full-time equivalent (FTE) positions within the Guardian ad Litem Division. Funds will be allocated to cover salaries, fringe benefits, and recurring costs necessary for these staff to perform their duties effectively, including office space, cell phones, and required software subscriptions. These positions will provide direct support to volunteer guardians, assist with documentation and case assignments, and ensure timely and organized management of Guardian ad Litem cases. Allocation will be managed internally through the agency's established hiring, payroll, and procurement processes to ensure compliance with state requirements. Ultimately, these investments will directly support volunteers in their advocacy role and improve the quality of representation provided to children across South Carolina.

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

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

The Guardian ad Litem Division continues to face rising caseloads that threaten its ability to meet statutory obligations and ensure that children in South Carolina have their best interests represented in court.

- In FY25, the program served 10,666 children: an average of 6,000 children per month with only 146 staff available statewide.
- Of these children, 47% were appointed a volunteer guardian ad litem while 53% required a trained Department of Children's Advocacy staff member to serve as their guardian, reflecting a growing reliance on agency personnel to meet advocacy demands.
- Caseloads in some counties exceed 30 per staff member, far above the statewide goal of maintaining caseloads below 20.

This workload is unsustainable and creates delays in case assignment, reduces service quality, and increases staff burnout and turnover. The addition of three Program Coordinator I positions will help reduce caseloads, stabilize staffing, and improve outcomes for children by providing oversight, documentation support, and timely management of assignments.

If funding is not provided, caseloads will remain unmanageable, volunteer recruitment and retention efforts will not be sufficient to meet demand, and the division risks failing to meet accountability goals such as increasing the number of children served by volunteers (Goal 1.1.1) and decreasing attrition of active volunteers (Goal 1.1.4). By contrast, funding this request will ensure the program has the staff capacity to meet statutory requirements, support volunteers, and deliver consistent, high-quality

advocacy for children who are brought into the child welfare system across South Carolina.

Salary: \$183,300

Fringe: \$87,324.12

Recurring Operating Expenses: \$8,100

Total: \$278,724.12

Non-Recurring (separate priority #7): \$4,500

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

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FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	3
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Foster Care Review Board FTE's Request (recurring)
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	General: \$84,105 Federal: \$0 Other: \$0 Total: \$84,105
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	1.00
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Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	☐	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	☒	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	☐	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	☐	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	☐	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	☐	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	☐	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	☐	IT Technology/Security related
	☒	HR/Personnel Related
	☐	Consulted DTO during development
☒	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority # 7	

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	☐	Education, Training, and Human Development
	☒	Healthy and Safe Families
	☐	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	☐	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	☐	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	2.2.5 - Review and update 100% of FCRD/FCRB policies and procedures to streamline and improve consistency across the state. 3.1.5 - Increase the number of adoption referrals received by Heart Gallery by 10% 3.1.6 - Ensure all children in foster care are scheduled for a timely review in accordance with the statutory requirement of reviewing each case every 6 months. 3.3.1 - Monitor and report quarterly and annually on Division activities, recommendations for permanency, and any deficits or barriers in the foster care system that are impacting permanency for children in foster care each fiscal year. Funds will be used to establish one Legal Assistant position within the Foster Care Review Board Division. This position will directly support the Division’s accountability
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goals by ensuring accurate preparation and management of legal documents, assisting with policy and procedure updates to improve consistency across the state (Goal 2.2.5), and supporting compliance with statutory review requirements to ensure every child's case is reviewed timely (Goal 3.1.6). The Legal Assistant will also strengthen documentation and record-keeping needed for adoption referrals (Goal 3.1.5) and permanency reporting (Goal 3.3.1).

The use of funds will be evaluated through measurable outcomes such as the timelines of legal documentation, the percentage of policies and procedures updated annually, and the Divisions ability to meet the statutory requirement of reviewing each case every six month. These measures ensure that funds are directly tied to improved efficiency, compliance, and accountability in the foster care system.

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

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

The recipients of funds will be the Foster Care Review Board Division through the establishment of one full-time Legal Assistant position. Funds will cover salary, fringe benefits, and recurring costs required for this position to operate effectively, including office space, cell phone, software subscriptions, travel, and training. Allocation will be managed internally through the agency's established hiring, payroll, and procurement processes to ensure compliance with state requirements.

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

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

The Foster Care Review Board has seen significant growth in its legal and regulatory responsibilities due to increased statutory oversight requirements. The reclassification of the Attorney position to Attorney III and updated role of the General Counsel have expanded the Division's legal workload beyond the capacity of existing staff. Currently, bottlenecks in legal document preparation, policy review, and case management support delay timely reviews and place additional strain on the General Counsel and program staff.

The requested Legal Assistant will provide essential support by drafting, editing, and organizing legal documents, managing records, assisting with policy updates, and supporting oversight hearings. This role will enable the Division to meet its statutory requirement of reviewing every child's case every six months, streamline adoption referrals, and ensure consistent compliance across the state.

If this request is not funded, delays in case reviews and policy updates will persist, increasing compliance risks and reducing the Division's ability to provide effective oversight of foster care cases. By contrast, funding this position will improve efficiency, reduce workload strain, and ensure that the Foster Care Review Board can fulfill its mission of protecting children's best interests through accountability and oversight.

Salary: \$53,100

Fringe: \$25,296.84

Estimated Recurring Operating Expenses: \$5,708

Total: \$84,104.84

Non-Recurring Expenses (separate priority): \$1,500

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

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

AGENCY PRIORITY	5
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Guardian ad Litem “Best Interest of the Child” Operating Funding (recurring)
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	General: \$1,500,000 Federal: \$0 Other: \$3,428,597 Total: \$4,928,597
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	0.00
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Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

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

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark “X” for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	☐	Education, Training, and Human Development
	☒	Healthy and Safe Families
	☐	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	☐	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	☐	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	1.1.1 - Increase the number of children served by volunteer guardians ad litem. 1.1.2 - Improve or maintain agency turnover rate through effective recruitment and retention 1.1.4 - Decrease the attrition rate of active volunteers 1.3.1 - Increase the completion rate of the 30-hour pre-service training by potential volunteers Increasing the other funds spend authorization at a level consistent with actual revenue will ensure that expenditures remain transparent, properly accounted for, and directly tied to outcomes such as reducing turnover (Goal 1.1.2), decreasing volunteer attrition (Goal 1.1.4), and expanding training completion (Goal 1.3.1). The
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use of funds will be evaluated through measurable outcomes, including staff retention, volunteer capacity, and service quality, ensuring program stability and fiscal responsibility.

The separate requested increase in appropriations funds will be used to support the Guardian ad Litem Division's ability to sustain operations and best interest advocacy services for children across South Carolina. Funds will be allocated to cover recurring program costs, including lease increases, relocation expenses, and rising legal representation costs, which were previously identified but not approved.

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

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

Recipients of funds will include Guardian ad Litem program staff and volunteers who depend on operational support to effectively represent children's best interests. Funds will also be directed to cover contractual obligations such as car leases, office space expansion, relocation expenses, and legal representation costs for volunteers. Allocations will follow existing state financial processes to ensure proper oversight and alignment with program objectives.

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

- The Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Division is requesting additional funding through two separate actions: (1) an increase in general fund appropriations to address cost pressures tied to the state pay plan and inflation; and (2) the restoration of other funds spending authority to fully utilize available revenue.

Expenditure Overview (FY2025)

In FY2025, the Division received \$5,973,953 in state appropriations and generated \$6,528,867 in revenue. However, expenditures totaled \$14,286,779, including:

- Personnel and Fringe Benefits: \$11,458,387
- Contractual Services: \$1,559,283
- Supplies: \$103,827
- Fixed Charges: \$726,803
- Travel: \$400,521
- Utilities: \$37,958

These expenditures support approximately 147 employees statewide and are critical to fulfilling statutory mandates for child advocacy.

Request 1: Increase in General Fund Appropriations - \$1,500,000

The GAL Division is requesting an additional \$1.5 million in recurring general funds to support unavoidable cost increases.

- Personnel/Pay Plan Gap: The new state pay plan increased GAL salaries by \$465,158, but only \$216,786 in general funds were allocated, leaving a shortfall of \$248,372 that must be absorbed from existing resources.
- Inflationary Costs: Office leases, copier contracts, utilities, and vehicle leases continue to increase annually, creating additional pressure on limited resources.
- Ongoing Technology Service Charges: Recurring Department of Technology Services fees, network services, and equipment support are essential for statewide operations and caseworker communication. These costs are fixed and ongoing, not one-time upgrades.

Because expenditures exceed both state appropriations and generated revenue, the Division has relied on existing cash balances to cover annual deficits. This practice is

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

not sustainable.

Carryforward balances have declined from \$12,629,542 in FY2024 to \$10,845,583 in FY2025. Current projections show the balance will decrease further to \$7,387,116 in FY2026 and only \$3,121,307 in FY2027.

Without additional recurring appropriations, the Division's carryforward will be fully depleted, resulting in a negative balance and leaving the Division unable to meet required obligations.

Approval of this request will ensure sufficient recurring funding to cover mandated pay plan increases and offset inflationary cost pressures, preserving the Division's ability to provide essential advocacy services for children and families statewide.

Request 2: Increase in Other Funds Spending Authority - \$3,428,597 in other funds spending authority.

The Division is also requesting \$3,428,597 in other funds spending authority.

- Over the last three years, the Division has generated an average of \$6,823,019 annually in other funds revenues.
- However, the ability to fully utilize these funds has been restricted due to an agency-wide reduction of \$2,467,800 in overall spending authority for the Department of Children's Advocacy.
- This reduction has limited the Divisions flexibility to align expenditures with actual revenues.

Calculation of Request Amount - \$3,428,597

The requested increase in other funds spending authorization is based on the Division's three-year average of actual revenues generated:

- Three-year average revenues generated (FY2023-FY2025): \$6,823,019
- Current authorized spending authority: \$3,394,422
- Difference (needed to fully utilize average revenues): \$3,428,597

Increasing the other funds spending authority will:

- Allow the Division to access available revenues and reduce the amount of mid-year increases requested through the Executive Budget Office.
- Provide flexibility to fully align expenditures with available other funds revenues.
- Ensure resources are available to absorb recurring cost increases without depleting carryforward balances.

Summary of Request:

- General Fund Appropriations Increase: \$1,500,000 (to offset pay plan gap, inflationary costs, and required statewide service charges; necessary due to unsustainable depletion of carryforward balances).
- Other Funds Spending Authority: \$3,428,597 (noting a prior agency-wide reduction of \$2,467,800 which most substantially impacted the Guardian ad Litem Division).

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

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FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	6
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	IT Operations Software Licensing
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	General: \$50,841 Federal: \$0 Other: \$0 Total: \$50,841
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	0.00
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Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	X	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	X	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
		Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
		Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
		Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
		Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
		Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	X	IT Technology/Security related
		HR/Personnel Related

Consulted DTO during development

Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
		Education, Training, and Human Development
	X	Healthy and Safe Families
		Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
		Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
		Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	1.2.2 - Develop and deliver one annual statewide training and four regional trainings to serve as the mandatory training program for FCRB board members and FCRD staff to improve the quality of case reviews. 2.2.5 - Review and update 100% of FCRD/FCRB policies and procedures to streamline and improve consistency across the state. 3.1.1 - Review and improve the agency's tracking system for reviewing and evaluating services for children. 3.3.2 - Monitor and report total number and typology trends of complaints and critical incident notifications received by the DCA within a fiscal year. This request directly supports agency accountability goals 1.2.2, 2.2.5, 3.1.1, and
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3.3.2.

Microsoft Teams and Office 365 are critical for developing and delivering statewide and regional trainings (1.2.2), ensuring policies and procedures remain consistent and up to date across divisions (2.2.5), supporting the agency's tracking system for reviewing and evaluating services for children (3.1.1), and enabling staff to monitor and report complaint and incident trends in a timely manner (3.3.2).

Cisco/SmartNet licensing ensures the agency's IT systems remain operational and secure, allowing staff to meet accountability standards without interruption.

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

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

Funds will be used to procure software licenses and IT support services through Microsoft and Cisco/Meraki AP Smart Net Licensing for all agency employees. Recipients include staff within System Improvement, Guardian ad Litem, Foster Care Review Board, and administrative/IT operations who rely on Microsoft Teams, and SmartNet coverage to perform their duties. Licenses will be allocated through the agency's IT unit to ensure each staff member has full access to required systems for communication, training, case review, and reporting.

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

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

Microsoft Teams is absolutely essential tools for agency operations, enabling virtual Foster Care Review Board meetings across the state with over a hundred volunteers, attending virtual guardian ad litem court hearings, and enabling System Improvement investigators to participate in multi-agency staffings. These platforms have allowed staff to continue services without disruption and expand training and collaboration across the state.

Over the past three years, the cost of Microsoft Teams has steadily increased: \$84,669.36 in FY23, \$102,732.84 in FY24, and \$111,796.05 in FY25. These figures reflect both agency staff growth and vendor price escalations. To ensure sufficient coverage for anticipated increases tied to inflation and continued staffing needs, the agency is requesting \$120,739.73 for Microsoft Teams in FY26. This amount builds in a modest buffer (8%) over the most recent invoice to prevent shortfalls.

Cisco/Meraki AP Smart Net Licensing provides the technical support and coverage needed to keep IT functional and secure. Unlike Teams, these costs have remained relatively stable: \$16,587.90 FY23, \$16,808.06 in FY24, and \$15,101.13 in FY25. Since the most recent invoice reflects a slight decrease, the agency is requesting \$15,101.13 for FY26, consistent with actual cost.

The DCA requested, and received, \$85,000 in recurring funding last year for IT Operations however due to increased costs and increased staff the software licensing fees for Microsoft have already increased substantially. While costly, these investments are vital to ensure operational efficiency, continuity of services, and compliance with accountability requirements.

Annual Price

Cisco/Meraki AP Smart Net Licensing: \$15,101.13

Microsoft Teams: \$120,739.73

Total: \$135,840.86

Current recurrent funding receiving for IT Operations: \$85,000

Total request: \$50,840.86

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

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

FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	8
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Continuum of Care Transfer Alignment
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	General: \$400,000 Federal: \$0 Other: \$0 Total: \$400,000
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	0.00
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Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

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

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark “X” for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	☐	Education, Training, and Human Development
	☒	Healthy and Safe Families
	☐	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	☐	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	☐	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	1.1.3 - Maintain current staffing levels within the division, with a focus on employee retention, until a new funding source is secured. 2.2.3 - Maintain or improve efficacy of Continuum of Care's services for children and youth as measured through dashboard data. 3.1.4 - Maintain youth in their homes, schools, and communities through intensive care coordination. Funds will be used to continue existing Continuum of Care operations currently supported by Office of Mental Health (formerly Department of Mental Health) transfer. These include case management, service coordination, and program oversight for youth with severe emotional and behavioral challenges. The funds will be tracked through the agency’s financial system and allocated to the same statutory activities currently supported under the OMH transfer to ensure service.
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What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

The direct recipients of these funds will be youth and families served by the Continuum of Care program. Fund will be allocated to program operations, staffing, and service coordination that ensure statewide access to intensive case management for children with severe emotional and behavioral needs. Funds will be managed through the Continuum of Care programs established service structure.

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

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

The Continuum of Care (COC) currently receives an annual transfer of \$400,000 from the Office of Mental Health (formerly Department of Mental Health) pursuant to Proviso 35.1, which has been in effect for approximately 20 years.

If Proviso 35.1 is removed or amended, COC will lose this transfer funding. This request seeks recurring funds to align the agency's budget in the event OMH is no longer required to provide this transfer. Ensuring this funding stream is maintained is critical to support services provided to high needs out across the state and aligns with accountability goals 2.2.5 (policy consistency), 3.1.1 (system tracking), and 3.3.2 (monitoring/reporting).

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

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

FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	9
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Guardian ad Litem & Foster Care Review Board Pay Disparity (recurring)
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	General: \$377,555 Federal: \$0 Other: \$0 Total: \$377,555
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	0.00
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Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

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

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark “X” for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	☐	Education, Training, and Human Development
	☐	Healthy and Safe Families
	☐	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	☐	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	☒	Government and Citizens

	1.1.2 - Improve or maintain agency turnover rate through effective recruitment and retention 1.2.1 - Foster innovation in retention methods for staff. Survey Guardian ad Litem Division staff regarding their satisfaction with leadership. The requested funds will directly support agency goals to improve and maintain turnover rates through effective recruitment and retention (Goal 1.1.2) and to foster staff retention through improved satisfaction with leadership and compensation equity (Goal 1.2.1). Salary adjustments will be implemented using the agency’s updated pay matrix, which has been reviewed and approved by Human Resources to ensure equity, consistency, and compliance with state compensation policies.
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ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS

The use of funds will be evaluated through measurable outcomes, including:

- Turnover and retention rates within the Foster Care Review Board and Guardian ad Litem Divisions.
- Employee satisfaction surveys tracking perceptions of fairness and compensation equity.
- HR monitoring to confirm that all 100 identified employees have reached pay parity with new hires in comparable roles.

By addressing salary inequities through an HR-approved framework, the agency will strengthen retention of experienced staff, stabilize program delivery, and maintain consistent quality of services for children and families who have entered the child welfare system.

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

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

Funds will be allocated to 100 identified employees (15 in the Foster Care Review Board Division and 85 in the Guardian ad Litem Division) to correct salary inequities caused by the 2% increase and new pay minimum adjustments. Allocation amounts will be based on the updated HR-approved pay matrix, which ensures adjustments are made fairly, consistently, and in line with the state compensation policies. Distributions will be processed through payroll in compliance with state HR and fiscal guidelines.

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

The statewide 2% salary increase, and revised minimum pay adjustments have unintentionally created inequities within the agency. Newly hired employees are now entering at salaries higher than long-serving staff with greater tenure, advanced degrees, and professional certifications. This disparity undermines workforce morale and increases the risk of turnover among experience employees whose expertise is critical to program stability and quality outcomes.

We have identified 15 staff in the Foster Care Review Board and 85 staff in the Guardian ad Litem Division whose salaries are below those of new hires in comparable roles. To address this, the agency has updated its pay matrix, which has been reviewed and approved by Human Resources to ensure fairness and consistency in salary administration. However, additional funding is necessary to implement these equity adjustments.

Without corrective funding, the agency faces the loss of skilled staff, which would disrupt case continuity, increase recruitment and training costs, and negatively impact services provided to vulnerable children and families. Addressing this pay disparity is essential to maintaining equity, improving retention, and ensuring consistency in service delivery.

Guardian ad Litem

Employees affected: 85

Salary difference: \$248,927.78

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

Fringe: \$74,678.33

Total: \$323,606.11

Foster Care Review Board

Employees affected: 15

Salary difference: \$41,498.43

Fringe: \$12,449.53

Total: \$53,947.96

Grand Total Salary: \$290,426.21

Gand Total Fringe: \$116,176.76

Grand Total: \$406,602.97

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

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

FORM B2 – NON-RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	4
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Continuum of Care (non-recurring)
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	\$1,500,000
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

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

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	☐	Education, Training, and Human Development
	☒	Healthy and Safe Families
	☐	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	☐	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
☐	Government and Citizens	

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	1.1.3 - Maintain current staffing levels within the division, with a focus on employee retention, until a new funding source is secured.
	1.4.1 - Secure at least one contract, MOU, or other funding source that allows Continuum Of Care to provide and expand services for youth with severe mental health conditions
	2.2.2 - Ensure 80% of Continuum of Care parents interviewed will feel satisfied with the services they receive overall each fiscal year.
	2.2.3 - Maintain or improve efficacy of Continuum of Care's services for children and youth as measured through dashboard data.
	3.1.4 - Maintain youth in their homes, schools, and communities through intensive care coordination.
	The Continuum of Care Division is requesting an increase in general funds authorization to align with actual revenue and expenditure trends and to stabilize operations following reductions in the loss of revenue from the Medicaid waiver program.

Funds will be used to maintain staffing levels within the Continuum of Care Division (Goal 1.1.3) to ensure children and families continue receiving the intensive care coordination they need. The division is actively pursuing new funding sources through contracts, MOUs, and grant applications (Goal 1.4.1), and this request provides the necessary bridge until long-term funding is secured. Program performance will be measured by parent satisfaction surveys, with a goal of at least 80% of parents reporting satisfaction with services each fiscal year (Goal 2.2.2). Effectiveness will also be monitored through division dashboard data to ensure services are maintained or improved despite funding reductions (Goal 2.2.3). Ultimately, the use of funds will be evaluated by the divisions ability to keep youth safety in their homes, schools, and communities (Goal 3.1.4), which is central to the mission of Continuum of Care.

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

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

Funds will be directed toward maintaining existing staff to preserve services for children and families. In addition, funds will cover recurring operating expenses such as office space, communication systems, and technology necessary to deliver intensive care coordination. The primary recipients of funds will be Continuum of Care staff positions, with allocations supporting salaries, fringe benefits, and essential operating costs. Allocations will be managed internally through the state payroll and procurement processes to ensure compliance and transparency.

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

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

In FY2025, the Division received \$2,320,336 in state appropriations and generated \$1,129,431 in other funds revenue, for a total of \$3,449,767. Expenditures, however, totaled \$3,966,477, including:

- Personnel and Fringe Benefits: \$3,186,089
- Contractual Services: \$245,161
- Supplies: \$67,409
- Fixed Charges: \$311,259
- Travel: \$138,673
- Case Services: \$11,743
- Utilities: \$6,143

These costs support approximately 46 staff positions statewide and are necessary to meet statutory and mission-driven responsibilities.

The Division fiscal challenges have been significantly compounded by the loss of a major Medicaid waiver program, which historically provided funding support. The non-renewal of this program created a recurring shortfall that cannot be absorbed through appropriations and revenue alone. On average, the Division has generated only \$1,235,602 in other funds revenue over the past three years, which is insufficient to offset rising operating costs.

In addition to base personnel costs, the Division is experiencing unavoidable increases in operating expenses. The largest cost drivers include:

- Lease costs for office space and state vehicles, which are essential for staff to meet with families, attend hearings, and provide statewide coverage.
- Utilities and IT support, including Department of Technology Services charges, cell phones, and communications technology needed to maintain operations.
- Supplies and copier leases, which have steadily increased and remain critical for case management.

These rising costs are compounded by inflation and cannot be reduced without impairing program delivery.

To cover annual deficits, the Division has relied on carryforward balance. However, this practice is not sustainable. Carryforward balances are projected to fall to \$458,535 in FY2026 and a negative (\$1,820,826) in FY2027, compared to recurring expenditures of

nearly \$4 million annually. Without an increase in, reserves will be fully depleted, and the Division will be unable to sustain operations.

Approval of this request will allow the Division to stabilize operations following the Medicaid waiver loss, and ensure continuity of care for children with complex needs. As the Division is able to secure new work and can assess revenues for FY28, adjustments to the requested non-recurring amount to accommodate for any Division revenues.

Without this appropriation, the Division faces negative cash balances, staffing reductions, and significant service disruptions that would directly impact vulnerable children and families statewide.

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

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

FORM B2 – NON-RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	7
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	New Hire Equipment (non-recurring)
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	\$13,500
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

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

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	☐	Education, Training, and Human Development
	☒	Healthy and Safe Families
	☐	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	☐	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	☐	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	1.2.2 - Develop and deliver one annual statewide training and four regional trainings to serve as the mandatory training program for FCRB board members and FCRD staff to improve the quality of case reviews. 2.2.5 - Review and update 100% of FCRD/FCRB policies and procedures to streamline and improve consistency across the state. 3.1.1 - Review and improve the agency's tracking system for reviewing and evaluating services for children. 3.3.2 - Monitor and report total number and typology trends of complaints and critical incident notifications received by the DCA within a fiscal year. Funds will be used solely for the purchase of standard workstation equipment for the nine new FTE positions. Cost was estimated at \$1,500 per employee to cover laptops, monitors, mouse/keyboard, laptop bags, and desks. Expenditures will be procured in accordance with state purchasing guidelines and monitored through the agency's financial tracking system to ensure accuracy, transparency, and accountability. The use of these funds will be evaluated by confirming timely deployment of equipment to each new hire and ensuring that the technology is functional and in active use for training, case review, and reporting.
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What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

The direct recipients of these funds will be the nine new FTEs hired under System Improvement, Guardian ad Litem, and Foster Care Review Board. Equipment will be distributed to employees based on position start date and job function to ensure each staff member has the tools required to effectively perform their assigned duties.

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

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

This non-recurring request supports the addition of nine new FTEs within System Improvement, Guardian ad Litem, and Foster Care Review Board by providing the necessary technology and workstation equipment (laptops, monitors, accessories, desks). These resources are essential for employees to perform core job functions, including case review, policy development, statewide/regional training, and system tracking. Adequately equipping staff ensures alignment with agency accountability goals 1.2.2, 2.2.5, 3.1.1, and 3.3.2 by increasing efficiency, improving consistency, and enhancing the agency's ability to monitor outcomes and provide high-quality services for children and families.

System Improvement (related to Priority 1)

Requested FTEs:5

Guardian ad Litem (related to Priority 2)

Requested FTEs:3

Foster Care Review Board (related to Priority 3)

Requested FTEs: 1

$\$1,500 * 9 = \$13,500$

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

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

FORM B2 – NON-RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	10
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Children’s Trust (non-recurring)
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	\$750,000
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

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

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark “X” for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	☐	Education, Training, and Human Development
	☒	Healthy and Safe Families
	☐	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	☐	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	☐	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	Children's Trust of South Carolina was founded in1984 by the General Assembly with the mission of finding and funding innovative solutions to prevent child abuse and neglect.
	Both the mission and values of the Department of Children’s Advocacy directly align with the important work that Children’s Trust does as the statewide organization focused on the prevention of child abuse and neglect. The fiscal and social impact of the \$750,000 matching funds cannot be underestimated.

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

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	The direct recipients of these funds will be Children’s Trust of South Carolina, a Child Serving Agency established under S.C. Code of Laws § 63-11-910, et.seq., a statewide organization focused on the prevention of child abuse and neglect. They provide funding, resources, and training to help local program partners build strong families and positive childhoods.
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What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon

**JUSTIFICATION
OF REQUEST**

Children's Trust has been designated as the recipient of the federal Maternal Infant Early Childhood Homevisiting Grant, which provides evidence-based homevisiting services to mothers and babies.

In 2022, this federal grant was reauthorized, for the first time, with a state 3:1 match component. In fiscal year 2027, if the South Carolina General Assembly allocates \$750,000 to Children's Trust for homevisiting services the state will be able to pull down an additional \$2,250,000 to expand these vital services.

Currently, less than 10% of eligible mothers and babies are receiving voluntary homevisiting services. Homevisiting has been shown to improve maternal and infant health, reduce dependency on government welfare programs, increase child educational outcomes, and prevent abuse and neglect.

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

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

FORM B2 – NON-RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	11
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	South Carolina Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers (non-recurring)
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	\$1,500,000
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

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

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark “X” for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	☐	Education, Training, and Human Development
	☒	Healthy and Safe Families
	☐	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	☐	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	☐	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	The South Carolina Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers (SCNCAC) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) membership organization and statewide leader in the response to child abuse. They are an accredited state chapter of the National Children’s Alliance and provide training, technical assistance, accreditation support and statewide services to 17 primary children’s advocacy centers and 14 satellite children’s advocacy centers (CAC) located throughout the state and serving all 46 counties in South Carolina.
	The work of the SCNCAC aligns closely with the Department of Children’s Advocacy (DCA) in ensuring that children in South Carolina are protected, and an effective and appropriate response is made when abuse and/or neglect is suspected. One of the most important partnerships is the training, implementation, and oversight of the South Carolina Child Abuse Response Protocol mandated in S.C. Code of Laws § 63-11-2400, et. seq. This funding will directly support and provide services that are mandated to be provided under that statutory provision. All the funding will be used to meet the increased demand for CAC services and ensure a best practice evidence-based response to child abuse is available for all children and families in South Carolina regardless of where they live.

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

	The direct recipients of these funds will be the South Carolina Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers, a Child Serving Agency that is mandated pursuant to S.C. Code of
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RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	Laws § 63-11-310, to coordinate and facilitate the exchange of information among statewide centers and provide technical assistance to communicate in the establishment, growth, and certification of local centers. The network must also educate the public and legislature regarding the needs of abused children and provide or coordinate multidisciplinary training opportunities which support the comprehensive response to suspected child maltreatment.
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What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST	Child advocacy centers (CACs) reduce the trauma on children by eliminating the need to relive their trauma through multiple interviews with multidisciplinary team professionals while improving collaboration among all agencies involved in the child abuse response. In 2024, South Carolina CACs provided services to 13,788 child abuse victims and their caregivers. SCNCAC also provides statewide child abuse response protocol training and other assistance to multidisciplinary team partners, DSS and law enforcement agencies, to assist them in their investigative roles in response to child abuse. This funding will support all the above activities by providing funds to CACs and SCNCAC for staff salaries and fringe benefits and equipment to support these services. The funds will also be used to provide a portion of the cost of the SCNCAC statewide forensic interview recording evidence management system and other statewide technology that is used by CACs, law enforcement, and DSS to protect the confidentiality of the disclosures made by children in the CAC.
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Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

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

FORM E – AGENCY COST SAVINGS AND GENERAL FUND REDUCTION

CONTINGENCY PLAN

TITLE	Agency Cost Savings and General Fund Reduction Contingency Plan
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AMOUNT	\$416,214
<i>What is the General Fund 3% reduction amount? This amount should correspond to the reduction spreadsheet prepared by EBO.</i>	

ASSOCIATED FTE REDUCTIONS	4
<i>How many FTEs would be reduced in association with this General Fund reduction?</i>	

PROGRAM / ACTIVITY IMPACT	The identified positions provide fiscal oversight, IT support, and communications for all divisions of the agency (Guardian ad Litem, Foster Care Review Board, Continuum of Care, and System Improvement). While several are funded proportionally across multiple divisions, the full salaries have been applied here for purposes of meeting the 3% General Fund reduction requirement. Elimination of these positions would significantly reduce administrative capacity and increase operational risk. The agency sought to avoid cutting direct service staff, prioritizing the protection of frontline services to children and families.
<i>What programs or activities are supported by the General Funds identified?</i>	

SUMMARY	To achieve the required 3% General Fund reduction (\$416,214), the Department identified four administrative positions supported by the General Fund. Although these positions are allocated across multiple division, there full salaries were applied to this reduction scenario for simplicity and compliance. Removing these roles would weaken agencywide fiscal, legal, IT, and communications support, creating inefficiencies across all divisions. This approach prioritizes the protection of direct service staff in Guardian ad Litem, Foster Care Review Board, and System Improvement, where additional funding and staff are being requested. Positions and Salary Accounting/Fiscal Manager II: \$95,000.00 General Counsel: \$130,376.00 IT Director: \$94,933.00 Director of Strategic Communications: \$107,044.00 Total Salaries: \$427,353
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Please provide a detailed summary of service delivery impact caused by a reduction in General Fund Appropriations and provide the method of calculation for anticipated reductions. Agencies should prioritize reduction in expenditures that have the least significant impact on service delivery.

AGENCY COST SAVINGS PLANS	The Continuum of Care (COC) consolidated several leased office spaces, supported by a combination of hybrid scheduling, shared workspace arrangements, and remote where appropriate. This strategy allowed staff to maintain operations without disruption while minimizing overall square footage needs. Projected FY26 savings of \$66,278 reflects the full-year impact of consolidated office space. These savings are expected to continue through hybrid scheduling, remote work, and efficient use of shared office arrangements.
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What measures does the agency plan to implement to reduce its costs and operating expenses by more than \$50,000? Provide a summary of the measures taken and the estimated amount of savings. How does the agency plan to repurpose the savings?