

Sec. 5101.89.

(A) There is created a ~~children service~~ youth and family ombudsman office under the department of job and family services consisting of the following: (1) A family ombudsman, who shall be appointed by the governor and investigate complaints made by adults; (2) A youth ~~advocate~~ ombudsman, who shall be appointed by the governor with input by the OHIO Youth Advisory Board and oversee complaints made by youth, as defined in section 5101.894 and shall advocate for the best interests of children involved in concerns investigated by the office; (3) Not fewer than two regional ombudsmen; (4) Any necessary support staff. (B) The ~~children service~~ youth and family ombudsman office shall investigate and resolve concerns made by or on behalf of youth and families involved with public children services agencies, Title IV-E agencies, or private provider agencies that administer or oversee foster care or placement services for the children services system. The office shall ensure the independent and impartial review of youth, family, and community complaints or concerns.

Sec. 5101.891. The youth and family ombudsman office shall perform all of the following duties:

(A) Receive, investigate, and attempt to resolve complaints from citizens, including children in the custody of a public children services agency or in the care and placement of a Title IV-E agency, related to government services regarding child protective services, foster care, and adoption; (B) Establish procedures for receiving and resolving complaints, consistent with state and federal law; (C) Provide an annual report to representatives of the OHIO Youth Advisory Board, governor, speaker of the house of representatives, president of the senate, minority leadership of the house of representatives and senate, and the director of job and family services, as defined in section 5101.896. An evaluation of this report by the OHIO Youth Advisory Board shall be presented to the youth ombudsman and the governor within 60 days of its release.

Sec. 5101.893. To the extent permitted by state or federal law, a representative of the ~~children service~~ youth and family ombudsman office may report to an appropriate authority any suspected violation of state law discovered during the course of a complaint review.

5101.894 As used in this section, youth is defined as a person who is (1) Less than eighteen years of age; (2) An emancipated young adult who has entered into a voluntary participation agreement under section 5101.1412 of the Revised Code; or (3) At least eighteen years of age at the time of making a complaint, but less than eighteen years of age when the alleged act that is the subject of the complaint occurred.

Sec. 5101.895. The department of job and family services shall be responsible for all administrative undertakings for the ~~children-service~~ youth and family ombudsman office, including the provision of offices, equipment, and supplies, as necessary. The family ombudsman and youth ombudsman are not supervised by the director of the department of job and family services or their designees and operational support is not subject to reduction unless approved by the legislature.

Sec. 5101.897. (A) No employee of the ~~children-service~~ youth and family ombudsman office shall do any of the following: (1) Hold any office of trust or profit; (2) Engage in any occupation or business interfering or inconsistent with the duties of the office; (3) Serve on any committee of any political party; (4) Have any interest that is, or may be, in conflict with the interests and concerns of the office. (B) As used in this section, "office of trust or profit" means any of the following: (1) A federal or state elective office or an elective office of a political subdivision of the state; (2) A position on a board or commission of the state that is appointed by the governor; (3) An office set forth in section 121.03, 121.04, or 121.05 of the Revised Code; (4) An office of the government of the United States that is appointed by the president of the United States.

Sec. 5101.899. (A) The ~~children-service~~ youth and family ombudsman office shall have access to only the records of the department of job and family services that are necessary for the administration of sections 5101.89 to 5101.899 of the Revised Code and in the performance of its official duties, including any records maintained in the uniform statewide automated child welfare information system under section

5101.13 of the Revised Code. The office has the right to request of the director of job and family services necessary information from any work unit of the department having information. The collection, compilation, analysis, and dissemination of information by the office shall be performed in a manner that protects complainants, individuals providing information about a complaint, public entities, and confidential records. (B) The office shall have access to any necessary records in the control of a public children services agency, a Title IVE agency, or a private provider agency that administers or oversees foster care or placement services for the children services system. (C) Files of the office and any records contained in those files are not public records subject to inspection or copying under section 149.43 of the Revised Code. Information contained in investigative and other files maintained by the office shall be disclosed only at the discretion of the office or if disclosure is required by a court order.

GRF 600XXX Youth and Family Ombudsman \$500,000 \$500,000"

Section _____ YOUTH AND FAMILY OMBUDSMAN

The foregoing appropriation item 600XXX, Youth and Family Ombudsman, fifty percent shall be used to support the activities of the youth ombudsman office."