

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Department Office of Administration

HB Section(s): 5.160

Program Name Office of Child Advocate

Program is found in the following core budget(s):

1a. What strategic priority does this program address?

Improve child welfare outcomes.

1b. What does this program do?

The Office of Child Advocate provides families and citizens an avenue through which they can obtain an independent and impartial review of the decisions and/or actions made by the Department of Social Services, Children's Division.

The Office of Child Advocate offers eight primary functions to concerned citizens:

- Foster care case management review
- Unsubstantiated hotline investigation review
- Mediation between parents and schools regarding abuse allegations
- Review child fatalities when there is a history of child abuse and neglect concerns or involvement with the Children's Division
- Intervene on behalf of a child during judicial proceedings
- Review policy and procedures of Children's Division, the Juvenile Office, and guardian ad litem within a county
- Increase knowledge of professionals and the general public regarding child welfare
- Provide information and referrals for families needing resources

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

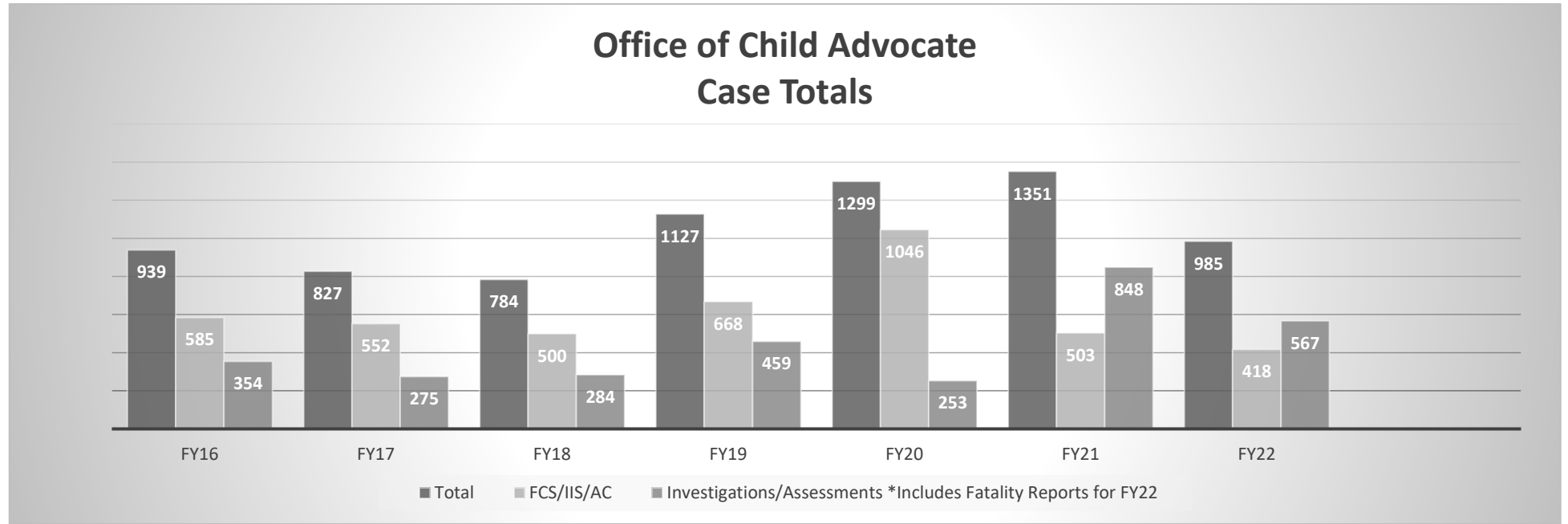
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Program Name Office of Child Advocate

Program is found in the following core budget(s):

2a. Provide an activity measure(s) for the program.



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Program is found in the following core budget(s):

2b. Provide a measure(s) of the program's quality.



Callers to OCA often believe that they are the customer. However, the children of the cases we review are our customers and the children's best interest may run counter to our caller's interest. We are unable to determine the children's satisfaction.

No data was able to be collected in FY22. Starting in FY23 Client satisfaction data through a client survey on the newly developed OCA website (August 2022)

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2c. Provide a measure(s) of the program's impact.

OCA increases the knowledge of the professionals and the general public regarding child welfare in three primary ways:

1. OCA has served on the following Task Forces and Work Groups to improve child welfare practice and raise awareness:
 - Task Force on Human Trafficking
 - Governor's Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children
 - Missouri Task Force on Children's Justice
 - Child Fatality Review Program, state panel
 - Missouri State Foster Care and Adoption Board
 - Missouri State Juvenile Justice Advisory Board
 - Missouri Alliance for Children and Families Specialized Case Management Advisory Board
 - Child Support Guidelines Review Subcommittee of the Family Court Committee
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2. OCA has increased the knowledge of professionals through
 - Visiting over half of the 46 Judicial Circuits meeting with workers, supervisors, and circuit managers
 - Leading and participating in trainings and webinars
3. Additional activities to increase the knowledge and outreach to families and citizens:
 - Event displays at state conferences
 - OCA website
 - Speaking engagements to various groups and organizations
 - Report distribution

2d. Provide a measure(s) of the program's efficiency.

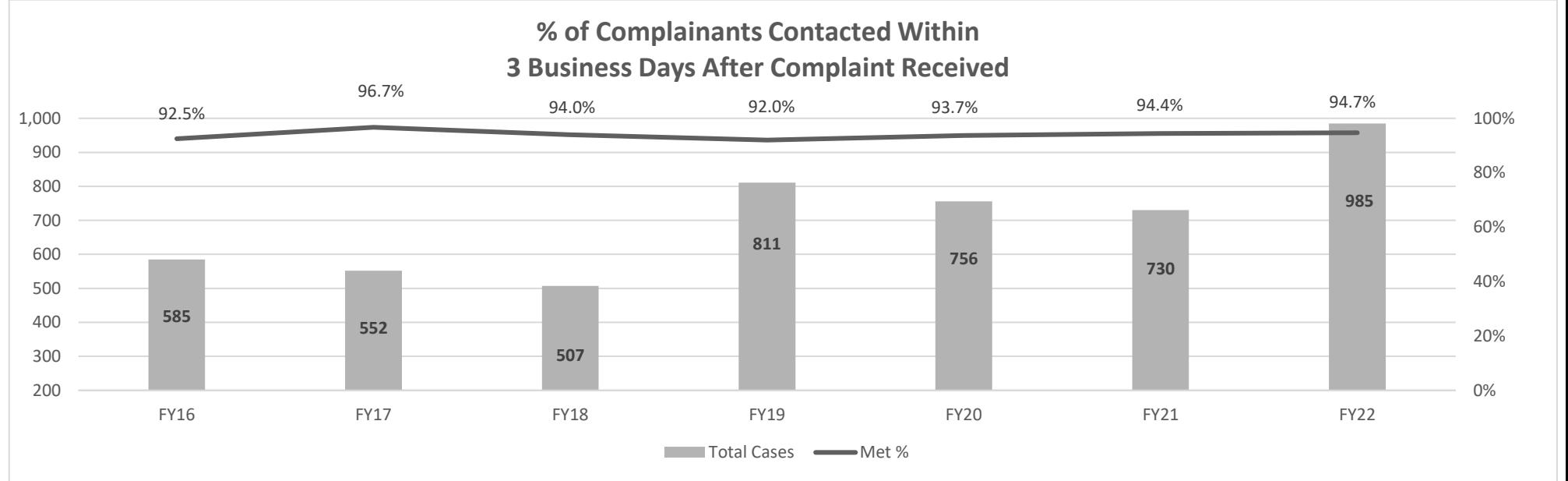
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1. Percent of complainants contacted within three business days after complaint received. Case files will be initially reviewed and complainants will be notified of a determination if a full review will be opened.

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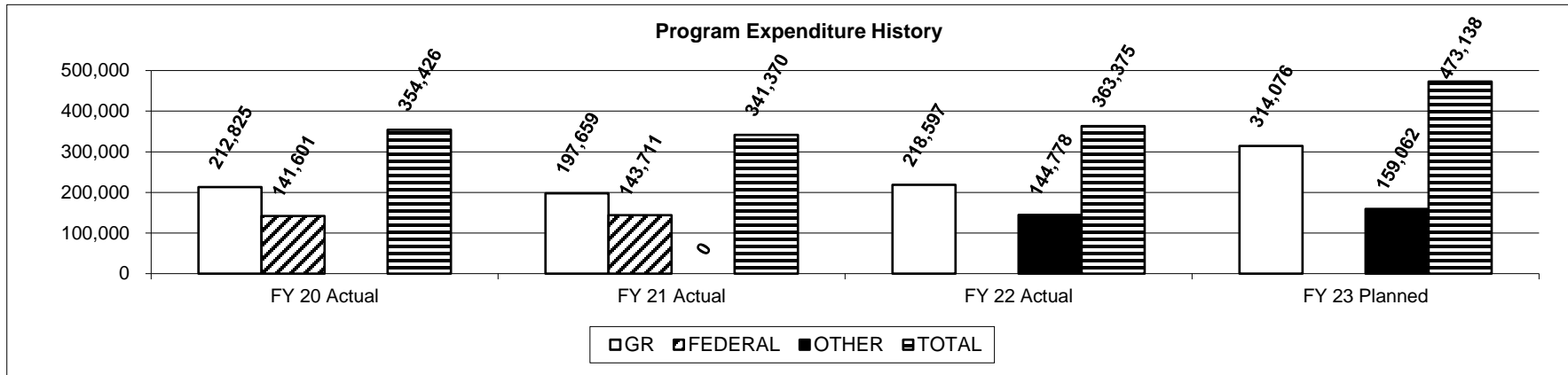
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3. Provide actual expenditures for the prior three fiscal years and planned expenditures for the current fiscal year. (Note: Amounts do not include fringe benefit costs.)



4. What are the sources of the "Other" funds?

N/A

5. What is the authorization for this program, i.e., federal or state statute, etc.? (Include the federal program number, if applicable.)

Section 37.700-37.730, 160.262, and 210.145 RSMO

6. Are there federal matching requirements? If yes, please explain.

No

7. Is this a federally mandated program? If yes, please explain.

No