

<b>AGENCY NAME:</b>	Department of Child Advocacy		
<b>AGENCY CODE:</b>	L080	<b>SECTION:</b>	41

**Fiscal Year 2018–2019  
Accountability Report**

**SUBMISSION FORM**

**AGENCY MISSION**

The S.C. Department of Children’s Advocacy champions advocacy, accountability, and service to improve outcomes for children served by state agencies in South Carolina.

**AGENCY VISION**

Growing a community where children thrive.

Does the agency have any major or minor recommendations (internal or external) that would allow the agency to operate more effectively and efficiently?

<b>RESTRUCTURING RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is the agency in compliance with S.C. Code Ann. § 2-1-230, which requires submission of certain reports to the Legislative Services Agency for publication online and the State Library? See also S.C. Code Ann. § 60-2-30.

<b>REPORT SUBMISSION COMPLIANCE:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Is the agency in compliance with various requirements to transfer its records, including electronic ones, to the Department of Archives and History? See the Public Records Act (S.C. Code Ann. § 30-1-10 through 30-1-180) and the South Carolina Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (S.C. Code Ann. § 26-6-10 through 26-10-210).

<b>RECORDS MANAGEMENT COMPLIANCE:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is the agency in compliance with S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-120(J), which requires an agency to conduct a formal review of its regulations every five years?

<b>REGULATION REVIEW:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please identify your agency's preferred contacts for this year's accountability report.

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
<b>PRIMARY CONTACT:</b>	Amanda F. Whittle	803-315-2251	Amanda.Whittle@childadvocate.sc.gov
<b>SECONDARY CONTACT:</b>			

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2018–2019 Accountability Report, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

**AGENCY DIRECTOR  
(SIGN AND DATE):**

*Amanda F. Whittle 9-20-19*

**(TYPE/PRINT NAME):**

Amanda F. Whittle

**BOARD/CMSN CHAIR  
(SIGN AND DATE):**

**(TYPE/PRINT NAME):**

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## AGENCY'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The Department of Children's Advocacy (DCA) was created in 2018 by Act 160 and codified in S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Section 63-11-2210, et. seq. DCA launched on July 1, 2019 with existing Agency divisions to manage and improve and with new missions to be created and implemented. In DCA's early weeks, immediate needs were identified for Continuum of Care, Foster Care Review Board, and Guardian ad litem Program. Concurrently, consistent with DCA's new missions, a 1-800 phone line and DCA website went "live" on July 1, 2019 and began accepting telephonic and electronically-submitted complaints.

**Continuum of Care.** As an immediate need, Continuum of Care sought the submission of a Medicaid 1915(c) waiver. Continuum has been in discussions with DHHS for approximately five years concerning the waiver with anticipation that the waiver reimbursement amount would sustain this division. Continuum is currently only authorized to submit claims through Medicaid Targeted Case Management. Those rates have been significantly reduced during the years Continuum has sought the waiver. As a result, expenses and reimbursement revenue have been inconsistent to the detriment of Continuum's financial ability to continue providing services in future years without a change in its funding. While those discussions are ongoing, Continuum must be prepared to advocate for alternative funding to continue providing high fidelity Wraparound services for children with serious emotional or behavioral health diagnosis/es and whose families need assistance keeping their children in their homes, school, or community.

**Foster Care Review Board.** The Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) "may participate, through counsel, in child abuse and neglect proceedings pursuant to Sections 63-7-1660, 63-7-1700, 63-7-2520 and in any hearing held pursuant to a motion filed by a named party or party in interest. Participation includes the opportunity to cross-examine witnesses and to present its recommendation to the court" pursuant to S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Section 63-11-750. FCRB has not had a staff attorney since July of 2018 and identified the need to post and hire an experienced attorney for this statewide position. The position description was drafted in July, 2019; the position was posted in August, 2019; interviews were held in September, 2019; and DCA is hopeful to have the new attorney onboarded in October, 2019. In the meantime, FCRB is assessing the need to participate in pending cases and to contract with an attorney(s) on an interim basis until the FTE attorney can be hired. This has occurred on at least one case since DCA began on July 1, 2019.

**Guardian ad litem Program.** During early visits and communication with Guardian ad litem Program staff, volunteers, community partners and constituents, Guardian ad litem Program's immediate needs were determined to be filling staff vacancies and recruiting additional volunteers. As an interim measure, processes were put in place whereby existing DCA State Office staff augmented the Guardian ad litem Program's operational support to assist with visiting county offices and support staff, to meet and communicate with staff and volunteers, to post and fill positions, process renewal leases, and onboard staff and volunteers.

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**1-800 Number/Complaint Submission.** Prior to July 1, 2019, the Department of Administration worked with the newly-appointed State Child Advocate (SCA)/DCA Director to assist with transitioning the Admin division to DCA and to identify Admin personnel who could provide administrative support, create the 1-800 line and DCA website with electronic complaint submission capability, and log and track complaint information. Within the first weeks, the DCA communicated with all nine agencies to provide information to be published on their websites and to establish points of contact for referrals and questions. DCA has also met more extensively with DSS regarding access to records and processes for responding to complaints and referrals. There were seven (7) phone calls the first week, and, by week twelve (12), DCA had received more than three hundred (300) calls or electronic submissions.

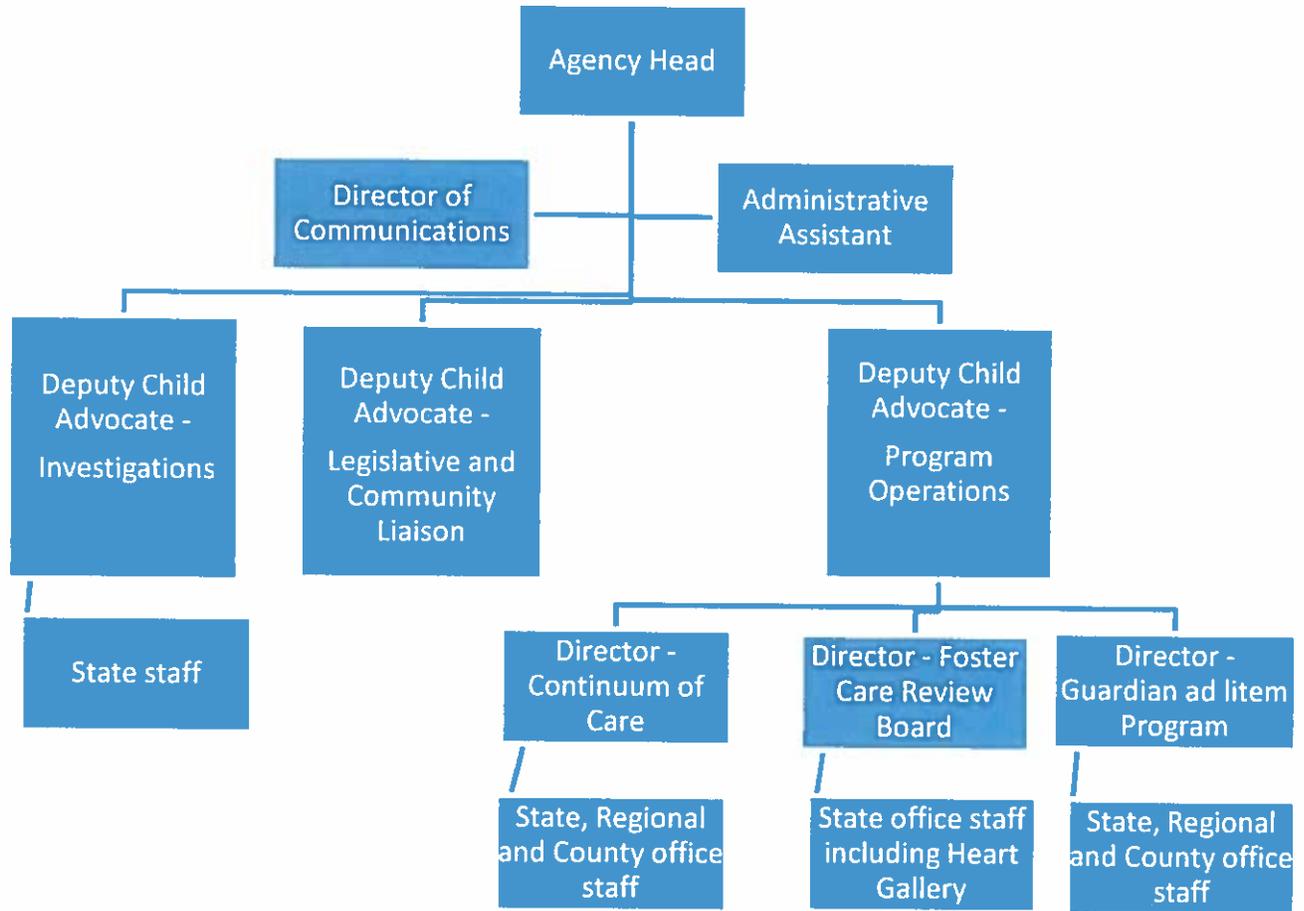
**Concurrent Organizational and Operational Work.** Concurrent with identification and resolution of its immediate needs, the DCA leadership team has worked to establish its vision, mission, goals, and strategies. DCA's statutory complex provides shared services with Admin which has been a positive experience. DCA immediately adopted Admin's policy and procedure, and Admin and DCA have worked together to identify workflow processes that need to be established.

**Next steps.** DCA will establish the infrastructure to create, review and revise core agency and office processes and policies regarding IT, Human Resources, confidentiality, privacy, and office management; strengthen recruitment, hiring, onboarding, retention of staff and volunteers; outline and disseminate operational practices; assess and strengthen initial and ongoing training; provide and encourage professional growth and teambuilding opportunities; examine and amplify the relevancy, integrity, and usability of current data tracking and reporting programs; create and promote information-sharing forums and venues; and collaborate and coordinate with other agencies and community partners to fulfill DCA's statutory duties and goals. With agency leadership, DCA will establish intermediate and long-term strategies and goals and request funding that is consistent with the sequencing of priorities.

The Agency began with a Director who was also the State Child Advocate with five direct reports: Administrative Assistant, Communications Director, Continuum of Care Director, Foster Care Review Board Director, and Guardian ad litem Director and with the DCA Director designated as the point of contact and decision-maker for agency operational and personnel matters, for 1-800 complaint resolutions (including review, referral, monitoring and investigating), for legislative and community research and response, and for interagency collaboration, coordination and communication.

To create capacity for program operational needs, for the thorough and timely review and/or investigation of complaints, for improved communication and coordination regarding access to and navigation of services by state agencies for children, and for the development of a broad vision of reform including recommendations for improvement to the service delivery by state agencies, the following organizational structure has been established for DCA:

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The Department of Children’s Advocacy (DCA) has identified strategies and measures for all of its divisions to champion advocacy, accountability and service. This organizational structure will promote focus and intentionality to improving outcomes for children by state agencies in South Carolina. DCA’s Accountability Report contemplates creating capacity and infrastructure to execute the strategies and reach goals to grow a community where children thrive.

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Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement Template

Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective	Type	Item #			Description	2019-20			Time Applicable	Data Source and Availability	Calculation Method	Meaningful Use of Measure
		Goal	Strategy	Measure		Base	Target	Actual				
Healthy and Safe Families	G	1			To serve as advocates for timely, safe, and effective services for children							
	S	1.1			Establish, maintain, and continue to improve innovative and competitive recruitment efforts							
	M	GAL		1.1.1	Increase the number of active volunteers such that all children have a court-appointed volunteer advocate by 2024.	51%	60%	7/1/2019-6/30/2020	GAL ETO System "Case Listing by Volunteer" as of 8-31-19	Number of children served by volunteer Guardian ad Litem/Total number of children served by the Guardian ad Litem program.	The purpose of a 2010 statutory change was to create a system where all children involved in DSS were represented by volunteer GALs. 8714 children were served as of 8-31-19. 4477 children were served by volunteer GALs. As a result, 4237 were served by GAL Program staff.	
	S	1.2			Support our employees with clear expectations, measurable and achievable success criteria, and regular feedback to help them be successful in the workplace.							
	M	GAL		1.2.1	Recruit and retain staff to reduce existing vacancies in an effort to reduce existing workloads for staff; improve staff's ability to actively recruit volunteers; and to provide additional support for volunteers and the court system	37%	25%	7/1/2019-6/30/2020	Dept. of Admin. Human Resources Vacancy Report as of 9-11-19	Current Guardian ad Litem vacancies/Total FTEs	Staff currently serve as advocates for 4237 children even with 37% of FTE positions unfilled. Filling these positions will reduce caseloads and provide support for volunteers.	
	M	FCRB		1.2.2	Develop and deliver one annual topical training and four regional trainings for FCRB volunteers and staff to improve the quality of case reviews.	0	5	7/1/2019-6/30/2020	FCRB will maintain records of dates, locations, times, and attendance regarding completed training sessions.	Count of Trainings	Regular trainings provide an opportunity for relevant legislative and caselaw updates in addition to strengthening ongoing mission objectives and focus.	
	S	1.3			Foster innovation in retention methods for volunteers							
	M	GAL		1.3.1	Survey volunteer Guardians ad Litem regarding their satisfaction with their relationship with the Guardian ad Litem Program.	0%	80%	7/1/2019-6/30/2020	A survey will be developed and reported.	Number of volunteer Guardian ad Litem who report being satisfied with their relationship with the Guardian ad Litem program/total number of volunteer Guardian ad Litem who complete the survey.	For the success of the GAL Program, it is imperative to have volunteer GALs who are satisfied with the support and guidance they receive from GAL Program staff. Volunteer GALs contribute to advocacy for children through direct involvement with children and through providing their feedback about systemic improvements.	
	M	GAL		1.3.2	Increase the number of intermediate/advanced training hours, peer support and/or coaching accessed by volunteer GALs by 100% by 2023	0%	25%	7/1/2019-6/30/2020	GAL ETO System capturing GAL continuing education hours	[(New average number of training hours per volunteer GAL - original average number of training hours per volunteer GAL)/original average number of training hours per volunteer GAL] *100	GAL Program leadership has been advised by current volunteer GALs that some have more experience than others, and newer volunteers could benefit from peer coaching and mentoring. In addition, it appears that many volunteer GALs are not availing themselves to training opportunities beyond their initial certification training. This training will increase GALs' advocacy skills and judicial confidence in GALs' knowledge regarding ever-changing laws, practice and policy in the area of child welfare.	
	Healthy and Safe Families	G	2			To ensure that children, parents, and concerned citizens in South Carolina know how to connect children in need to the right services						
S		2.1			Educate the public about state agency services							
M		Leg Comm and Communications Director		2.1.1	Create an online resource for state services and resources for children organized by specific need by June 30, 2020	0%	100%	7/1/2019-6/30/2020	The S.C. Dept. of Children's Advocacy website will be modified to include an online resource for the public regarding services available to children by South Carolina's state agencies.	Percent completion	One of the statutory duties of the Dept. of Children's Advocacy includes educating the public about state agency services. Providing easily-accessible online information to the public about the availability of services could reduce incidences of abuse, neglect and institutionalization of children by apprising families of services available to them in their homes and communities.	
M		Leg Comm and Communications Director		2.1.2	Develop and deliver or attend and participate in at least 4 public or community meetings or events to share information about accessing and/or navigating services provided by state agencies for children	0%	4	7/1/2019-6/30/2020	The Dept. of Children's Advocacy's Communication Director will work closely with DCA leadership to develop and promote public awareness opportunities.	Count of meetings	Creating a forum for members of the community to hear about how to access and navigate through services and programs will not only help people know what services are available but also help them feel less intimidated, confused, and overwhelmed by applying for and accessing services available to children.	
S		2.2			Develop process to provide an excellent customer experience.							
M	GAL Ops		2.2.1	Review and update 100% of policies and procedures to streamline and improve consistency across the state.	0%	100%	7/1/2019-6/30/2020	Guardian ad Litem offices will have consistent operational policy and procedure.	Percent Completion	The GAL Program uses existing National CASA policy for training, but national standards do not provide all of the operational policy and procedure that county and regional offices need on a day-to-day basis. GAL offices will operate more smoothly and interact more efficiently with Clerks' offices, volunteer GALs, DSS, and the judiciary with more consistent and effective statewide office management policy and procedure.		

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	M	Ops	2.2.2		Create consistent and effective policies and procedures for improved efficiency for all Department of Children's Advocacy programs.	0%	100%		7/1/2019-6/30/2020	The Dept. of Children's Advocacy began on July 1, 2019 and adopted Admin policy at that time.	Percent Completion	Dept. of Children's Advocacy includes three divisions (Continuum of Care, Foster Care Review Board, and Guardian ad litem) which were part of the Department of Administration prior to DCA's effective date of July 1, 2019. At its launch, DCA adopted then-existing Admin policy. This policy should be reviewed to ensure that ongoing policy is consistent with DCA's specific child-focused and improvement-oriented mission and duties.
	M	COC	2.2.3		Ensure 87% of Continuum of Care parents interviewed will feel satisfied with the services they receive overall.	0%	87%		7/1/2019-6/30/2020	Continuum of Care will administer regular surveys regarding parental satisfaction of services.	Number of parents who report being satisfied with the services they receive overall from the Continuum of Care program/total number of parents who complete the survey.	DCA seeks to develop processes to provide excellent customer service through measuring customer service and establishing a customer feedback process which guides service improvements.
	M	COC	2.2.4		95% of Continuum of Care parents will indicate that they feel respected by Continuum of Care staff.	0%	95%		7/1/2019-6/30/2020	Continuum of Care will administer regular surveys to measure customer perception of COC staff's professionalism.	Number of parents who report feeling respected by the Continuum of Care staff/total number of parents who complete the survey.	DCA seeks to develop processes to provide excellent customer service through measuring customer service and establishing a customer feedback process which guides service improvements.
		COC	2.2.5		The average Child Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS) score of total youth will support the efficacy of COC services through a 30% reduction in the youth's baseline crisis score.	0%	30%		7/1/2019-6/30/2020	Continuum of Care maintains CAFAS scores as part of the requirements of its high fidelity Wrap Around quality control and assurance.	Comparison of youths' beginning and ending CAFAS scores	A child's improvement is the single-most important goal of DCA. Continuum of Care's ability to objectively measure a youth's improvement is fundamental to the effectiveness of COC's model and professionals.
	M	Invest	2.2.6		Initial response to complaints occurs within one business day of the Agency's receipt of telephone or website-submitted complaints.		98%		7/1/2019-6/30/2020	Capacity will need to be developed to meet this goal and to measure the timeliness of complaint response times.	Number of complaints for which agency's initial response was within one business day of agency's receipt of the complaint/total number of complaints received by the agency.	Capacity needs to be developed to allow DCA to respond to complaints relatively quickly and to determine which matters require more immediate assistance or referrals. To achieve this measurement, an investigative staff will need to be hired and trained in addition to having a system which monitors the time between receipt of and response to complaints.
Government and Citizens	G		3		<b>Develop and promote a broad vision for reform, driven by the values and goals of child-serving agencies, to make the services and programs provided by state agencies more effective for children, youth, families and communities</b>							
	S		3.1		<b>Examine, on a system-wide basis, the care and services that state agencies provide children</b>							
	M	Invest and Leg Comm	3.1.1		Establish an objective system for reviewing and evaluating services for children by June 30, 2020.	0%	100%		7/1/2019-6/30/2020	One of the statutory duties of the Dept. of Children's Advocacy includes examining, on a system-wide basis, the care and services that state agencies provide children.	Percent completion	One of the statutory duties of the Dept. of Children's Advocacy includes examining, on a system-wide basis, the care and services that state agencies provide children.
	M	Leg Comm	3.1.2		Review and report on services that state agencies provide to children to the General Assembly.	0	1		7/1/2019-6/30/2020	One of the statutory duties of the Dept. of Children's Advocacy includes providing a report to the General Assembly regarding the activities of the SCA.	Report submitted	One of the statutory duties of the Dept. of Children's Advocacy includes providing a report to the General Assembly regarding the activities of the SCA.
	S		3.2		<b>Receive, refer, monitor and investigate complaints regarding state agencies</b>							
	M	Invest	3.2.1		Develop a system to track, monitor and resolve complaints in a timely manner by June 30, 2020.	0%	100%		7/1/2019-6/30/2020	Electronic network database for the Department of Children's Advocacy	Percent completion	Collecting, reviewing, and considering this type of information will help DCA and other agencies provide better services for children and families and will assist in the State Child Advocate in developing a broad vision for reform that includes recommendations for improvement.
	M	Leg Comm	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 through regular meetings with the nine statutory agencies.	0	4		7/1/2019-6/30/2020	Department of Children's Advocacy data regarding meetings scheduled and held with agency participation information	Count of meetings	DCA should be involved in regular conversations with agency leadership to inform agencies of issues, to enlist their help and cooperation in resolving issues, and to learn more about other agencies' processes to better-assist DCA with assisting callers and with making recommendations and advocating for systemic improvement.
	S		3.3		<b>Establish the capacity to manage, monitor, and report on statewide and/or internal projects.</b>							











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Program Template

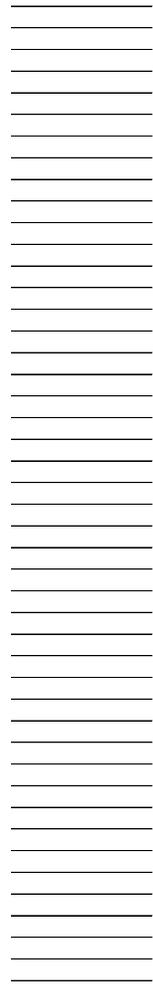
Program/Title	Purpose	FY 2018-19 Expenditures (Actual)				FY 2019-20 Expenditures (Projected)				Associated Measure(s)	
		General	Other	Federal	TOTAL	General	Other	Federal	TOTAL		
I. Administration	Provide administrative support for Agency's divisions; work closely with Admin's shared services to provide HR, finance, budget, legal, communication, and IT support for the Agency's programs; accept, refer, review, monitor and investigate complaints regarding nine specific state agencies; participate in State Fatality Review Committee; oversee the fulfillment of the Agency's statutory duties; submit an annual report; accept and determine whether to investigate critical incidents				\$ -				\$ 424,502	\$ 424,502	Administers statutorily-provided programs regarding assisting abused and neglected children; children with emotional and behavioral issues; reviews the adequacy of services provided to children by nine specific South Carolina state agencies; manage complaint submission processes by phone and electronic submission; accept, review, refer, monitor and/or investigate complaints submitted by complainants; submit an annual report; accept and determine whether to investigate critical incidents
II.A. Guardian ad litem	Recruit, train, and supervise volunteers who advocate for the best interests of children in Family Court proceedings				\$ -	\$ 3,044,718	\$ 2,159,143	\$ 332,118	\$ 5,535,979	\$ 5,535,979	Advocates for abused and neglected children
II.B. Foster Care Review Board	Monitor the progress in achieving permanent placements for children in foster care				\$ -	\$ 275,762	\$ 1,039,472		\$ 1,315,234	\$ 1,315,234	Provides accountability for children in foster care
II.C. Continuum of Care	Serve children with the most severe and complex emotional or behavioral health challenges whose needs are not being adequately met by existing services or programs				\$ -	\$ 2,197,767	\$ 1,223,584		\$ 3,421,351	\$ 3,421,351	Assists children with emotional and behavioral needs
III. Employee Benefits					\$ -	\$ 1,318,000	\$ 1,329,000	\$ 119,563	\$ 2,766,563	\$ 2,766,563	











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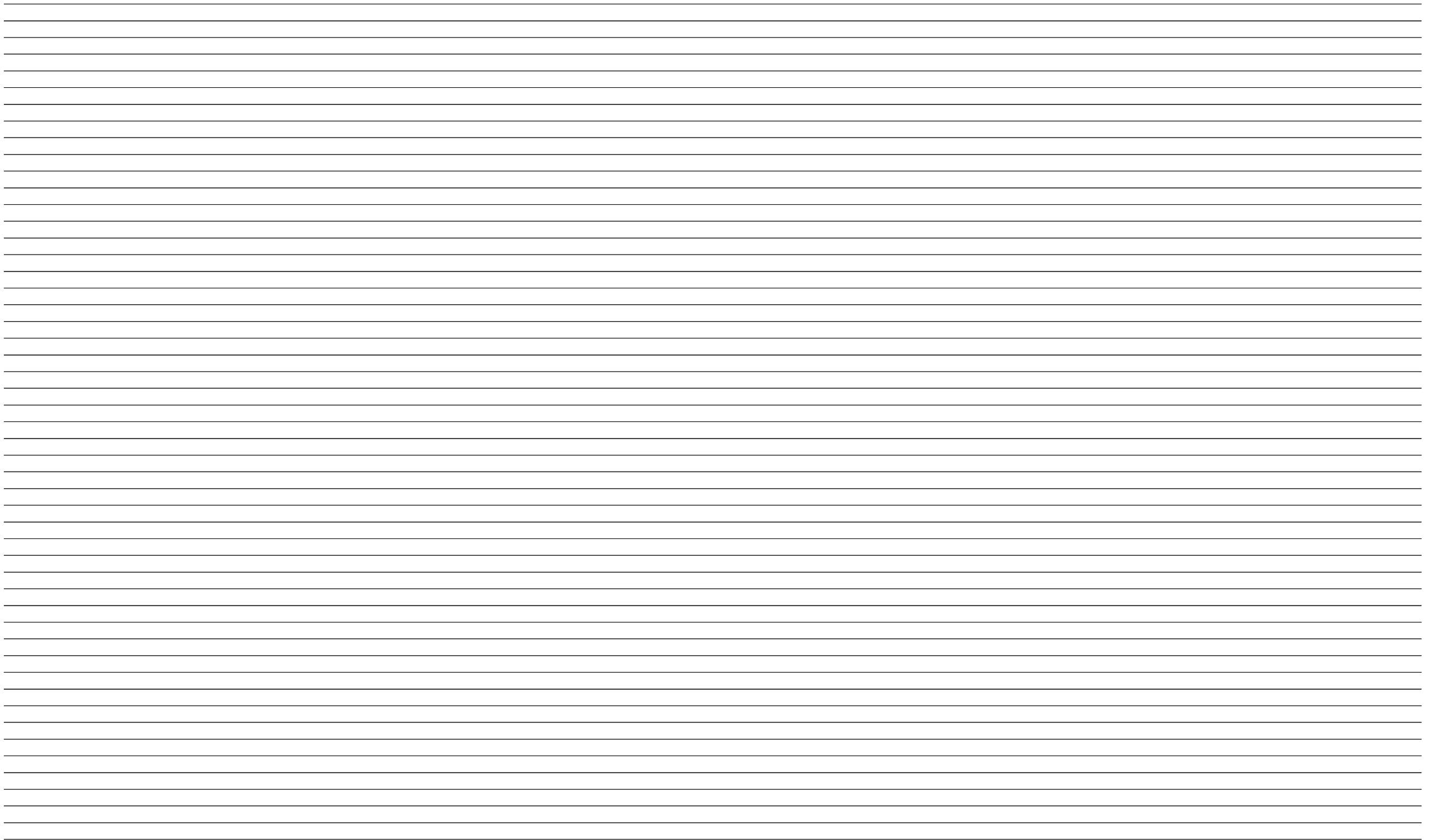
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**Customer Template**

Divisions or Major Programs	Description	Service/Product Provided to Customers	Customer Segments	<i>Specify only for the following Segments: (1) Industry: Name; (2) Professional Organization: Name; (3) Public: Demographics.</i>
Foster Care Review Board	Monitors progress in achieving permanent placements for children in foster care	The FCRB provides support and coordination to local review board member volunteers and State Board of Directors	General Public	Appointed local FCRB members in each county in South Carolina and State Board of Directors representing each Congressional District in South Carolina
Foster Care Review Board	Monitors progress in achieving permanent placements for children in foster care	The FCRB conducts periodic case review of children residing in foster care in South Carolina	General Public	Children and families involved in South Carolina's foster care system
Foster Care Review Board	Monitors progress in achieving permanent placements for children in foster care	The FCRB provides the Family Court in every county in South Carolina a child-specific written recommendation following each case review of a child in foster care	Judicial Branch	Family Court Judges who are making decisions about permanency for children in foster care
Foster Care Review Board	Monitors progress in achieving permanent placements for children in foster care	The FCRB provides the S.C. Dept. of Social Services and Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem Program in every county in South Carolina a child-specific written recommendation following each case review of a child in foster care	Executive Branch/State Agencies	Department of Social Services and Guardians ad litem who are making decisions about permanency for children in foster care
Foster Care Review Board - Heart Gallery	Provides enhanced child-specific adoption recruitment services	The S.C. Heart Gallery maintains an interactive website for enhanced target adoption recruitment	General Public	Legally free children in foster care in South Carolina; interested families approved to adopt; interested families not yet approved to adopt; and South Carolina families assigned for completion of adoptive home studies
Continuum of Care	Serves children with the most severe and complex emotional or behavioral health challenges whose needs are not being adequately met by existing services or programs	Evidenced-based, intensive care coordination and Medicaid Targeted Case Management	General Public	South Carolina youth under age 18 with severe emotional disturbance and/or behavioral health challenges; may serve up to age 21 if youth is in special education; also serving young adults up to age 25 who are enrolled in Roads of Independence (ROI) Program pilot program in Lee, Kershaw, and Sumter counties through a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant with the Department of Mental Health
State Child Advocate (Legislative and Community Affairs)	Examine adequacy of services for children by nines specific state agencies	Establish capacity to examine nine specific state agencies	Legislative Branch	Child-recipients of state services and families who need to access services
State Child Advocate (Legislative and Community Affairs/Communications Director)	Educate public about services available to children by state agencies	Online directory, public forums or other methods of informing public	General Public	Child-recipients of state services and families who need to access services
State Child Advocate (Legislative and Community Affairs/Communications Director)	Educate public about services available to children by state agencies	Attend public forums, speak with members of community and research availability of services to determine service array	General Public	Members of the community and families who benefit from coordination of services and processes









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Partner Template

Name of Partner Entity	Type of Partner Entity	Description of Partnership	Associated Goal(s)
Various State Agencies	State Government	Continuum of Care	2
Various Medicaid Contracted Care Organizations	Private Business Organization	Continuum of Care	2
Various Continuum of Care Qualified Providers	Private Business Organization	Continuum of Care	2
University of Maryland	Higher Education Institute	Continuum of Care	2
Department of Mental Health (DMH)	State Government	Continuum of Care (funding for services/operations and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association grant)	2
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA)	State Government	Continuum of Care (SAMHSA grant with DMH)	2
Department of Health and Human Services	State Government	Continuum of Care (Coordination for Medicaid reimbursement)	2
Various Federal Agencies	Federal Government	Continuum of Care	2
Various Local Agencies	Local Government	Guardian ad litem Program	1,2
Various State Agencies	State Government	Guardian ad litem Program	1,2
National CASA	Non-Governmental Organization	Guardian ad litem Program	1,2
S.C. Dept. of Social Services	State Government	Guardian ad litem Program (Title IVe funding for training of volunteer guardians ad litem)	1,2
Various State Agencies	Higher Education Institute	Guardian ad litem Program (Training providers)	1, 2
Various Child Welfare Organizations	Non-Governmental Organization	Guardian ad litem Program	1,2
Various Local Agencies	Local Government	Foster Care Review Board	1,3
Various State Agencies	State Government	Foster Care Review Board	1,3
Various Child Welfare Organizations	Non-Governmental Organization	Foster Care Review Board	1,3





