

OOFY Advisory Board Meeting (July 2026)

7/7/26

Co-Chairs: Vivian Dudley, Elena Leomi

1. Circle (3-3:30, Vivian)

- Circle is a time for connection and relationship building for the board. This time is closed to the public.

2. Board Values Check In (3:30-3:35, Co-Chairs + Misty)

- Public Meeting begins.
- Elena reminds us of last year values work: [Purpose and Values / Office of Ombuds for Foster Youth - State of Minnesota](#)
- Kristy: we say what's true and we center Fosters first: we see it in the ombuds report, not afraid of conflict, sometimes tension but that's ok, holding tension for the prioritization of fosters.
- Charie: we work with care and we see the whole person on the board, aligns with her board caretaker role.
- Elena: we fix the roots not just the branches, as shown by the proposed foster youth bill of rights.
- Misty: Centering fosters through the SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression) workgroup.
- Robin: we say what's true: especially important while meeting directly with Fosters, many are confused because information hasn't been shared with them.

3. Updates from the Foster World (3:35-3:45, Co-Chairs)

- This is a time to informally share any relevant updates, ideas, or questions related to foster care. What are you hearing in your professional and personal roles? What does OOFY need to know about?
- Charie: she has been working on the Squad Deck: it's a conversation tool, in beta testing, about helping young people build intentional relationships that are vital to their transition. 4 years of her LLC The Right Reach!
- Foster Advocates is hosting our summer celebration in Duluth! There are spots on a coach bus to travel up and back for folks from Twin Cities/Southern MN, and limited travel funds for folks coming in from elsewhere in MN. Open to Fosters of all ages! sc2026.eventbrite.com
- Question: Elena read about raising the age of delinquency: [Raising the Delinquency Age Status Report](#). Misty: this came through legislative action in 2024. Changing the age from 10 to 13. That means that if

the youth is 10,11,12 and is charged with a crime they would be handled in the child protection side. Misty can reach out to folks but wouldn't be able to present to the board until Nov possible, after implementation date. The board is interested.

- Misty: DCYF opportunity, evaluation and learning group. just learned of this opportunity today from DCYF- and the application deadline is tomorrow at 4pm. It is for an Evaluation and Learning Group related to the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act. Evaluation and Learning Group (ELG) Member Application
- Vivian: jumping into entrepreneurship with hair oils! She's launching the website.

4. Board Business (3:45-4:15, Co-chairs + Robin)

1. Welcome to new board members!
2. Board Recruitment for final open seat (3:50-3:55, Vivian and Elena)
 - a. One seat open for an Adult w/ Lived Experience. Candidates must be 26+ and have been in foster care in MN at some point before the age of 18. This seat expires 1/4/27. Because of this, applications for that seat will be open Sept-Nov, with recommendations to the GO in Nov, hopeful appointments by January 2027.
3. Scheduling Poll Results (Robin)
 - a. meetings will be held the first Tuesday of the month, in the mornings from 9-11, and the board will continue meeting once a month with two in person meetings a year.
 - b. Board needs to decide in person meetings.
4. New Charter Language: see PDF for proposed new charter language (3:55-4:05, Robin)
 - a. Can't vote, no quorum.
5. Brainstorm: onboarding and orientation for new members (4:05-4:15, Vivian and Elena):
 - a. Norms of meetings, mostly virtual. Scheduling.
 - b. Welcome from the chair/co-chair (1:1 meeting or a letter)
 - Intro to OOFY values and processes
 - Sharing handbook, data privacy requirements, other legal aspects
 - Overview of OOFY and Board history
 - Sharing folder with historical notes from board meetings
 - Assess government systems and board structure training needs (example, understanding agencies that impact child welfare, learning Roberts rules, etc)
 - c. Kristy: one on one with another board members as a welcome: getting to know each other, how are you, why are you in this field, some bumps you encountered, questions. More informal.
 - d. Data practices meeting
 - e. [Small Agency Support / Minnesota.gov](#)
 - f. Roberts Rules
 - g. Bella: one pager on current and upcoming agenda items, what are we working on now and in the future.
 - h. How do you talk about the ombuds office? Things for board members to share about OOFY.
 - i. OOFY staff: identify our recommendations on what's held by staff versus board for onboarding.

- j. Any current members interested in doing one on ones: Vivian, Charie.

5. Ombuds Report (4:15-4:55, Ombudsperson Coonce)

- Misty: DCYF in September, they will share their legislative priorities.
- **Budget Planning Overview:**
 - o General appropriation = the amount our agency is given from the total state budget. Small increase each year to account for rising costs
 - o Grant funds = OOFY enabling statute allows us to receive public or private grants that support our agency's work. We have received \$26k from Sauer Family Foundation and \$20k from Graves to support full design and printing of Foster Youth Rights handbook in FY 27.
 - o Agency budget narratives: provide a description of what your agency does and the public good or outcome that is a result of that investment in a way that decision-makers and the public can easily understand. Demonstrate how well you are doing with performance measures that show how much is provided (the quantity), how well it is done (the quality) and whether or not anyone is better off (the result). Misty is working on this, Due August 7
 - o Change Request - if we are seeking an increase to our general appropriation, considered by the G.O. in their budget
 - o Overall state budget projection = negative balance, increases to agencies are very unlikely
 - o New governor will decide the overall state budget, will be impacted by their priorities and their approach to planning
 - o Questions? No
- **Year 3 OOFY Priorities: seeking Advisory Board input.**
 - o Foster Youth Outreach and Engagement position filled!
 - o Systemic issue reports: we are considering 1) EFC or 2) lack of appropriate reporting for youth already in licensed foster homes.
 - o Would the Advisory Board like to be involved in the selection? If so, what information would you need? Likely investigation timing: start October/November, 3-6 months before report is written pending scope of the issue
 - o Kristy: emphasizes EFC concerns, especially youths exiting 6 months before 18.
 - o Vivian: shares example of barriers when county workers want to place, they could have placed her in a shelter.
 - o Jakayla: aging out was a major headache, trying to set up school and resources, didn't have a foundation.
 - o Kristy: This is likely too big, but the dangers of a county administered, state supervised system.
 - o Misty: people are working on this, she is part of the work.
- **Internal Controls:**
 - o Every state agency has to complete an annual "CSAT." The CSAT has 15 goal areas with multiple objectives for each. It's a very big tracking spreadsheet, showing how we comply with lots of legal requirements related to risks. Things like how we protect data, how we protect against misuse or mismanagement of agency funds, and much more. OOFY is on our 3rd one, due August 31st.

- In March I presented on our internal assessment related to the OLA's program evaluation of OBFF. This highlighted the importance of having a strong, active advisory board who understands their critical role in oversight. In line with that, and our discussions with co-chairs about plans and process for onboarding new members, I identified this as the priority goal for OOFY's internal controls for the next ~ year.
- Presenting to you in hopes this is a goal you can support for me to submit for OOFY. I think it aligns with discussions we've had at many meetings and should provide meaningful benefit to the board and to OOFY as an agency.
- Updates to charter: to specify and clarify role in oversight of ombudsperson role, such as requirement of annual performance review, process for completing annual review, expectations and process for handling and reporting any concerns which may pose risk to agency's financial stability or ability to fulfill statutory mandates, including expected reporting of fraud related concerns.
- Update to charter re: role in review of agency's risk assessment plan, helping identify risk areas and how to manage them, and board chair signing the certification form annually along with the ombudsperson.
- Proposed project timeframe: September 2026-Sept 2027
- Idea: Consider a small committee to work on this outside of meetings, or have co-chairs take the lead on this, and bring things back to full meeting for vote/discussion, and/or dedicate regular time during meetings.
- As board co-chair, Vivian needs to sign off by 8/31/26. Will review and discuss further at August guide team meeting.

6. Public Comment (4:55-5, Co-chairs)

7. Meeting Close (5 pm)

Attendance: Vivian, Tina, Jakayla, Bella, Elena, Kristy, Charie

Guests: Jill Esch, Karina Hunt

Advisory Board Meeting Ombuds Report

July 7, 2026





- Budget Planning Overview
- Year 3 OOFY Priorities -
Advisory Board Input
- Internal Controls Projects

Biennium: 2-year budget cycle



- We are just starting year 2 (“Fiscal Year 2027”/FY27)
- Unspent funds from year 1 roll over into year 2
- Unspent funds from year 2 go back to General Fund

Budget Planning Overview

OOFY Budget

	FY 26	FY 27	Biennium Total
General Appropriation	\$982,000	\$997,000	\$1.977 million
Grant Funds	\$0	\$46,000	\$46,000

Planning for the next biennium (FY28-29) starts now!



- Agency budget narrative - public information
- Change requests
- Gubernatorial transition (new governor) and overall state budget status

What questions do you have?

What additional information would you like to have?



Review of OOFY Agency/Staff Year 3 Priorities

Priority areas presented at June meeting:



- Foundational projects
- Foster youth rights materials
- Agency evaluation
- Agency reporting
- Legislative priorities

Year 3 Priorities - Seeking Advisory Board Input

**Any priority areas you would like more
information on?**

Priority areas to be added?

Any suggested changes?



Systemic Issue Reports



- Raise attention to recurring theme/trend
- Direct recommendations to a higher level vs. specific agency
- Formal report is needed vs. informal recommendations
- OOFY is best positioned to investigate and make recommendations on the topic
- Stay “off-the-shelf”

Focus of Systemic Report Seeking Advisory Board Input



**What else should OOFY consider for our
next systemic investigation?**

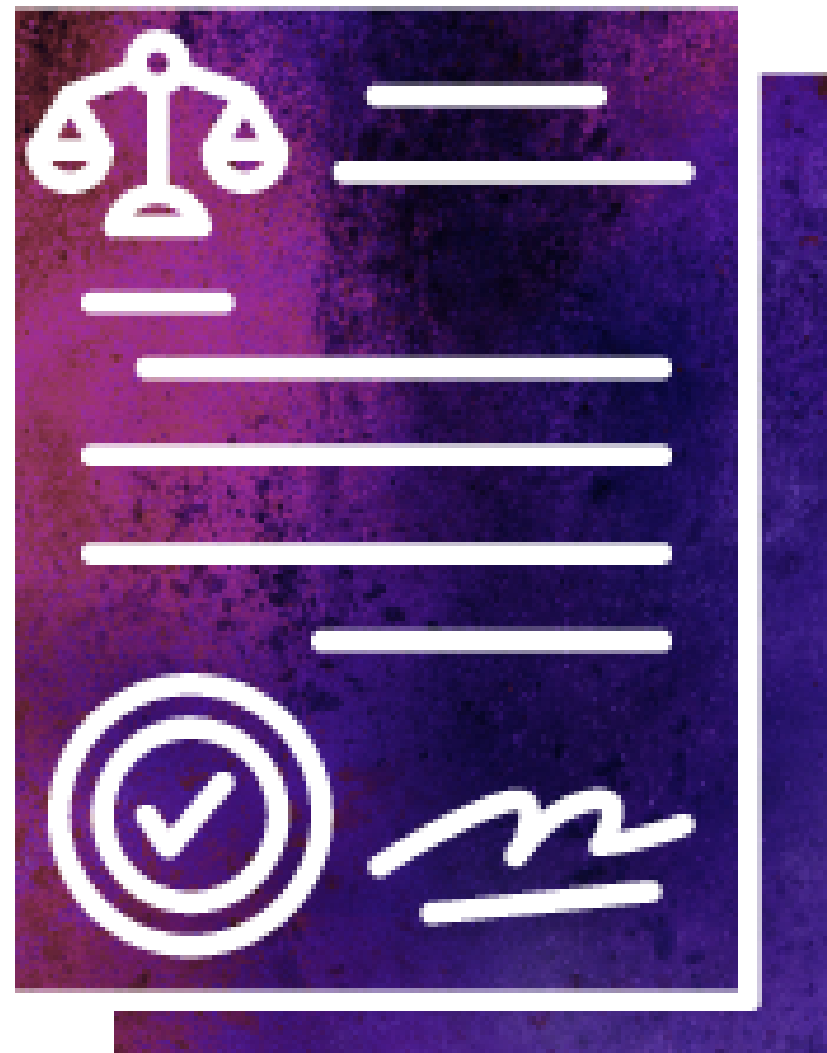
**What additional information do you
need?**

OOFY Internal Controls Priority Project



- Annual, detailed assessment of risk areas using the CSAT
- “Control System Assessment Tool”
- New this year - identify priority project/s

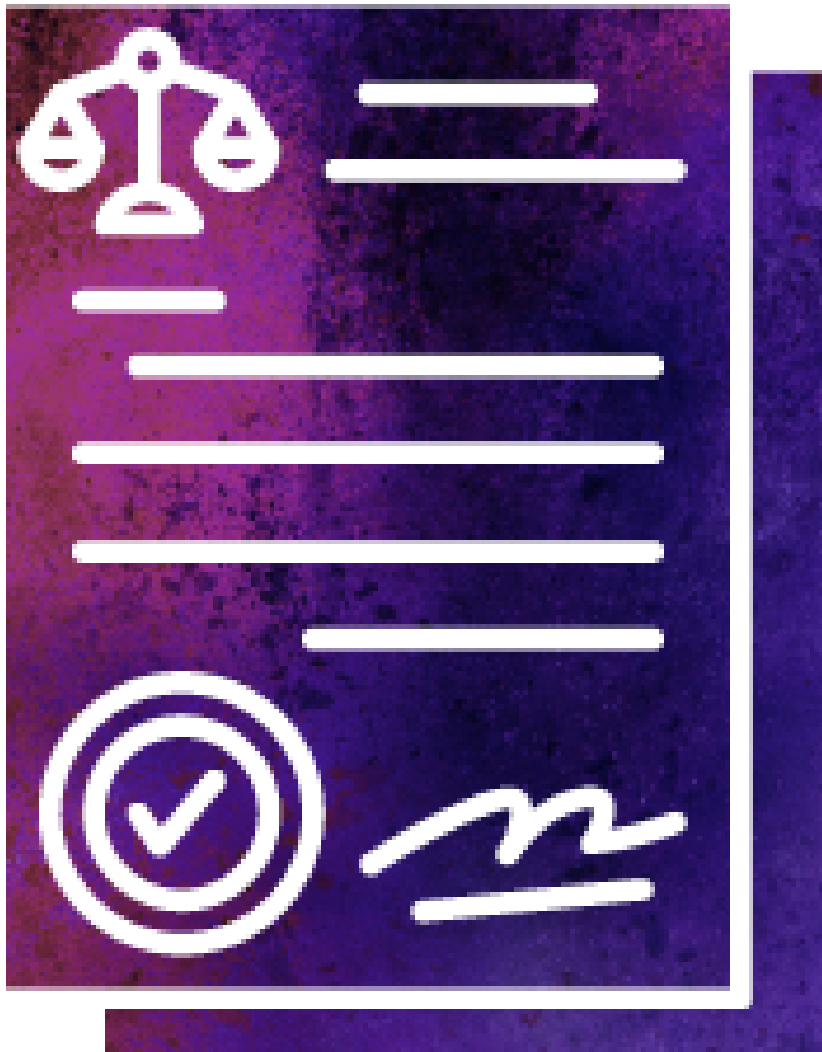
OOFY Internal Controls Priority Project



“Ensure there is strong, well structured onboarding of advisory board members and clear, written guidance to their role in oversight of the ombudsperson's performance.”

OOFY Internal Controls Priority Project

So, what would this mean for the board?



- Updates to charter
- Clarify type, scope, and frequency of ombuds reports to Advisory Board
- Create clear process for onboarding and training
- Proposed timeframe: Sept 2026-Sept 2027



Proposed changes to the OOFY Advisory Board Charter



Section 2.0 Guiding Principles

- ...the Advisory Board will use the following guiding principles to inform how the group will work together. The guiding principles will help guide decision-making and outline what the Advisory Board deems as priorities for their work together. ~~The Advisory Board shall:~~
- Values: TBD

- ...the Advisory Board will use the following guiding **values** to inform how the group will work together. The guiding **values** will help guide decision-making and outline what the Advisory Board deems as priorities for their work together.
- **We Center Fosters First**
Our work begins and ends with Fosters—people who have too often felt unheard in systems meant to support them. Centering Fosters means we start conversations and decisions grounded in what matters most to them.
- **We Work with Care**
Care is the method we bring to all of our work—with Fosters, colleagues, partners, and ourselves. Working with care means balancing urgency with humanity so our impact supports, not harms.
- **We Say What's True**
We speak with transparency and integrity. Honesty builds confidence, not harm.
- **We Fix the Root, Not Just the Branches**
We use what we learn—from Fosters, partners, data, and our own practice—to guide meaningful change.
- **We See the Whole Person**
When people are seen, included, and valued, belonging is felt and fairness becomes possible—the conditions that allow equity to emerge as an outcome of our daily practice

Section 5.1: The Role of the OOFY Advisory Board

Advisory Board advice is primarily positioned to influence OOFY staff priorities; state, county, and local procedures and policies; and even legislation impacting foster youth.

The primary modes for influence include:

- Providing advice to the Ombudsperson regarding use of OOFY resources, including staff time, focus, programming, and Ombudsperson requests to state, county, and local entities.
- Providing advice to the Ombudsperson regarding legislative priorities for the upcoming biennium.
- Voting on formal advisory resolutions in Advisory Board meetings intended to influence the Office, other state agencies, and the foster care system.

Add:

- Conduct an annual performance review for the Ombudsperson for Foster Youth.



Gratitude & Concerns

- The Intake Program Specialist shall share the Gratitude & Concerns form by email after every board meeting. If a board member wishes to share concerns or gratitude about other board members, they should complete the form. The co-chairs will discuss the form during the Guide Team meeting and determine appropriate next steps.