

## Table of Contents

### Office of the Foster Youth Ombudsperson

<i>Agency Profile</i> .....	1
Agency Expenditure Overview .....	2
Agency Financing by Fund .....	3
Agency Change Summary .....	4
<b><u>Change Item(s)</u></b> .....	5
<i>Maintain Current Service Levels</i> .....	5

**AT A GLANCE**

- The Office of the Foster Youth Ombudsperson was created in 2022
- The Office is tasked with supporting and advocating for youth in the foster care system

**PURPOSE**

The Office of the Foster Youth Ombudsperson was created during the 2022 legislative session. The authorizing legislation created an Ombudsperson appointed by the Governor, and created a board of stakeholders, including youth currently in the foster care system to oversee the work of the Ombudsperson. This law also specifies the Ombudsperson “may investigate decisions, acts, and other matters related to the health, safety, and welfare of youth in foster care to promote the highest attainable standards of competence, efficiency, and justice for youth who are in the care of the state.” The law also directs the office “shall provide outreach, resources, and assistance to youth in foster care by directly engaging with youth in residential treatment facilities, group homes, and family foster homes.”

**BUDGET**

As a newly established office, the Ombudsperson does not have historical spending. They do have a general fund appropriation of \$775 thousand in fiscal year 2023, and \$726 thousand general fund base in fiscal year 2024 and beyond. Currently, the only funds available to the agency are general fund appropriations, however, the Ombudsperson has statutory authority to seek public grants and accept private awards to carry out the duties of this office.

**STRATEGIES**

Strategies for the new office will be determined by the new Ombudsperson and board overseeing the work of the ombudsperson.

**RESULTS**

The results for the new office will be determined by the new Ombudsperson and board overseeing the work of the ombudsperson.

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Minnesota Laws 2022, Chapter 63 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2022/0/Session+Law/Chapter/63/>) established the Office of the Foster Youth Ombudsperson.

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY20	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimate FY23	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
					FY24	FY25	FY24	FY25

**Expenditures by Fund**

1000 - General				775	726	726	742	759
<b>Total</b>				<b>775</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>759</b>
Biennial Change				775		677		726
Biennial % Change								
Governor's Change from Base								49
Governor's % Change from Base								3

**Expenditures by Program**

Foster Youth Ombudsperson				775	726	726	742	759
<b>Total</b>				<b>775</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>759</b>

**Expenditures by Category**

Compensation				405	405	405	421	438
Operating Expenses				350	301	301	301	301
Other Financial Transaction				20	20	20	20	20
<b>Total</b>				<b>775</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>759</b>

**Full-Time Equivalents**

				4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
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(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY20	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimate FY23	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
					FY24	FY25	FY24	FY25
<b>1000 - General</b>								
Direct Appropriation				775	726	726	742	759
<b>Expenditures</b>				<b>775</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>759</b>
Biennial Change in Expenditures				775		677		726
Biennial % Change in Expenditures								
Governor's Change from Base								49
Governor's % Change from Base								3
Full-Time Equivalents				4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY23	FY24	FY25	Biennium 2024-25
<b>Direct</b>				
<b>Fund: 1000 - General</b>				
<b>FY2023 Appropriations</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>1,550</b>
<b>Base Adjustments</b>				
Current Law Base Change		(49)	(49)	(98)
<b>Forecast Base</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>1,452</b>
<b>Change Items</b>				
Maintain Current Service Levels		16	33	49
<b>Total Governor's Recommendations</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>1,501</b>

## Office of the Foster Youth Ombudsperson

### FY 2024-25 Biennial Budget Change Item

#### Change Item Title: Maintain Current Service Levels

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
General Fund				
Expenditures	16	33	33	33
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Other Funds				
Expenditures	0	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact = (Expenditures – Revenues)	16	33	33	33
<b>FTEs</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

#### Recommendation:

The Governor recommends additional funding of \$16 thousand in FY 2024 and \$33 thousand in each subsequent year from the general fund to maintain the current level of service delivery at the Office of The Foster Youth Ombudsperson.

#### Rationale/Background:

Each year, the cost of doing business rises—employer-paid health care contributions, FICA and Medicare, along with other salary and compensation-related costs increase. Other operating costs, like rent and lease, fuel and utilities, and IT and legal services also grow. This cost growth puts pressure on agency operating budgets that remain flat from year to year.

Agencies face challenging decisions to manage these costs within existing budgets, while maintaining the services Minnesotans expect. From year to year, agencies find ways to become more efficient with existing resources. However, cost growth typically outstrips efficiencies, and without additional resources added to agency budgets, service delivery erodes. This recommendation provides additional funding to ensure the newly established office maintains sufficient funding to pay for operations.

#### Proposal:

The Governor recommends increasing agency operating budgets to support maintaining the delivery of current services.

#### Results:

This proposal is intended to allow the Office of the Foster Youth Ombudsperson to continue to provide current levels of service and information to the public.