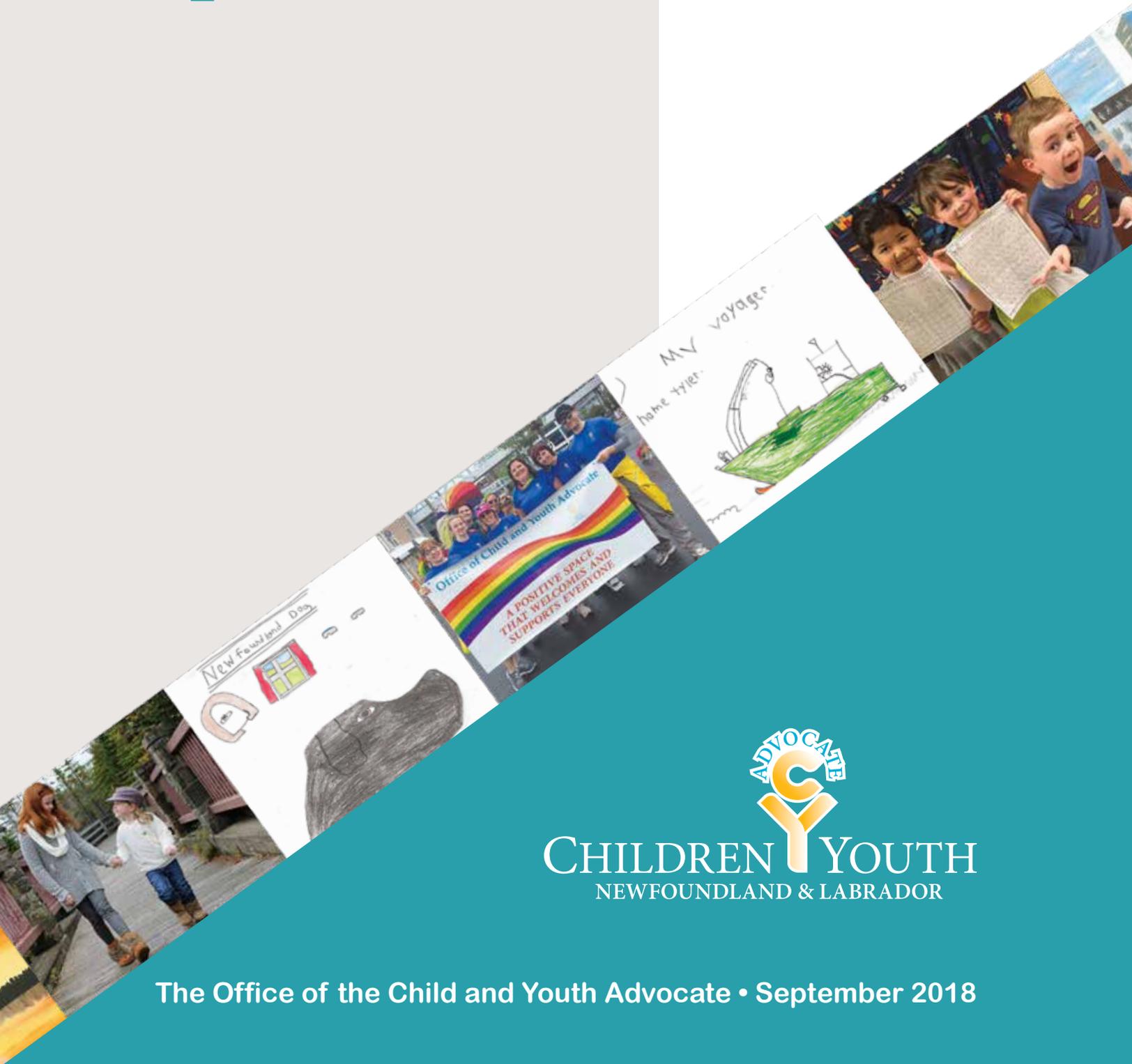


# Annual Performance Report

# 2017 2018



CHILDREN YOUTH  
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate • September 2018

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## Message from the Child and Youth Advocate

I am pleased to present the Annual Performance Report for 2017-18. The report has been prepared in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act** provisions for a Category Two entity. As Child and Youth Advocate, I recognize my obligation under the **Act** and I am accountable for the results reported herein.

We have focused renewed energy on our outreach and engagement activities on a provincial level, and you will see the results as you continue reading. We are very proud of the work we have done to promote and encourage diversity and inclusion. We have accomplished many “firsts” for our office on this strategic issue. As we move forward, these commitments will be tightly woven into the work we do on an ongoing basis.

It is a privilege to advocate with and for children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador. Every day presents an opportunity for improvement and advancement of young people’s rights. We will continue to seek and to share those opportunities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jacqueline Lake Kavanagh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

**Jacqueline Lake Kavanagh**  
**Child and Youth Advocate**



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## 1.0 Overview

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) is an Independent Statutory Office of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador. This office has the legislative authority to represent the rights, interests and viewpoints of children and youth under the age of 19 years. In instances where a young person has been in a care or custody arrangement, the age of service is extended up to their 21st birthday.

The governing legislation for the Office is the **Child and Youth Advocate Act**, which is among the strongest of such legislation in the country. In December 2017, the House of Assembly passed amendments to the legislation for mandatory reporting of critical injuries and deaths of children and youth to our office.

The Child and Youth Advocate is a member of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA). The Office operates from a rights-based perspective and applies the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** as the basis for all advocacy work.

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate is mandated to:

- Protect and advance the rights and interests of children and youth by providing individual and systemic advocacy;
- Ensure that children and youth have access to services and that their complaints receive appropriate attention;
- Conduct independent reviews and investigations;
- Inform the public about the needs and rights of children and youth;
- Provide information and advice to government, agencies of the government and to communities about the availability, effectiveness, responsiveness and relevance of services to children and youth;
- Make recommendations to government regarding legislation, policies, programs and services designed to meet the needs of children and youth.

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The Child and Youth Advocate reports directly to the Legislature through the Speaker of the House. The Office employs a total of 13 staff and all are members of the public service of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Office serves the entire province and is based in St. John's. Services are accessed in person, via telephone (toll free), email, fax, mail or through the website at <http://www.childandyouthadvocate.nf.ca/default.htm>.

The Office operates on a budget of approximately \$1.4 million.

**Budget Approved for 2017-2018 Fiscal Year**

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|                                     |                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Salaries                            | \$1,150,100        |
| Employee Benefits                   | \$3,500            |
| Transportation and Communications   | \$55,400           |
| Supplies                            | \$6,000            |
| Professional Services               | \$19,000           |
| Property, Furnishings and Equipment | \$4,000            |
| Purchased Services                  | \$160,900          |
| <b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>                 | <b>\$1,398,900</b> |

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## 2.0 Highlights and Accomplishments

During the reporting period of April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018, the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate was involved in a range of activities including individual advocacy, systemic advocacy, investigations, outreach and education. Highlights of the year include:

### *Service Delivery and Performance*

- Responded to approximately 585 requests for service/individual advocacy. This is in addition to 72 requests carried forward from the previous year.

### *Investigations/Reports/Releases*

- Released an investigative report entitled **The Case for Culturally Responsive Services** which contains four recommendations. Report can be found at: <http://www.childandyouthadvocate.nf.ca/pdfs/CulturallyResponsiveServicesReport2017.pdf>  
Staff later participated in the launch of a multi-departmental training focused on Intercultural Competence. This training, arranged by the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour reflected a recommendation in this investigative report.
- Issued an investigative report entitled **The Case for Specialized Health Care Responses to Recognize and Prevent Child Sexual Abuse** which contains seven recommendations. Report can be found at: [http://www.childandyouthadvocate.nf.ca/pdfs/specialized\\_healthcare\\_responses\\_rpt2017.pdf](http://www.childandyouthadvocate.nf.ca/pdfs/specialized_healthcare_responses_rpt2017.pdf).
- The Advocate publicly addressed challenges facing young people in Indigenous communities.  
<http://www.childandyouthadvocate.nf.ca/pdfs/ChallengesFacingYoungPeopleInIndigenousCommunitiesJune22-17.pdf>.
- Announced two investigations and one systemic review in November 2017.

- 
- Released a status report on all recommendations to date entitled **Not there Yet**. The Report can be found at:  
<http://www.childandyouthadvocate.nf.ca/pdfs/ACYRecommendationsReport2016NotThereYet.pdf>.
  - Called for action in February 2018 regarding student safety in schools and the need for change in the Education system's policies and legislation to provide the District with sufficient ability to address issues, particularly related to sexual violence.

### ***Engagement/Outreach***

- Launched the Diversity and Inclusion Poster in July 2017 with translations to French, Innu-aimun and Inuktitut;
- Commenced the Young Artist Program in August 2017;
- Launched our onsite outreach program at Thrive, Choices for Youth, and Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre in Whitbourne where we visit these agencies on a regular basis to ensure young people have access to services and can learn more about the role of OCYA and their rights;
- Commenced our Listening Tour with visits to multiple sites and groups around the province, totaling 32 communities and approximately 550 young persons;
- Began using Twitter as a form of social media engagement;
- Hosted Thrive's Velocity Group, MUN's Radhoc Youth Leadership group and children from Daybreak Parent Child Centre;
- Celebrated National Child Day in November 2017 with a host of activities, provincial outreach travel and social media messages;
- Reached approximately 1300 children and youth through summer program child's rights sessions.

### ***Continuous Learning/Education***

- Staff participated in 32 separate educational activities during the fiscal year. This learning has focused on a variety of topics including intercultural competency, LGBTQ2S+ and gender diversity, mental health, youth sexting, social media, information management and privacy legislation.

- 
- Organized and co-hosted with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Office of the Citizens Representative, and Chief Electoral Office a two day investigative training program in October 2017, provided by the Ombudsman Ontario Office called “Sharpening Your Teeth: Advanced Investigative Training for Administrative Watchdogs” that included 28 staff from various Statutory Offices.
  - Provided field placement for a Bachelor of Social Work student.

### ***Legislation***

- Implemented legislative amendments to the **Child and Youth Advocate Act** for mandatory reporting of child and youth deaths and critical injuries.

### ***Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA)***

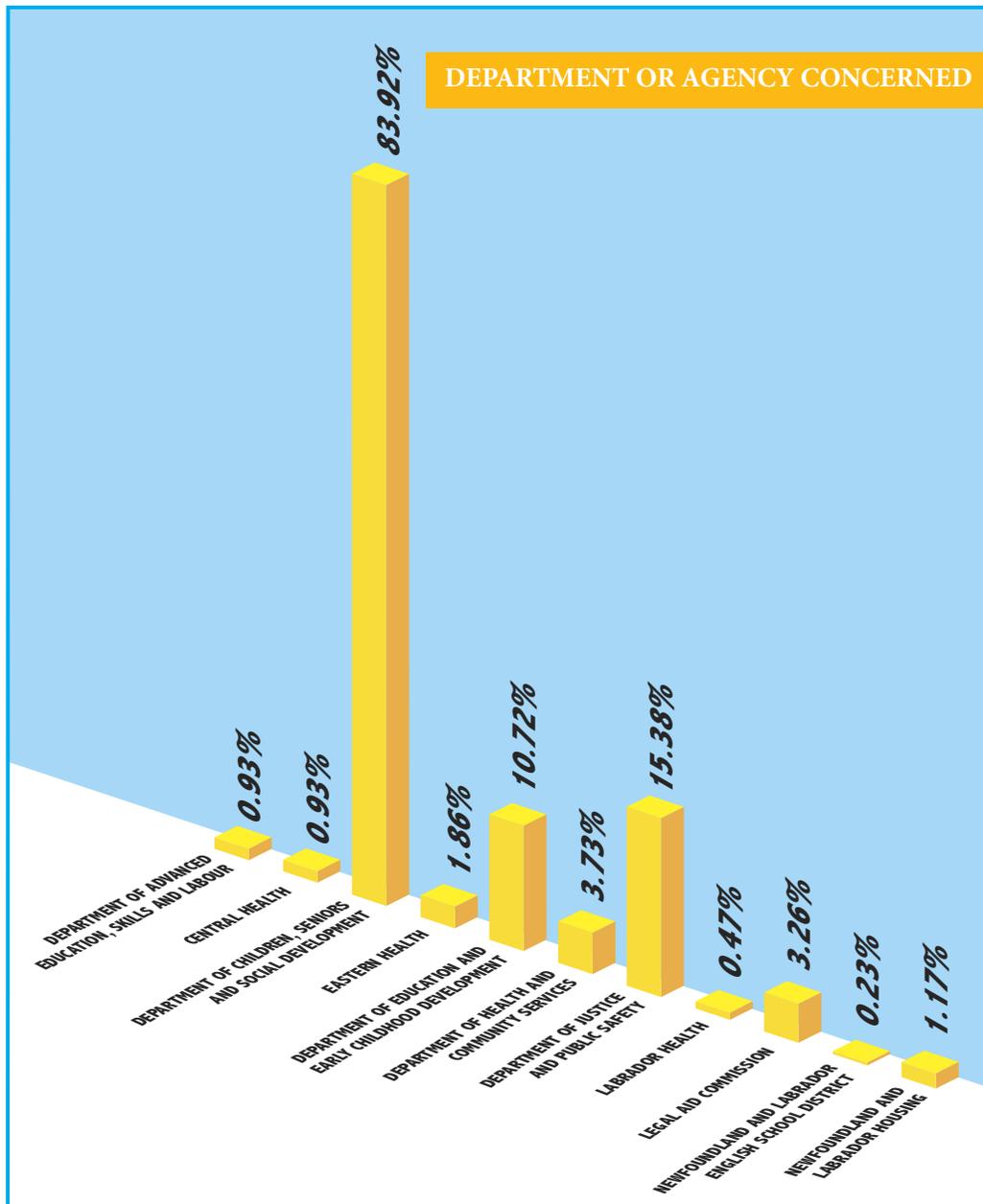
- In January 2018 the Child and Youth Advocate, along with colleagues from the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates, participated in the emergency meeting on Indigenous child welfare in Ottawa.
- Engaged in a new monthly webinar initiative with CCCYA for information sharing, as well as exploring new and emerging approaches and practices in advocacy.

### ***Community Events***

- The Office participated in community events to support and raise awareness of important systemic issues impacting young people.
  - May 2017: Attended City of St. John’s Youth Awards luncheon.
  - May 2017: Participated in the Big Brothers-Big Sisters Bowl for Kids Sake fundraising event.
  - May 2017: Attended year end celebrations for Roots of Empathy.
  - June 2017: Child and Youth Advocate addressed Provincial Foster Families Association Annual Symposium.
  - February 24, 2018: We joined 300+ walkers in the Coldest Night of the Year Walk in downtown St. John’s to raise awareness and funds for community organizations working with homeless and vulnerable youth. The local recipient of the funds was Choices for Youth Outreach and Youth Engagement Centre.
  - February 28, 2018: We issued a provincial challenge to PINK IT UP to raise awareness of bullying and to wear pink as a sign of support for young people.

## OCYA Statistical Highlights

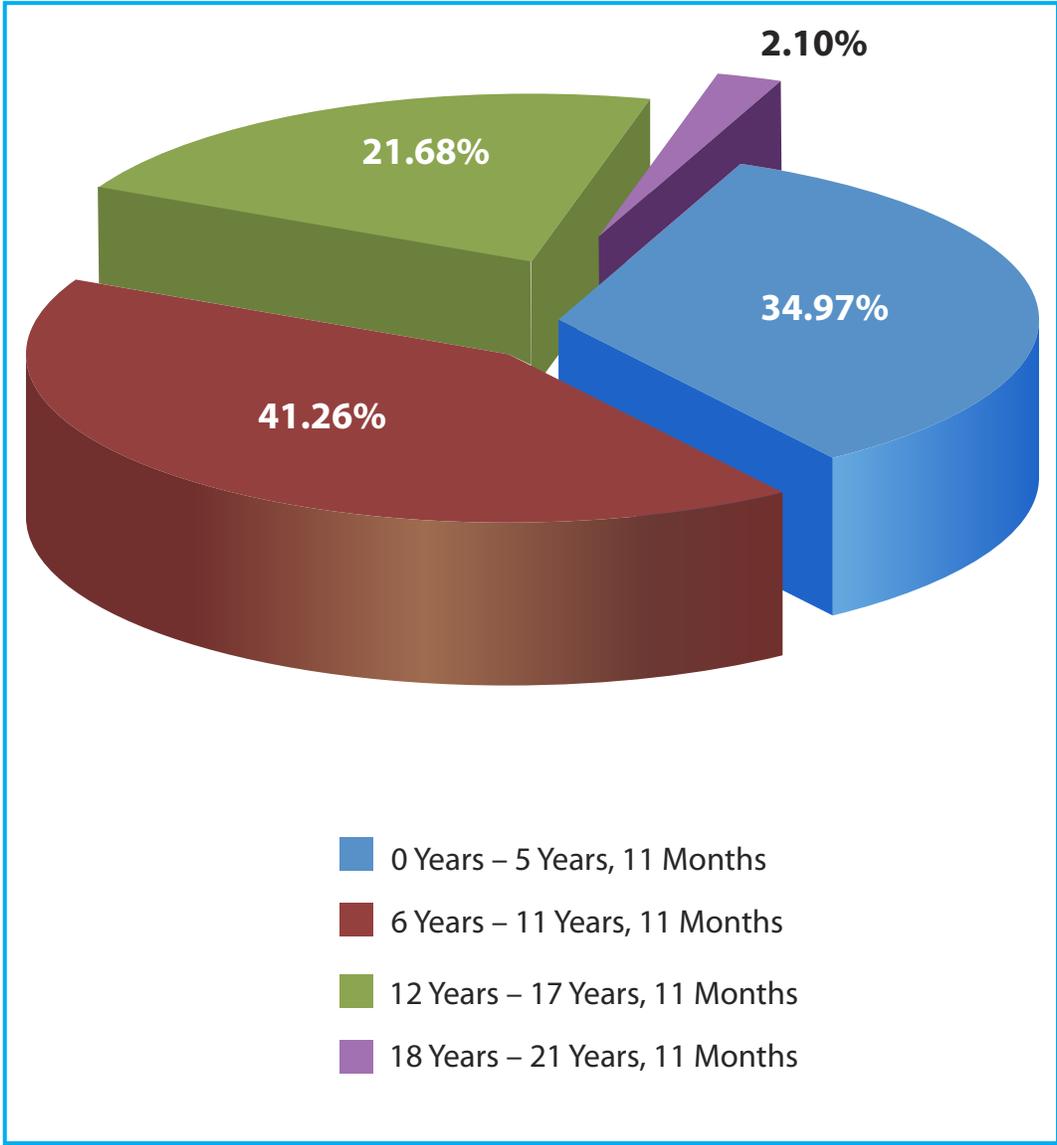
This graph represents the department or agency that was the focus of a concern or complaint. Trends are consistent with previous years in that the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD) is the highest department or agency of focus.



**Note:** In previous OCYA Annual Reports there was a category above entitled “More Than One Department/Agency Involved”. That category has been eliminated in the graph and the data distributed to the respective department/agency to better reflect the information in a more comprehensive manner. Thus some percentages above may appear somewhat higher than previous years, but may not reflect an actual change or trend.

This chart identifies the age of client for advocacy assistance. Just over 41% of requests for assistance involved children between six and twelve years of age. Consistent with previous years, older youth requests were the lowest received; however, that number is slightly higher than the 1.43% of last year.

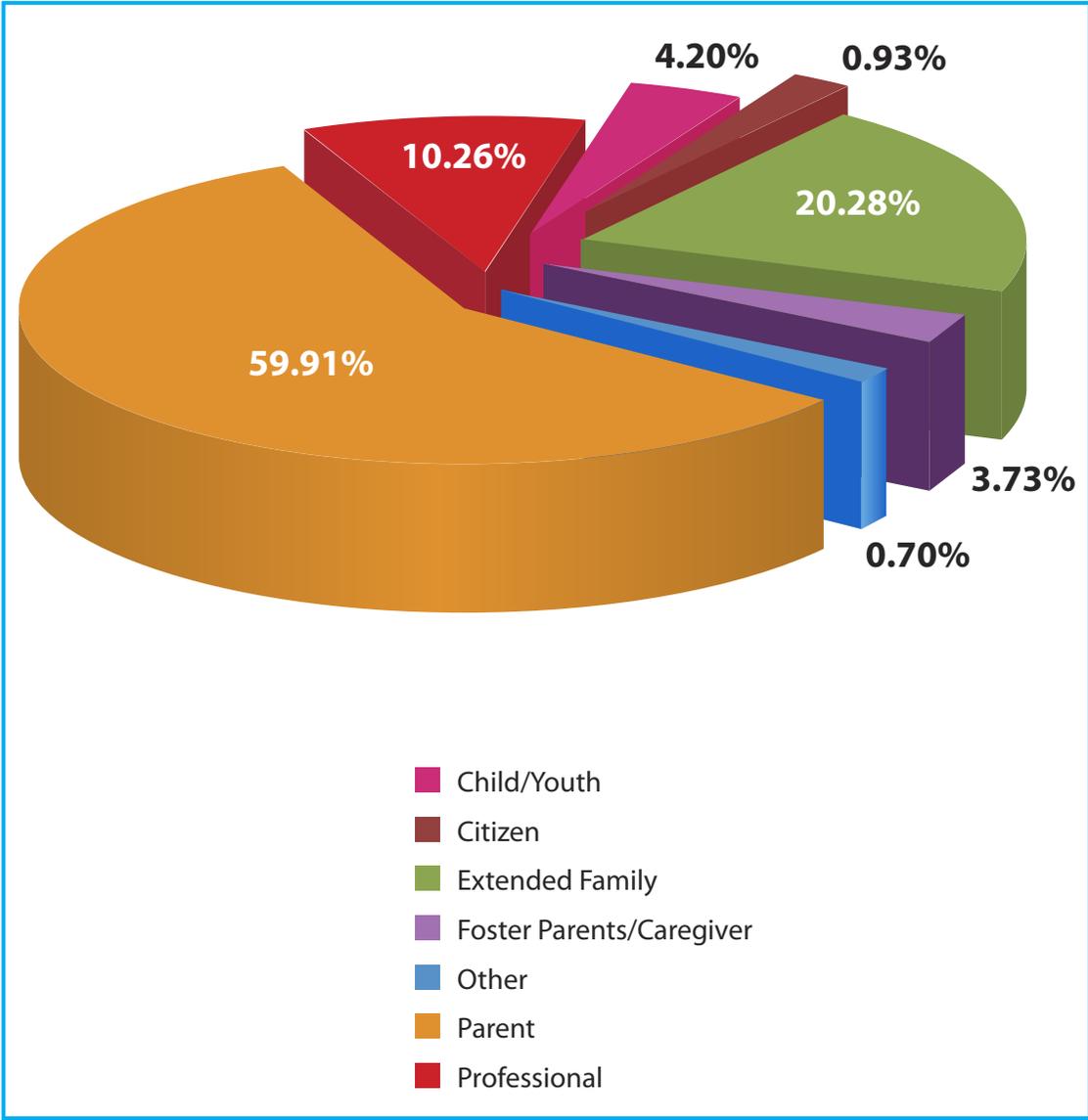
**AGE OF CLIENT**



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This chart identifies the person requesting advocacy assistance on behalf of a child/youth. Parents continue to be the primary contact requesting advocacy services for their child(ren).

**PERSON REQUESTING ADVOCACY TO CHILD/YOUTH**



## 3.0 Report On Performance

As this report represents the first year of a new three year business plan for 2017-2020, results for 2017-2018 are identified.

### Issue 1: Community Outreach and Engagement

As the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate must be well informed and connected to young people, their communities and service providers to advocate effectively, it is essential to increase outreach and engagement initiatives.

#### Goal:

By March 31, 2020, the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have increased community outreach and engagement.

#### Objective 1:

By March 31, 2018 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have developed, implemented and reported on youth engagement initiatives.

| INDICATORS   | ACCOMPLISHMENTS   |
|--|---|
| 1 Complete youth engagement tour and report of findings prepared.          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Held Listening Tour with visits to Eastern, Central and Western regions of Newfoundland and to Labrador. We visited 32 communities and approximately 550 young persons. Draft report of the Listening Tour has been prepared and will be publicly distributed.</li></ul>  |
| 2 Consult with established youth networks and service providers completed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Began ongoing regular outreach at Thrive, Choices for Youth, and NL Youth Centre in Whitbourne.</li><li>• Held sessions in multiple schools, student leadership groups, Community Youth Networks, summer programs, as well as District School, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), Boys and Girls Clubs, Community Education Network, Waypoints, St. John's Native Friendship Centre, Qalipu Youth Group and their leaders, Easter Seals, Association For New Canadians, Trans Support NL and MUN Rahoc Youth Leadership.</li></ul> |

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## INDICATORS

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>3</b> Implement applicable child/youth engagement activities.            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• With the launch of the Listening Tour, over 32 communities have been visited, including multiple sessions with children and youth in the St. John's area.</li><li>• OCYA summer students reached a total of approximately 1300 children and youth, 27 organizations, and made 45 presentations.</li><li>• OCYA newsletter is published twice a year and targets young persons, parents and service providers.</li><li>• Expanded youth engagement through the onset of social media tools such as Twitter.</li></ul> |
| <b>4</b> Develop and promote resource material in collaboration with youth. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Involved youth in design and development of educational and promotional materials such as OCYA Information Cards. In developing this card, we reached out to the Choices Youth Leadership Council on content and format.</li><li>• Engaged youth with the Boys and Girls Club for suggested changes for the OCYA website.</li><li>• Launched Young Artist Program to invite young artists under the age of 21 to submit artwork to OCYA to be used in resource materials, reports, etc.</li></ul>                    |

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### Discussion of Results:

In 2017-2018 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate made many strides in Outreach and Engagement initiatives by formally establishing mechanisms such as the Listening Tour, the Young Artist Program, ongoing regular outreach in specific sites, and developing a social media presence. In addition to this progress, many connections were made with youth serving organizations throughout the province as we recognize that strengthened connections with young people, their communities and service providers will increase access to and awareness of child/youth rights. We are committed to expanding our outreach and engagement initiatives in the upcoming fiscal years and envision this work will not only inform the OCYA about issues of select groups, but also allow the Office to further connect with young people to support and advance their rights.

#### Objective 2 for 2018-2019

By March 31, 2019 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have researched and implemented education initiatives that support a continuous learning environment related to child and youth rights, and issues impacting young persons.

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**Indicators:**

- Offer OCYA staff continual training and education opportunities related to identified systemic needs, rights and issues impacting children and youth.
- Monitor and track continuing education needs of and opportunities provided to staff.

**Issue 2 - Enhanced Inclusion and Diversity Awareness**

With greater awareness and growth of diversity in the province, it is vital that the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate press for services that are inclusive and culturally responsive. The OCYA is committed to developing and implementing initiatives that enhance awareness of inclusion and diversity.

**Goal**

By March 31, 2020 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have promoted and enhanced awareness of social and cultural inclusion, and diversity for children and youth.

**Objective 1:**

By March 31, 2018 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have enhanced awareness and education related to the need for cultural diversity and inclusion approaches in services to children and youth.

| INDICATORS  | ACCOMPLISHMENTS   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1</b> Complete in house cultural diversity and inclusion training.</p>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• OCYA staff participated in the launch of a multi-departmental training focused on Intercultural Competence. This training, arranged by the Department Advanced Education, Skills and Labour reflected a recommendation made in the OCYA investigative report, <b>The Case for Culturally Responsive Services</b>.</li><li>• Staff attended a session facilitated by Trans Support NL which focused on gender diversity and the issues facing trans youth.</li></ul>   |
| <p><b>2</b> Identify gaps in existing services and responses related to cultural diversity and inclusion.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• OCYA released an investigative report entitled <b>The Case for Culturally Responsive Services</b> with four recommendations focusing on the need for:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cultural competency, diversity and inclusion training for designated frontline Government staff;</li><li>• Interpretation services;</li><li>• Coordinated approaches between the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development and policing services;</li><li>• Government to review and evaluate services available to culturally diverse individuals and families to identify any gaps in services and areas for improvement.</li></ul></li><li>• OCYA issued a news release and the Advocate conducted followup media interviews regarding the challenges facing young people in Indigenous communities.</li></ul> |

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## INDICATORS

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>3</b> Complete focus groups with stakeholder groups to identify gaps and inclusion issues impacting children and youth in our province.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Met with Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) in schools, Trans Support NL as well as Indigenous groups and governments such as Nunatsiavut Government, St. John's Native Friendship Centre, Innu Nation, Sheshatshiu School, Sheshatshiu Youth Centre and Qalipu Youth Group and their leaders and the Association for New Canadians.</li></ul> |
|---|---|

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### Discussion of Results:

We are excited about the many connections we have made in 2017-18 as we have established some strong networks that will support further collaborative work and projects in 2018-19. Discussions and preparatory work with the Nunatsiavut Government in 2017-18 led to an announcement regarding a comprehensive review of child protection services to Inuit children. This work will be undertaken in 2018-19. Through our work with Trans Support NL we are planning joint events for 2018-19 focusing on advancing the rights of trans and gender diverse youth in our province.

Progress has certainly been made to enhance awareness of inclusion and diversity. The remaining 2017-20 planning cycle will see OCYA continue to work on enhancing inclusion and diversity through an outreach plan that further targets diverse and minority groups of children and youth. Education, communication and promotional materials which promote and respect inclusion and diversity in the areas of language, culture, sexual orientation and gender identity will also be key areas of focus.

### Objective 2 for 2018-2019

By March 31, 2019 the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will have developed and implemented a diversity outreach plan that targets diverse and minority groups of children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador.

#### Indicators:

- Consult with established child and youth focused networks, agencies and service providers of diverse and minority groups.
- Develop and implement an outreach plan and applicable engagement activities with diverse and minority groups of children and youth.

## 4.0 Opportunities And Challenges

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate is privileged to have the mandate to advocate for children and youth in this province. We are motivated to work hard with and on behalf of young people when we hear their stories. They are often vulnerable and face many economic, legal, and societal barriers. In these challenging fiscal times we must be focused on ensuring that children and youth receive the services they deserve.

We need to further enhance our abilities and efforts to engage young people, and to get out to meet with youth so they can guide and inform our work. We are very proud of our work with children and youth regarding engagement, diversity and inclusion and we are excited about the opportunities this work will bring in the coming year. Although based in St. John's we are committed to fulfilling our mandate and have a provincial presence.

Our Office is concerned about the over-representation of Indigenous children and youth in the child protection system and acknowledge it presents a significant challenge for our province and country. To improve the conditions and well-being of Indigenous children and youth in our province (and country) we need comprehensive and coordinated efforts and adherence to the **Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action**. We are honored with the Nunatsiavut Government's request to conduct a review of child protection services for Inuit children. This work must be conducted carefully and sensitively. The Review, to be completed in 2018-19, will identify deficiencies, explore promising and best practices, and make recommendations for improved outcomes within an appropriate cultural context.

We are very excited about new connections with Trans Support NL. Through in-depth discussions, we have learned of the many challenges and issues faced by gender diverse youth and although society has come a long way, there is still a long way to go. We look forward to being a safe place for these youth to tell their stories so we can advocate with them and for them for the changes they need.

Over the past year we have made formal and informal recommendations to many government departments and agencies. We look forward to seeing many fruits of this labour in the coming year in the areas of Education, Income Support, Health, Child Protection and Justice. We appreciate the openness to our discussions, questions and recommendations. We are also experiencing the value of departments and agencies proactively seeking OCYA input into policy, program and legislative changes while they are still in the planning stages. We look forward to this practice continuing and growing in the years ahead.

## 5.0 Financial Statements

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this document are based on information provided in the **Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for Fiscal Year Ended 31 March 2018**.

| OFFICE OF THE CHILD AND<br>YOUTH ADVOCATE<br>(Current Estimates) | ACTUAL<br>\$       | AMENDED<br>\$      | ORIGINAL<br>\$     |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>01. Salaries</b>  | \$1,087,316        | \$1,150,100        | \$1,150,100        |
| Operating Accounts:  |                    |                    |                    |
| Employee Benefits  | \$3,244            | \$3,500            | \$3,500            |
| Transportation and Communications                                | \$46,891           | \$55,400           | \$55,400           |
| Supplies   | \$4,942            | \$6,000            | \$6,000            |
| Professional Services  | \$13,585           | \$19,000           | \$19,000           |
| Purchased Services   | \$154,094          | \$160,900          | \$160,900          |
| Property, Furnishings and Equipment                              | \$3,863            | \$4,000            | \$4,000            |
| <b>02. Operating Accounts</b>                                    | \$226,619          | \$248,800          | \$248,800          |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>  | <b>\$1,313,935</b> | <b>\$1,398,900</b> | <b>\$1,398,900</b> |



[www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca](http://www.childandyouthadvocate.nl.ca)

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