

Agency Name:

Department of Children's Advocacy

Agency Code:

L080

Section:

41



Fiscal Year FY 2021-2022

Agency Budget Plan

FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

**OPERATING
REQUESTS**
(FORM B1)

For FY 2021-2022, my agency is (mark "X"):	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting General Fund Appropriations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Federal/Other Authorization.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

**NON-RECURRING
REQUESTS**
(FORM B2)

For FY 2021-2022, my agency is (mark "X"):	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Non-Recurring Appropriations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Non-Recurring Federal/Other Authorization.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

**CAPITAL
REQUESTS**
(FORM C)

For FY 2021-2022, my agency is (mark "X"):	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting funding for Capital Projects.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

PROVISOS
(FORM D)

For FY 2021-2022, my agency is (mark "X"):	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting a new proviso and/or substantive changes to existing provisos.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Only requesting technical proviso changes (such as date references).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any proviso changes.

Please identify your agency's preferred contacts for this year's budget process.

**PRIMARY
CONTACT:**
**SECONDARY
CONTACT:**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email</i>
Amanda Whittle	(803) 734-3176	Amanda.Whittle@childadvocate.sc.gov
Jason Epting	(803) 737-3061	Jason.Epting@admin.sc.gov

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2021-2022 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

SIGN/DATE:
**TYPE/PRINT
NAME:**

<i>Agency Director</i>	<i>Board or Commission Chair</i>
	
Amanda F. Whittle	

This form must be signed by the agency head – not a delegate.

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FORM D – PROVISO REVISION REQUEST

NUMBER	41.2
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Cite the proviso according to the renumbered list (or mark "NEW").

TITLE	DCA: Guardian Ad Litem Program
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Provide the title from the renumbered list or suggest a short title for any new request.

BUDGET PROGRAM	II.A. Guardian Ad Litem
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Identify the associated budget program(s) by name and budget section.

RELATED BUDGET REQUEST	No
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Is this request associated with a budget request you have submitted for FY 2021-2022? If so, cite it here.

REQUESTED ACTION	Amend
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Choose from: Add, Delete, Amend, or Codify.

OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTED	None
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Which other agencies would be affected by the recommended action? How?

SUMMARY & EXPLANATION	<p>The Department of Children’s Advocacy (DCA) is a new agency that began on July 1, 2019. The Agency includes three divisions which are Continuum of Care, Guardian ad litem Program, and Foster Care Review Board. The legislation that created DCA charged the new agency with receiving, responding to, referring, monitoring, and investigating complaints; communicating and ensuring accountability regarding nine state agencies; having Deputy Child Advocates; sharing services with the Department of Administration; and developing a broad vision for reform including submitting an annual report to the General Assembly, Governor, and Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children. Proviso 41.2 was promulgated prior to the effective date of the DCA, and it was likely created to ensure that funding to meet the statutory requirement of S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Section 63-11-570 which requires the General Assembly to provide the necessary funds for the Guardian ad litem Program to carry out the provisions of 63-11-500 through 63-11-560 and 63-7-1990(B)(5). One of the statutory requirements is that all children involved in an abuse and neglect action through Family Court must have a volunteer Guardian ad litem appointed as their advocate. The duties associated with investigating complaints, collaborating and coordinating with other agencies, and developing and recommending improvements toward a broad vision of reform are associated with the goals of the Guardian ad litem Program, support the Program, and, like the GAL Program, provide advocacy, accountability and service for children. DCA seeks a modification of the Proviso 41.2 which honors and secures the requirement that sufficient funding be allotted to the GAL Program to fulfill its mandate while also clarifying the flexibility within the agency to use the funds for areas of work within DCA with a broader interpretation.</p>
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Summarize the existing proviso. If requesting a new proviso, describe the current state of affairs without it. Explain the need for your requested action. For deletion requests due to recent codification, please identify SC Code section where language now appears.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this request would be to avoid additional budget requests, because carry forward money could be used in a less narrow sense. DCA would like to be authorized to pursue cost-sharing or cost-saving improvements that would benefit the Guardian ad litem program as well as other DCA divisions to avoid duplication and to promote fiscal efficiency. DCA seeks authority to use the funding in a broader sense while maintaining the integrity of the funding to ensure that representation through court-appointed special advocates is not compromised.

Provide estimates of any fiscal impacts associated with this proviso, whether for state, federal, or other funds. Explain the method of calculation.

PROPOSED PROVISO TEXT

41.2. (DCA: Guardian Ad Litem Program) ~~Both the program and the funds appropriated to the Department of Children's Advocacy, Guardian ad Litem Program must be administered separately from other programs within the Department of Children's Advocacy and must be expended for the exclusive use of the Guardian ad Litem Program.~~

For the current fiscal year, the Department of Revenue is directed to reduce the rate of interest paid on eligible refunds by two percentage points. The revenue resulting from this reduction must be used exclusively for operations of the Guardian ad Litem program and be deposited in the State Treasury in a separate and distinct fund known as the "South Carolina Guardian ad Litem Trust Fund." Unexpended revenues in this fund carry forward to succeeding fiscal years, and earnings in this fund must be credited to it. The Guardian ad Litem program may carry forward the other funds authorized herein for its operations from the prior fiscal year into the current fiscal year.

Paste existing text above, then bold and underline insertions and strikethrough deletions. For new proviso requests, enter requested text above.

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FORM E – AGENCY COST SAVINGS AND GENERAL FUND REDUCTION CONTINGENCY PLAN

TITLE	Agency Cost Savings and General Fund Reduction Contingency Plan
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AMOUNT	\$236,465
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What is the General Fund 3% reduction amount? This amount should correspond to the reduction spreadsheet prepared by EBO.

ASSOCIATED FTE REDUCTIONS	5 FTEs
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How many FTEs would be reduced in association with this General Fund reduction?

PROGRAM / ACTIVITY IMPACT	<p>A general fund reduction would be achieved by maintaining 5 vacancies within the Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Program. The GAL Program currently has 24 vacancies, and the Department of Children’s Advocacy (DCA) has committed to filling vacancies with the GAL Program during the next fiscal year as outlined in the Annual Accountability Report. A net 18 vacancies were filled during FY2020. DCA recognizes the need to maintain all 24 of the positions within the GAL Program and to fill them. DCA will continue to explore ways to reduce costs and reinvest those savings within the agency to better serve the citizens of South Carolina.</p>
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What programs or activities are supported by the General Funds identified?

SUMMARY	<p>These FTEs are needed to meet the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Program’s CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) volunteer supervision standards. The core mission of the GAL program is to recruit, train, and supervise volunteers to advocate for the best interest of abused and neglected children in Family Court proceedings. Due to the lack of volunteers in some regions, existing staff are managing cases rather than recruiting, training, and supervising volunteers, creating a cycle where children cannot be served on a timely basis.</p>
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Please provide a detailed summary of service delivery impact caused by a reduction in General Fund Appropriations and provide the method of calculation for anticipated reductions. Agencies should prioritize reduction in expenditures that have the least significant impact on service delivery.

AGENCY COST SAVINGS PLANS

5 Program Coordinator I FTEs @ \$33,494 = \$167,470

Employer Contributions (@ 41.2%) = \$68,998

Total Savings = \$236,468

On July 1, 2019, there were 42 vacancies within the Guardian ad Litem Program. There were 29 vacancies as of January 2, 2020 and 24 vacancies as of June 30, 2020. A net of 18 vacancies were filled. DCA recognizes the need to maintain all 24 of the positions within the GAL Program and to fill them. DCA has committed, through its Annual Accountability Report, to reduce existing vacancies to 10% (12 vacancies) during FY21 and would anticipate committing to reducing existing vacancies to 5% (6 employees) during FY22. DCA anticipates that South Carolina's financial forecast will be improved in 2022 such that the FY23 budget would contemplate DCA filling all positions, including the 5 FTEs contemplated here, for the GAL Program to be fully staffed by 2024. This aligns with the goals, strategies and measures of 1.1.1 and 1.2.1 of DCA's Annual Accountability Report which was submitted on September 15, 2020.

What measures does the agency plan to implement to reduce its costs and operating expenses by more than \$50,000? Provide a summary of the measures taken and the estimated amount of savings. How does the agency plan to repurpose the savings?