



The Office of the Child Advocate Style Guide

A RESOURCE FOR STANDARDIZATION ACROSS THE OFFICE

JANUARY 2023
THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MARIA Z. MOSSAIDES, DIRECTOR
[LINK TO REPORT ON MASS.GOV](#)

Document Components

Cover Page

The final following table outlines the components of the first page, the Cover Page.

Table 1: Components of Cover Page	
Component	Rule
OCA Logo	Left aligned, appearing above the title
Title	Left aligned, font size 54, bolded , OCA Blue, Hex# #008FBE. <i>(Note that this may change if a different color theme is developed as discussed in Formatting, page 11)</i>
Footer	Left aligned, font size 11, white, background should be Turquoise Accent 1 25% Darker, Hex# 006B8E and include the date published, the name of the Child Advocate and the link to the report

Table of Contents

Each report should include a standard table of contents that appears after the Cover Page and before the Cover Letter and should be hyperlinked to the section headers. The Table of Contents should include Heading 1 and Heading 2 levels of information, but does not need to include levels below that (e.g. Heading 3.) **The Table of Contents should be “updated” before sharing documents.** For more information on how to insert, link and update a table of contents, click [here](#).

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Cover Letter



MARIA Z. MOSSAIDES
DIRECTOR

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF THE CHILD ADVOCATE
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MAIN: (617) 979-8374 • WWW.MASS.GOV/CHILDAVOCATE

DATE

The Cover Letter should appear on the official letter head of the Child Advocate. The graphic at the top of the letter head should be the width of the page, roughly 6.51 inches. The date of publication should be listed before the start of the letter.

Sincerely,



Maria Mossaides

Director, Office of the Child Advocate

OCA Staff List

All current OCA staff, and their titles should be listed as follows:

Maria Z. Mossaides
Director
“The Child Advocate”

Christine Palladino-Downs
Senior Director of Quality Assurance

Cristine Goldman
Director of Policy and Legal Counsel

Ari Fertig
Legislative and Communications Director

Melissa Threadgill
Director of Strategic Innovation

Bekah Thomas
Senior Policy Manager

Dana Deshiro
Quality Assurance Supervisor

Renee Franzis
Quality Assurance Supervisor

Kristi Polizzano
Juvenile Justice Program Manager

Tina Saadallah
Clinical Specialist

Alix Rivière
Research and Policy Analyst

Nicole Thornhill
Clinical Specialist

Jessica Seabrook
Policy and Research Analyst

Karen Blake-Robinson
Clinical Specialist

Morgan Byrnes
Research and Project Coordinator

Jean Clements
Office Manager

The OCA Staff List should be confirmed and, if necessary, updated prior to sharing and publishing. For OCA Annual Reports, the list should include only staff members employed during the fiscal year the annual report covers.

About the Office of the Child Advocate

The following blurb should be provided in an “About the Office of the Child Advocate” section: The [Office of the Child Advocate \(OCA\)](#) is an independent executive branch agency with oversight and ombudsperson responsibilities, established by the Massachusetts Legislature in 2008. The OCA’s mission is to ensure that children receive appropriate, timely and quality state services, with a particular focus on ensuring that the Commonwealth’s most vulnerable and at-risk children have the opportunity to thrive. Through collaboration with public and private stakeholders, the OCA identifies gaps in state services and recommends improvements in policy, practice, regulation, and/or law. The OCA also serves as a resource for families who are receiving, or are eligible to receive, services from the Commonwealth.

Table of Acronyms

Each report containing acronyms should include a table providing the relevant definitions. The table should have two columns, one titled “Acronym” and the other titled “Definition.”

Formatting for the table is as follows:

- Title: Calibri, size 14, font color white, background color OCA blue (Hex #008FBE)
- Acronyms and Definitions: Calibri, size 12, font color black, background color white
- Acronyms should be **bolded**
- Rows: Borders around each row, border color OCA blue (Hex #008FBE)
- Columns: No borders dividing the columns
- Table should be the width of the page, 6.51 inches

Acronym	Definition
BSAS	Bureau of Substance Addiction Services
CAFL	Children and Family Law (Division of CPCS)
CBHI	Children’s Behavioral Health Initiative
CBI	Community-based intervention
CPCS	Committee for Public Counsel Services (Public Defenders)
CTTF	Childhood Trauma Task Force
CWOF	Continue Without a Finding
DCF	Department of Children and Families
DESE	Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
DMH	Department of Mental Health
DPH	Department of Public Health
DYS	Department of Youth Services
EOE	Executive Office of Education
EOHHS	Executive Office of Health & Human Services
EOPSS	Executive Office of Public Safety & Security
JJPAD	Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board
JDAI	Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPS	Massachusetts Probation Service
ONA	Overnight Arrest
SRO	School Resource Officer
YAD	Youth Advocacy Division (Division of CPCS)
YO	Youthful Offender

Appendices¹

An appendix should be created on its own individual page labelled “Appendix” and followed by a title on the next line that describes the subject of the appendix. The title of each appendix should be written in Title Case and labeled as a Style Heading 1 (see Style Heading Section of this document below) so that it appears on the document’s Table of Contents. If there are multiple appendices, each should be labelled with a capital letter and referenced via footnote by its specific title (for example, “see Appendix A”). Appendices should be labeled A to Z.

¹ See Appendix A for example.

Contact Page

The following table outlines the components of the final page, the Contact Page.

Table 2: Components of Contact Page	
Component	Rule
Office Title	Calibri, font size 22, bolded
Phone	Calibri, font size 14, header bolded
Address	Calibri, font size 14, header bolded
Website Link	Calibri, font size 14, header bolded , link in standard hyperlink blue (HEX # 0000EE).
Contact person	Calibri, font size 14, header bolded and should include the person’s name, title, and email address on policy reports that have a specific staff member as a contact.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Child Advocate



Phone

Main Office: [\(617\) 979-8374](tel:(617)979-8374)

Complaint Line: [\(617\) 979-8360](tel:(617)979-8360)

Address

One Ashburton Place, 11th Floor
Boston, MA 02108

Website

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/office-of-the-child-advocate>

Contact

Name, Position

Email

Formatting

General

The following table outlines the general formatting guidelines that should be applied throughout the document.

Table 3: General Formatting Guidelines	
Component	Rule
Font*	Calibri ²
Font Size*	12
Font Color*	All non-heading text should be black
Alignment	Left
Spacing	1.0 spacing between sentences, single space between words and after periods
Margins	1" all around, 0.5 headings
Header	Should include the title of the report, left-aligned, and starting on the page after the TOC in the same font and font size as the body and the OCA logo, right-aligned. To learn more about inserting a header, click here .
Page Numbers	Footer, right aligned, and starting on the page after the TOC in the same Font and Font Size as the body
Theme	OCA Theme For specific report types, including reports that are the product of a Commission or Working Group, staff may also develop themes building off the OCA Theme. Learn more about creating custom theme here , and more about sharing a custom theme here . If a report uses a different color theme, notes on colors for specific items throughout this report may not apply.
Page Breaks	Insert Page Break between sections
Numbers	Spell out numbers less than 10 and/or a number that starts a sentence, heading, or title
Bulleting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary bullets should use the black circle symbol with an indent of 0.25 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Secondary bullets should use the outlined circle symbol with an indent of 0.25 <p>There should be only a single space between bullets. Spacing of bullet and sub-bullet indent should be consistent across the document</p>

² Calibri was selected from a list of accessible fonts recommend by Microsoft. To learn more about document accessibility, click [here](#).

Paragraph	There should be a 1.08 space between paragraphs. Paragraphs should not be indented. Learn more about changing space between paragraphs here .
Hyperlinks	Hyperlinks appearing both in text and in citations should be in the standard hyperlink blue (HEX # 0000EE).

*Note: when copying content from other sources, often times the text formatting (color, font and text size) gets copied as well. Some of this formatting is easy to spot, while other components are not. Always go through and make sure non-heading text is Calibri, size 12 and black.

OCA Theme

All OCA publications should use the official OCA Microsoft theme that utilizes the colors from the OCA logo. The theme is available as a .thmx file in the OCA General channel on Teams [here](#) (note, the .thmx file will look like a blank PowerPoint template). More information on .thmx files can be found [here](#).

The theme should be downloaded locally. Once downloaded, the theme should be available by clicking the Design tab and then, on the left side of the ribbon, clicking the Themes tool. If the Theme does not appear in the “Custom” section, click the Browse for Themes option. In the resulting dialog box, you can navigate to the location where you placed the .thmx file, click that file, and then click Open. The theme should now be available within Word.

Color	Hex #
OCA Blue	008FBE
OCA Purple	800080
OCA Red	EB0029

Style Headings

All sections and subsections of the report should be noted by adding a “heading style.” Heading styles can be found on the “Home” tab of Word. This makes the document more accessible while also making it possible to insert a standard TOC. For more information on style headings, please click [here](#). Headings should follow the following guidelines:

- All Headings should be in Calibri (Body).
- There **should** be an extra space between Heading 1 and the content that follows. Heading 1 should be size 18.
- There **should** be an extra space between Headings 2+ and the content that follows. Heading 2 should be size 14. However, in some reports that have a lot of graphs and small sections, it may be better to omit the extra space after Headings 2+. It is important that whichever option is chosen for a report (space between all headings and omitting the space for Headings 2+) that it is **consistent across the entire report**.

- Headings should be written in Title Case (all words capitalized except for minor words unless they are the first or last word of the title).
- Headings should use the OCA color palette

Page Breaks

Page breaks should be manually inserted after all major sections of reports. Section breaks should **not** be used. To learn more about how to insert a page break, please click [here](#).

Graphs

The following table outlines the formatting guidelines for all graphs included in the document. All graphs should be done in Excel and “copied and pasted” into the document.

Table 5: Graph Formatting Guidelines	
Component	Rule
Data	As a general guideline, data can be presented in either number or percent form, depending on what information and/or analysis is being communicated. Additionally, when appropriate, the n can be added to categories. Most importantly, all raw data included in any analysis should be provided in an appendix.
Title	Should include the figure number, be bolded , with the italicized title below, font size 12, black
Caption	Font size 10, include source, figure captions should not be italicized.
Formatting	No outlines or grid lines, height 3.03, width 6.51
Variables	Use labels for less than two variables, font size 10, black
Axis Labels	Font size 11, written in Title Case (all words capitalized except for minor words unless they are the first or last word of the title), black
Tables	Include tables under all graphs with 3+ categories
Colors	Graphs colors should be part of the OCA Palette
Alt Text	Alt text ³ is meant to convey the “why” of the image as it relates to the content of a document or webpage. It is read aloud to users by screen reader software, and it is indexed by search engines. It should be added to all graphs and be included in the caption. The accessibility of the document should be checked prior to publishing using Word’s Accessibility Checker found in the review tab. For more information on how to access the Accessibility Checker, click here . For more information on how to add alt text, click here .

³ To learn more about alt text see: [https://accessibility.huit.harvard.edu/describe-content-images#:~:text=Alternative%20\(Alt\)%20Text%20is%20meant,example%20of%20a%20missing%20image](https://accessibility.huit.harvard.edu/describe-content-images#:~:text=Alternative%20(Alt)%20Text%20is%20meant,example%20of%20a%20missing%20image).

Figure X:
*Custodial Arrests by Fiscal Year
(FY17-FY21)*

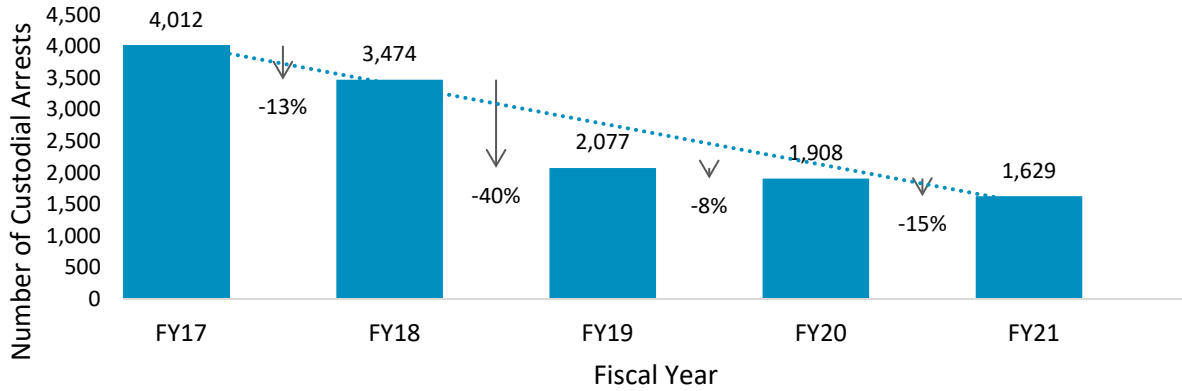
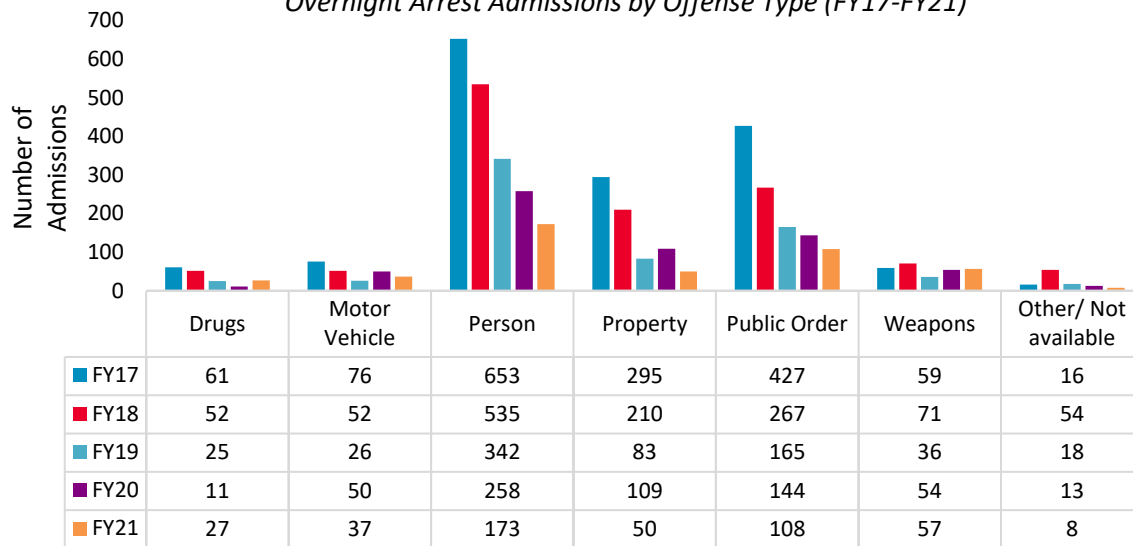


Figure X:
Overnight Arrest Admissions by Offense Type (FY17-FY21)



Tables

The following table outlines the formatting guidelines for all tables included in the document.

Table 6: Table Formatting Guidelines	
Component	Rule
Title	Font size 12, bolded, white, dark blue (Turquoise, Accent 1, Hex #006A8E background).
Table Header	The table header row option should always be checked when creating tables in order to make them more accessible. To set a header row, select the table, then select the Design Tab in Table Tools, on the left-hand side check the “Header Row” box.
Rows	Alternating light blue (Aqua, Accent 2 80% Lighter, Hex # DBEEF4) and white starting with light blue
Alignment	Left
Alt Text	Alt text should be added to all tables. The accessibility of the document should be checked prior to publishing using Word’s Accessibility Checker found in the review tab. For more information on how to access the Accessibility Checker, click here . For more information on how to add alt text, click here .

Text Box

Text Box Formatting Guidelines

The following formatting rules should be applied to all text boxes:

Title: Bolded, centered

Font: Calibri, size 12

Outline: 1.50 width; Aqua, Accent 5, Darker 25%, Hex # 31849B

Background: Aqua, Accent 2 80% Lighter, Hex # DBEEF4

Shape Style: No shadowing should be added to the text box

Alt Text: Alt text should be added to all text boxes. The accessibility of the document should be checked prior to publishing using Word’s Accessibility Checker found in the review tab.

For more information on how to access the Accessibility Checker, click [here](#). For more information on how to add alt text, click [here](#).

Text Wrapping

All text wrapping should be set to the “in line with text,” in order to create a more accessible document. For more on text wrapping, please click [here](#).

Graphics

The following table outlines the formatting guidelines for all graphics included in the document.

Table 7: Graphics Formatting Guidelines	
Component	Rule
Borders	Graphics should not have borders outlining them
Caption	Font size 10, include source (if applicable), figure captions should not be italicized.
Colors	Any smart art used to create graphics color should use the OCA Palette
Alt Text	Alt text should be added to all graphics and be included in the caption. The accessibility of the document should be checked prior to publishing using Word’s Accessibility Checker found in the review tab. For more information on how to access the Accessibility Checker, click here . For more information on how to add alt text, click here .

Example:

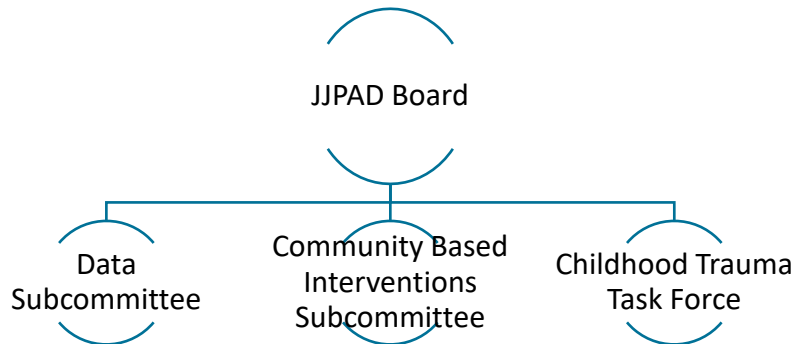


Figure X: JJPAD and CTF Structure

Citations and Footnotes

The OCA uses the American Psychological Association (APA) citation and format style.⁴ To learn more about APA and its general guidelines click [here](#). When citing a resource, the following guidelines should be followed:

⁴ Purdue University. (2020). *APA Style Introduction*. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html

- Citations should appear in the footnotes at the bottom of the page. To learn more about footnotes, click [here](#).
- Citations should be font size 9
- Citations should include a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) or link to the reference material. A DOI is a unique and never-changing string assigned to online journal articles, books, and other works. DOIs make it easier to retrieve works, which is why APA recommends including them in citations.
 - Example of citation with DOI: Briggs-Gowan, M. J., Ford, J. D., Fraleigh, L., McCarthy, K., & Carter, A. S. (2010). Prevalence of exposure to potentially traumatic events in a healthy birth cohort of very young children in the northeastern United States. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 23*(6), 725–733. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.20593>
 - Example of citation with link to reference material: The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (n.d). *Screening and Assessment*. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. <https://www.nctsn.org/treatments-and-practices/screening-and-assessment>
- When citing data from a frequently updated source, such as a Tableau Public page, the citation must include “Accessed [date].” However, non-data citations, such as information from a website, do not need to include “Accessed [date].”
- When referencing a specific resources/report in the narrative of the report, the resource material should be linked directly in the text and in the footnote/citation as directed.
- Citations of a Massachusetts state agency report (including OCA reports) should be formatted in the footnote so that the name of the agency are hyperlinked.
 - Example: [Massachusetts Department of Children and Families](#). (2021). FY21 Annual Report. <https://www.mass.gov/doc/dcf-annual-reportfy2021/download>
- If multiple consecutive sentences are using information from the same source, cite the source after the first sentence and not subsequent ones.

For legal citations, the OCA follows the guidelines put forth in The Bluebook, the style manual for citing to legal documents within the United States. To learn more about The Bluebook, including how to cite cases, statues, and other resources, click [here](#) or [here](#).

Appendix A: Example