

**Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman:  
Budget Rationale**

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**Proposed Appropriation:** There is appropriated from the general fund to the department of justice \$250,000 for the biennium beginning July, 1 2013.

This estimated appropriation is based upon the budget history of Montana’s *Mental Health Care Ombudsman* [established pursuant to 2-15-210, MCA].\* The cost projected in the fiscal note to the bill establishing the Mental Health Care Ombudsman [SB-239 of 2009] was \$250,000 for FY 2000 and 2001 combined.

The first ombudsman to hold that office [Bonnie Adee] confirms that the annual operating costs in those first two years was approximately \$90,000 plus \$90,000, with the remaining set-up costs bringing the budget for that biennium up to \$250,000.

The annual expenditures recorded by the *Mental Health Care Ombudsman* have been fairly consistent, except for the year 2008. From Fiscal Year 2007 to Fiscal Year 2012 the expenditures have been as follows:

	<b>Personal Services</b>	<b>Operating</b>	<b>Total</b>
FY 12	96,019	10,957	106,957
FY 11	93,455	13,295	106,751
FY 10	89,267	18,277	107,494
FY 09	68,251	11,857	80,108
FY 08	89,440	14,211	103,651
FY 07	80,598	14,415	95,013
FY 06	79,619	14,942	94,561

\* The primary duties of Montana’s *Mental Health Care Ombudsman* have been to “work independently” in order to:

1. “represent the interests of consumers of mental health services”
2. “to work directly with consumers to assist them in accessing services and in resolving problems in obtaining services” and
3. to “play an important role in shaping the evolving mental health system”

