



## Changes to Colorado's Mandatory Reporting Laws

In 1963, Colorado was the first state to create mandatory reporting laws, which require people in certain occupations to make a report if they suspect child abuse or neglect.<sup>1</sup> Since then, it has become clear that certain communities – including people of color, under-resourced communities and individuals with disabilities – are over-represented in the child welfare system. Additionally, the Office of the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman (CPO) reported in a [2021 brief](#) that mandatory reporters frequently find these laws to be confusing, and do not know when or how they are actually required to make reports.

To address these issues, in 2022 the General Assembly created the [Mandatory Reporting Task Force](#), located in the CPO.<sup>2</sup> The task force met 31 times – totaling 72 hours of discussion – during a 24-month period. It brought together a diverse group of 34 professionals and individuals with lived experience to study 19 directives and develop recommendations to help address the systemic and technical components of mandatory reporting laws.

On January 1, 2025, the task force published its [final report](#), which included 18 recommendations for legislative action to improve mandatory reporting laws. Recommendations contained in the report were reviewed and voted on by task force members. Each recommendation was supported by at least 70 percent of voting members, and many received unanimous support.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, the recommendations of the task force revolved around five themes: (1) Recognizing and addressing the disproportionate impacts of mandatory reporting laws and policies on people of color, under-resourced communities and individuals with disabilities; (2) Clarifying reporting processes and requirements; (3) Creating and requiring mandatory reporter training; (4) Addressing requirements for specialized occupations; and (5) Reviewing and improving data and information systems.

House Bill 25-1188: Mandatory Reporter Task Force Recommendations – which was signed into law on May 31, 2025 – was the first step toward implementing the task force's recommendations, starting with those changes that did not result in fiscal impacts.

### House Bill 25-1188 amended mandatory reporting laws by addressing:

- **Victim's Advocates:** The bill removed victim's advocates from the list of mandatory reporters.<sup>4</sup> *This change went into effect on May 31, 2025.*
- **Reporting Timelines:** The bill clarified that mandatory reporters must make a report as soon as reasonably possible, but no later than 24 hours after receiving information leading to a suspicion of child abuse or neglect. *This change will go into effect on September 1, 2025.*
- **Professional Capacity:** The bill updated Colorado's law to narrow the requirement to make a report only when mandatory reporters encounter suspected child abuse or neglect within their professional capacity. *This change will go into effect on September 1, 2025.*

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<sup>1</sup> See [C.R.S. §19-3-304](#).

<sup>2</sup> See [House Bill 22-1240](#).

<sup>3</sup> The task force's [voting records](#), [meeting recordings](#), and [minute and recap documents](#) are available online.

<sup>4</sup> See [C.R.S. §13-90-107\(1\)\(k\)\(II\)](#) for the definition of victim's advocates, and see [C.R.S. §19-3-304](#) for the list of mandatory reporters. A letter in support of this change from several organizations can be found [here](#).



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- **Requirements for Those Working for Attorneys:** The bill clarified that mandatory reporting requirements do not apply to individuals who are working for attorneys who are providing legal services. *This change will go into effect on September 1, 2025.*
- **Reporting Criteria:** The bill prohibited reports made due to a family or child’s race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or disability status. *This change will go into effect on September 1, 2025.*
- **Delegation:** The bill amended statute to specify that a mandatory reporter may not delegate their reporting obligation to a person who has no first-hand knowledge of the circumstances leading to a suspicion of child abuse or neglect. *This change will go into effect on September 1, 2025.*
- **Institutional Protocols:** The bill specified that entities employing mandatory reporters may develop protocols regarding how reports are made as long as they comply with state laws, regulations and do not deter or impede an employee from making a report. *This change will go into effect on September 1, 2025.*
- **Written Reports:** The bill eliminated the current requirement for mandatory reporters to follow up an oral report with a written report. *This change will go into effect on September 1, 2025.*
- **Duplicative Report Reduction:** The bill amended statute so that, if a mandatory reporter attempts to make a report about an instance for which a report has already been received, they can instead be given a referral identification number that fulfills their requirement to make a full, duplicative report. *This change will go into effect on September 1, 2025.*

Nothing in this bill created a prohibition for anyone to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

## Organizations in support of House Bill 25-1188 included:



## For more information, please contact:

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