

Timothy Montoya Task Force Final Report

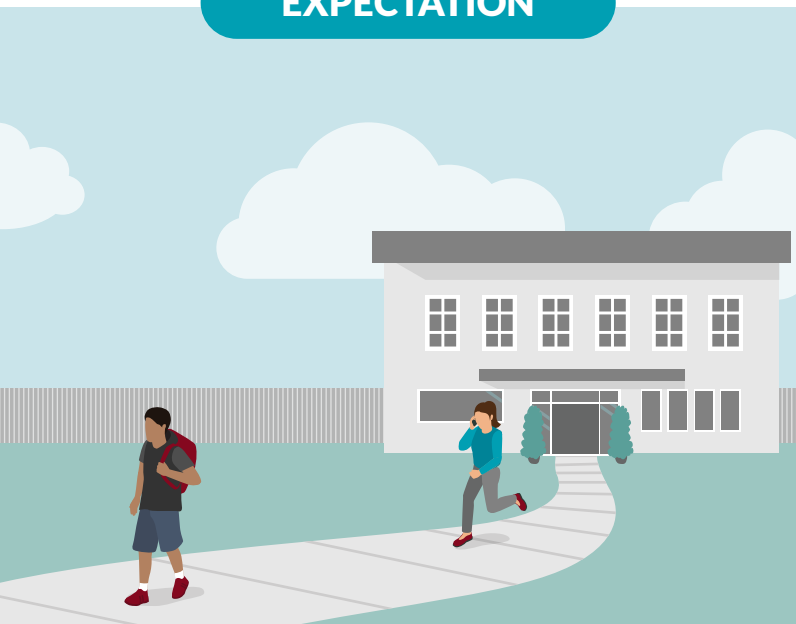
Introduction

In 2020, 12-year-old Timothy Montoya was hit and killed by a car shortly after running away from out-of-home care. In response to this tragedy and others like it, the Colorado legislature established the Timothy Montoya Task Force to Prevent Youth from Running from Out-of-Home Placement. This group has just released its [final report](#) and [executive summary](#), with recommendations for how Colorado can prevent these tragedies from happening in the future.

Problem

The task force found that the state has no standard, adequate systems in place to stop youth from leaving care, help find youth who have run, or properly care for them when they return. When the care of these young people is entrusted to the state – whether that’s with a foster home or a 24-hour residential facility – the public has high expectations of the care those youth will receive. Unfortunately, there is currently a stark disconnect between those expectations and the reality those youth currently face.

EXPECTATION



When a child attempts to run away from care, somebody will prevent them from leaving.



When a child runs away, there will be an organized response to intervene and find them.



Once a child has been found, they will be provided comprehensive aftercare.

REALITY



Children are allowed to run because of ambiguity in the law about when, how and if they can be stopped.



There are no laws that require a coordinated effort to locate a child.



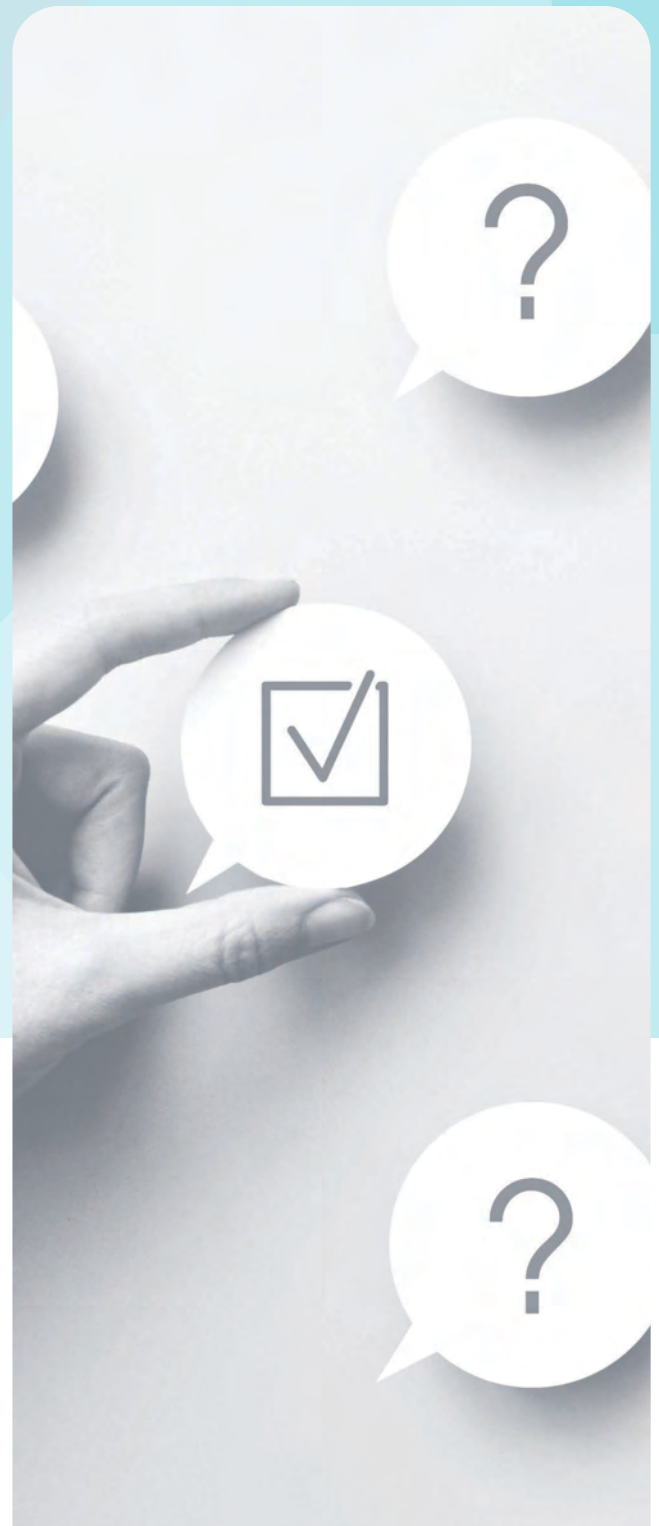
There are no statewide standards of care for a child when they return.

Solution

The task force brought together a diverse group of professionals and individuals with lived experience to recommend solutions to these problems. This group has now issued thoughtful recommendations for how the state of Colorado can build a better system and prevent future tragedies. These recommendations include changes that will help to prevent youth from running away from out-of-home care, intervene to appropriately respond when youth do run from care, and ensure that youth who leave receives appropriate medical and mental health evaluations and care when they return.

The final report of the Timothy Montoya Task Force to Prevent Children from Running Away from Out-of-Home Care can be found [here](#). This report provides an overview of the task force, summaries of its discussions regarding the directives it has been tasked with addressing, and the full text of the recommendations it has set forth for the state of Colorado.

To read the executive summary of the final report, click [here](#). This briefly summarizes the recommendations put forth by the task force. The recommendations are divided into three sections, which together would help create a continuum of services for youth who run from out-of-home placements. These sections incorporate prevention, intervention, and aftercare.



Questions?

If you have any questions about the task force or its final report, please contact:

Stephanie Villafuerte

Colorado's Child Protection Ombudsman

svillafuerte@coloradocpo.org

720-625-8641

Bryan Kelley

Public Policy Analyst

bkelly@coloradocpo.org

720-673-9546

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF COLORADO'S CHILD PROTECTION OMBUDSMAN

The Office of Colorado's Child Protection Ombudsman (CPO) is an independent state agency committed to ensuring the state's child protection system consistently provides high quality service to every child, family and community in Colorado. The CPO studies the child protection system to ensure a better future for Colorado's children and youth. By researching and highlighting issues within Colorado's publicly funded safety nets, the CPO is working to create a better child protection system now and for the future.



**CHILD PROTECTION
OMBUDSMAN**
of COLORADO



KEYSTONE
POLICY CENTER