# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# commissioner of the administration for children, Youth and families, Department of health and human services

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| **OVERVIEW** | |
| Senate Committee | Finance |
| Agency Mission | To enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans by providing effective health and human services and fostering advances in medicine, public health and social services |
| Position Overview | The commissioner serves as the effective and visible advocate for children, youth and families, within the Department of Health and Human Services and with other departments, agencies and entities of the federal government, by maintaining active review and commenting responsibilities, as appropriate, concerning federal policies affecting young individuals and the families of young individuals. |
| Compensation | Level V $145,700 (5 U.S.C. § 5316)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | The Assistant Secretary of the Administration for Children and Families |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** | |
| Management Scope | The commissioner oversees a budget that in 2016 was $18.870 billion, and the Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) estimates 231 full-time equivalents for fiscal 2017.[[2]](#endnote-2)  ACYF is divided into two bureaus—the Children’s Bureau (CB) and the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB)—responsible for different issues involving children, youth and families, and a crosscutting unit charged with research and evaluation. CB administers programming related to child abuse and neglect prevention, foster care, youth development and adoption. FYSB administers programming related to runaway and homeless youth, teen pregnancy prevention and family violence prevention. Each bureau has an associate commissioner appointed by the president. In addition, the United States and its territories are divided into 10 regions, each with an office responsible for ACYF programs in that region.[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Advises the secretary, through the assistant secretary for children and families, on matters relating to the sound development of children, youth and families, and plans, develops and implements a broad range of activities[[4]](#endnote-4) * Administers state grant programs under titles IV-B and IVE of the Social Security Act * Manages the Adoption Opportunities Program and other discretionary programs for the development and provision of child welfare services * Administers the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, which supports and encourages services that prevent or remedy the effects of abuse and/or neglect of children and youth[[5]](#endnote-5) * Collects and disseminates information related to the needs of children, youth and families * Develops plans and conducts research in the field of children, youth and the families * Determines how best to partner at the federal level to provide a full array of services for families, by assisting in the establishment and implementation of a variety of programs and services, some outside of ACYF, to support the needs of children, youth and families; these include health and mental health services; housing and shelter assistance; education and training services; protective services; foster care; teen parenting prevention and support; child care; family support and preservation; teen pregnancy prevention and counseling; counseling on the effects of violence in the communities of individuals and their families; recreational and volunteer opportunities; and comprehensive early childhood development * Provides technical assistance and consultation to states and their political subdivisions with respect to the programs administered by CB and FYSB * Prepares, publishes and disseminates materials concerning the welfare of children, youth and families * Gathers statistics on children, youth and families eligible to receive services from programs related to CB or FYSB * Coordinates activities carried out or assisted by all departments, agencies and entities of the federal government with respect to the collection, preparation and dissemination of information relevant to children, youth and families * Stimulates more effective uses of existing resources and available services for children, youth and families * Develops basic policies and sets priorities with respect to the development and operation of programs and activities conducted under chapter 42 U.S.C. § 12312 (The Public Health and Welfare § Functions of Commissioner) * Convenes conferences of authorities and officials of organizations (including federal, state and local agencies and nonprofit private organizations) of programs for children, youth and their families for the development and implementation of policies related to the priorities and purposes of chapter 42 U.S.C. § 12312, including topics such as the establishment of a nationwide network of comprehensive, coordinated services and opportunities for such individuals * Conducts periodic evaluations of the programs and activities related to the purposes of chapter 42 U.S.C. § 12312 * Develops, in coordination with other agencies, methods to ensure adequate training for personnel concerning children, youth and families, and ensures the adequate dissemination of such information to appropriate state and community agencies * Coordinates with and seeks the advice of voluntary agencies and organizations that provide services related to the purposes of chapter 42 U.S.C. § 12312 |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | * Knowledge of child welfare policy, practice and administration; child abuse and neglect; foster care; adoption; family violence; teen pregnancy prevention; child and youth development; trauma; adverse childhood experiences; research evidence use; evidence and data informed decision-making; evidence-based policy and practice; and family support and service array * Prior agency experience (helpful) * Extensive management experience * Strong relationships with relevant stakeholders, or the ability to form them * Familiarity with budgeting and the legislative process |
| Competencies | * Commitment to children, youth and families and their safety, permanency and well-being * Strong communication and interpersonal skills * Excellent leadership skills * Ability to work under high pressure * Ability to handle sensitive matters * Energy for frequent amount of travel * Excellent negotiation skills * Ability to work in a matrixed agency * Ability to work across party lines |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |
| Rafael Lopez (2014 to 2017) – Senior Policy Advisor, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy; Associate Director, Annie E. Casey Foundation; President and CEO, The Family League of Baltimore City, Inc.[[6]](#endnote-6) | |
| Bryan H. Samuels (2010 to 2014) – Chief of Staff, Chicago Public Schools; Director, Illinois Department of Children and Family services[[7]](#endnote-7) | |
| Joan E. Ohl (2002 to 2008) - Cabinet Secretary of the West Virginia Department of  Health and Human Resources[[8]](#endnote-8) | |

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/olab/fy_2016_acf_operating_plan.pdf>

   https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/olab/final\_cj\_2017\_print.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/acyf/about [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/about/leadership/rafael-lopez [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/about/leadership/bryan-samuels [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. <https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/111501jotest.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)