

**Disability Rights California  
OCRA Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
Friday, May 29, 2020, 12:00 p.m.  
Via Zoom Meeting**

**PRESENT:** Marty Omoto (Chair), Deaka McClain, Elizabeth Gomez, Jim Janz, Jeff Thom, Rene Rodriguez, Sandra Smith, Tammi Bradley

**ABSENT:** Diana Powell

**STAFF:** Alice Ximenez, Hillary Marriott, Katie Hornberger, Koleen Biegacki, Andy Imperato, Jasbir Soomal

**CLOSE CAPTIONING SERVICE:** Natasha DeLeon, NorCal

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Marty Omoto established a quorum and brought the meeting to order at 12:19 p.m.

**2. Approval of December 12, 2019 Minutes**

The Committee reviewed the minutes.

It was M/S/C (Smith/Rodriguez) to approve the December 12, 2019 meeting minutes. Marty Omoto, Katherine Perez and Yolanda Vargas abstained.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

Elizabeth Gomez thanked DRC staff for their presence during this pandemic and also asked if the agenda today could also include discussion about OCRA legal clinics for the community. Marty Omoto shared his appreciation to everyone for welcoming him to chair the OCRA Advisory Committee and expressed the importance of the continuity of the former efforts the committee made last year towards outreach and agreed that it is a priority that the committee work on reaching those people that do not know what DRC does.

Renee Rodriguez expressed how clients are struggling with making payments, keeping and getting jobs, and accessing technology.

Deaka McClain shared that DRC helps with housing and other areas and if there is an area they don't help with due to funding, then DRC should find

the grants available to help with things like domestic violence for people with disabilities.

Tammi Bradley expressed her concerns about COVID-19. She shared that clients are struggling right now to understand what is happening. They are no longer attending day programs and need assistance with these transitions. She said DRC should focus on helping consumers with the transition to a different kind of day program and how to ease into the world again.

Ms. Gomez agreed that domestic violence is very important and that DRC needs to look at how clients are being affected. Families have called Ms. Gomez saying that their neighbor passed away from COVID-19 and they now are concerned. They need information about housing rights and referrals. She asked, where does DRC refer them?

Jim Janz said the committee should focus on the community of people with intellectual disabilities who have multiple disabilities. Their disabilities will be multiplied with the post-COVID-19 era. Communities are having these discussions and they will continue.

Andy Imparato shared that as a new person hearing everything that the DRC committees are discussing is very helpful. As DRC Executive Director Mr. Imparato is looking at how DRC can be responsive to community needs and determining what is reasonable to expect DRC staff to do. He shared that he agreed with Ms. McClain that DRC needs to determine what the strategy will be to develop resources if it doesn't currently have them.

Mr. Omoto explained that much of the anxieties have always existed and have been caused by recession or budget shortfalls. The crisis we are all faced with now is regarding losing services. How do we tell consumers it will all be okay? COVID-19 has created additional complexities for people. Mr. Omoto inquired, what is the job of DRC or OCRA? What is the mission?

Mr. Rodriguez recommended working with the Developmental Services Task Force to ensure that people's needs are met.

Sandra Smith shared that there are studies about people who have recovered from COVID-19 but have lingering effects. This needs to remain on the DRC radar.

Yolanda Vargas requested that DRC support the creation of accessible materials to support mutual aid workers. Ms. McClain asked for more explanation about mutual aid workers. Ms. Vargas explained that members of the community have decided to support the more marginalized and disconnected members of their communities. An example is a person not being able to go get groceries. A neighbor might offer to help even though they are not the paid support person. Companies are now being more helpful in allowing online purchases with food stamps such as Amazon and Walmart. Ms. Vargas thanked DRC for writing letters and asked the committee to write letters thanking them. Ms. Bradley shared that Amazon Prime offers reduced rates for people on Medi-Cal.

Ms. McClain asked if DRC could ensure that homeless shelters and domestic violence shelters are accessible. She has experienced hotels which claim to be accessible but they do not meet her needs.

Mr. Omoto asked if there are other DRC board committees that items could be referred to, to address some of these concerns. Katie Hornberger shared that Program and Planning would be a good committee to refer some of these items to.

Katherine Perez shared that she appreciated all the issues members have brought up and added that there is no therapy available for people with intellectual disabilities. She stated that it is important that DRC connect policy work to individual needs.

#### **4. OCRA Semi-Annual Report**

Ms. Hornberger explained where to find all of the OCRA Semi-Annual and Annual Reports and invited all members to visit the website. Ms. Hornberger explained that the advocacy report detailed many success stories that are fun to read. OCRA served 3,900 clients and helped with 5,444 issues in the last 6-month period of time. The majority of services were for children, then to persons age 23-40. OCRA is at parity in ethnicity for many of the underrepresented communities but it has been a challenge during COVID-19. In regards to client satisfaction, OCRA sends a survey to every 4<sup>th</sup> closed case. The return rate was at 19% which is very good. Generally, people were very satisfied with OCRA services. An area OCRA continues to struggle with is call backs. 86% of people say they receive a call back within 2 days. When OCRA follows up, often people were called

back but their problem was not solved in two days so they marked no. It seems to also be a problem with the question. OCRA has a grievance procedure in place. During the last 6 months, OCRA had 5 grievances but none of those escalated and they were all resolved.

Mr. Omoto asked a number of questions including whether OCRA knows the number of people they have not served, if OCRA has noticed trends when certain problems keep emerging, does the Legislative Committee look at potential policy changes, and, are there issues being missed that need to be checked on like public charge or immigration topics.

Ms. Hornberger shared that OCRA does a lot of outreach in different ways such as conducting a training on special education to a group of parents, and then asking if the parents have friends who are persons with disabilities or whether they have children with disabilities. The training is then held at someone's house so everyone can be reached with focus on those that might not call us such as the monolingual communities. OCRA has also reached out to the Southeast Asian community leaders so the leaders can make the referrals to OCRA. In the Valley Mountain Regional Center area, Southeast Asian community leaders have started to invite OCRA to meetings. In southern California, large Korean churches have been good places for outreaches and building relationships.

Mr. Omoto wants the committee to figure out how to get a measurement of the people not being reached.

Ms. Gomez explained that people have shared with her that when they call OCRA, they are not able to get someone to help them and this is causing a sense of distrust. The majority of the callers are getting a link to go find information, but they are not getting the help they want.

Mr. Rodriguez asked for information about the DDS fact book. Ms. Hornberger explained that it is a book with statistics based on the data reports from the regional centers. Ms. Hornberger continued that the OCRA advocacy stories can help people learn what strategies work in certain situations. OCRA has a brochure that will be sent to all the committee members. Mr. Rodriguez asked that SSI be kept since income is so important right now.

Jim Janz asked about the presentation that DRC staff made to regional center staff and how well it was received. He also asked what OCRA is doing now during the COVID-19 lockdown for outreach. Ms. Hornberger responded that some regional centers don't invite OCRA in and others invite OCRA a lot. OCRA has done various trainings including, "What is OCRA." OCRA takes every opportunity to train regional center staff to instill values around person centeredness. Other trainings include criminal diversion, clients' rights, special education and social security. Some trainings are done with the regional centers during their internal meetings. The trainings also help regional center staff make better referrals to OCRA. Currently, OCRA is doing many trainings via zoom however, some concern is for those people not being reached because they don't have internet or unlimited phone access. OCRA is eager to see people again like walk-in clients where phone access is limited for them.

Mr. Janz reminded members that the in-person meetings can be phased in by wearing masks and having the audience sit 6 feet apart from staff.

Mr. Omoto asked that COVID-19 be included in the OCRA Annual Report as well as the information that some people only have the ability to be in person. Some people will need to interact as soon as it is safe so staff need to determine how they will balance those interests.

Ms. Hornberger shared that one of the important issues is student re-entry and the discussion about what school is going to look like, and staff are thinking about how to help with that. DRC is also thinking about multiple options for staff so everyone can be comfortable.

Ms. Bradley suggested that agencies plan sensitivity trainings that include information on how clients go back to day programs due to fears about COVID-19.

## **5. Additional agenda items**

Mr. Omoto shared that the additional agenda items recommended can be done in workgroups or separate additional OCRA Advisory Committee zoom calls. Ms. Hornberger announced that the next scheduled meeting is in December. Mr. Omoto asked committee members to rethink the number of times the committee meets and Mr. Imperato offered immediate support to schedule another meeting in the summer via zoom to continue talking about the additional agenda items.

The meeting concluded at 2:06 p.m.

ATTEST:

Marty Omoto, Chair