

OCRA ANNUAL REPORT  
(July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019)

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(Under Separate Cover)

OCRA SELF-ADVOCACY TRAINING EVALUATION BINDER

## I. INTRODUCTION

Disability Rights California provides state-wide clients' rights advocacy services for regional center consumers, under a multi-year contract with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), through the Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA). The contract was renewed effective July 1, 2016, for a 5-year period ending June 30, 2021. OCRA is in the third year of this five-year contract. This annual report covers July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019.

During the past year, OCRA resolved 10,032 issues for 6,721 consumers, which represents a slight decrease from last year in clients served (7,010 last year) and issues handled (10,322 last year), but still much higher than the required amount (7,560 per year). OCRA also participated in 614 trainings during the last fiscal year, presenting to approximately 19,121 people. This is a significant increase from last year in both the number of trainings and the number of people OCRA reached during these trainings. See section II.A.4 for details. OCRA staff continue to achieve positive results for clients with a variety of legal issues as evidenced in the attached statistics and Advocacy Report. OCRA clients also reported increased satisfaction with OCRA services. See section 11.D for more information.

OCRA operates offices throughout the state, which are staffed by at least one Clients' Rights Advocate (CRA) and one Assistant Clients' Rights Advocate (ACRA). Our staff are accessible and strive to understand the needs of the local community. Katie Hornberger, OCRA Director, also began overseeing DRC's new program performing Social Security Payee Reviews. The Office of Payee Review and Beneficiary Assistance (OPRABA) was established through the Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act. This federal law moved the reviews of representative payees from the Social Security Administration (SSA) to the Protection and Advocacy agencies nationwide. OPRABA conducts reviews and issues corrective action plans to correct risky or problematic money management practices and to correct deficiencies. OPRABA also provides educational visits and community outreach and training. In addition to reviews assigned by SSA, OPRABA can also identify and nominate payees that were reported to have problems and ask SSA to assign those also. OPRABA is an exciting new program that can provide systemic change to improve the lives of Social Security beneficiaries. This new work aligns well with the work of OCRA. Confidentiality between the two programs is both important and well-orchestrated. OCRA and OPRABA staff must have

client releases to speak with each other and the files are maintained in two separate databases. During the past fiscal year, OCRA hired two Managing Attorneys to provide increased oversight and program direction. OCRA hired new ACRA's for consumers of two regional centers to increase language access. OCRA also now has a team of four community integration CRA's and one Assistant CRA. A list of the current staff and office locations is attached as Exhibit A.

All OCRA offices operate under the same core advocacy principles and standards. Staff in each individual office remain flexible to meet the needs of the local regional center's consumers. For example, staff may hold office hours inside different regional center locations to be accessible to consumers and regional center staff at those locations. Other staff travel to different locations to meet with consumer family member groups in remote locations. OCRA staff listen and learn about the needs of regional center client communities and try to meet those unique needs.

## **II. PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES**

Disability Rights California's contract with DDS requires performance objectives as established in Exhibit A, Page 14, Paragraph M, of the contract. Each of the specific required outcomes is discussed in the following Sections A through F. The contract does not set specific numbers for the performance outcomes.

### **A. Services are provided in a manner that maximizes staff and operational resources.**

OCRA continues its tradition of serving many people with developmental disabilities. OCRA handled 10,032 issues for regional center consumers during the past fiscal year. Although OCRA served slightly fewer clients with fewer issues than last year, OCRA supervisors encouraged staff to provide a higher level of service than in previous years which had more callers and more "counsel and advice" level cases to handle. By providing direct representation rather than a more limited scope of service such as giving advice or information, OCRA has seen a large improvement from last year in all areas of consumer satisfaction, described in section D below. This is evidence of OCRA's commitment to provide a higher level of service to callers and better explain how OCRA is able to help them. The statistics, attached as Exhibit B and discussed below, show the wide variety of issues and the many cases handled by OCRA staff. The

advocacy report, attached as Exhibit C, covers January through June 2019, and tells the actual stories of individual cases (using a fictional name) and the impact on consumers' lives.

### **1) Advocacy Reports.**

OCRA's client case work is best exemplified in the advocates' written stories about cases or outreaches with practical value that demonstrate a good outcome, explain the law, or teach a lesson. In an effort toward brevity, the stories are just a summary to reflect a sampling of the cases that OCRA handled. A longer Advocacy Report is available upon request. Cases for the first half of the fiscal year were summarized in the summer and fall 2018 Advocacy Report, which was previously submitted in the Semi-Annual Report. The summaries from January 2019 through June 2019 are compiled and attached as Exhibit C. The report uses fictional first names of clients to improve readability while maintaining confidentiality.

Advocacy stories show the extraordinary value and diversity of OCRA's work. Many cases reflect resolution of systemic problems through direct representation, involvement on committees, or the effective relationships OCRA has with regional center and other agencies. The variety of cases OCRA staff handle are typically in response to the calls the office receives from a client or someone calling on behalf of a client.

During this past reporting period, OCRA staff provided direct representation in a range of different problem areas such as public benefits, regional center services, community placement, and special education. OCRA staff also assist clients who have housing issues. Housing issues can range from payment issues, to disability-related issues, to risk of losing housing, to habitability issues, or can involve government housing programs. We highlight 4 recent housing cases here.

#### **OCRA Negotiates with Housing Commission for Client.**

Linda is in her 60s and uses a wheelchair for mobility due to cerebral palsy and arthritis. Linda requires 24/7 live-in aids to care for her. The aids use a Hoyer Lift to help Linda move in and out of her wheelchair and bed. Linda's aids must also turn her throughout the night or she may suffocate and die. For years, Linda has had a 2-bedroom voucher through Section 8 Housing as a reasonable accommodation so her aids can stay with her through the night. Recently, a supervisor at the local housing authority

tried to revoke Linda's 2-bedroom housing voucher. When Linda turned to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities for help, she was told to call OCRA. OCRA contacted Linda's doctors and live-in aids, then filed a request for reasonable accommodation with the local housing authority with details about Linda's health needs. The commission decided that Linda's 2-bedroom Section 8 housing voucher will continue as a reasonable accommodation. Her voucher was also modified because of OCRA's advocacy, which means Linda now pays less in rent.

### **Monica Gets Safe, Appropriate Housing.**

Monica lived independently in an apartment for most of her adult life. Over time, mold grew in her apartment, which had a major adverse impact on her health. Monica required hospitalization several times due to her compromised respiratory system. Monica asked her landlord repeatedly to clean out the mold. The landlord ignored her pleas. OCRA sent a demand letter ordering the landlord to find an alternative unit or compensate Monica so she could pay for another apartment. The landlord agreed to move Monica into a similar apartment unit until all the repairs are finished.

### **Annie Gets Her Money Back.**

Annie moved into a new apartment in September. Annie had provided notice to her former landlord of her plan to move. Unfortunately, Annie's financial management agency accidentally continued to send Annie's September and October rent checks to her former landlord. Despite Annie's repeated requests, the former landlord kept and cashed the rent checks. OCRA mailed a demand letter to Annie's former landlord stating that Annie had provided proper notice, moved out, and the landlord was not entitled to any rent payment beyond her rental period. The former landlord then returned Annie's money.

### **Javier Moves into His Own Apartment after Landlord Agrees to Reasonable Accommodation.**

Javier applied to rent an apartment, but the property owner refused to rent to him because he did not have an established credit history. This owner was also unwilling to allow Javier to move in, even if his mother agreed to be a cosigner on the lease. Javier's mother called OCRA. She reported that the building receives federal funding and must designate a certain number of units to individuals with disabilities who are low income. OCRA

provided Javier's mother with legal authority regarding the property owner's obligation to provide reasonable accommodations to potential tenants with disabilities, such as permitting cosigners on a lease agreement. After sharing this information with the property owner, they approved Javier's rental application. Javier is thriving in his new home.

## **2) Analysis of Consumers Served.**

OCRA handled 10,032 cases from July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019. Exhibit B contains the complete compilation of data for the fiscal year. The data has been compiled by:

1. Age
2. County
3. Disability
4. Ethnicity
5. Race
6. Gender
7. Living Arrangement
8. Type of Problem (Problem Codes)
9. Service Type

The reports included here are in non-table format so they are accessible to individuals who use screen-readers. Although the data is still contained in grids, each row of the table is self-explanatory as read from left to right and does not require the navigational reference of a table header row for context.

Consistent with previous years, the largest number of consumers OCRA served by age during this time period, 2,655 out of 6,721, were individuals in the 4-to-17 years-old age group. 39.5 percent of OCRA's clients are in this age group. The next largest was the 23-40 age group with 1,525 people served or 22.7 percent of OCRA's clients. This is a similar percentage to last year.

For those cases where gender is recorded, OCRA has traditionally served more males than females, with 66.3 percent of the consumers served being male and 33.7 percent being female in this reporting period. These numbers are similar to the percentage served by regional centers, according to the DDS Fact Book, 16<sup>th</sup> Edition. As of January 2018, regional centers served 65.0 percent male compared to 35.0 percent female. Each

year, the gender imbalance widens, as both OCRA and regional centers increase the numbers of males served and decrease the numbers of females served. The Fact Book attributes the growing gender imbalance, largely, to the growing Autism population, which is over 80 percent male.

Statistics on the ethnicity of consumers served for the year show OCRA's continuing commitment and success in reaching underserved communities. For example, approximately 39.1 percent of consumers served by OCRA identified as Hispanic/Latino. This is a slightly higher percentage than the 38.9 percent of regional center consumers identified as Hispanic/Latino in January 2018, taken from the DDS Fact Book, 16<sup>th</sup> Edition. This is reported under "ethnicity." Some callers to OCRA do not want to state whether they are Hispanic/Latino or non-Hispanic/Latino. If a caller declines to state, they are still included in overall numbers of clients, but not included in the Hispanic/Latino count.

African-American and Asian consumer data is under the report for "race" in this annual report. Approximately 9 percent of consumers served by OCRA identify as African-American. This is a similar percentage to the 8.9 percent of regional center consumers according to the current Fact Book. Asian consumers make up 6.9 percent of regional center consumers, and 6.5 percent of consumers served by OCRA. Many OCRA offices have chosen the African-American and Asian communities as their population to target with outreach. OCRA's goal is to successfully serve all underserved communities, is especially important as we continue to carefully review the Purchase of Service (POS) Data collected by regional centers under Welfare & Institutions Code Section 4519.5. OCRA staff attended local stakeholder meetings, joined local committees, and held internal discussions to further study and impact possible changes to reduce disparities again this year.

The percentage of consumers residing in the parental or other family home remains by far the largest number of service requests for consumers served by OCRA, with 7,205 service requests showing consumers living in the family home or 71.8 percent of the cases handled. This is the same percentage as last year. The next largest group served is those living independently, with 1,155 service requests or 11.5 percent with this living arrangement. This is an increase from last year, in which 10.1 percent of consumers served by OCRA lived independently.



### **3) Analysis of Consumers Assisted with Moving to a Less Restrictive Living Arrangement.**

Laws require regional centers to notify OCRA about people living in restrictive settings such as Developmental Centers, IMDs, and MHRCs, and people whose community placements are at risk of failing. Laws also require regional centers to send OCRA comprehensive assessments and meeting notifications for clients in restrictive settings. Because of these requirements and the ongoing Developmental Center closures, OCRA's work has involved helping clients in restrictive settings to move into the community and helping deflect clients from going into a more restrictive setting.

Assistance or representation in cases involving restrictive settings can include reviewing records, interviewing and developing a relationship with the consumer, talking with the regional center and the consumer's circle of support, attending a variety of meetings, negotiating through phone calls, drafting and filing documents for court, attending court dates, special education advocacy, and continuous advocacy for movement back to the community or additional services to be able to stay in the community.

OCRA staff contact the providers of the Enhanced Behavioral Support Homes (EBSHs) and Community Crisis Homes (CCHs) as they open and consumers begin to move in. It is important to maintain a relationship with the administrators and staff of these homes who are now serving consumers formerly in restrictive settings, some of whom were in those restrictive settings for significant parts of their lives. OCRA staff have reviewed many Individual Behavior Support Plans (IBSPs) and attended Individual Behavior Support Team meetings to review behavior plans to make sure clients' rights are respected. During this review period, OCRA staff reviewed 207 comprehensive assessments and IBSPs for consumers in developmental centers, IMDs, EBSHs, or CCHs.

OCRA staff attended a variety of meetings – Individual Program Plan meetings, Semi-Annual Review meetings, Transition Planning Meetings, Transition Review Meetings, 5-day and 30-day meetings held after a consumer is placed in the community, deflection meetings, meet-and-greets between consumers and providers, Individual Education Program meetings, Individual Behavior Support Team meetings for consumers in Enhanced Behavioral Support Homes, meetings for clients in Community Crisis Homes, or other “special” meetings. During this review period,

OCRA staff attended 312 meetings on behalf of consumers in restrictive settings or at risk of losing their community placements. This is an increase over the 272 meetings OCRA staff attended last year, and a broader variety of meetings, as more consumers move into the community. OCRA staff have also attended 14 court hearings for clients in restrictive settings during this review period. While staff may review fewer comprehensive assessments and attend fewer meetings as developmental centers close, OCRA will continue its involvement with clients in restrictive settings such as acute crisis units, Canyon Springs, IMDs, EBSHs, CCHs, and homes with delayed egress and/or a secured perimeter.

Regional centers must notify OCRA when a client is referred for a 4418.7 assessment, which often results in an admission to the acute crisis unit at Fairview or Sonoma Developmental Centers, or Canyon Springs. OCRA staff represent almost all consumers in the acute crisis units from the time they are admitted (or before), to their meeting 30 days after they have moved into the community. OCRA staff have also been involved in cases for whom a 4418.7 referral was made to the regional project for possible placement in a restrictive setting, but after a meeting, the client was able to remain in the community with additional or different services.

OCRA has a team of four community integration CRAs and one Assistant CRA to assist local CRAs with these often-difficult cases. The community integration CRAs have formed relationships with developmental center and IMD staff, public defenders, public guardians, family members, and other stakeholders to discuss systemic concerns with the developmental center closures and barriers to community placements. These CRAs directly represent consumers and attend stakeholder meetings. They also provide consultation and technical support to local CRAs who handle a wide variety of cases by sharing their specific expertise with all the factors that go into handling cases for consumers in restrictive settings. These community integration CRAs also share their experience with specific homes and facilities in an effort to address barriers and help individual clients in all parts of the state.

The community integration CRAs also provide training to public defenders, public guardians, developmental center staff, and regional center staff about community integration laws and regulations. Topics also include regional center eligibility and services, since court and legal staff serve clients who have been denied eligibility or need certain regional center services they are not receiving.

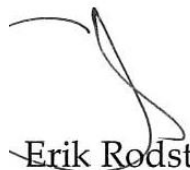
Several OCRA offices and community integration staff members have cultivated relationships with judges and other court staff through trainings and being available for consultation when difficult cases come into their courtrooms. Many judges and court personnel have called OCRA to get involved in regional center consumers' cases that OCRA would not have otherwise known about. Building these relationships and trust over time is crucial to better serve consumers in restrictive settings, at risk, or who require OCRA advocacy to get regional center eligibility or services.

Here is one letter of appreciation from a training OCRA provided in southern California during this review period.

Greetings,

On behalf of the Independent Juvenile Defender Program staff and attorneys, I cannot thank you enough for volunteering your valuable time to present to our panel on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and the work you do with OCRA. We are grateful that you are willing to share your wealth of knowledge and experience and I look forward to seeing the value to our clients. I hope that the future will bring many more such collaborations.

Thank you.



Erik Rodstrom

Resource Attorney

Independent Juvenile Defender Program

#### **4) Outreach/Trainings.**

Outreach and Training serve two important purposes: 1) notifying people about the availability of OCRA assistance and 2) educating people about the law and their rights. OCRA provides training on many issues to a wide variety of people. Attendees include direct consumers, family members, regional center staff and vendors, and community members. Training topics include but are not limited to, consumers' rights, abuse and neglect issues, IHSS, Medi-Cal, regional center issues, special education, voting

rights, SSI, rights in the community, alternatives to conservatorship, and self-determination.

During the last fiscal year, OCRA presented 614 outreach trainings, reaching approximately 19,121 consumers, families, service providers, regional center staff, and community members. This number represents a large increase in trainings from the previous outreach year (502) and a large increase in the number of people attending these trainings from last year's 15,258. OCRA hopes to realize an increase in clients served and issues handled in the next fiscal year as a result of the increase in trainings and outreach.

OCRA continues to create and present new trainings for the disability community in English, Spanish, and other languages. For example, OCRA staff recently presented two sessions and staffed a resource table at a conference for empowering Asian families in northern California, using interpreters in Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese. OCRA often uses publications from the DRC website as part of the training. DRC translates all new self-help publications posted on our website into the California threshold languages.

To assist individuals from traditionally underserved communities, each OCRA office develops a target outreach plan. Each office targets at least six outreaches per year to a specific group of persons who are underrepresented in the office's catchment area. OCRA's Paula Sandoval and Christine Hager served as the Outreach Coordinators this fiscal year. They advise staff in implementation of their target outreach plans. These are two-year plans based upon evaluating prior outreach plans' results, new census data, and information from DDS regarding the ethnicity of consumers served by each regional center. This fiscal year concludes the second year of a two-year cycle. In June 2019, OCRA staff completed outreach plans for the next two years. OCRA's Debra Marcia served as Outreach Coordinator for the Asian community to improve our service to this community. Several offices have identified the Asian community as their target for outreach. A detailed report on outreach and training is included as Exhibit D.

**A. Issues and complaints are resolved expeditiously and at the lowest level of appropriate intervention.**

From July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019, OCRA resolved 10,032 issues for consumers. Of those, all but 32 were resolved informally. These numbers are consistent with previous years, in that 99 percent of all the matters that OCRA handled were resolved without using hearings or court. Data showing this is attached as Exhibit E.

**B. Collaborative and harmonious working relationships are fostered.**

OCRA staff continue to collaborate with the local regional centers, stakeholders, and community members. Some examples of collaboration include serving on regional center diversity committees, disparity task force meetings, Bioethics Committees, Behavioral Modification Review Committees, Risk Assessment Committees, County Coordinating Councils, Supported Life Training Planning Committees, meetings with counties about benefits, services, and appeals issues, IHSS Statewide Advocates' Meetings, DS Taskforce Implementation Workgroups, UCEDD CAC, State Hearings Division Stakeholder meetings, Fiesta Educativa planning committees, Health & Wellness Committee-Forensic Task Force, Criminal Justice Task Force, Multi-Agency Advisory Board (MAAB), Healthcare Task Force, Adult Transition Task Force, Resident Transition Advisory Group, Quality Management Advisory Group, and liaison meetings for the developmental center closures/transition, among others. All CRAs are participating in meetings with their regional centers' Self-Determination Program Local Advisory Committees. Many also provided trainings on self-determination.

Many OCRA staff also provide training to regional center staff and vendors and meet regularly with regional center staff and community partners to share ideas and expertise on many subjects. When OCRA staff notice trends in legal issues of regional center consumers, they offer training to regional centers on that problem area. For example, if there are issues with SSI and Social Security, OCRA has offered to train regional center staff and meet with the regional center's accounting/client trust department or institutional representative payees.

Most OCRA offices meet regularly with regional center managers to resolve systemic and individual client issues informally rather than through a hearing or complaint, when possible. This philosophy of collaboration is

not only required by Disability Rights California's contract with DDS, but also recognizes that some of the most effective advocacy takes place because of interpersonal relationships and informal advocacy. The success of this philosophy is demonstrated by the number of calls OCRA receives from varied sources, by its ability to resolve matters informally, and by its recognition as an excellent resource for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

### **1) Memorandums of Understanding.**

OCRA has established Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with each regional center that address that center's individual needs, concerns, and method of operation. Generally, MOUs are updated as needed, including when the law changes. Meetings to review MOUs have been productive and positive. OCRA has very good working relationships with almost all regional centers. During this fiscal year, the MOU was updated at Valley Mountain Regional Center. Copies of all MOUs have been forwarded to DDS. The status of each revised MOU is listed in Exhibit F.

### **2) Meeting with Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA).**

ARCA and OCRA meet regularly to discuss various issues. Katie Hornberger, OCRA Director, and often Catherine Blakemore, DRC Executive Director, met with ARCA many times during this fiscal year: 10/10/18, 12/21/18, 1/28/19, 2/26/19, 3/18/19, 4/10/19, 5/3/19, 5/13/19, 5/29/19, 5/31/19, and 6/28/19. ARCA and OCRA also serve on committees together and keep regular phone and email contact with each other to discuss issues that arise.

### **B. Consumers and families are satisfied with the services provided.**

Disability Rights California recognizes the importance of consumer satisfaction. OCRA is committed to serving consumers and family members in a manner and with results that ensure consumer and family satisfaction with the services provided. Survey results show positive consumer satisfaction over the past fiscal year. A member of the OCRA management team calls back all responders who request a call back, whether their responses were positive or negative. An OCRA management team member also calls all responders who gave a negative response and their contact information. In this way, we can remedy any concerns and provide additional support to consumers.

## **1) Consumer Satisfaction Survey.**

OCRA measures consumer satisfaction by a survey developed jointly by staff, the OCRA Consumer Advisory Committee, and DDS. One thousand eight hundred and seventeen (1,817) surveys were mailed out. Two hundred and sixty-three (263) people returned surveys. This represents a 14 percent return rate.

Of those responding to the questions, 95 percent felt they were treated well by the staff. This is much higher than last year's 90 percent. One respondent wrote, "Both Cherri and Filomena are the best people I have ever met. They are very professional. Knowledgeable. Supportive." 89 percent of the respondents believed their call was returned within two days. This is also than last year's 86 percent. One person wrote, "I cannot say enough good things about the assistance I and my son (the client) received from Natalie. She called me right back, did research and emailed me the information that we needed. My son is now living in his own apartment for the first time and doing very well. Without Natalie and the Clients Rights Center this may not have happened. So, thank you from the bottoms (and tops!) of our hearts!" 93 percent of the respondents reported that they understood the information they received, which is the same as last year. One respondent said, "Made me comfortable and helped me understand the rights of my child."

94 percent of respondents felt their Clients' Rights Advocate listened to them, which is higher than last year at 93 percent. One person wrote, "Fueron muy Buenos me atendieron me escucharon y me dieron solucion a lo que necesitaba. Gracias. (They were very good, they helped me, they listened to me and they gave me a solution to what I needed. Thank you)." 90 percent of respondents felt they were helped with their question or problem which is higher than last year's 86 percent. One respondent wrote, "Karis was friendly, knowledgeable, helpful, patient and very informative. You are so lucky to have her. We are grateful for her help." 91 percent said they would ask their Clients' Rights Advocate for help again, which is higher than last year. One respondent said, "Muchas gracias por su tiempo. Dios quiera no tenga la necesidad de llamarles y creanme no lo dudaria. (Thank you so much for your time. God forbid I will need to call you again and believe me if I have to, there is no doubt that I will.)" See Exhibit G, which discusses these survey results in more detail.

From the survey results and the positive written comments, which are uncorrected and reflect exactly what consumers and their families wrote, most consumers are satisfied with the services provided by OCRA. The OCRA management team has worked hard to improve satisfaction, including finding ways for staff to provide a higher level of service and better explaining to clients the services that OCRA staff can and cannot provide to help them.

## **2) Letters of Appreciation.**

OCRA consumers and family members often take the time to write letters of appreciation. These kind words come in cards, letters, notes, and emails. The time it took to send them represents the high value of the work performed by OCRA staff. Below is just a sampling of the many letters received. OCRA is providing the letters of appreciation with the wording from the originals, including any grammatical errors, unless otherwise indicated. We have also edited client names.

Muchísimas gracias  
por hacer este viaje  
para ayudarnos  
con nuestro hijos  
por sus derechos

Gracias por  
tu apoyo. y  
por ser tan huma-  
nitaria.



“Muchísimas gracias por hacer este viaje para ayudarnos con nuestro hijos por sus derechos. Gracias por tu apoyo y por ser tan humanitaria.”  
 (“Thank you very much for making this trip to help us with our children for their rights. Thank you for your support and for being so caring.”)

Hello Britnee,

Thank you so much for working with us and helping us fight for to get PT twice a week.

We really appreciate all that you have done for us. We love working with you and we can't thank you enough for the work that you have done on our behalf.

Thank you for prioritizing us as your client and helping / doing everything in your power to help us win our case.

Thank you very much!!

Hello Priscilla,

This is \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ mother, I wanted to thank you again for coming and supporting us through the IEP meeting and for helping us to get the placement we wanted for \_\_\_\_\_. Like I said I just wanted to call and tell you how grateful we are for all of your help and everything that you did. I hope you have a good day, take care.

-----

\_\_\_\_\_ wanted to thank Priscilla for all of her assistance. \_\_\_\_\_ was finally found eligible for SSI. Very thankful and wanted to update Priscilla with good news.

I am  
touched  
beyond words,  
your thoughtfulness  
& willingness to help us  
got us through this stressful process and  
it is won because  
of you!  
Thank you!

Dear Mrs. Groggs

I want to thank  
you for all the help  
and support you  
gave Lisa and I with  
all the Social Security  
transactions.

We are relieved  
that everything  
worked out fine.

Thank you very  
much.

Thank you very much  
for helping me.

Hi Alejandro,

Thank you for reaching out. I apologize about the delay. Great news, WRC decided to continue providing speech for my son which is thoroughly needed. Thanks to your advice and what to put in the letter it really helped.

Thank GOD for individuals like yourself that advocate for those that don't know how. I wish you and your family all the best this holiday season and the new year.

Many, Many thanks!

Hi Kimberlee,

I wanted to take a moment to say thank you again for coming out to Glenn County to meet with parents. It was a small group, but I know they all greatly appreciate your time and expertise. It is nice to have a working relationship with you so we can continue to work together to support students + families.

2/7/19

Dear Lori and Kimberlee

& Jasper too

Thank you for helping us.

Words are not enough,

but we appreciate you more  
than we could ever Express

what's you have done for us  
to get us help after Campfire  
We will NEVER forget!

### 3) Cases will be handled in a timely manner.

Consumers and families usually contact OCRA because something has gone wrong for them. Maybe they are losing a government benefit or their housing, or are facing another urgent situation. They may be worried about their rights and need information. OCRA staff must be responsive. OCRA has, since its establishment, had a policy that all calls will be returned as soon as possible, but not later than the close of the next business day. OCRA staff note this policy on the outgoing voicemail message that callers hear when reaching the office voicemail. OCRA staff also note in the intake record if a client has a deadline or a timeline they must follow for

their legal issue, such as a deadline to file an appeal. By noting this in the intake, advocates advise clients of timelines, and prioritize cases with a closer deadline.

OCRA also measures its performance in this area through its consumer satisfaction survey; see Exhibit G, discussed more above. OCRA statistics show that 89 percent of all callers to OCRA received a call back within two days during the last fiscal year. This percentage is higher than last year's 86 percent. The OCRA management team continues to discuss ways to increase this percentage and will continue to recruit extra staff to meet the needs of callers. OCRA uses Bilingual ACRA's for northern and southern California to assist with returning calls, completing intakes, and full ACRA support when staff are out of the office. OCRA also uses temporary CRAs and ACRA's in offices with higher volume to ensure timely service. OCRA uses "floating CRAs" to help high volume offices around the state or offices with a vacancy that need to be staffed during the hiring process.

**C. The provision of clients' rights advocacy services is coordinated in consultation with the DDS contract manager, stakeholder organizations, and persons with developmental disabilities and their families representing California's multi-cultural diversity.**

OCRA works through the OCRA Advisory Committee to ensure this performance outcome is achieved. Attached as Exhibit H is a list of the members of the Disability Rights California Board of Director's OCRA Advisory Committee effective June 30, 2019.

Public members of the Advisory Committee are appointed by the Board of Directors. In the selection process, the Board considers geographical diversity, both rural and urban and north and south, type of developmental disability represented, and ethnic background, in addition to the qualifications of the individual applicants.

The OCRA Advisory Committee provides valuable insight to the OCRA staff. At the meetings, members and OCRA staff discuss a wide variety of topics. Board members become better self-advocates because of having served on the Committee. The Committee is currently recruiting new members. Minutes for the meeting held on September 14, 2018, were provided with the Semi-Annual Report. The minutes for the April 16, 2019 meeting are included as Exhibit H. DDS staff is invited to attend the next meeting, in December 2019, in Sacramento, CA.

**D. Self-advocacy training is provided for consumers and families at least twice in each fiscal year.**

Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 4433(d)(5), requires that the contractor providing advocacy services for consumers of regional center services provide at least two self-advocacy trainings for consumers. Disability Rights California's contract with DDS mirrors this language. OCRA strongly believes in the importance of self-advocacy and requires each of its 21 offices to provide at least one self-advocacy training for consumers per year, far exceeding the two mandated trainings. Many offices provide more than one training per year. This fiscal year, OCRA staff provided 54 self-advocacy trainings statewide.

Staff may present any of the approved self-advocacy trainings. To date, OCRA has developed seven separate packets of information for OCRA staff to use in the mandated trainings in addition to the DDS Consumer Safety materials and the living arrangement options materials developed by DDS. One of those seven is a new self-advocacy training that OCRA developed this review period, and DDS approved, called "Moving into the Community." Samples of the OCRA self-advocacy packets (all are in both English and Spanish), were provided separately in a binder marked OCRA Training Materials with the 2007-2008 Annual Report. In past discussions with DDS's Contract Manager, it was decided that OCRA should not submit duplicate training packets in this year's annual report. As always, OCRA welcomes comments from DDS on any training packets.

OCRA must report in its Annual Report a sample of the self-advocacy training surveys. OCRA has randomly selected consumer training satisfaction evaluations to include with this Annual Report. Almost without exception, consumers are pleased with OCRA trainings. A list of Self-Advocacy Trainings held last year is in Exhibit I.

Here is a sampling of consumers' comments on the self-advocacy training satisfaction evaluations. OCRA is providing the comments with the wording from the originals, including any grammatical errors, unless otherwise indicated.

## Living Options Training

5. How did this training meet your needs?

help realise that I want to  
change my living situation

5. How did this training meet your needs?

You learn about where to live

5. How did this training meet your needs?

I liked thinking and  
talking about living options.

## Emergency Preparedness

5. How did this training meet your needs?

It was a great training



5. How did this training meet your needs?

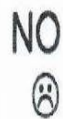
I learned something new.

8. Other comments or suggestions:

They listened to our comments  
and ~~the~~ questions and were  
appreciative of our comments.

Thank you so much  
for this.

4. Was the speaker interesting?



Comments: She was nice

5. How did this training meet your needs?

It make me remember what to do in an  
emergency

5. How did this training meet your needs?

I learned that about everything they said of safety.

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Voting

Other things I want to tell you:

Great job.

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### III. TITLE 17 COMPLAINTS

CCR, Title 17, Section 50540, sets forth a complaint procedure whereby a regional center consumer, or his or her authorized representative, who believes a right has been abused, punitively withheld or improperly or unreasonably denied, may file a complaint with the Clients' Rights Advocate. The Complaint process is similar to that established by Welfare & Institution Code, Section 4731. There were two Title 17 Complaints filed during the last fiscal year, as noted on Exhibit J.

### IV. DENIAL OF CLIENTS' RIGHTS

CCR, Title 17, Section 50530, sets forth a procedure whereby a care provider may deny one of the basic rights of a consumer if there is a danger to self or others or a danger of property destruction caused by the actions of a consumer. The Clients' Rights Advocate must approve the denial and submit a quarterly report to DDS by the last day of each January, April, July, and October. OCRA is including the reports concurrently with the contractual date to provide OCRA's reports. If this is not acceptable to DDS, OCRA will submit duplicate reports as requested. Attached as Exhibit K is the current log of Denials of Rights from the OCRA offices.

### V. CONSUMER GRIEVANCES

Exhibit A, Paragraph 12, of the contract between DDS and Disability Rights California requires OCRA to establish a grievance procedure and to inform all clients about the procedure. DDS has approved the grievance procedure developed by OCRA. The procedure is posted prominently in

both English and Spanish at each office. The grievance procedure is also available in Arabic, Armenian, Chinese (Simplified), Farsi, Hmong, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Laotian, Russian, Tagalog, Thai, and Vietnamese. OCRA staff offer the grievance procedure in all letters to consumers or others who contact OCRA, when an office declines to provide the requested service to that person.

During the past fiscal year, OCRA handled 10,032 matters. There were four first-level grievances filed by consumers or family members. One of those four grievances proceeded to the second and third level. Information about the grievances has been submitted to DDS. Attached as Exhibit L is a chart detailing the grievance filed against OCRA during this period.

## **VI. COLLECTION OF ATTORNEYS FEES**

OCRA does not charge consumers, their families or advocates fees for services nor does OCRA seek to recover costs from these individuals. Clients' Rights Advocates who are licensed to practice law in California, or Assistant, Associate, or unlicensed Clients' Rights Advocates, all of whom work under the supervision of an attorney, can collect attorney's fees and costs similar to those collected by private attorneys or advocates for special education cases or other cases where there are statutory attorney's fees. OCRA collects fees only in special education cases or Writs of Mandamus. Fees and costs may be negotiated at mediation or can be received where an Administrative Law Judge has determined that the petitioner is the prevailing party. Fees are collected from the opposing party, which is normally a school district. Costs include any expenses to the Petitioner or OCRA for suing, such as filing fees or costs of expert evaluations. Neither Disability Rights California nor OCRA ever collect attorney's fees from consumers.

OCRA received \$4,300 in attorney's fees during the annual reporting period. See Exhibit M.

## **VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCEMENT OF SERVICES**

The contract between DDS and Disability Rights California requires that annually Disability Rights California make recommendations to DDS on potential methods of enhancing the services that OCRA provides for regional center consumers.

The support of DDS through the years has made it possible for OCRA to effectively and efficiently serve consumers. However, the demand for a higher level of OCRA service, such as direct representation, continues to increase. OCRA has also noticed a substantial increase in the number of cases involving people living in restrictive settings, losing group home placements, coming out of jail, or stuck in a medical hospital setting, with no place to go. These cases require a lot of staff time. OCRA must continue to look at providing additional staffing to better serve all clients, if we want to continue increasing the higher-level cases we handle each year. For those individuals in restrictive settings or at risk, OCRA has a team of four CRAs and one Assistant CRA to assist this special population. Across the state, OCRA offices are reporting having more cases that require direct representation or limited scope representation, and fewer cases that could be handled with information or advice. In offices that handle fewer cases, staff will be using more time participating in outreach events in the community and conducting trainings, to increase the number of callers. OCRA plans to hire one outreach coordinator and one outreach supervisor, to join the Peer Advocate and the outreach coordinators in an “outreach unit” to help with outreach goals.

OCRA also recognizes the need to serve diverse communities with varying language needs, which means continuing to recruit and hire staff who speak diverse languages. OCRA strives to provide the highest level of service possible, given our resources. We can better do this with additional bilingual support and “floating” staff to provide coverage for vacancies and to provide support to enable staff can take on cases when we otherwise may not have had the resources. OCRA also hopes to increase its disability diversity in staffing by finding qualified candidates for open positions who can bring unique, personal disability perspectives to the unit.

To ensure that we can continue to provide high quality services OCRA would appreciate additional resources to increase staffing to meet these unique needs while continuing to provide the high level of service to consumers already living in the community and consumers who are in restrictive settings and hoping to transition into the community.

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

OCRA provides exceptional service to a large number of people with developmental disabilities throughout the state. OCRA handled 10,032 cases for 6,721 clients last year. Additionally, OCRA provided 614

trainings to approximately 19,121 consumers, family members, regional center staff and vendors, and interested community members - all while meeting each of its performance objectives and improving consumer satisfaction in all areas surveyed. OCRA looks forward to continuing to work with people with developmental disabilities and helping access the services and supports they need to live the most independent and productive lives in the least restrictive environment. People with developmental disabilities have benefitted from OCRA's legal assistance at no cost to them and it is an honor for OCRA to continue to provide.