

OCRA SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT
(JULY 1, 2024 - DECEMBER 31, 2024)

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I. INTRODUCTION

Disability Rights California provides statewide clients' rights advocacy services for regional center clients under a 3-year contract with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) through the Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA). This semi-annual report covers July 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024. Advocacy services include helping clients access services and support, resolving complaints and issues, taking legal action, and providing training.

Between July 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024, OCRA handled 5,204 cases for 3,566 clients. This is an increase in cases and clients compared to the last semi-annual reporting period last year. See section II.A.2 for details.

During this period, OCRA conducted 247 outreach and training activities to 8,759 attendees. This is an increase in the number of outreaches and the number of people OCRA trained compared to the same semi-annual reporting period last year. See section II.A.4 for details.

OCRA runs offices throughout the state, most of which have one Clients' Rights Advocate (CRA) and one Assistant or Associate CRA (ACRA) to serve clients. Two OCRA offices with high volume have 2 ACRA's – Alta California and San Diego. One office has 2 CRA's – North Bay. OCRA has 2 statewide Intake Assistants assigned to support 7 offices during this period. Intake Assistants improve initial communication by answering incoming calls to those offices and getting basic information from callers. For the next review period, OCRA will add a Lead Intake Assistant to cover more offices. OCRA uses Statewide CRA's and ACRA's to help busier offices with cases and cover staff absences. OCRA's physical offices are in locations convenient to regional centers.

One way that OCRA meets the diverse needs of regional center clients is by hiring diverse staff. About 25% of OCRA staff identify as having a disability. Many speak languages other than English, such as Spanish, Korean, French, Farsi, Arabic, and some use American Sign Language. All OCRA staff receive training in respecting cultural and language preferences when analyzing what a client needs and providing services. A list of current staff and office locations is attached as Exhibit A.

II. PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Disability Rights California's contract requires performance objectives, see Exhibit A, Section 12, Paragraph M, of the contract. Each of the specific required outcomes is discussed in the following Sections A through F.

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

OCRA continues to serve many people with developmental disabilities. OCRA handled 5,204 issues for regional center clients during this 6-month period, for 3,566 clients. OCRA sees clients in person in their homes, day programs, school, and in facilities. OCRA staff are in offices at least two days each week if clients prefer to come to the office. OCRA also uses Zoom and other remote means to meet with clients and families.

OCRA represented and educated people on many legal issues and helped fix systemic issues. As cases come in, OCRA staff try to provide the highest level of service to the most clients possible. The statistics, in Exhibit B and discussed below, show the wide variety of issues handled by OCRA staff. The advocacy report at Exhibit C tells the stories and the impact our work has had on clients' lives.

1) Advocacy Reports.

OCRA's effective service to the community and the impact of that work is best shown in advocacy stories. Advocates submit case or outreach summaries that show a good outcome, teach a lesson, or have practical value. The stories show the wide variety of legal issues handled by OCRA. Some reflect resolution of systemic problems through high-level direct representation. Others are resolved through negotiation because of collaborative relationships. And others show how clients and family members are empowered to resolve issues with tailored guidance from OCRA. In this way, OCRA provides a combination of both "lay" and "legal" advocacy.

These stories are just a sampling of the cases that OCRA handled. A longer Advocacy Report is available upon request. Stories from July 2024 through December 2024 are at Exhibit C.

Here are examples of OCRA services in 3 areas of the law. These advocacy stories are not part of the Advocacy Report in Exhibit C.

Group Home Returns Ian's Computer and Cell Phone.

Ian was stuck in a psychiatric hospital and desperately wanted to move out. A group home nearby agreed that Ian could move in, but the group home's staff told him he would have to give up his computer and cell phone. Ian agreed to give up his property because he wanted to leave the hospital. OCRA learned of the removal of Ian's property several months after he moved into the group home. OCRA went to a meeting with Ian, his regional center service coordinator, and the group home staff to discuss the denial of Ian's property. OCRA told the group home they must follow the law if they want to deny someone access to their personal property, including notifying OCRA. OCRA also told Ian about his right to get his property back. Once learning of his rights, Ian asked for his property back. The home returned Ian's cell phone and computer. Ian can now make private phone calls and has access to the internet through his computer.

OCRA Gets Client Assessed for Special Education Eligibility.

6-year-old Julia was struggling in school. Her disability made kindergarten hard for Julia last year, so her mother asked for assessments for special education eligibility. The school district did not start the process. OCRA collaborated with the regional center's IDEA specialist about her situation. OCRA helped Julia's mother understand the assessment process and drafted a written request for the school district to assess Julia for special education eligibility. OCRA sent the written special education assessment request to Julia's school district. The district still did not respond to the assessment request, so OCRA followed up with the district and explained the district is out of compliance with special education assessment timelines. The district finally sent Julia's mother an assessment plan and started the assessment process. Julia's mother is relieved Julia will get the support she needs to access her education.

Client Gets Her SSDI Benefits Back Plus a \$27,000 Back-Payment.

Susan called OCRA because her SSDI benefits stopped, and she owed Social Security \$5,500. Social Security decided Susan was no longer eligible for benefits because she earned over the monthly "substantial gainful activity" amount. Susan works at a store. She has many disability-related modifications to her job duties. OCRA helped Susan appeal her SSDI termination and gather more information about the support she gets at work. Susan's employer completed an SSA-3033 Work Activity

Questionnaire form, showing she has a work subsidy based on her productivity at work. OCRA submitted the work subsidy information to Social Security for the appeal. Over 10 months, OCRA followed up with Social Security until Susan's case finally settled. Susan is eligible for SSDI benefits again because she has a work subsidy, which lowers her monthly earnings to below the substantial gainful activity amount. Susan got her monthly SSDI benefits back. She also got a \$27,000 retroactive SSDI payment for the time she was without benefits.

2) Analysis of Clients Served.

OCRA handled 5,204 cases for 3,566 clients from July 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024. Exhibit B contains the data for the fiscal year. The data is compiled by:

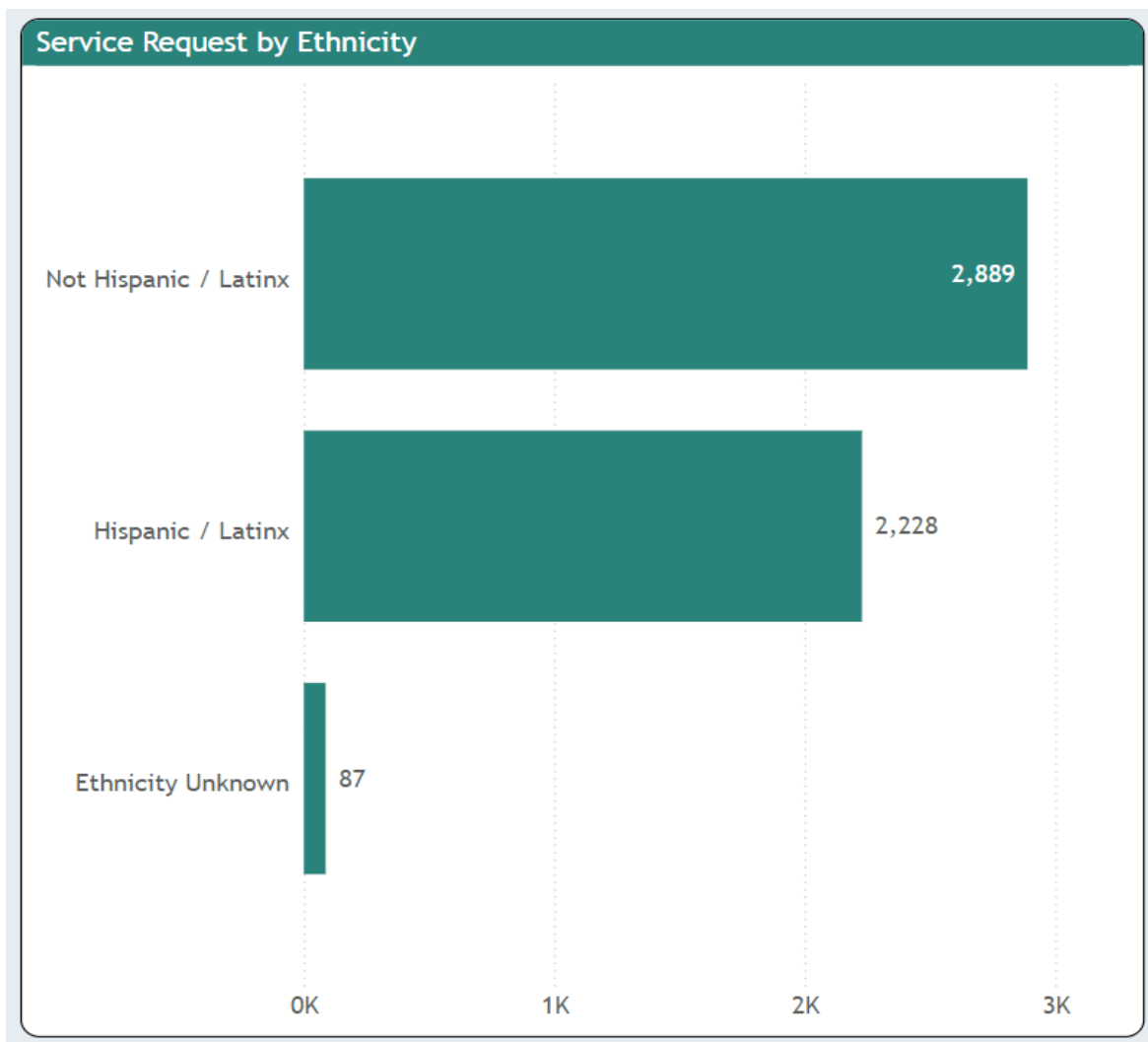
1. Age
2. County
3. Disability
4. Ethnicity
5. Race
6. Language
7. Gender
8. Gender Identity
9. Pronoun
10. Living Arrangement
11. Type of Problem (Problem Codes)
12. Service Type
13. Reason for Closing (Information and Referral service requests)
14. Representation in Appeal Process

The reports included here are in non-table format so they are accessible to people who use screen-readers. Although the data is still in grids, you can look at each row from left to right and do not need a table header row for context.

By age, the largest percentage of clients OCRA served were aged 3 through 21, at 60.77 percent of clients served. This means parents or caregivers of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities are the most frequent callers to OCRA. For comparison, 51.3 percent of regional center clients are aged 3 through 21, according to the DDS Comprehensive Dashboard for September 2024. 2.15 percent of OCRA

clients are aged 0 through 2. These Early Start clients are about 13.6 percent of the regional center population. Likely, OCRA serves fewer Early Start clients because their parents are just getting into the developmental services system, and the regional center is meeting most of their needs. They may not have tried accessing as many generic services as older children, so experience fewer denials.

Statistics on the ethnicity of clients served show OCRA's continuing commitment and success in serving neglected communities. For example, 43.02 percent of clients served by OCRA identified as Latinx. This is slightly higher than the 42.70 percent of Hispanic/Latino regional center clients, per the DDS Comprehensive Dashboard for September 2024. Below is a chart showing the ethnicity of the client cases.

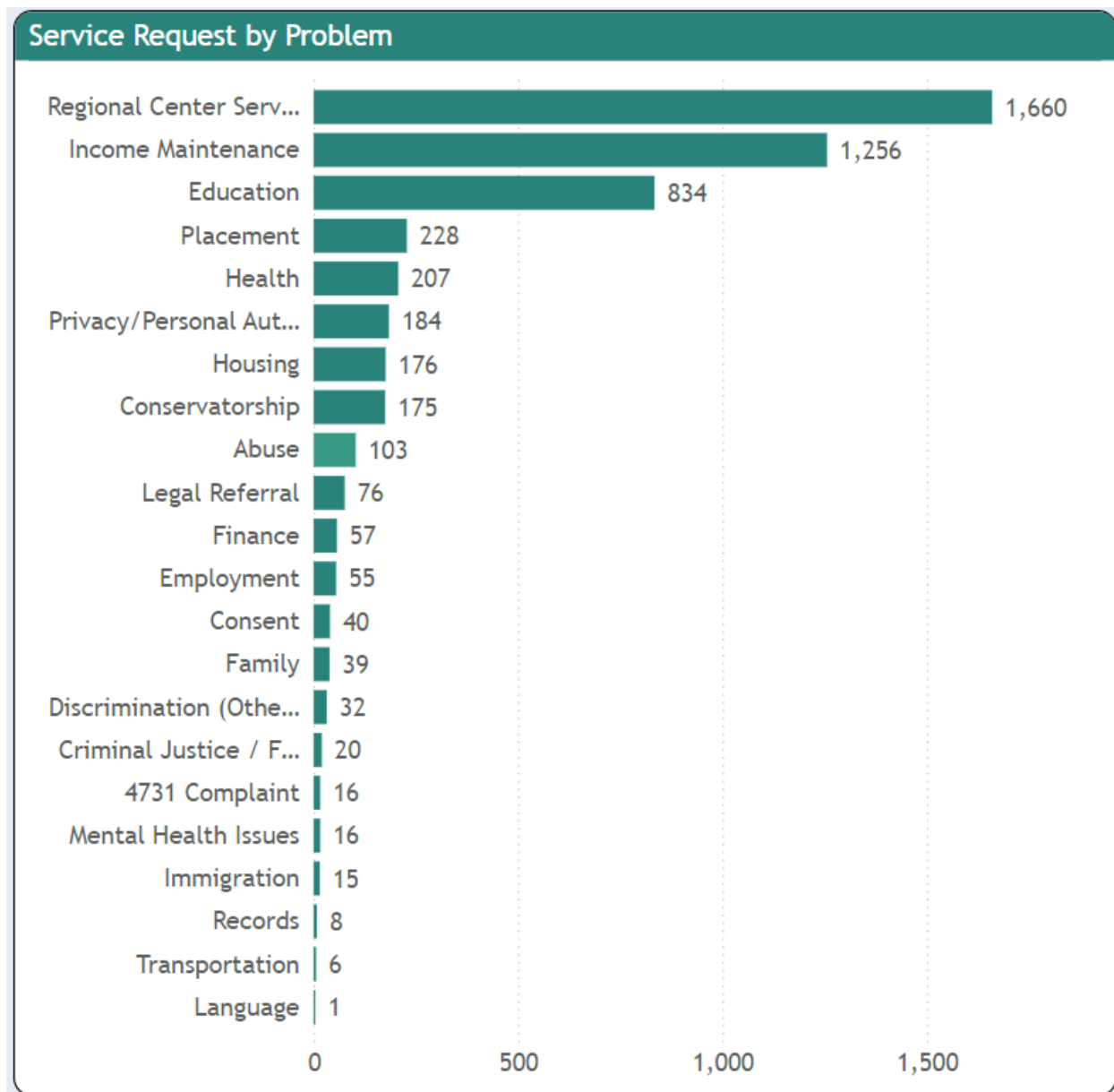


African American and Asian client data is in the report for “race,” which is separated from “ethnicity” in our reporting system. African American clients represent 8.1 percent of regional center clients, but a larger 9.7 percent of clients served by OCRA. Asian clients make up 9.0 percent of regional center clients, and 8.3 percent of clients served by OCRA. OCRA is slightly underserving Asian clients during this reporting period but is proud to continue to achieve and surpass parity statewide with the Latinx and African American regional center communities.

For client language, OCRA serves mostly English speakers, with Spanish being the second most common language. This is the same as regional centers statewide. Because OCRA serves mostly children and young adults, the client language field in OCRA’s case management database does not capture when OCRA works directly with a parent or family member who speaks another language. The field captures client language, not caller. This means much of the work OCRA does in Spanish and other languages is under-reported. OCRA is looking for ways to capture all language-diverse work since the client language designation does not tell the whole story.

Clients living in the family home generate the largest number of service requests for clients served by OCRA, with 3,258 service requests showing clients living in the family home, or 62.6 percent of cases handled. As in previous review periods, the next largest group served by OCRA are those living independently, with 565 service requests or 10.8 percent with this living arrangement.

OCRA’s case management database categorizes service requests by issue. Issues are labeled by a problem area and a subproblem area. OCRA’s largest problem area is Regional Center Services. This can be anything from regional center eligibility cases, to disputes over services, to problems with case management. This area is 31.9 percent of OCRA’s cases. The next largest is Income Maintenance, at 24.1 percent. These cases involve IHSS, Social Security, or other income programs. The third largest is Education, which can be a range of different special education cases, at 16.03 percent. The remaining problem areas ranged from less than 1 percent to 4.38 percent. These include Placement, Health, Conservatorship, and Housing, among others. Here is a chart showing the problem area of the client cases.



To track cases where OCRA and other units of DRC represent clients in regional center appeals, OCRA and other units use the sub-problem code, “Appeal Process.” This is used when staff directly represent a client in any stage of a regional center appeal – informal meeting, mediation, or hearing. This does not include service requests where OCRA staff provide information, advice, or technical assistance to someone who is representing themselves or someone else in a regional center appeal. OCRA represented a client during a regional center appeal in 9 cases during the last review period. All other units at DRC, not including OCRA, represented a client in 0 regional center appeals.

OCRA collects data about why staff closed a case at the lowest level of help. The lowest level is called “Information and Referral.” OCRA staff select from 12 possible reasons for closing the case. During this period, staff closed 2,346 cases at this level. The largest percentage of these cases, 28.05 percent, were closed because the caller asked only for information, referral, or a publication. The next highest, at 23.32 percent, were closed because OCRA reviewed an Individual Behavior Supports Plan (IBSP) or a comprehensive assessment only. OCRA does this work on behalf of people in restrictive settings (see next section). The next highest, 13.30 percent, closed because the issue was not OCRA-eligible. This could be family law, criminal law, personal injury, or another type of case OCRA does not handle. OCRA gives callers referrals as described in section VII below. The remaining reasons for closing these Information and Referral cases range from less than 1 to 7.37 percent.

3) Analysis of Clients Assisted with Moving to a Less Restrictive Living Arrangement.

The law requires regional centers to tell OCRA about people who live in restrictive settings and people whose community placements are at risk of failing. This includes people who live in, or are at risk of going into, Porterville Developmental Center, Canyon Springs, an Institution for Mental Disease, and STAR homes. The law requires regional centers to send OCRA comprehensive assessments and meeting notifications for clients in these restrictive settings, and clients living in Enhanced Behavioral Support Homes (EBSHs) and Community Crisis Homes (CCHs). Providers of EBSHs and CCHs must invite OCRA to Individual Behavior Support Team (IBST) meetings, and staff attend as many as possible. Providers also send monthly Individual Behavior Supports Plans (IBSPs) to OCRA staff. Some providers write weekly IBSPs and send them to OCRA.

OCRA's help in these cases includes speaking with the client about their wishes, reviewing records, attending a variety of meetings, negotiating through phone calls, drafting and filing documents for court, speaking with the client's public defender, service coordinator, family members, or home administrators about possible living arrangements and services, and attending discharge planning meetings and court dates, all to advocate for movement back to the community or for more services to stay in the community. OCRA staff are committed to helping people live in the least restrictive environment, a mandate of the Lanterman Act.

During this review period, OCRA staff took on 451 cases for people who live in Enhanced Behavioral Supports Homes and 199 cases for people who live in Community Crisis Homes. This is an increase in cases for clients in both EBSHs and CCHs from the last semi-annual period.

OCRA staff handled 59 cases for people who live in Porterville Developmental Center or Canyon Springs Community Facility. OCRA also helped in 33 cases where the client was in a STAR home for treatment. OCRA handled 24 cases for people in IMDs. Cases for all of these restrictive settings are more than the last semi-annual review period.

The law also requires regional centers to notify OCRA about clients whose court-ordered 6500 commitments are expiring or have a hearing scheduled, clients under a 5250 or higher level commitment, clients for whom a petition is filed for a Lanterman Petris-Short (LPS) conservatorship, and clients referred to Porterville Developmental Center. OCRA receives these notifications from some regional centers, but not others. For regional centers that do not provide notifications, OCRA staff review requirements during meetings and give them a “cheat sheet” with the law and duties in a chart.

4) Outreach/Training.

Outreach and Training serve two important purposes: 1) telling people about OCRA services and how to get help and 2) educating people about the law and their rights. OCRA provides training on many issues to a variety of people. Training topics include clients’ rights, abuse and neglect issues, IHSS, Medi-Cal, special education, voting rights, Social Security benefits, rights in the community, rights under new laws, alternatives to conservatorships, self-determination, and other topics. Training audiences include direct clients, family members, regional center staff and vendors, and community members. For details about self-advocacy trainings specifically, see section II.F.

During this six-month review period, OCRA presented 247 trainings with a total attendance of about 8,759 people. This is more trainings and attendees than the last semi-annual reporting period. Many outreach and training events are virtual, which makes events more accessible for some communities. OCRA staff also collaborated and presented at many in-person events and enjoyed connecting in person.

To guide OCRA staff in their outreach efforts, each office develops a 1-year outreach plan as a team. Each office chooses communities to target based on ethnicity, race, language, or community feedback. Examples of goals are to host a table at the regional center's Black history month cultural event and partnering with a Tagalog-speaking service coordinator to host a training event with food for Filipino families. Each office also does at least 2 self-advocacy training events per year under their plans.

This semi-annual report covers the first 6 months of the outreach cycle that began July 1, 2024. For more details on this and all outreach and training, see the report in Exhibit D.

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

From July 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024, OCRA resolved 5,204 issues for clients. Of those, all but 14 were resolved informally. Over 99 percent of all the matters that OCRA handled were resolved without using administrative hearings/complaints or court proceedings. OCRA staff routinely contact regional center managers or negotiate with public benefits staff or managers before filing an appeal. Data showing OCRA service type (levels) is at Exhibit E.

C. Collaborative and harmonious working relationships are fostered.

OCRA staff continue to collaborate with regional centers, stakeholders, and community members. Examples of collaboration with regional centers include OCRA staff participating in:

- Self-Determination Program Local Advisory Committees
- Regional Center START Advisory Council
- Regional Center Diversity Committees
- Disparity Task Force Meetings
- ECT Review Committees
- Bioethics Committees
- Behavioral Modification Review Committees
- Risk Management/Assessment Plan (RMAP) Committees
- Regional Resource Development Project – Regional Center (RRDP-RC) Liaison Meetings

Some examples of collaboration with stakeholder and community groups include OCRA staff participating in:

- Access Paratransit Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Access Paratransit Operations Subcommittee
- Adult Transition Task Force
- Butte County Coordinating Council (BCCC)
- California Health and Human Services Master Plan Workgroups
- California Statewide Alliance Team
- California Welfare Advocates
- Choices Conference Planning Committee
- Colaboracion Latina – UC Davis MIND Institute Resource Center
- County/Advocate meetings about benefits, services, and appeals
- Criminal Justice Task Force
- DS Taskforce and Implementation Workgroups (and many other DDS Focus Groups and Workgroups)
- El Arc de California
- Healthcare Task Force
- Health & Wellness Committee-Forensic Task Force
- IHSS Statewide Advocates' Meetings
- LA County Dependency Court Education Committee
- Multi-Agency Advisory Board (MAAB)
- People with Disabilities and Aging Advisory Council (PWDAAC)
- Self-Advocacy Board of Los Angeles County (SABLAC)
- SABLAC & SCDD Self-Advocacy Joint Projects
- SCDD Self-Advocacy Special Education Training
- SCDD Self-Advocacy Training
- SCDD Self-Advocacy Friendly check in
- SSI Statewide Advocates' Meetings
- State Hearings Division Stakeholder meetings
- Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (SSAN)
- Supported Life Training Planning Committees
- The Arc of California planning committees
- University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)
- Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee L.A County (VAAC)

Many OCRA staff provide training to regional center staff and vendors on topics such as clients' rights, OCRA services, or a substantive area of the law such as Social Security benefits. OCRA staff meet regularly with regional center staff and community partners to spot trends, share experiences and knowledge, and collaborate on many subjects. Many regional center staff have made OCRA their primary contact if their clients have legal issues.

OCRA has found, consistent with this requirement in Disability Rights California's contract with DDS, that much effective advocacy takes place from relationship-building and informal advocacy. OCRA's calls come from many sources. OCRA staff resolve issues and complaints with regional centers, public benefits agencies, and school districts informally. Word of these successful negotiations often spread around the disability community.

During this review period, OCRA was honored to help develop the California Health and Human Services Master Plan on Developmental Disabilities. Three OCRA staff served on three specific workgroups and others joined to listen and provide public comment.

1) Memorandums of Understanding.

OCRA has established Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with each regional center that address the center's individual needs, concerns, and method of operation. OCRA reviews MOUs each year and updates them as needed. OCRA has very good working relationships with most regional centers. During this review period, OCRA did not update MOUs with any regional center. OCRA and regional centers will update MOUs using a form template during the next review period. OCRA has forwarded copies of all current MOUs to DDS. Exhibit F lists the status of each revised MOU.

2) Meetings with Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA).

ARCA and OCRA serve on several workgroups, task forces, and committees together. This collaborative relationship will continue, as will the work on shared goals.

D. Clients and families are satisfied with the services provided.

Disability Rights California recognizes the importance of client satisfaction. OCRA is committed to serving clients and family members in a way and with results that ensure client and family satisfaction with the services provided. In the past, OCRA used a Client Satisfaction Survey, developed with DDS many years ago. Survey results showed positive client satisfaction during each review period. OCRA did not send the former survey to any clients during this review period. DRC is undertaking an agency-wide process to improve data and documentation of client satisfaction and once that process is implemented, OCRA will participate and report the results.

1) Clients file few grievances.

One indicator of client satisfaction is the low number of grievances compared to the number of cases OCRA handles. During this review period, there were just 6 level one grievances, and none escalated to a higher level. Compared to 5,204 cases handled, this low number of grievances is remarkable.

2) Cases are handled in a timely manner.

One way OCRA strives for client satisfaction is by handling cases promptly. Clients and families contact OCRA because something has gone wrong. Their cash or health benefits may have stopped, they may be forced to move to a more restrictive environment, or they have another urgent situation. OCRA's policy is that staff return all calls 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. For offices that have assigned Intake Assistants, they answer the phone. This increases the number of callers reaching a person rather than a voicemail box.

Statewide CRAs and ACRAAs handle calls in offices with a high call volume or when there are staff absences or vacancies. Staff also use electronic call logs to document all calls, which ensures timeliness and helps client satisfaction.

Once a caller completes an intake and a case is opened for a client, OCRA staff use internal timelines to move through the case. OCRA supervisors oversee cases and track when they were opened, and the work done so

far. Supervisors and staff track when they should complete all the work and wrap up a case, given the timelines. For example, a case under the category “Information and Referral” should be resolved within 7 calendar days. For this type of case, OCRA staff give information such as a publication or a referral to another legal aid organization, attorney, or resource. The 7-day timeline ensures the caller gets this information and referral quickly. A case under the type, “Counsel and Advice” should be resolved within 28 days. The OCRA management team runs a report, as a check and balance, to show each case’s number of days open and highlight any cases that need more attention.

E. The provision of clients’ rights advocacy services is coordinated in consultation with the DDS Project Representative, stakeholder organizations, and persons with developmental disabilities and their families representing California’s multi-cultural diversity.

OCRA meets with the DDS Project Representative monthly and dedicates 2 more meetings during the fiscal year specifically to review information about OCRA services in the Annual and Semi-Annual Reports. When DDS has asked to see specific data, OCRA responds by adding it to the next report. OCRA presents to DDS twice per year about its clients’ rights advocacy services as reported in the Annual and Semi-Annual Reports.

In section II.C above, OCRA identifies many stakeholder organizations OCRA staff collaborate with to foster harmonious relationships. Many of these groups serve and represent California’s multi-cultural diversity. OCRA staff not only attend meetings, but also share information, provide trainings, and serve on boards of these groups. Also as noted above in section I., many OCRA staff represent California’s multi-cultural diversity and speak languages other than English. When clients see and hear people who look and talk like them, they are often more willing to share their opinions, struggles, and solutions. Several OCRA staff serve on Diversity Committees with their local regional center to better serve diverse client groups.

DRC’s Board of Director’s Community Engagement Committee gathers input from the multicultural disability community, including people with developmental disabilities, about DRC and OCRA services. During these sessions, OCRA listens and learns about priorities from the developmental disability community.

Because listening and serving together has been so informative, OCRA will continue to hear from the community on how to provide high quality, efficient services with which clients are satisfied.

F. Self-advocacy training is provided for clients 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 clients of regional center services provide at least two self-advocacy trainings for clients each year. Disability Rights California's contract with DDS mirrors this language. OCRA believes strongly in the importance of self-advocacy and requires at least two self-advocacy trainings by each of the 21 OCRA offices per year, far exceeding the two mandated trainings. Some offices provide more than two per year.

During this 6-month review period, OCRA staff provided 71 self-advocacy presentations statewide, more than triple the number from the same reporting period in 2023.

Staff may present any of the DDS-approved self-advocacy trainings. To date, OCRA has developed 7 packets of information to use in the approved trainings in addition to the DDS Consumer Safety materials and the living arrangement options materials developed by DDS.

OCRA provided the self-advocacy packets (all are in both English and Spanish) separately in a binder marked OCRA Training Materials with the 2007-2008 Annual Report. In discussions with DDS's previous Project Representative, all agreed that OCRA should not submit duplicate training packets. As always, OCRA welcomes comments from DDS on any training packets. A list of Self-Advocacy Trainings held during this reporting period are in Exhibit G.

Self-Advocacy training survey responses are valuable to give feedback and ideas for future trainings. Here are sample comments from training surveys, which participants completed during in-person self-advocacy trainings this review period.

Survey comments from "Clients' Rights Bingo."

1. Did you like where the training was held?

(Getting into the building, was the training room comfortable, were you able to get into the bathroom, was the information provided helpful, etc.)

YES ✓ NO

1. Did you like where the training was held? (Getting into the building, was the training room comfortable, were you able to get into the bathroom, was the information provided helpful, etc.) YES NO

YES

2. Did you learn something from this training?

YES ✓ NO

2. Did you learn something from this training? YES NO

YES

3. Did the information presented meet your needs?

YES ✓ NO

Excellent 4 Good 3 Fair 2 Poor 1

3. Did the information presented meet your needs? YES NO

YES

4.Excellent. 3. Good. 2. Fair. 1. Poor.

"3. Good."

4. How would you rate the quality of the presentation?

4 3 2 1

4. How would you rate the quality of the presentation?

4-3-2-1

4

5. Overall, how would you rate the usefulness of this training/presentation?
4 3 2 1

Survey comments from "Voting Rights."

3. Did you learn something from this training? YES NO



Comments: _____

1. Did you learn something from this training? YES NO

YES

4. Was the speaker interesting? YES NO



Comments: _____

2. Was the speaker interesting? YES NO

YES

5. How did this training meet your needs?

I Learn How to register

3. How did this training meet your needs?

"I Learn How to register"

6. How would you rate the quality of the presentation?

☐ Poor ☐ Fair ☒ Good ☐ Excellent

4. How would you rate the quality of the presentation? Poor.

Fair. Good. Excellent

Good

1. Were your access needs met?

(Getting into the building, was the training room comfortable, were you able to get into the bathroom, was the information provided helpful, etc.) YES NO



Comments: _____

4. Was the speaker interesting? ☒ YES ☐ NO

Comments: _____

I. Was the speaker interesting? YES NO
YES

5. How did this training meet your needs?

learning how to vote

II. How did this training meet your needs?
Learning how to vote

6. How would you rate the quality of the presentation?

☐ Poor ☐ Fair ☐ Good ☒ Excellent

III. How would you rate the quality of the presentation?
Poor. Fair. Good. Excellent.
Excellent

III. TITLE 17 COMPLAINTS

CCR, Title 17, Section 50540, sets forth a complaint procedure whereby a regional center client, 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 but offers more client protections. OCRA handled no Title 17 Complaints during this review period, as noted on Exhibit H.

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 client if there is a danger to self or others or a danger of property destruction caused by the actions of a client. The Clients' Rights Advocate must receive and review the denial for it to be started. The regulation requires that OCRA submit a quarterly report to DDS by the last day of each January, April, July, and

October. Instead, OCRA has included the reports concurrently with the contractually-required Annual and Semi-Annual reports. OCRA can submit duplicate reports quarterly to DDS, if requested. Exhibit I is the log of Denials of Rights from the OCRA offices.

V. CLIENT GRIEVANCES

The contract between DDS and Disability Rights California requires OCRA to establish a grievance procedure and to inform 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 and is available in all 11 threshold languages. The grievance procedure is offered in letters to clients or others who contact OCRA, when an office declines to provide the requested service to that person. During this review period, OCRA handled 5,204 matters. OCRA received 6 grievances filed during this review period. Exhibit J is the grievance chart.

VI. COLLECTION OF ATTORNEY'S FEES

OCRA does not charge clients, 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 for special education cases or other cases where there are statutory attorney's fees. Neither Disability Rights California nor OCRA ever collect attorney's fees from clients. OCRA collected no attorney's fees during this review period, see Exhibit K.

VII. REFERRAL LISTS

Disability Rights California maintains referral lists of individuals and entities performing consumer advocacy services. There are several areas of the law that OCRA does not handle. These include family law issues like child custody and divorce, personal injury and medical malpractice cases, and estate planning and special needs trusts. Statewide referral lists give clients options to contact attorneys, advocates, or other resources when OCRA does not handle their issue. Some offices have created local referral lists because of special needs in their area, for example rural areas or needing Spanish-speaking attorneys or office staff. Disability Rights

California's statewide referral lists for clients are available in English and Spanish. The English versions are at Exhibit L.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCEMENT OF SERVICES

The contract requires Disability Rights California to make recommendations annually and semi-annually to DDS on potential methods of enhancing the services that OCRA provides for regional center clients. The support of DDS through the years has made it possible for OCRA to serve clients effectively and efficiently. We appreciate the positive relationships and ability to contact DDS when we have a concern, and to work collaboratively to improve services. We enjoy serving on committees and sharing the feedback of our clients and their experiences in the system. We look forward to continued collaboration.

To enhance services, OCRA proposes that:

- OCRA and DDS both facilitate connecting OCRA local office staff with the DDS Community Operations staff who are liaisons to each regional center. This would be another way to foster communication and identify and resolve systemic issues to better serve clients.
- DDS provides OCRA a list of clients who live in Institutions for Mental Disease (IMDs), since OCRA does not consistently get this information from all regional centers. By law, IMDs are required to notify OCRA quarterly of all admissions of regional center clients, but none do so. DDS sharing this information with OCRA will allow clients in this very restrictive setting to get access to advocacy services to help them live in the least restrictive environment.

IX. CONCLUSION

OCRA has continued to provide exceptional service to people with developmental disabilities throughout the state. Clients and callers are satisfied with OCRA's outreach/training and casework, shown in the positive training survey responses and the low number of grievances compared to the number of cases. In just 6 months, OCRA handled 5,204 cases for 3,566 clients in a wide variety of legal problem areas. In these 6 months, OCRA also provided 247 training events to 8,759 clients, family members, regional center staff and vendors, and interested community

members - all while meeting each of its performance objectives. OCRA has surpassed statewide parity with the Latinx and Black and African American communities and will listen and learn how to better connect with Asian communities. OCRA staff are committed every day to helping regional center clients access services and supports to live the most independent and productive lives in the least restrictive environment. OCRA looks forward to continuing to work with people with developmental disabilities and provide the advocacy services they need.