

OCRA SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT  
(July 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
I. INTRODUCTION .....	3
II. PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES.....	4
A. Services are provided in a manner that maximizes staff and operational resources.....	4
1) Advocacy Reports. ....	4
2) Analysis of Consumers Served.....	7
3) Analysis of Consumers Assisted with Moving to a Less Restrictive Living Arrangement.....	9
4) Outreach/Training.....	12
B. Issues and complaints are resolved expeditiously and at the lowest level of appropriate intervention. ....	13
C. Collaborative and harmonious working relationships are fostered. ....	13
1) Memorandums of Understanding.....	14
2) Meeting with Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA). ....	14
D. Consumers and families are satisfied with the services provided.....	14
1) Consumer Satisfaction Survey.....	15
2) Letters of Appreciation.....	16
3) Cases will be handled in a timely manner.....	20
E. 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.....	21
F. Self-advocacy training is provided for consumers and families at least twice in each fiscal year. ....	21
III. TITLE 17 COMPLAINTS.....	24

IV. DENIAL OF CLIENTS' RIGHTS .....	25
V. CONSUMER GRIEVANCES .....	25
VI. COLLECTION OF ATTORNEYS FEES.....	25
VIII. CONCLUSION .....	26

EXHIBIT LIST

- EXHIBIT A OCRA Staff Roster
- EXHIBIT B OCRA Statistics
- EXHIBIT C Advocacy Report
- EXHIBIT D Outreach and Training Report
- EXHIBIT E Report by Service Level
- EXHIBIT F Memorandums of Understanding
- EXHIBIT G Consumer Satisfaction Surveys
- EXHIBIT H OCRA Advisory Committee and Meeting Minutes
- EXHIBIT I Self-Advocacy Trainings
- EXHIBIT J Title 17 Complaints
- EXHIBIT K Denial of Rights
- EXHIBIT L Consumer Grievance Report
- EXHIBIT M Attorney Fees

## I. INTRODUCTION

Disability Rights California provides state-wide clients' rights advocacy services for regional center consumers pursuant to a multi-year contract, HD119002, with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) through the Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA). The contract was renewed effective July 1, 2016, for this 5-year period ending June 30, 2021. OCRA is in the third year of this five-year contract. This semi-annual report covers July 1, 2018, through December 31, 2018.

Between July 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018, OCRA handled 4,928 issues for 3,619 clients, which continues to be well over the 30 per month, per office required by contract. OCRA staff continue to handle a variety of legal issues with positive results. OCRA also participated in 291 trainings during the 6-month period, presenting to approximately 9,582 people. See section II.A.4 for details.

OCRA operates offices throughout the state, most of which are staffed by one CRA and one Assistant CRA. This enables our staff to be accessible to and best understand the local community. Most OCRA offices are near the regional center office. One way OCRA has increased access to its services is hiring floating CRAs. In this period, we also hired a former CRA as a part-time "floating CRA" to assist offices statewide with high volume or a staff member on leave. This means we now have three floating CRAs. OCRA will be recruiting for a second Peer Advocate or Peer Trainer in Northern California to compliment the work of our Peer Advocate in Southern California.

OCRA continues to assist people moving from restrictive settings like developmental centers and IMDs into the community. OCRA has four full-time "Community Integration CRAs" in northern, southern, and central California, who are supported by one supervising CRA, and one Assistant CRA statewide. This unit within OCRA provides direct advocacy to consumers in restrictive settings or at risk of losing community placement, trainings to entities and professionals serving these consumers, technical assistance to public defenders and other advocacy professionals, and participation in systemic meetings involving community integration and service to consumers. Local CRAs also handle some of these cases and trainings. A list of the current staff and office locations is attached as Exhibit A.

## 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 4,928 issues for regional center consumers during this 6-month period, which is slightly less than the same period last year. OCRA served 3,619 clients during this semi-annual review period, which is also slightly less than the same reporting period last year. One reason for the lower number is that Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) closed at the end of this review period. OCRA staff were not involved in as many service requests for reviewing comprehensive assessments or attending meetings because clients moved from SDC into the community. OCRA staff still handled some SDC cases, but there were fewer in the beginning of this review period than other periods, and then almost none in November and December of 2018. The holiday season this December resulted in significantly lower numbers than other years. The last two weeks of the year were extremely slow. We are working to ensure that clients know that our office is open unlike some of the regional centers that close for the holidays.

OCRA successfully represented and educated people on many different legal issues and helped to remedy systemic problems. 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, covering July through December, 2018, included as Exhibit C, tells the stories and the impact our work has had on consumers' lives.

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

OCRA's effective service to the community and the impact of that work is best demonstrated in advocacy stories. Advocates regularly submit summaries of cases or outreaches with practical value and demonstrate a

good outcome or teach a lesson. The examples also show the wide variety of legal issues handled by OCRA. Many of these case stories reflect resolution of systemic problems through high-level direct representation, while others are resolved through collaborative relationships. In an effort toward brevity, the stories are just a sampling of the types of cases that OCRA handled. A longer Advocacy Report is available upon request. The summaries from July 2018 through December 2018 are compiled and attached as Exhibit C.

OCRA posts advocacy reports and other success stories on our website and social media regularly. These stories are a quick and easy way for DDS and the public to see the value of our work and better understand the rights of people with disabilities. OCRA staff focus on cases where there are no other advocacy resources the client can access, such as cases other attorneys do not handle. During this reporting period, we had a mix of cases in different legal areas, including several where OCRA would have been the only source of free advocacy services. Here are four examples of OCRA's mix of cases.

### **OCRA Helps Josie Get Her Social Security Benefits Back.**

Josie came to OCRA after her Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits were terminated because she earned too much money. She filed an appeal, but had not heard from the Social Security Administration for several months. OCRA contacted Social Security, inquired about the status of her appeal, and asked if they requested information about costs that should have been deducted from Josie's countable income, such as impairment-related work expenses and work subsidies. Social Security acknowledged that they did not inquire about such costs and agreed to accept this information from OCRA. After submitting her deductible expenses, Josie's income fell below the earning limits. Because of this, she is now receiving her SSDI benefits again and received a lump sum back-payment of \$15,000.

### **Client's Wheelchair is Repaired after OCRA Intervenes.**

Julia's family contacted OCRA because her power wheelchair was in disrepair and the Medicare Durable Medical Equipment (DME) provider assigned to fix the wheelchair did not complete the repairs for over two years. Julia had no way to get around and sometimes had to crawl around

her home. Some days, she was unable to attend her day program because the wheelchair did not work. The Medicare DME provider would schedule appointments to meet with Julia at her home and then never show up. OCRA became involved and asked for an IPP meeting with the regional center to discuss the issue. OCRA agreed to make a final attempt to work with the Medicare DME provider. If the provider still failed to repair the power wheelchair, OCRA would file a complaint. At the IPP meeting, OCRA also discussed the regional center funding the repairs as the payor of last resort. OCRA communicated with the DME provider and attended meetings to discuss the repairs needed for Julia's power wheelchair. When the DME provider failed to complete the repairs, OCRA filed a complaint with Medicare and requested the regional center complete the repairs as payor of last resort. The regional center agreed to pay for the repairs. Julia can finally use her power wheelchair and regularly attend her day program.

### **Patricia Gets to Stay in her Home.**

Patricia has lived in her subsidized Section 8 apartment for 40 years. Patricia's landlord issued a 90-day notice to vacate because he no longer wanted to participate in the Section 8 program and could charge someone else more for rent without accepting a Section 8 voucher. Patricia was receiving chemotherapy treatment for her recent cancer diagnosis at the time she received this notice. Patricia contacted OCRA asking for help. OCRA and the legal advocacy unit within Disability Rights California agreed to co-counsel on Patricia's case. They represented Patricia by requesting reasonable accommodations under the Fair Housing Act and state law from both Patricia's landlord and the Housing Authority. Patricia's advocacy team successfully negotiated with the Housing Authority to increase the total rent to the landlord to \$1,700 per month. Patricia's landlord then agreed to withdraw the 90-day notice to vacate and accept the new rent amount from the Housing Authority. Patricia will continue to live in her long-time apartment.

### **Amy's Dental Expenses are Partially Reimbursed by Regional Center.**

Amy is a minor with cerebral palsy. She has a partially obstructed airway and the lateral movement of her tongue is limited, which causes food to remain in her mouth. This increases her risk of gingivitis. Amy needs deep cleaning more often than other people and needs general anesthesia

during dental work. Amy's mother asked the regional center for specific referrals, but they gave her a list of Denti-Cal providers. She called many on the list, but they either said they cannot provide services to patients with Amy's needs or had a long waiting list. Amy's need for dental work grew more urgent as the days passed. She also needed her impacted wisdom teeth to be extracted. Since the regional center's list did lead to a viable service, Amy's mother contacted a dentist that she had previously seen, and he performed all of Amy's dental work. Amy's mother paid to cover the dental work. After the dental work was performed, Amy's mother contacted the regional center to request reimbursement. The request was denied. Amy's mother appealed and called OCRA for help to prepare for the hearing. The regional center contended that she had not kept them informed about the situation and prevented them from finding a generic resource to cover the services. Amy's mother alleged her actions were reasonable and the specialized dental work was related to Amy's developmental disability. After the hearing, the judge awarded Amy and her family a reimbursement for dental expenses related to her disability, a portion of the total cost. Amy's mother was pleased to have been able to successfully advocate for her daughter.

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

OCRA handled 4,928 cases from July 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018. 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 chart is self-explanatory as read from left to right and

does not require the navigational reference of a table header row for context.

The largest percentage of consumers served by age during this time period were age 4 to 17, at 40 percent of consumers served. This is slightly lower than the last semi-annual review period, which was 42 percent. The conclusion is that parents or caregivers of children with developmental disabilities are the most frequent callers to OCRA. The next largest was the 23-40 age group with 24.5 percent, higher than the 21.7 percent in the previous semi-annual report.

For cases where gender is recorded, as in the past, OCRA served more males than females, with 66 percent of the consumers served being male and just under 34 percent being female in this reporting period. These numbers continue to coincide with the percentage served by regional centers, according to the DDS Fact Book, 15<sup>th</sup> Edition. The Fact Book attributes the gender imbalance partly to the increase in individuals with an Autism diagnosis, currently over 80 percent male.

OCRA recently changed the categories of living arrangement in its case management database to streamline the choices and remove unused or duplicate types of living arrangements. Consumers residing in the family home remains by far the largest number of service requests for consumers served by OCRA, with 3,538 service requests showing consumers living in the family home or 71.7 percent of the cases handled. This percentage is slightly higher than OCRA's last semi-annual report and is lower than the regional center percentage of consumers served in this living arrangement, at 78.4 percent, cited in the DDS Fact Book, 15<sup>th</sup> Edition. As in previous review periods, the next largest group served by OCRA is those living independently, with 543 service requests or 11 percent with this living arrangement. This is slightly higher than last year during the same period and higher than the regional centers' 8.4 percent of clients living in ILS/SLS.

OCRA continues its involvement with people transitioning from developmental centers into the community by handling 135 service requests for consumers whose living arrangement was developmental center, or 2.7 percent of service requests. This percentage is lower than the last semi-annual review period because far fewer consumers live in developmental centers as they move into the community at a faster rate in



preparation for closure. Only 0.3 percent of regional center consumers live in Developmental Centers per the recent Fact Book. See section A.3 below for OCRA's involvement with clients in restrictive living arrangements.

OCRA's statistics on the ethnicity of consumers served for this first half of the year show OCRA's continuing commitment and success in serving underserved communities. For example, over 41 percent of consumers served by OCRA identified as Hispanic/Latino. This is a higher percentage than OCRA served during last year's semi-annual period, and higher than the 37.8 percent of Hispanic/Latino regional center consumers in January 2017, taken from the DDS Fact Book, 15<sup>th</sup> Edition.

African-American and Asian consumer data is under the report for "race," which is separated from "ethnicity" in our reporting system. African-American consumers represent 8.9 percent of regional center consumers and 9 percent of consumers served by OCRA. This is a slight decrease in African-American consumers served by OCRA from last semi-annual reporting period at 9.3 percent. Asian consumers make up 6.6 percent of regional center consumers, but a higher 8.5 percent of consumers served by OCRA. This is also an increase over last semi-annual period's 7.9 percent. OCRA staff continue to do outreach targeted to underserved communities. OCRA offices have targeted the Asian, Latino, Native American, and African-American communities in their outreach plans and have had success in building meaningful relationships in those communities by increasing people served. OCRA is now in the second year of two-year outreach plans. See section A.4 for more details on outreach plans.

### **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 planned closure of the developmental centers, OCRA's work has involved assisting clients in restrictive settings to move into the community and helping deflect clients from going into a more restrictive setting.

OCRA staff have been contacting providers of the Enhanced Behavioral Support Homes (EBSHs) and Community Crisis Homes (CCHs) as they open and consumers move in. Staff have attended Individual Behavior Support team meetings to review consumers' behavior plans to make sure clients' rights are respected. It is important to maintain a relationship with the administrators and staff of these homes who are now serving consumers formerly in restrictive settings for much of their lives.

Assistance or representation in cases involving restrictive settings can include reviewing records, interviewing and developing a relationship with the consumer, 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 stay in the community.

During this review period, OCRA staff reviewed 105 comprehensive assessments for consumers in developmental centers or IMDs. This is fewer than the 256 that OCRA staff reviewed during the last semi-annual review period. Since Sonoma Developmental Center closed during this period, regional centers completed and sent fewer comprehensive assessments overall.

OCRA staff attend 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 Plan meetings for consumers in Enhanced Behavioral Support Homes, and other “special” meetings. During this review period, OCRA staff attended 126 meetings on behalf of consumers in developmental centers or IMDs, or who were at risk of losing their community placements. This number is similar to the same period last year at 125. OCRA staff also attended 27 meetings for consumers in EBSHs and CCHs, and reviewed 26 Individual Behavior Support Plans. OCRA staff have attended six court hearings for clients in restrictive settings during this review period. The numbers of comprehensive assessments reviewed and meetings attended will decline as consumers move into the community, but OCRA will continue its involvement with clients in other restrictive settings such as 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 Center or Canyon Springs. OCRA staff represent most consumers in the acute crisis units from the time they are admitted (or before) to their meeting 30 days after they have moved back 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 remained in the community with additional or different services.

OCRA has a team of four community integration CRAs, and one Assistant CRA who directly report to a Supervising CRA. This team directly represents clients and assists 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 attend meetings and provide training to public defenders, public guardians, developmental center staff, and regional center staff about community integration laws and regulations. The expertise of this team is a good resource for other OCRA staff. They help address barriers local CRAs are facing in all parts of the state. Here is one advocacy story highlighting how a client achieved community integration.

### **Louie Moves into the Community After 4 Years in a Locked Facility.**

Louie is a young man who lived in an IMD since 2014. Louie wanted to leave the locked facility, but his regional center said he was not ready, based on the comprehensive assessment it completed. OCRA requested an updated assessment to be completed by an outside provider. The regional center agreed. The new comprehensive assessment indicated that Louie was ready for community placement, so the regional center started the referral process in 2015. It took a long time to find a provider willing to serve Louie. One provider agreed to work with Louie in a new group home it was developing. The IPP team would give Louie a discharge date, but the date kept changing because of licensing issues with the home. Louie became impatient because despite his excellent behavior, he was still in a locked facility. His team worked hard to encourage his continued excellent behavior. Louie finally moved out and is thriving in the community. Louie and his family are eager for him to become even more independent.

#### **4) Outreach/Training.**

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 numerous issues to a wide variety of people. Training topics include consumers' rights, abuse and neglect issues, IHSS, Medi-Cal, special education, voting rights, Social Security benefits, rights in the community, alternatives to conservatorships, self-determination, and other topics. Training audiences include direct consumers, family members, regional center staff and vendors, and community members.

During this 6-month review period, OCRA presented at 291 trainings with a total attendance of approximately 9,582 people at the various trainings. This represents a significant increase from the last semi-annual report. See section II.F for details.

OCRA continues to have a Peer Advocate. He is a person with a developmental disability who provides community trainings, coaches and advocates for clients, and assists staff in developing consumer-friendly trainings and materials. The Peer Advocate has also met with consumers in restrictive settings in southern California to learn their wishes and discuss community integration options with them. He also joins case review meetings to offer insight to the advocates from a peer perspective. OCRA plans to hire another Peer Advocate or Peer Trainer for northern California to help develop new and innovative trainings.

To assist individuals from traditionally underserved communities, OCRA has developed target outreach plans. Each OCRA office targets at least six outreaches per year to a specific group of persons who are underrepresented in the office's catchment area. Paula Sandoval and Christine Hager serve as the Outreach Coordinators. They advise staff on implementation of their target outreach plans. These are two-year plans based upon an evaluation of prior outreach plans' results, new census data, a review of regional center purchase of service data, and the race and ethnicity of consumers served by each regional center. This semi-annual report covers six months of a two-year outreach cycle that ends June 30, 2019.

Many OCRA offices have identified the Asian community as their target for outreach. Debra Marcia serves as the Outreach Coordinator for the Asian

community in an effort to improve our services to this community. Given our increase in serving the Asian community, from 7.9 percent to 8.5 percent, this outreach is working. Some offices have assisted Asian community groups in putting on trainings and conferences, not only presenting at the conference, but also attending planning meetings and providing supplies and sponsorship. A detailed report on outreach and training is included as Exhibit D.

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

From July 1, 2018, through December 31, 2018, OCRA resolved 4,928 issues for consumers. Of those, all but 18 were resolved informally. Over 99 percent of all the matters that OCRA handled were resolved without using administrative hearings or court proceedings. Data showing this is attached as Exhibit E.

**C. 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 participate in their regional centers' Self-Determination Program Local Advisory Committee meetings. 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. OCRA staff meet regularly with regional center staff and community partners to spot trends, share

experience and expertise, and collaborate on many subjects. Many regional center staff have made OCRA their primary contact if one of their clients has a legal issue.

This philosophy of collaboration is not only incorporated into Disability Rights California's contract with DDS, but is also a recognition 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, its ability to resolve matters informally, and 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 the center's individual needs, concerns, and method of operation. Generally, MOUs are updated as needed. However, changes to the law mean that MOUs may be reviewed and meetings held or scheduled. These meetings have been productive and positive. OCRA has very good working relationships with almost all regional centers. During this review period, the MOU was updated with these regional centers: Eastern Los Angeles, North Los Angeles County, Redwood Coast, Valley Mountain, and South Central Los Angeles. OCRA has forwarded copies of all MOUs 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 Catherine Blakemore, Executive Director, met with ARCA twice during this review period, on 10/10/18 and 12/21/18. ARCA and OCRA also serve on committees together and regularly discuss current issues. ARCA, DRC, and DDS have also been meeting regularly to discuss systems issues.

### **D. 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 semi-annual review period.

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

OCRA measures consumer satisfaction by a survey developed jointly by staff, the OCRA Consumer Advisory Committee, and DDS. Nine hundred and fifteen (915) surveys were mailed out. One hundred and forty-four (144) people returned surveys. This represents a 16 percent return rate, which is higher than the 12 percent return rate from the last semi-annual review period.

Of those responding to the questions, 95 percent of the respondents who answered the questions felt they were treated well by the staff. One respondent said, "I was treated with the out most respect every step was explained thoroughly. Very professional." 89 percent of the respondents believed their call was returned within two days. This is higher than last year during the same reporting period. One respondent said, "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!" 94 percent of the respondents reported that they understood the information they received. This percentage is also higher than last year during the same period. One person wrote, "Luisa Delgadillo was highly professional and personable, helped understand my daughter case with, SSI and presenting my case."

During this reporting period, 94 percent of respondents felt their Clients' Rights Advocate listened to them, the same as last year. One responded 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.)" 91 percent of respondents felt they were helped with their question/problem. This is higher than the 84 percent from last year during this period. Respondents said, "I am extremely grateful for the services I received. It allowed me to effective advocate for my son and obtaining a favorable outcome in our state hearing" and "Aimee Delgado was an excellent lawyer. She knew the entire process and prepared me well for

the hearing. In fact, the night before the hearing the Regional Center retracted and decided to grant what I am requesting. Without her help, I would not have won the case. Thank you!" Finally, 91 percent of respondents said they would ask their Clients' Rights Advocate for help again, also higher than last time. One respondent wrote, "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.)"

These satisfaction numbers are higher than the last semi-annual review period. Still, to remedy concerns of any unhappy callers, a member of the OCRA management team calls back all responders who either request a call back or made any negative responses and supplied their contact information. See Exhibit G, which discusses the results of OCRA's survey.

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

OCRA consumers and family members often take the time to write letters of appreciation. These kind words and the time it takes to send them represent 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 redacted client names.

Sent: Tuesday, November 27, 2018 7:33 AM

To: Alejandro Gastelum

Subject: Re: OCRA EMAIL 2

Hi Alejandro, Thank you for reaching out. I apologize about the delay. Great news, \_\_\_ RC 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!



Dearest Aimee,

Thank you from the bottom  
of my heart for all your help  
with \_\_\_\_\_ case. Without you  
it wouldn't have been possible.

God Bless you and  
all that you do!

Nice things just seem to  
bloom from you.

Thanks so much.

(Dearest Aimee,  
Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your help with \_\_\_\_\_ case.  
Without you, it wouldn't have been possible. God Bless you and all that  
you do!)

Sent: Tuesday, October 9, 2018 5:45 PM  
To: Mario Espinoza  
Subject: Re:

Mario, I can't thank you enough. Your being there and keeping  
our points front and center was incredibly helpful. I think it is  
pretty clear \_\_\_\_\_ needs more support. And with it, I do believe  
he can have a happy and productive life. So thank you for  
making a big, positive difference.

Dear Jacqueline,

I owe you a debt of gratitude for your help with my son \_\_\_\_\_ for approval of services with \_\_\_\_\_

I appreciate your enormous support in the short amount of time that I've spent with you. We can't thank you enough. Please enjoy the bouquet of flowers as a gift of appreciation from us.

(Dear Jacqueline,  
I owe you a debt of gratitude for your help with my son \_\_\_\_\_ for approval of services with \_\_\_\_\_. I appreciate your enormous support in the short amount of time that I've spent with you. We can't thank you enough. Please enjoy the bouquet of flowers as a gift of appreciation from us.)

Sent: Sunday, October 07, 2018 8:31 PM

To: Christine Hager

Subject: Thank you note from Tracy group

Hi Christine,

We are sending you this email to express our appreciation of your time, effort, and diligence in bringing the opportunity to work in the workshops you brought to Tracy. We learned a lot and no words can express how much this means in improving the lives of each and every one of our children. Thank you for making a significant difference in many families. We sincerely look forward to participating in future workshops here and in the surrounding communities.

God Bless You.

Poder de Voces Especiales

Tracy

Lorie,

Thanks so much for attending our open house. You helped make the event outstanding. We appreciate you!

Sincerely, The Chico CA MENTOR Staff

(Lorie, Thank you so much for attending our open house. You helped make the event outstanding. We appreciate you! Sincerely, The Chico CA MENTOR Staff)

Date: Thu, Jul 12, 2018 at 9:36 PM

Subject: ICC Member

To: Catherine Blakemore

Cc: Katie Hornberger

Hola senora Blakmore y Hornberger soy \_\_\_\_\_ y este email es para darle las gracias por esta grand oportunidad que now an dado de este entrenamiento que fue brindados a nosotras de una manera muy porfecional respeto y con mucho corazon los cuales nos fortalecieron y enriquecieron de conocimiento el cual me brinda la oportunidad de abogar de una manera eficaz y efectiva para poder darle a mis hihos una vida mas digna y yena de esperanza para su futuro y tambien ayudar a las familias de mi comunidad. Definitivamente no tengo palabras para expresar mi agradecimiento, y hojala en un futuro cercano n puedan brindar un nuevo entrenamiento como este de IDEA. que tengan un maravillosa day.

Atentamente (Hello Mrs. Blakmore and Hornberger, I am \_\_\_\_\_ and this email is to thank you for this great opportunity

you have given us by being trained in a way that was very professional respectful, and a lot of heart which we have strengthened and enriched with knowledge which gives me the opportunity to advocate in an effective way to give my children a more dignified life and hope for their future and also help the families of my community, I definitely do not have words to express My thanks, I hope in the near future, you can offer us a new training like this IDEA. Have a wonderful day.  
Sincerely,)



A photograph of a handwritten note on lined paper. The text is written in cursive and includes a date '11/18' in the top right corner, the recipient's name 'To Jose', the main message 'Thank-you for speaking to our community.', and the sign-off 'Sincerely,'.

(11/18 To Jose, Thank you for speaking to our community.  
Sincerely,)

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

Consumers and families contact OCRA because something has gone wrong for them. Maybe they are losing a government benefit, are being forced to move to a new more restrictive environment, or are facing another urgent situation. Therefore, OCRA staff should 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 measures its performance in this area by its consumer satisfaction survey; see Exhibit G, discussed more above. OCRA statistics shows that 89 percent of all callers to OCRA received a call back within two days during this review period. This is an increase from the same reporting period last year. OCRA has three bilingual ACRA's statewide to assist local

OCRA offices in returning calls timely. OCRA also has three “floating” CRAs, one of whom is bilingual, who help busier local offices handle cases after a client intake has been completed so that once the office has information about the issue, they handle it quickly. Staff also use electronic call logs to improve timeliness and client satisfaction.

**E. 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 December 31, 2018.

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 committee is currently accepting applications for new members.

The OCRA Advisory Committee provides valuable insight to the OCRA staff. A wide variety of topics are addressed at the meetings and members become better self-advocates because of having been on the committee. Minutes for the OCRA Advisory Committee meeting held on September 14, 2018, are included as Exhibit H. DDS staff is invited and encouraged to participate in the next meeting, which has not yet been scheduled at the time of writing this report.

**F. 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 each year. Disability Rights California’s contract with DDS mirrors this language. OCRA strongly believes in the importance of self-advocacy and requires at least one self-advocacy training by each of the 21 OCRA offices per year, far exceeding the two mandated trainings. Many offices provide more than

one training per year. During this 6-month review period, OCRA staff provided 25 self-advocacy presentations statewide, which is one more than the last semi-annual review period.

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 besides the DDS Consumer Safety materials and the living arrangement options materials developed by DDS. One of those seven is a self-advocacy training that OCRA developed last review period, and DDS approved, called "Moving into the Community." The Peer Advocate, who provides self-advocacy training to consumers in many different settings, will continue to develop new self-advocacy training ideas.

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 discussions with DDS's previous Contract Manager, it was decided 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 last year are in Exhibit I.

Here are some comments from self-advocacy training surveys.

### HANDS OFF MY MONEY TRAINING

3. Did you learn something from this training?

YES

NO

Comments: yes I like more Experience for me

(3. Did you learn something from this training?  
Comment: "Yes I like more experience for me.")

5. How did this training meet your needs?

By Guiding me  
on how to manage and carefull when it  
comes to your identification and or  
finances.

(5. How did this training meet your needs?

Comment: "By Guiding me on how to manage and carefull when it comes to your identification and or finances.")

5. How did this training meet your needs?

I learn A Lot from it. And I hope  
we can do it Again.

(5. How did this training meet your needs?

Comment: "I learn alot from it and I hope we can do it again.")

### VOTING TRAINING

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

Comments:

Learned about Voting right.

(3. Did you learn something from this training?

Comment: "Learned about voting rights.")

5. How did this training meet your needs?

It's the needs of Independence

(5. How did this training meet your needs?

Comment: "It's the needs of Independence.")

8. Other comments or suggestions:

This training was very helpful.  
cos, prior before now, I did not  
know the meaning of some of  
the words I heard today.  
We should do this more often before  
any elections.

(8. Other comments or suggestions:

Comment: "This is training was very helpful cos, prior before now, I didn't know the meaning of some of the words I heard today. We should do this more often before any elections.")

### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING

5. How did this training meet your needs?

reminded to get batteries, canned food w/ poptop,  
transister radio, external phone charger.

(5. How did this training meet your needs?

Comment: "Reminded to get batteries, canned food w/poptop, transister radio, external phone charger.")

### **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. However, the later law offers more consumer protections. OCRA handled one Title 17 Complaint filed during this review period, 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 procedure and submit a quarterly report to DDS by the last day of each January, April, July, and October. Instead, OCRA is including the reports concurrently with the contractually required Annual and Semi-Annual 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 and is available in all 11 threshold languages. Additionally, the grievance procedure is offered in all letters to consumers or others who contact OCRA, when an office declines to provide the requested service to that person.

During the 6-month review period, OCRA handled 4,928 matters. There were no grievances filed against OCRA during this review period. Attached as Exhibit L is the grievance chart showing no grievances filed.

#### **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. Neither Disability Rights California nor OCRA ever collect attorney's fees from consumers.

OCRA collected no attorney's fees during this review period, see Exhibit M.

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

OCRA has continued to provide exceptional service to people with developmental disabilities throughout the state. OCRA handled 4,928 cases for 3,619 different clients in a wide variety of legal problem areas. Additionally, OCRA provided 291 trainings to 9,582 consumers, family members, regional center staff and vendors, and interested community members - all while meeting each of its performance objectives. 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.