



OFFICE OF RESPONDENT  
PARENTS' COUNSEL  
Protecting the Fundamental Right to Parent

Non-Classified

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel

### STAFF ATTORNEY – CARRIE ANN LUCAS DISABILITY ADVOCACY DIRECTOR

Job Location: The Central office is located in Denver, Colorado, and State of Colorado employees must reside in Colorado. At this time, the position is primarily remote.

Salary Range: \$9,577 - \$13,264 per month

Release Date: July 18, 2022

Apply By: August 18, 2022, 5:00pm

Employment Type: Full Time

### **ABOUT THE ORPC**

The Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel (ORPC) is an independent agency within the State of Colorado Judicial Branch that is vested with the oversight and administration of legal representation for indigent parents in child welfare cases across Colorado.

Respondent Parents' Counsel (RPC) play a critical role in achieving the best outcomes for children in child welfare cases by protecting the legal and due process rights of parents, presenting balanced information to courts, and promoting the preservation of family relationships. To learn more, visit <https://www.coloradoorpc.org/>.

### **ABOUT THE CARRIE ANN LUCAS DISABILITY ADVOCACY DIRECTOR**

On February 24, 2019, Colorado and the nation lost one of the most effective and strongest advocates for parents with disabilities, Carrie Ann Lucas, when she died at the age of 47. Ms. Lucas was the Case Strategy Director for the ORPC at the time of her death. Her untimely death was a crushing loss for both the disabled community and the legal community. Ms. Lucas lived with a rare form of muscular dystrophy for three decades. Though Ms. Lucas had planned to go into ministry, she changed course and went to law school after struggling to adopt her niece out of foster care due to discrimination based on her own disability.

Ms. Lucas' advocacy was instrumental in amending Colorado's law to ensure that a parent's disability cannot be the sole reason for denial of custody, adoption, foster care, or guardianship of a child and to ensure that parents with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations to allow them to reunify with their children. As State



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Senator Julie Gonzales recognized when the legislature held a moment of silence in Ms. Lucas' honor, "Carrie Ann Lucas is a testament to doing everything that you can with what you've got."

Part of Ms. Lucas' immense impact was through her work at the ORPC, where she advocated for the rights of parents with disabilities. To honor Ms. Lucas' memory and to ensure that her important work continues after her passing, the ORPC has created the Carrie Ann Lucas Disability Advocacy Director position.

## **GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES**

ORPC Attorneys are required to work as a team to develop systemic policy initiatives and innovative approaches to the representation of respondent parents at both the trial and appellate levels of dependency cases. Attorneys perform a variety of duties including recruitment, hiring, and evaluation of respondent parent attorneys; litigation support and case consultation; development of attorney practice standards; coordination and execution of attorney trainings and resources; and a variety of administrative support functions for the ORPC.

## **ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS**

The Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel invites qualified applicants to apply for the position of Staff Attorney – Carrie Ann Lucas Disability Advocacy Director. The staff attorney:

- Works with the Deputy and Executive Director to maintain a list of qualified trial counsel available for appointment in dependency cases.
- Conducts research on permanency outcomes for children in the child welfare system with disabilities, access and barriers to services, and programs showing promise in permitting children to remain with parents with disabilities or reunifying with parents with disabilities.
- Provides individual case consults for attorneys who represent parents with disabilities and clients who are parenting children with disabilities.
- Creates and maintains a public Carrie Ann Lucas resource portal on the ORPC website, which will house resources available to parents with disabilities and those representing them.
- Develops and formalizes practice guidelines specific to trial and appellate representation for parents in dependency cases. Works collaboratively with the Executive Director, Deputy Director, ORPC staff attorneys, and RPC trial and appellate attorneys to develop and vet practice guidelines.
- Works collaboratively to develop and advance systemic trial advocacy issues.
- Monitors changes in case law, rules, regulations, and policies impacting respondent parent representation with special focus on the impacts to the disability community.
- Collaborates with the Training Director and Appellate Director to train lawyers statewide on litigation and advocacy strategy.



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- Attends committee meetings and collaborates with other child welfare stakeholders on matters impacting the ORPC's broader policy goals.
- Uses his or her judgment and analytical problem-solving and communications skills to identify potential solutions to legal and other problems.
- Helps the ORPC conduct an annual attorney application review and evaluation of ORPC contractors.
- Supports the other ORPC staff with projects and tasks.
- Occasional travel across the state of Colorado and some out of state travel may be required.
- Other duties as assigned.

## **DISTINGUISHING FACTORS**

Preference will be given to applicants with both private practice and government agency experience. The following are additional important qualifications: expertise in dependency law and case strategy, significant respondent parents' representation training and knowledge, expertise in the Americans with Disability Act, and a passion for the advocacy of parents with disabilities. This position reports directly to the ORPC Deputy Director.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

This job requires that the applicant be an attorney who is licensed to practice law in Colorado or who can be licensed within six months. Must have experience in family defense, child welfare law, disability advocacy, or a related defense field. Preference will be given to applicants who have a working knowledge of the Colorado Children's Code, Juvenile Rules of Procedure, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Must have excellent communication skills.

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each of the above essential functions satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the physical and environmental conditions required of the employee on the job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

### *Work Environment:*

This position is subject to many interruptions and may require handling multiple calls, inquiries, and job priorities at once. The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate.

### **EEO/AA/ADA EMPLOYER**

NOTICE! The Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel believes that equity, diversity, and inclusion drive our success, and we encourage candidates from all identities, backgrounds, and abilities to apply. The State of Colorado is an equal opportunity employer committed to building inclusive, innovative work environments with



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employees who reflect our communities and enthusiastically serve them. Therefore, in all aspects of the employment process, we provide employment opportunities to all qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, medical condition related to pregnancy, creed, ancestry, national origin, marital status, genetic information, or military status (with preference given to military veterans), or any other protected status in accordance with applicable law.

NOTICE! Each person employed must present identity and employment eligibility verification.

NOTICE! Employees hired after March 1, 1988, must be on the payroll direct deposit program.

NOTICE! The Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel is committed to the full inclusion of all qualified individuals. As part of this commitment, our agency will assist individuals who have a disability with any reasonable accommodation requests related to employment, including completing the application process, interviewing, completing any pre-employment testing, participating in the employee selection process, and/or to perform essential job functions where the requested accommodation does not impose an undue hardship. If you have a mental or physical impairment which limits one of your major life activities (e.g. walking, hearing, seeing, speaking, breathing, or learning) and require reasonable accommodation to ensure you have a positive experience applying, testing or interviewing for this position, it is your responsibility to notify the Office at least 3 working days before the interview or test date. If you need special accommodations at the work site, you must notify the Office as soon as possible so that such accommodations may be effected as quickly as possible.

NOTICE! All prospective employees of the Colorado Judicial Branch are subject to background investigation prior to hiring.

NOTICE! Employees will be required to attest to and verify that they are fully vaccinated for COVID-19. Upon hire, new employees will have three (3) business days to provide attestation to their status with proof of vaccination. Note: Fully vaccinated means two (2) weeks after a second dose in a two-dose series of the COVID-19 vaccine, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or two (2) weeks after the single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.

## HOW TO APPLY

Complete the online application at the link below. Please direct application questions to Jena Fleiner, ORPC Office Manager, at [admin@coloradoorpc.org](mailto:admin@coloradoorpc.org). Submit a cover letter detailing qualifications and experience for this position, a resume, and a list of three professional references by **5 p.m. on August 18, 2022**, by filling out the application at the following link:

[https://fs7.formsite.com/ORPCColorado/form32/form\\_login.html](https://fs7.formsite.com/ORPCColorado/form32/form_login.html)



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You may submit the required information through the online application only. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. Please note application materials will not be returned. Successful applicants will be contacted to schedule an interview. This position is eligible for benefits, including participation in retirement, health, dental, life/AD&D, and short-term disability plans and paid leave.

Faxed, mailed, or emailed applications will NOT Be Accepted. Be sure to follow the directions to apply.