

OFFICE OF RESPONDENT PARENTS' COUNSEL

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT



MELISSA MICHAELIS THOMPSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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I. Agency Overview

“There is no relationship more integral to a society than that of the family. And central to that institution is the relationship between parents and their children.” [People In Int. of T.W., 519 P.3d 1071, 1075 \(Colo. App. 2022\)](#). To protect those bonds in Colorado, the Office of Respondent Parents’ Counsel (ORPC) ensures the availability of high-quality legal representation for parents in dependency and neglect (D&N) cases. See [C.R.S. § 13-92-104\(1\)\(a\)\(I\)](#). In creating the ORPC through [C.R.S. § 13-92-101](#), the Colorado General Assembly declared that a Respondent Parents’ Counsel (RPC) “plays a critical role in helping achieve the best outcomes for children involved in dependency and neglect proceedings by providing effective legal representation for parents . . .”

A. Background

For more than a decade prior to the creation of the ORPC, the Colorado legal community recognized the serious inadequacy of parents’ representation in D&N cases, which included high caseloads, inadequate compensation, lack of resources and support, inadequate training, and lack of oversight. The following timeline provides an overview of the creation of the ORPC and its major accomplishments over the last two decades.

2005

Colorado Supreme Court creates Respondent Parents’ Counsel Task Force to make recommendations about parent representation in CO.

2007

National Center for State Courts, National Association of Counsel for Children, and National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges publish [Needs Assessment¹](#) for Respondent Parent representation in Colorado (“Needs Assessment”).

Spring
2014

Passage of [Senate Bill 14-203](#), which declared “it is in the best interests of the children and parents of the state of Colorado to have an independent office to oversee the Respondent Parents’ Counsel to improve the quality of legal representation for parents involved in dependency and neglect proceedings and who often do not have the financial means to afford legal representation.”

Sept. 30,
2014

Respondent Parents' Counsel Work Group issued their [final report](#) ("Final Report")² which concluded that an independent standalone agency would be the most cost efficient and effective structure to meet the agency's statutory mandate.

Apr. 24,
2015

[Senate Bill 15-1149](#) signed into law and established the ORPC.

Jan. 1,
2016

ORPC begins operations.

July 1,
2016

ORPC takes over responsibility from SCAO for all respondent parent appointments.

B. Statutory Mandate

The legislature agreed with these recommendations and established the ORPC as an independent agency within the judicial branch through [Senate Bill 15-1149](#). This enabling legislation, codified at C.R.S. § 13-92-104, charges and entrusts the ORPC with, at a minimum:



- Ensuring the provision and availability of high-quality legal representation for parents in dependency and neglect proceedings;
- Making recommendations for minimum practice standards.
- Establishing fair and realistic state rates by which to compensate RPC; and,
- Working cooperatively with the judicial districts to establish pilot programs.

Additionally, the ORPC Contract, Billing Policies and Procedures, and [Chief Justice Directive 16-02](#) (CJD 16-02) govern the appointment, practice standards, payment, and training of RPC.

C. Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan

Mission. The ORPC supports Colorado parents in the fight to preserve families, their dignity, and the constitutional right to parent in dependency and neglect cases. The ORPC recruits, trains, and supports high-quality attorneys and interdisciplinary legal professionals statewide. The ORPC advocates for family-centered policies and legislation, holds the state to its burden, and promotes equity and transparency in the system through data collection and analysis.

Vision. All families have access to zealous, client-centered legal advocacy grounded in justice and equity that addresses the root causes of family separation, leading to family reunification and stronger communities.

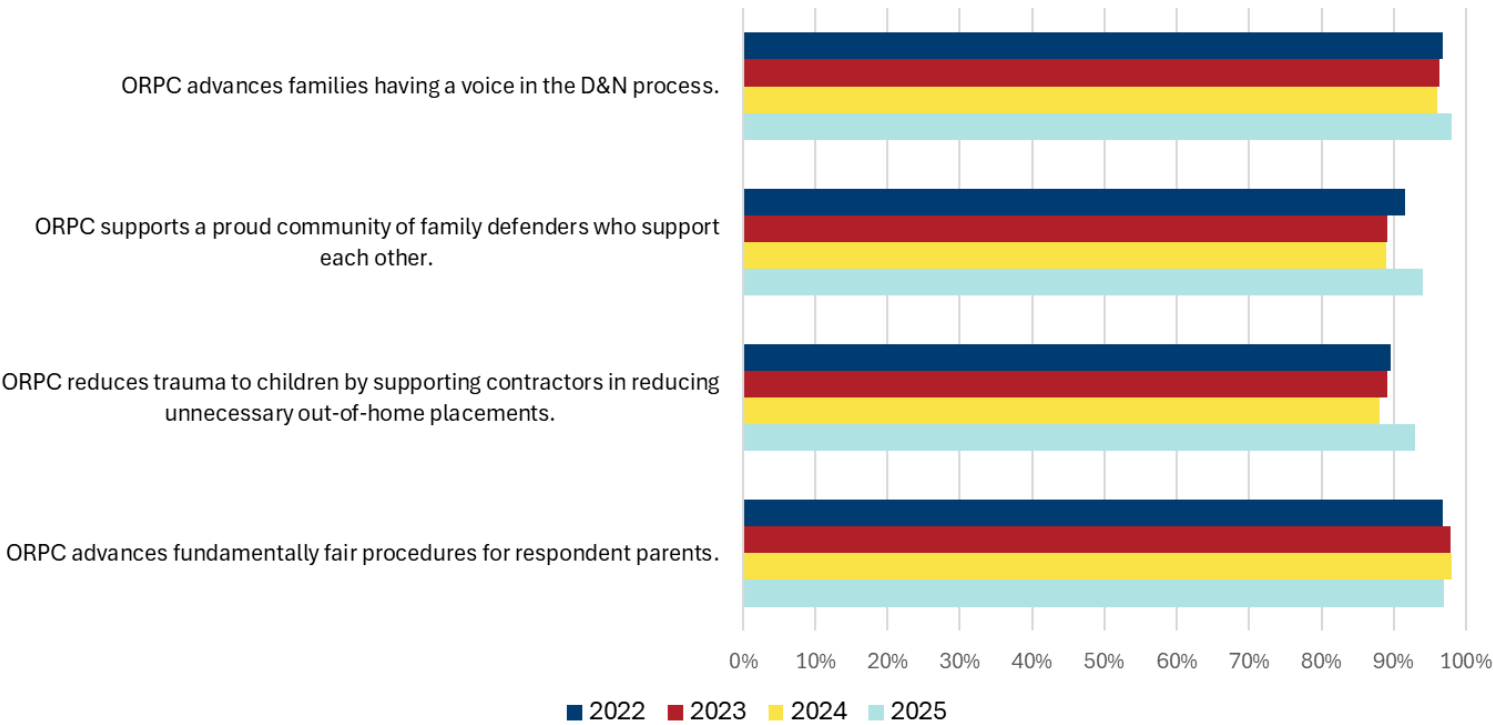
To achieve this ideal, the ORPC identified four essential pillars that inform its work. The agency recently revised the four pillars to better reflect the agency's current work and vision.

1. **Family Leading Change** - The ORPC prioritizes the leadership of families at the individual case level and in systemic efforts by ensuring that parents are actively involved, supported, and influential in every aspect of the family regulation system.
2. **Preventing Trauma and Supporting Resilience** – The ORPC confronts individual and generational trauma head-on, leveraging every tool available to advocate for families and communities and drive systemic change across oppressive systems.
3. **Supporting a Vibrant Family Defense Community** – The ORPC cultivates a strong, supportive family defense community dedicated to exceptional advocacy and team well-being through communication, compassion, and continuous growth.
4. **Transformative Justice** – The ORPC seeks transformative justice for families by advocating to dismantle the systemic causes of family separation and create conditions where families have their needs met and remain together.

To ensure progress in these and other areas, the ORPC administers an annual contractor survey to solicit essential feedback regarding the agency’s performance, the availability and value of resources, training needs, and the challenges to effective advocacy. In the 2025 Annual Contractor Survey, contractors answered questions about the ORPC’s previous four essential pillars. In that survey, 97% of contractors either strongly agreed or agreed that the ORPC advances fundamental procedural fairness for respondent parents, and 98% strongly agreed or agreed that the ORPC advances family voice in dependency and neglect cases.

2025 ORPC Annual Contractor Survey

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.
 % Strongly Agree and Agree



II. Major Functions

The ORPC enhances the provision of respondent parent representation across the State of Colorado. The agency does so by providing oversight of contractors appointed to represent indigent parents in dependency and neglect cases. The items below detail the major functions of the agency and its efforts

to meet ORPC legislative mandates and the needs Colorado's legal community and legislature have long identified for parent representation.

A. Ensuring Availability of High-Quality Representation

For the ORPC community to flourish, it is vital to retain those contractors who already provide strong advocacy for their clients. In creating a strong community of family defenders, it is equally important to recruit talented and dedicated RPC, Social Workers, and Parent Advocates to the practice to foster energy and creativity in the pursuit of the ORPC's mission. At the start of FY2025-26, the ORPC had 183 RPC, 45 Social Workers/Family Advocates, and 20 Parent Advocates under contract across the state. The contractors who take on this work and stick with it have an extraordinary passion for justice and for keeping families safely together. The ORPC strives to support these contractors through training, access to resources, and advocacy for increased compensation.

1. Recruitment

The ORPC was created in part to address the limited breadth and reach of the recruitment process for RPC. The Needs Assessment identified the following needs related to retention and recruitment of RPCs:



- Reducing turnover, recognizing that parents suffer from lack of continuity of counsel;
- Allowing RPC to specialize in this practice area;
- Increasing the number of RPC available;
- Engaging in varied recruitment strategies of both new and veteran attorneys to create a diverse pool of applicants, including those who speak multiple languages; and
- Creating intern and externship opportunities.

To further the ORPC’s statutory mandate to provide parents with high-quality legal representation and address the issues noted in the Needs Assessment, the agency created an objective attorney contracting process. Applications consist of written answers to critical thinking essay questions, a writing sample, references, and an interview. The written applications are scored by two staff members using a matrix to maximize objectivity and consistency in the review of applicants. Interview decisions are made based on the application, and interviews are conducted by two agency staff members.

To maintain sufficient qualified RPC across Colorado, the ORPC also engages in recruitment efforts throughout the year. Recruitment activities resulted in 62 applications completed and reviewed in FY2024-25, an increase of 34% over the prior year.

Performance Measure A: Evaluate and Recruit Attorney Contractors		FY2022-23	FY2023-24	FY2024-25	FY2025-26	FY2026-27
Number of Attorney Renewals and Verifications Reviewed	Actual	194	197	190	0*	TBD
Number of New Attorney Applicants	Actual	35	45	62	18*	TBD

** FY2025-26 includes data from July 1, 2025 - November 1, 2025. RPC renewals and verifications are due in March each year, but the ORPC reviews new applications throughout the year when there is a need for new attorneys in a particular jurisdiction.*

Despite these successes, recruitment of RPC in rural jurisdictions remains challenging due to the dearth of lawyers residing in the rural parts of Colorado. Notably, there are no RPC who reside in 33 of Colorado’s 64 counties. As a result, contractors who are willing and able must travel long distances to represent clients in at least half of the state, creating inefficiencies and limiting access to justice.

“ In smaller jurisdictions, there aren't enough ORPC contractors so there is an extra pressure to take cases that I don't have the time for. Some counties will appoint me to a case without reaching out first for conflict checks/availability. -RPC Contractor 2025 ”

In response, the ORPC continues to develop multiple pipelines from which to recruit attorneys who are likely to excel in parent representation, including:

- Cultivating networks through law schools;
- Engaging with specialty bar associations and other professional organizations;
- Connecting new applicants who are not yet qualified to work independently with firms looking for associates;
- Participating in local and national speaking engagements and trainings throughout the state and country;
- Attending public interest career fairs;
- Guest lecturing for master of social work classes, law school clinics, and other opportunities to discuss a family defense career path with students;
- Providing ongoing mentorship of law students from local law schools;
- Hosting externs at ORPC;
- Placing externs from local law schools with RPC, allowing them to gain RPC experience under the Student Practice Act;
- Meeting with judges to discuss potential practitioners for targeted outreach;
- Engaging attorneys practicing juvenile, family, or criminal law about adding RPC work to their practices; and
- Meeting with attorneys leaving public defense or prosecution offices to discuss opportunities as RPC contractors.

Participating in these opportunities helps the ORPC recruit professionals who might otherwise be unaware of the important work and career opportunities for family defenders.

2. Compensation and Billing

One of the primary reasons identified for the creation of the ORPC was to set adequate compensation levels to ensure high-quality representation. In the words of the 2007 Needs Assessment, the flat-fee compensation system “requires attorneys to accept a large number of appointments in order to sustain a practice in this area . . . discourag[ing] attorneys from entering and staying in this area of practice.” The Needs Assessment specifically recommended attorneys be compensated adequately to allow for lower caseloads and mandated “[a]ppropriate and competitive compensation must become a component of RPC representation.”

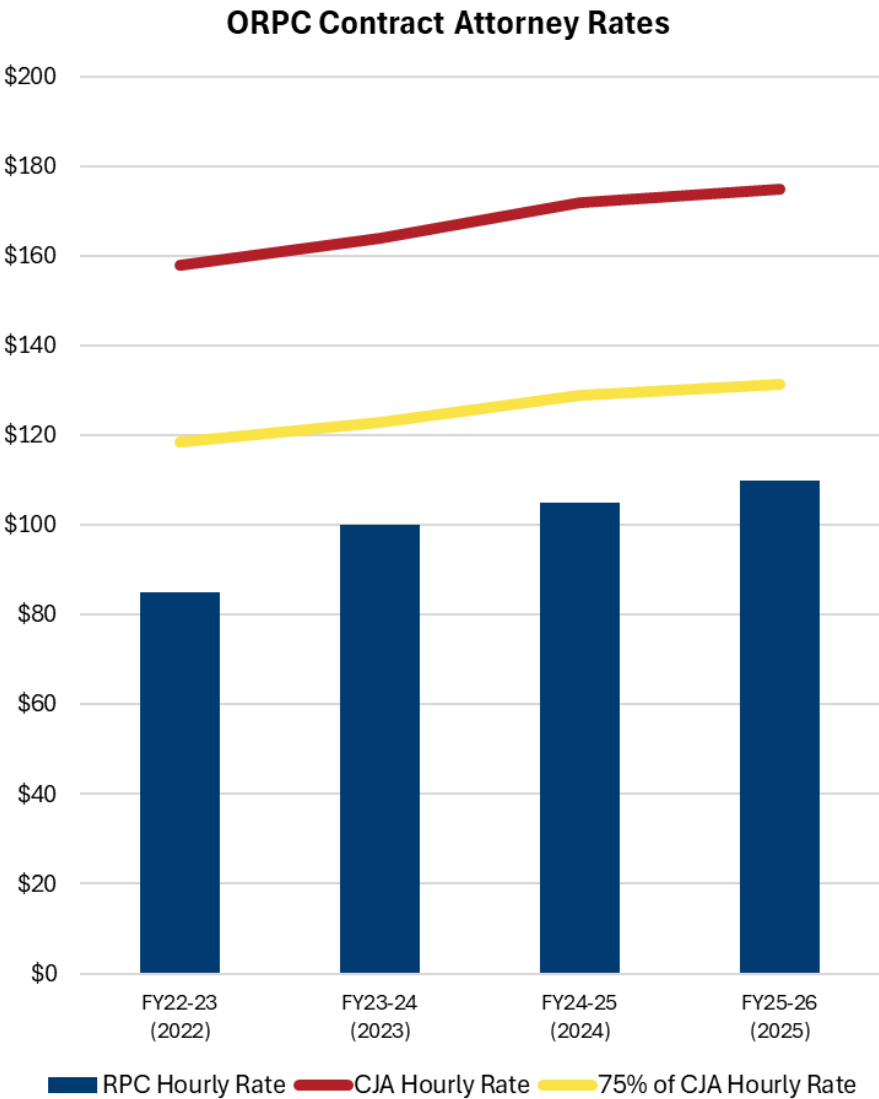
As a result, the ORPC is charged with establishing fair state rates of compensation sufficient to attract and retain highly qualified attorneys. Independent contractors are small business owners who cover all their own overhead, including but not limited to the items below.

Unfunded Costs: Solo Practitioner Overhead	
\$	Health and Dental Insurance
\$	Short and Long Term Disability Insurance
\$	Required Malpractice Insurance
\$	Student Loan Repayment
\$	Professional Memberships
\$	Office Supplies and Space
\$	Time Off (Sick Leave, Vacation, FMLI, & Unemployment)
\$	Worker's Comp Insurance for Employees
\$	Software Licenses
\$	Bookkeeping and Tax Support
\$	Website and Email Hosting
\$	Digital Data Storage
\$	Client File Storage and Destruction
\$	Transportation
\$	Computer, Cell Phone, & Technical Equipment
\$	Retirement Savings

Despite the shortcomings noted in the 2007 Needs assessment, prior to the establishment of the ORPC, many judicial districts paid RPC on a flat-fee basis. Under that system, RPC received \$1,125 when they were appointed to a case and an additional \$1,262 if a motion to terminate parental rights was filed. Within one year of the ORPC opening its doors, the agency secured funding to convert all flat-fee cases to hourly billing. This ensured RPC were being paid for the actual time they were spending and incentivized high-quality legal representation.

In FY2023-24, after several years of small or no increases in rates of pay for public interest attorneys and contractors, the ORPC successfully requested a \$15/hour increase in the hourly rate for attorneys and a commensurate 18% increase in the hourly rates of other contractors such as Social Workers and Parent Advocates. This increase also tied the RPC hourly rate to 75% of the Federal Criminal Justice Act rate (currently \$175 per hour). The RPC hourly rate will increase by five dollars a year until it reaches 75% of the Federal Criminal Justice Act rate. In large part, the agency attributes recent recruiting successes to JBC actions to make compensation for RPC and other attorneys representing indigent people more fair through [Senate Bill 23-227](#).

Performance Measure B: Realistic Rate of Pay		FY2022-23	FY2023-24	FY2024-25	FY2025-26	FY2026-27
ORPC average hourly attorney rate	Target	\$85	\$100	\$105	\$110	\$115
	Actual	\$85	\$100	\$105	\$110	TBD



In the agency's annual contractor survey, 90% of contractors were either somewhat or extremely satisfied with the planned hourly increases established by this important legislation. This increase more closely aligns hourly rates for ORPC contract attorneys with the rates paid to attorneys in other public sectors. It also partially addresses the loss of real earnings due to inflation and decreased the attrition rate of contract attorneys who left ORPC practice for more lucrative and stable areas of practice.

The ongoing structured rate increases also allow firms to better compensate associates and provide better benefit packages, helping them to compete with other public interest law practice options.

Contractors manage their own businesses, receive no employee benefits, and lack access to traditional support structures like supervisors, all while receiving compensation that is less than half of the market rate for attorneys with similar levels of experience. Because of that, maintaining fair compensation for contractors remains crucial to contractor retention.

3. Retention

With federal public service loan forgiveness currently under threat and law school funding options decimated by recent changes in federal law, the pipeline of new attorneys willing to work for lower pay providing indigent defense is expected to slow to a trickle, which is likely to impact the ORPC's ability to contract with sufficient attorneys to meet its mandate. This would harm the agency's ability to provide high-quality legal representation to parents. It could also further damage attorney retention by increasing caseloads and stress.

Retention of experienced and high-quality professionals is more important to the ORPC than ever. Onboarding activities for new contractors are costly to the agency and, more importantly, to parents who suffer real harm when they experience turnover in their legal representation. In recognition of the importance of retention of RPCs to parents, the ORPC is adding a performance measure this year to track the percentage of parents who maintain the same RPC throughout the case. While some turnover will always occur, the ORPC would eventually like to see 90% of parents retain the same RPC throughout their case.

Performance Measure C: Continuity of Representation		FY2022-23	FY2023-24	FY2024-25	FY2025-26	FY2026-27
Number of parent appointments with the same RPC throughout the case	Target	N/A**	N/A**	N/A**	N/A**	85%
	Actual	78%	83%	81%	77%*	TBD

**FY2025-26 includes data from July 1, 2025 - November 1, 2025. **Because this is a new performance measure established this year, targets were not included for prior year data.*

Every year, the ORPC surveys its contractors and asks about their years of experience as RPC. Starting in 2023, the ORPC has seen a marked increase in contractor retention and levels of experience. Specifically, over the last three years nearly three-quarters of RPC (72%) have responded that they have four or more years of experience as an RPC, with more than a quarter of respondents having at least 10 years of experience as an RPC.

Additionally, RPC are now able to specialize in this field, with nearly half of RPC surveyed this year reporting that RPC work makes up 75-100% of their practice. Creating opportunities for experienced attorneys to remain in this work and specialize in this field reduces costs for the agency, improves services for parents, and better serves families.

Another hurdle impacting frequent turnover in recent years was contractors leaving ORPC work for employment opportunities that made them eligible for public service loan forgiveness. The recent passage of [House Bill 24-1374](#) ensured independent contractors for the ORPC and other independent judicial agencies would be eligible for federal public service loan forgiveness, further enhancing recruitment of attorneys. The availability of federal public service loan forgiveness for contractors following the passage of House Bill 24-1374 also assists contractors in reducing their expenses so they can continue to work at a lower hourly rate than they could earn in the private sector. The ORPC's intensive contractor recruitment, pursuit of adequate compensation, and efforts at retention promote high-quality interdisciplinary legal representation.

B. Increasing Support for High-Quality Representation

Prior to 2016, RPC lacked uniform access to resources and the independence necessary to effectively represent parents across the state. The ORPC has efficiently addressed some of the primary barriers to high-quality legal representation for parents by providing access to the following resources: expert

witnesses, investigators, process servers, meaningful and timely discovery, consults and case support, and interdisciplinary models of representation.

1. Experts, Investigators, and Interpreters

One of the primary barriers to high-quality legal representation for parents prior to the existence of the ORPC was the lack of RPC access to expert witnesses and investigators. The Final Report of the Respondent Parents' Counsel Work Group noted that increased access to expert witnesses "leads to improved outcomes – shorter time in care for children and earlier, more effective treatment interventions for parents." The 2007 Needs Assessment found that only 4.5% of RPC used investigators at that time. Furthermore, many RPC did not subpoena necessary witnesses for contested hearings because they could not obtain money for process service.

Performance Measure D: Recruit and Maintain Experts and Investigators	FY2022-23	FY2023-24	FY2024-25	FY2025-26	FY2026-27
Number of parent appointments with at least one <u>expert</u>	281	268	188	64*	TBD
Number of parent appointments with at least one <u>investigator</u>	322	291	227	54*	TBD

**FY2025-26 includes data from July 1, 2025 - November 1, 2025.*

The agency works to ensure that high-quality experts and investigators are available throughout the state. The ORPC maintains a database of experts to assist RPC in evaluating cases and presenting evidence supportive of their client's position.

Additionally, RPC can request investigators to assist with numerous activities such as locating clients, interviewing witnesses, obtaining necessary records, and conducting family-finding searches for potential supports and/or placements. Investigators also help busy RPC conduct an independent investigation into the allegations made against a parent, locate potential witnesses, interview potential witnesses, and obtain needed documents to ensure RPC can effectively represent their client. With lower hourly rates than those of RPC, investigators lower case costs while saving valuable time for RPC to concentrate on reaching expeditious resolutions for clients.

Recently, the agency located and negotiated with several statewide process servers to reduce reliance on investigators for service of process and make payment for process servers easier to access for RPC. Process servers have also been a cost-saving mechanism because the process servers are often able to effectuate service for less than the cost of using an investigator to complete the same service.

Interpreters also greatly aid RPC throughout a case, including in trial preparation, obtaining client direction, and client communication. The agency offers certified and non-certified interpreters as well as access to the Telelanguage line for all contractors to allow efficient communication with clients with limited English proficiency.

Access to experts, investigators, interpreters, and process servers improves the quality of services offered to parents and the accuracy of court decisions, thus ensuring fairness for indigent families during the court process.

2. Discovery

Prior to the creation of the ORPC, many RPC were unable to obtain discovery. When they could obtain discovery, they waited months for reimbursement from the state according to the Needs Assessment. These long waits for reimbursement discouraged RPC from seeking discovery.

Now, RPC are required to engage in informal and formal discovery processes pursuant to the Practice Standards in CJD 16-02. Additionally, after more than five years of work by a Supreme Court committee on which the ORPC sat, the Colorado Supreme Court adopted a new set of juvenile rules. These rules include a newly adopted Rule 4.9, which sets timelines and procedures for obtaining child welfare records. This rule also allows RPC to efficiently access significant discovery tools that attorneys in criminal and civil cases have utilized for decades.

However, the new rule also potentially creates new costs for the agency. While the rule is a statewide mandate, each county department of human services sets its own pricing for the records it produces, and these costs vary widely. For example, one county charges \$1 per page of discovery for attorney review with an additional rate of 25 cents per page for copies and \$30 per hour for administrative time spent redacting the records, while another county charges \$42 per hour for time spent redacting

records. Depending on the length of time a case has been open, there can be thousands of pages of records, and discovery is considered a mandated cost the ORPC is required to pay.

3. Interdisciplinary Team Model of Representation

“*Having Parent Advocates and Social Workers on case[s] help foster that sense of community that helps sustain my ability to do the work...* -RPC Contractor 2025

Since its inception ten years ago, the ORPC has piloted and studied intervention programs to improve the quality of legal representation for parents in Colorado, including the interdisciplinary team (IDT) model. The ORPC’s IDT model of legal representation pairs an RPC with a Social Worker, a Family Advocate, or a Parent Advocate with lived experience (all three advocate types will be referred to collectively as “advocates.”)

Parents involved in dependency and neglect cases often face complex challenges – many have experienced foster care themselves, live with the impacts of trauma, and navigate systems that have not historically met their needs. The ORPC’s IDT model wraps holistic support around parents to promote justice, family stability, and reunification.

IDT teams work collaboratively to support clients by building a client-centered team, through communication, meetings, and coordination. While attorneys focus most on legal advocacy, advocates dedicate more time to direct client engagement and communication. This balanced structure ensures families receive both strong legal representation and meaningful support.

A 2019 [independent evaluation](#) conducted by Metropolitan State University confirmed the benefits of including social workers in this interdisciplinary legal team approach.³ Since 2020, the ORPC has partnered with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (Colorado Lab) to rigorously build evidence for the IDT model of parent representation. In 2022, the Colorado Lab completed a study of the ORPC’s IDT representation⁴ which has earned a “promising” evidence designation as defined by [House Bill 24-](#)

[1428](#) because there is causal evidence demonstrating its effectiveness and Colorado-specific data showing that it is advancing equity for complex cases.

Further research by the Colorado Lab in 2025 found that IDT teams serve cases with significantly higher social and legal complexities than attorney-only models. This means IDTs are reaching families most affected by systemic inequities and barriers to reunification. Additionally, the Colorado Lab research indicates that even while serving more complex cases, IDTs achieve comparable or better outcomes than cases where parents are represented only by an attorney:

- 84% of children of parents with IDT representation remain at home or are placed with kin during their case.
- 79% experience at least one kinship placement when removal occurs – this figure is 75% for attorney-only cases.
- At case closure, 71% of children with IDT-represented parents are reunified or living with kin, compared to 69% with attorney-only representation.

Performance Measure E tracks the ORPC’s implementation of evidence-based practices in dependency and neglect cases, showing that the agency has steadily increased availability of and access to advocates.

Performance Measure E: Support the Use of Evidence- Based Practices		FY2022-23	FY2023-24	FY2024-25	FY2025-26	FY2026-27
Percentage of parents with interdisciplinary representation (Social Worker, Family Advocate, or Parent Advocate)		32%	34%	37%	38%*	TBD
Number of Social Worker/Family Advocate/Parent Advocate contractors available for work on ORPC cases	Target	40	50	60	70	70**
	Actual	52	65	60	65***	TBD

* FY2025-26 include data from July 1, 2025 - November 1, 2025.

***The ORPC would like to increase the number of available social workers, family advocates, and parent advocates but is unable to do so at this time due to state budget constraints. ***Number represents the number of contractors available on July 1, 2025.*

“ Most of my cases have a Family Advocate or Social Worker. When they are effective in working on the legal team they bridge the gap between the legal process and the practical application of the court's orders. They are indispensable. -RPC Contractor 2025 ”

Advocates play a crucial role in helping parents tell their stories, navigate trauma, and access support. Their involvement builds trust, improves engagement, and enhances attorney satisfaction. This collaborative, trauma-informed model – endorsed by the [American Bar Association](#)⁵ and supported by the federal [Children's Bureau](#)⁶ – demonstrates that holistic, team-based advocacy is not merely effective but essential for advancing equity and justice in Colorado's child welfare system.

4. Training Program

The ORPC was created in part to provide specific training for RPC to improve access to high-quality representation. The 2007 Needs Assessment specifically identified the following needs in Colorado parent representation:

- Trial skills;
- Mentoring for new attorneys;
- Structured opportunities to serve as co-counsel;
- Online or web-based training curricula; and
- Multidisciplinary or cross disciplinary training that affords other system stakeholders an opportunity to learn about the roles and responsibilities of RPC

The ORPC supports its mission primarily through virtual training, supplemented by several in-person opportunities each year. Among the agency's annually held trainings are the New Attorney Boot Camp, Fall Conference, and the Carrie Ann Lucas Civil Rights Training, which are combined when possible, to reduce costs.

Most trainings are open to the agency's child welfare and judicial partners, and whenever possible, the ORPC also collaborates with other agencies to reduce costs and integrate multidisciplinary perspectives. In FY2024–25, one quarter of all trainings offered were multidisciplinary, developed in partnership with one or more other organizations.

In addition to these formal training opportunities, the ORPC also leads the Reunification Collaboration, a partnership among five key child welfare stakeholders dedicated to celebrating and supporting reunified families. The Reunification Collaboration plays a vital role in building community, fostering resilience among child welfare professionals, and advancing a statewide cultural shift toward family-centered, strength-based practice.

Historically, the ORPC also held periodic webinars, single day or partial day trainings, and workshops on rotating topics. In 2024, the ORPC began moving away from this approach, instead aiming to incorporate high-priority training needs into recurring annual trainings. This was primarily due to budgetary constraints and also reflected a desire to prioritize training quality over quantity. Because of this switch, the ORPC held fewer trainings and saw lower training attendance in FY2024-25.

The ORPC's training evaluation results for FY2024-25 showed high marks for the quality of trainings. On average, training attendees rated ORPC trainings as "Excellent" 64% of the time and "Good" 32% of the time. The feedback about the agency's training program in FY2024-25 was overwhelmingly positive.



2025 ORPC Contractor Survey

90% of contractors agreed that ORPC training opportunities are tailored to meet the specialized needs of ORPC contractors.

Below is a sample of recent feedback about the agency's trainings:

- *I cannot thank you enough for this training . . . This was the most informative training that I have taken regarding oppression, by far. It was great how you connected historical information with present day behaviors/laws/policies. Thank you!*

- *ORPC does the best job with their trainings. The best team ever!*
- *Inspiring and motivating.*
- *It was very informative and relevant to my practice, as are almost all of the ORPC trainings.*
- *Vitally important and useful information.*
- *Great experience! So many opportunities to connect with everyone while learning ways to advocate further and hopefully further support our families.*

In FY2024-25, the ORPC executed 21 trainings. Virtual platforms reach many more trainees and allow the agency to invite national trainers to speak more frequently without the need to travel. Yet the community building and collaboration that occurs at in-person events cannot be replicated virtually. As a result of this hybrid approach, the ORPC was able to train over 1,000 people last fiscal year at an average cost of just \$128 per person.

Performance Measure F: Provide High-Quality Trainings		FY2022-23	FY2023-24	FY2024-25	FY2025-26	FY2026-27
Trainings for attorneys, associates, Social Workers, Parent Advocates, and court personnel	Target	20	20	20	20	20
	Actual	39	23	21	9*	TBD
Total Number of Training Hours		146	124.8	105.5	32.25*	TBD
Total Number of Attendees**		1,696	1,348	1,072	581*	TBD

**Data provided for FY2025-26 includes data from July 1, 2025 - November 1, 2025. **The total number of training attendees is calculated by adding together the total number of attendees at each training. As such, a training attendee who attends multiple trainings in a year will be counted each time they attend an individual training.*

ORPC trainings are now much more accessible to contractors who live far from the Denver metro area. To ensure high-quality training content remains accessible, the ORPC also records most trainings and provides those videos to contractors free of charge. Nearly all ORPC trainings are offered free of charge and are open to the general public. In total, the ORPC has training videos from 69 prior trainings, as well as 39 prerecorded training videos, available for contractors to view at their convenience. This particularly benefits new RPC and rural RPC who may otherwise miss the trainings offered prior to their time as contractors or in locations far from their homes.



The ORPC offered 21 trainings in FY 2024-25 and has 108 on demand recorded trainings available on its website for contractors.

In FY2024-25, the ORPC held a traveling Legislative & Caselaw Update in Grand Junction. Multiple in-person rural trainings are planned for FY2025-26, including multidisciplinary Preventive Legal Services training in La Plata and Montezuma Counties. These measures meet the goals of building support and community for smaller jurisdictions.

Trial advocacy training has long been identified as a critical need by judicial officers. To provide the most effective trial advocacy training, the agency partners with the Office of Alternate Defense Counsel, which holds a highly rated annual trial advocacy program. In 2025, the ORPC's Training Director wrote the case problem which involved a crossover case where parents required both criminal defense and respondent parent counsel. This creative solution allowed both agencies to optimize trial advocacy training for its contractors. Seventy-eight RPC have participated in this program. Unfortunately, the budget realities of 2025 led to the ORPC only being able to support half the number of contractors that typically attend this training.

Beyond traditional training approaches, the ORPC offers diverse, hands-on, and creative opportunities for learning and growth that help professionals take their practice to the next level. The appointment of seasoned co-counsel on complex cases provides both mentorship and support, strengthening advocacy while mitigating burnout and turnover among practitioners. These opportunities for training, offered in many different formats and in accessible ways across the state, continue to effectively increase the quality of legal representation available for parents in Colorado.

5. Case Consults and Mentoring

The ORPC offers all contractors support to optimize time and resources for consistent, zealous, client-centered advocacy. Because most contractors practice in small firms or solo offices, they often rely heavily on agency support. The ORPC develops, implements, and manages the following resources to meet contractor needs:

- **Jurisdictional Liaisons:** The ORPC assigns a staff attorney and staff social worker liaison to each judicial district. Liaisons answer posts in the jurisdiction's listserv, provide consultations for cases filed within the jurisdiction, address jurisdiction-specific issues, create opportunities for connection, observe hearings to understand district-specific concerns, liaise with the jurisdictions' community partners, and generally support the community of contractors for their districts.
- **Family Defender Digest:** The agency circulates a biweekly email newsletter, entitled the *Family Defender Digest*. This newsletter includes caselaw summaries, contractor recognition, opportunities to be involved in child welfare reform efforts, and information about upcoming trainings and events.
- **Listserves:** The ORPC provides and maintains listservs statewide, as well as those specific to jurisdictions and practice areas. There are also established listservs for new RPC and managing attorneys to support their unique needs.
- **Roundtables:** ORPC staff attorneys schedule periodic roundtable discussions for judicial districts, appellate RPC, and managing RPC. Roundtable discussions examine challenges and brainstorm strategies to resolve systemic issues.
- **Westlaw:** The agency provides a subscription to the legal research database Westlaw to every RPC. The subscription includes Drafter's Edge, which allows RPC to save time while ensuring that their citations are accurate and up to date.
- **Motions Bank:** The ORPC maintains the Motions Bank, which is a repository of sample pleadings, memoranda analyzing common legal questions, and practice tool kits. The Motions Bank streamlines contractor research and writing time and currently contains over 300 files, with more added regularly.
- **Guided Reference in Dependency (GRID):** The agency collaborates with the Office of the Child's Representative to publish a comprehensive guide for legal professionals practicing in dependency and neglect, which is updated annually.
- **Legal Researchers:** The ORPC maintains a roster of qualified and experienced Legal Researchers to assist RPC with time-consuming, essential case-related tasks including legal

and social science research, drafting pleadings, discovery review, and evidentiary preparation for depositions and hearings.

- **Trial Case Consultations:** When contractors have more questions or need quick advice, they can efficiently book consultations with the ORPC staff through an automated scheduling system.
- **Appellate Consultation:** The ORPC offers RPCs appellate consultations with the Appellate Director, staff attorneys, and Appellate RPC to assist with preservation of the record and trial strategy.
- **Sustained Wellbeing Support:** Recognizing the detrimental impact of attorney burnout on clients and their families, the ORPC aids contractors dealing with professional or personal overwhelm by coordinating IDT or litigation support, temporarily removing RPC from appointment lists, or offering case transfer assistance to reduce caseloads.

Performance Measure G: Contractor Support		FY2022-23	FY2023-24	FY2024-25	FY2025-26	FY2026-27
Percentage of attorneys using case consultations	Target	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%
	Actual	82%	69%	75%	63%*	TBD

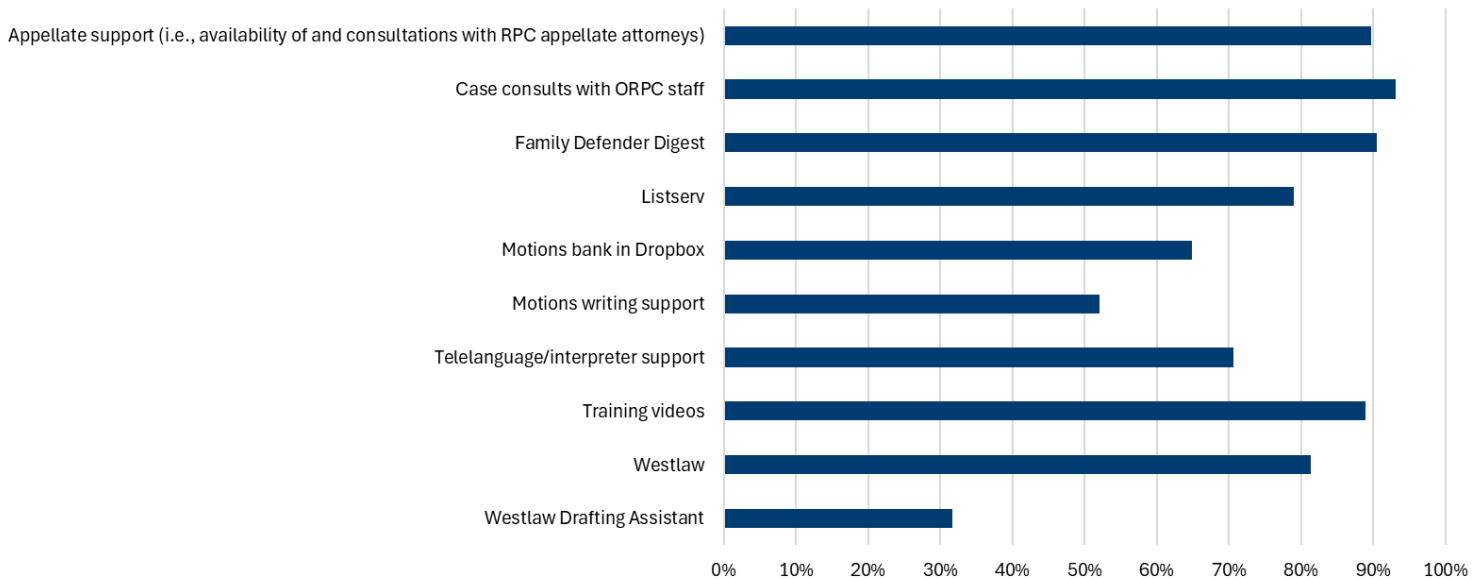
**Data provided for FY2025-26 includes data from July 1, 2025 - November 1, 2025.*

For the second year in a row, the percentage of contractors utilizing case consults has fallen below the agency's target. However, in just the first four months of this fiscal year, over half of contractors have already consulted with ORPC staff. When considering that the level of experience of RPC and the consistent assignment of RPC mentors for new RPC at the time of onboarding has continued to increase, it is understandable that the percentage of contractors using consults has declined. At the same time, the volume of consultations has remained steady with newer or less experienced RPC frequently using case consults with staff as a resource. The ORPC will consider whether the target should be adjusted.

The ORPC adjusts support and resources based on analysis of the agency's billing and data as well as contractor feedback. The agency solicits feedback from contractors on an as-needed basis and through the ORPC Annual Contractor Survey. The 2025 ORPC Annual Contractor Survey asked contractors to rate their level of satisfaction with the various resources made available by the ORPC.

2025 ORPC Annual Contractor Survey

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following resources offered by the ORPC.
% Very Satisfied or Satisfied



Based on the feedback in this year’s survey, contractors continue to express high levels of satisfaction with ORPC supports, including training videos, the Family Defender Digest, and case consultations with ORPC staff. In contrast, the agency is aware of the need to provide greater support with motions drafting and legal research. In response to survey results, the agency will offer a Motions Writing Training in 2026, increase the types and number of available motions in the Motions Bank, and prioritize increasing availability of Legal Researchers.

6. Appeals

As highlighted in the 2007 Needs Assessment, “[a]ttorneys should know and utilize legal resources and remedies available to their clients, including . . . appeals. That is because appellate review of dependency and neglect cases is essential to ensuring that children and families are protected, and the child welfare system is fair.

The ORPC’s appellate program is also critical to fulfilling the agency’s statutory mandate to provide high-quality counsel for indigent parents. After assuming oversight of RPC, the agency created an appellate contractor list, selecting appellate attorneys based on objective criteria to ensure high-quality

representation. The agency also implemented a policy preventing trial attorneys from handling their own appeals. This affords parents an independent and unbiased review of the trial proceedings.

To further ensure high-quality appellate representation, the ORPC developed an appellate-specific training program. This specialized training includes biannual Appellate Brief Writing training to acquaint new RPC with appellate attorney performance and practice standards. The ORPC requires appellate attorneys to complete the training within two years of signing their initial contract. In addition to training appellate counsel, the Appellate Brief Writing training allows trial RPC who are interested in doing appellate work to learn more about what the work entails and allows them to improve their motions practice at the trial level. Other trainings provided to appellate attorneys have included interlocutory appeals, issue spotting, framing appellate issues, and appellate roundtables to discuss current appellate trends.

In addition to ensuring high-quality representation, data collected by the agency indicate that the ORPC's appellate program has increased parents' access to justice over the last eight years. Correcting errors made at the trial court level protects parents' constitutional rights and encourages trial courts to treat these cases with due care and deliberation.

For the three full fiscal years reported below, approximately seven percent of cases submitted to the Court of Appeals were found to have a legal error so substantial that the Court of Appeals reversed the trial court decision. This figure does not include limited remands, which occur when the Court of Appeals sends a case back to the trial court for further proceedings on a discrete issue but still maintains jurisdiction over the appeal. If limited remands are included, reversal rates are even higher.

Performance Measure H: Appellate Quality		FY2022-23	FY2023-24	FY2024-25	FY2025-26	FY2026-27
Overall percentage of Court of Appeals reversals	Actual	7%	6%	9%	14%*	TBD

**FY2025-26 includes data from July 1, 2025 - November 1, 2025.*

And the critical task of advancing the law continues to be handled efficiently by the ORPC. Over the last three fiscal years, appeals accounted for only nine to twelve percent of the agency's attorney appointments. Additionally, in that same period, less than half the cases that ended in the termination

of a parent's rights were appealed, and a mere three percent of cases that ended in an allocation of parental responsibilities were appealed.

7. Pilot Programs

The ORPC's statutory mandate requires the agency to work cooperatively with judicial districts to establish pilot programs, and the agency recognized an opportunity to do so to improve early appointment of counsel. Early appointment of counsel is a priority for the ORPC, with the 2007 Needs Assessment opining that "[e]nsuring timely appointment of counsel on a statewide basis will not only ensure the rights of the parents are upheld at each stage of the process; it will facilitate timely adjudication of cases." The Assessment identified that appointment of RPC as soon as possible produces three substantial benefits: (1) court timeframes are expedited; (2) access to services is enhanced; and (3) parents are provided with a voice in court. The Assessment even concluded that parents who were appointed an RPC at their first appearance reached adjudication significantly faster than parents appointed counsel after the initial appearance.

In FY2021-22, the agency collaborated with the Jefferson County Department of Human Services and child welfare stakeholders to develop a pre-filing program to provide parents with legal representation during the initial child welfare assessment and to address unmet civil legal services needs. Early legal support [helps families stabilize without having to place children in foster care](#) or pursue a court-involved case.⁷

“*We do know that child welfare prevention programs prevent the bad outcomes associated with out-of-home placement. But they also have larger positive effects for families. They tend to have less mental health issues. They tend to have less medical issues. They can have higher educational achievement. And so really, we think this is where the money should be put.*

– Jennifer Mullenbach, Deputy County Attorney, Jefferson County

Nearly three-quarters of low-income families face civil legal challenges, but [few can access legal assistance](#).⁸ To combat this, from 2009-2016, the Detroit Center for Family Advocacy demonstrated

the power of the pre-filing program model, [preventing dependency petitions and foster care entry in 98% of cases](#) through assignment of teams of lawyers, social workers, and parent advocates.⁹ This inspired dozens of providers of parent representation across the country to include early advocacy in their programs.

Since 2024, the ORPC has accepted pre-filing referrals from all Colorado counties. The program remains flexible to meet the needs of the family and almost always includes an interdisciplinary team member. In a powerful example of the type of help the program can provide, the ORPC received a referral about a mother who was contacted by a caseworker but refused to let the caseworker inside her home. The ORPC quickly assigned an attorney and a parent advocate to work with the mother. The attorney provided information about the mother's rights and helped answer her questions about possible outcomes or next steps in the investigation. The parent advocate went to the mother's home for the caseworker's home visit, providing her support and reassurance during a scary experience for her. The county was able to determine that the mother's home was safe and did not need to take further action. Without the ORPC's interdisciplinary representation, the department would have had to pursue court action to enter the mother's home, which may have escalated to removal of her children, all in a case where the children were ultimately determined to be safe.

In addition to pre-filing, early intervention of a different sort has been the focus in Larimer County. Over the past year, advocates have attended initial emergency hearings with the RPC. These advocates provide immediate, on-the-ground support during traumatic and critical moments when parents are often overwhelmed and frightened. By being present at the earliest stage, advocates help parents understand the process, connect them with resources, and ensure their voices are heard in a trauma-informed way. Their presence also allows RPC to focus on legal strategy while knowing that their clients' emotional and practical needs are being addressed. Ultimately, this collaboration promotes more meaningful parent engagement, improves communication between all parties, and helps lay the groundwork for stronger, more family-centered outcomes from the very first court interaction.

Our data indicates that the number of attorneys being appointed prior to emergency or shelter hearings is rising. Adding an advocate to collaborate with the attorney and provide early support to the family can improve representation in many ways: establishing trust; improving information available to the

court and legal team; promoting collaboration with the department; and most importantly reducing trauma for families while improving their engagement in the process.

Advocates report they already see great benefits to this model and have experienced both large and small successes, such as:

- Securing kin placements during the emergency hearing, avoiding the trauma to children and parents of placement in foster care;
- Preventing removals by highlighting supports that are already in place; and
- Providing parents emotional support during a stressful and traumatic time.

Additional jurisdictions have expressed interest in providing this early intervention that includes advocates at emergency/shelter hearings. The ORPC continues to collect data to evaluate the efficacy and impact of this program as well as identify areas for improvement and hopes to expand this program. By investing in preventive legal services and advocacy, Colorado continues to reduce trauma to children caused by unnecessary and costly court intervention and family separation.

C. Oversight

1. Practice Standards

The 2007 Needs Assessment and 2014 Final Report both identified the strong need for RPC-specific practice standards. The activities and expectations of RPC are set forth fully in the Practice Standards created by the ORPC and adopted in Chief Justice Directive (CJD) 16-02 in 2021. The agency drew on guidance from the American Bar Association's national standards of practice for attorneys representing parents in dependency and neglect cases in addition to other states' practice guidelines for family defense attorneys. For non-attorney contractors, the ORPC developed similar practice standards through contract addendums in 2024. The major Practice Standards require RPC to, at a minimum:

- ✓ Maintain a manageable caseload;
- ✓ Appear at all hearings;
- ✓ Complete thorough hearing preparation prior to any contested hearing;
- ✓ Maintain ongoing client contact in a manner accessible for all clients;
- ✓ Take diligent steps to locate missing clients;

- ✓ Engage in regular communication with other professionals;
- ✓ File necessary motions, responses, or objections in a timely manner;
- ✓ Engage in informal and formal discovery;
- ✓ Attend staffings and family engagement meetings regularly unless an IDT member can attend;
- ✓ Conduct a thorough and independent investigation at every stage of the proceeding, using available resources such as social workers, investigators, and experts where appropriate;
- ✓ Identify, secure, prepare, and qualify expert witnesses when necessary to protect the client's rights and achieve the client's goals;
- ✓ Research resources to address ancillary legal issues which present a barrier to clients achieving their goals in the D&N;
- ✓ Participate in consultations with ORPC staff and appellate attorneys as needed;
- ✓ Be aware of updates to relevant law and social science research;
- ✓ Maintain accurate billing records; and
- ✓ Advise clients regarding their appellate rights and obtain appellate counsel where directed by the client.

The agency is currently updating the attorney practice standards to reflect updates in legislation, Rules of Juvenile Procedure, Rules of Professional Conduct, case law, and other guidance. The ORPC expects that the CJD will be updated to reflect these revisions in 2026.

2. Annual Contracting Cycle and Evaluation

The ORPC accepts RPC applications on a year-round basis through a rigorous application and interview process. Once selected for a contract, RPC are monitored and evaluated through surveys of judicial officers and court staff, billing and data reviews, verification applications, complaint tracking, and court observations. Contractors must annually verify eligibility, including compliance with training and insurance requirements, and undergo a full reapplication and interview approximately every five years.

As noted above, the ORPC seeks feedback annually from judicial officers and court staff regarding attorney performance. Also considered in the attorney evaluation process are complaints from parents and other stakeholders. Reviewing these complaints offers insight into the client's satisfaction with their

legal counsel and any repetitive performance issues. Complaints frequently identify areas of concern or confirm the agency's concerns that were identified through court observations or judicial feedback.

The 2007 Needs Assessment identified several areas of RPC practice that required significant improvement: (1) hearing preparation; (2) motions practice; and (3) communication with clients. First, the Needs Assessment recognized that "[p]roficient practice requires extensive preparation" and that attorneys must be given adequate time to prepare, including case analysis, predation of theory and theme, active participation at every stage of the proceeding, thorough investigation, and obtaining all necessary records. Second, the Needs Assessment determined that over two-thirds of all cases never had any motions filed in them, with the average being .5 motions filed per case and most motions not advancing substantive legal claims, such as return home or expansion of family time. Finally, and most pervasively, perhaps the biggest need identified was the need for consistent client contact. Shockingly, 96% of RPC respondents to the 2007 Needs Assessment reported they typically only met with clients immediately before or after hearings, in the courthouse. The ORPC practice standards address these concerns, and the ORPC also includes all these areas in its analysis and determination of contract renewals.

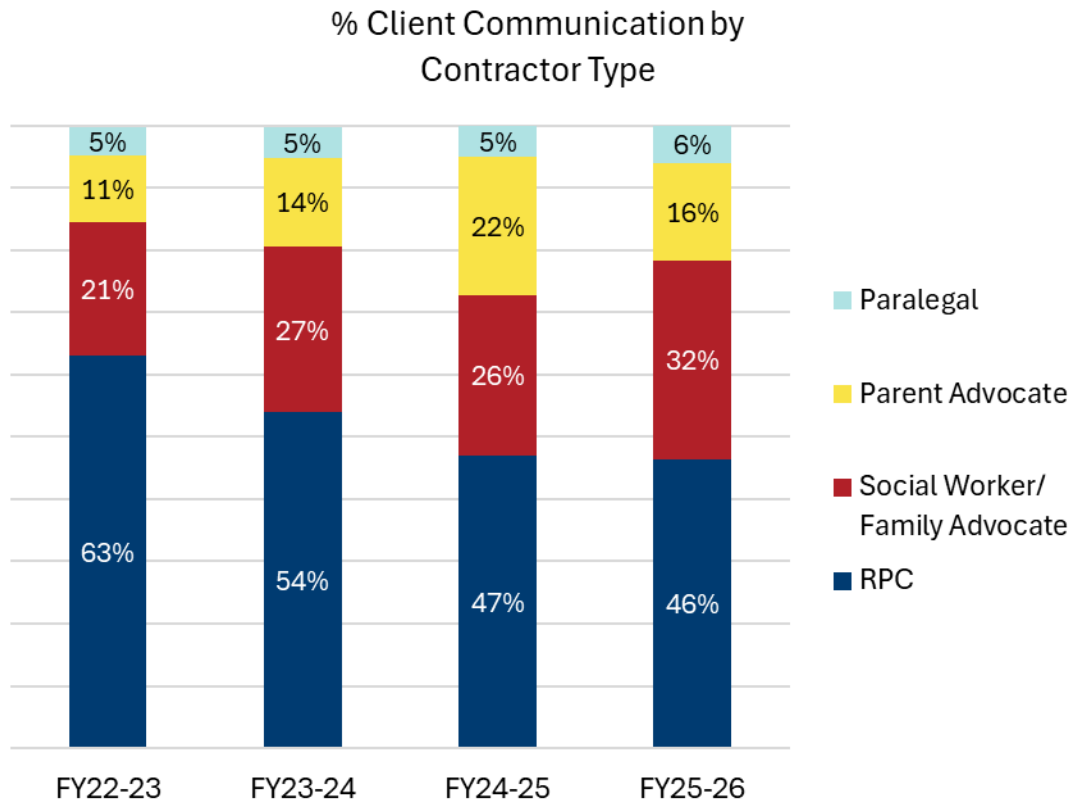
Over the last year, the ORPC implemented a new billing system, made necessary by the retirement of the developer of the agency's previous system. The new Respondent Parent Payment System (RPPS) expedites timely payments to contractors and enhances the agency's data collection activities. Requiring contractors to enter accurate client and outcome data as part of the billing process allows the agency to make improvements in its processes and better evaluate the services contractors provide.

Utilizing the Director of Research's skills, the agency extensively evaluates billing data for all contractors on a quarterly and annual basis. This data informs contract renewal decisions by providing information about how much time contractors spend communicating with their clients, whether attorneys are going to contested hearings and the amount of preparation for hearings, and whether they are filing motions and engaging in legal research. The agency can also determine whether RPC are engaging experts, investigators, Social Workers, and Parent Advocates on their teams.

On a quarterly basis, the Direct of Research evaluates the submitted billing from all contractor types for the prior quarter. This analysis provides data to the agency regarding the amount and types of billing occurring in all active cases. This allows the agency to outreach RPC whose caseloads may be too high and identify RPC who have not had client contact with certain clients for the quarter.

While specialization in RPC practice and eliminating flat fees have generally allowed RPC to reduce their caseloads, the lack of available counsel in rural areas continues to lead to caseloads that are too high in some areas of the state. The ORPC does not have a case cap but agrees with the 2007 Needs Assessment that RPC handling more than 100 cases in one year likely reduces the quality of their representation. Fortunately, the vast majority of RPC (between 86 and 88 percent over the last three fiscal years) are active in representing less than 100 parents in a year. For the RPC who represent more than 100 parents in a year, some utilize associates or support staff to efficiently manage large caseloads. However, the majority of RPC with high caseloads are in rural areas, particularly the southeast part of the state and the Western Slope. With the lack of lawyers residing in these areas and higher case filings in some areas, RPC practicing in rural areas can be stretched thin. The ORPC continues to evaluate how to better recruit and support RPC practicing in rural areas.

The agency's focus on client communication has successfully increased communication between RPC and their clients. From FY2022-23 to FY2024-25, average communication between RPC and their clients in each case rose by a full hour. The addition of interdisciplinary teams has further enhanced client communication. The chart below shows how advocates, who bill at a lower rate than RPC, as well as paralegals have taken on a greater share of communication with clients, all while increasing total time spent communicating with clients. Advocates often have life or professional experience that makes their communication with clients more effective than attorney communication, while improving efficiency and outcomes.



In recognition of the importance of achieving better outcomes for families, advancing a client’s position, and preserving important issues for appellate review, the ORPC continues to improve training and resources available to contractors, such as legal researchers and an expanded Motions Bank. These efforts are paying off, with the average hours billed for motions drafting continuing to increase year after year. For example, in FY2022-23, only 42% of cases had at least one motion filed, but in the last full fiscal year, almost half of all cases had at least one motion filed.

3. Court Observations

Court observations assist the agency in evaluating RPC for contracting decisions, needed supports, and tailored training to address needs for individual attorneys or whole jurisdictions. Additionally, information gained during the observations is used to evaluate the need to add or remove lawyers within jurisdictions.

The ORPC conducts court observations throughout the year. Agency staff travel throughout the state to witness court appearances in many types of hearings, both contested and uncontested. While the increased volume of virtual hearings creates additional opportunities for court observations, remote

hearings provide fewer opportunities for engaging directly with RPC. Additionally, virtual hearings can often be more difficult to follow. To combat these challenges, the ORPC continues to prioritize and conduct in-person court observations when possible.

In 2019, the ORPC adopted an objective court observation measurement tool tied to the agency's practice standards, the Colorado Rules of Professional Conduct, and legislative mandates. Both the tool and the guidelines for using the tool are updated on a regular basis. The agency aims to observe all renewing contractors at least once in the fiscal year their contract is up for renewal and at least four times during their contracting period. The ORPC makes exceptions to these goals for contractors who carry fewer than five contracted cases or who serve only in a supervisory role.

Performance Measure I: Conduct Court Observations		FY2022-23	FY2023-24	FY2024-25	FY2025-26	FY2026-27
Observations of renewing contractors	Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Actual	100%	94%	90%	21%*	TBD

**FY2025-26 includes data from July 1, 2025-November 1, 2025.*

In FY2024-25, the ORPC observed all renewing contractors at least twice, and 90% of all renewing contractors the number of times required by the agency's court observation policy. While the ORPC made extensive efforts to observe all renewing contractors, unexpected continuances and the distance of the court hearings from the agency's office did not allow completion of third or fourth observations for two contractors. The ORPC is on track to observe 100% of renewing contractors in FY2025-26.

The data collected during court observations creates follow-up opportunities to advise RPC when their performance falls below practice standards and to offer them resources to improve their performance. It also allows the ORPC to recognize contractors who are excelling in their advocacy and support of clients. The collected data also creates information for the training division to incorporate in planning future training curricula.



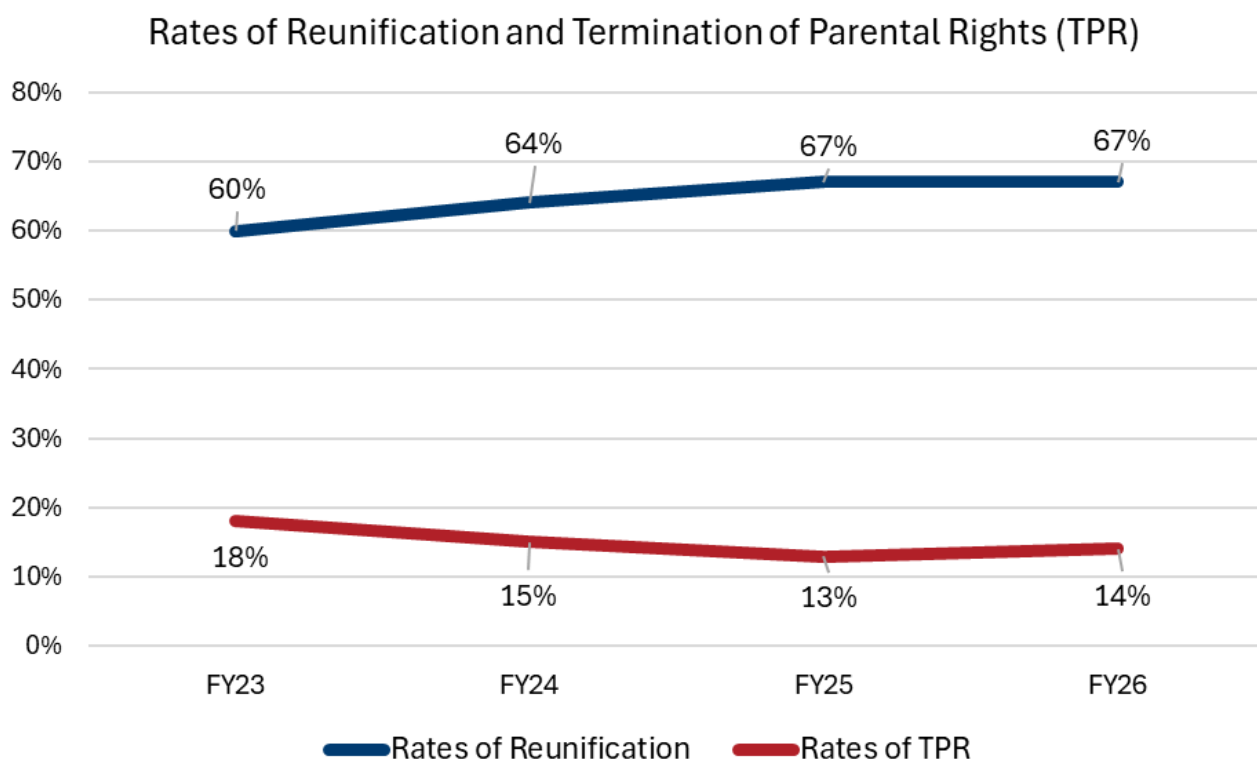
OVERSIGHT IN ACTION:

Since 2020, the ORPC has visited every judicial district, observing over **830** attorney appearances.

Court observations also mitigate overall legal error in courtrooms. If ORPC staff observe systemic problems in any jurisdiction, staff may follow up with judges and other appropriate agencies, such as the Colorado Judicial Department's Court Improvement Program, to discuss needs for training or additional resources. ORPC staff also support attorneys in each jurisdiction by providing relevant caselaw, research, and practice tips following observations to ensure parents have access to appropriate treatment plans, services, and resources as early as possible and throughout the case. As such, court observations are essential to the ORPC's ability to safeguard fair systems for families.

4. Outcomes

Since the creation of the ORPC a decade ago, parents and families in Colorado have benefited immensely from the provision of high-quality legal representation. From FY2018-2019 to FY2024-2025, the percentage of cases ending in termination of parental rights (TPR) decreased by almost one-third (32%). In that same time period the rate of reunification rose by 14%.



The ORPC has celebrated many major milestones in its decade of existence, including:

2017

All appointments transition from flat fee to hourly rates and the ORPC launches the Social Worker Pilot Program

2019

Passage of [Senate Bill 19-258](#) which allows the ORPC to draw down federal funds for representation of parents, bringing more federal dollars into the state to support high-quality legal representation for parents.

2020

Contract with first parent advocate

2021

Launch of Pre-filing representation program

2022

ORPC Specific Practice standards adopted by Colorado Supreme Court

2023

Passage of JBC initiated [SB 23-227](#) to provide automatic increases for attorney rates to improve recruitment and retention while maintaining adequate compensation rates for attorneys.

2024

Passage of [HB 24-1374](#) which permitted the ORPC to verify eligibility for federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness

2024

ORPC Receives Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition Game Changer Award

2026

Ten Year Anniversary of ORPC

By adhering to the ORPC's mission, vision, and values, the agency works to meet its legislative mandate to support parents in the fight to preserve their families, dignity, and constitutional right to

parent. Through its work, the ORPC seeks to address the root causes of family separation and to ensure that families facing child welfare system involvement can stay stronger together.

End Notes

¹ Colorado Court Improvement Program Respondent Parents' Counsel Task Force Statewide Needs Assessment: Final Report, March 2007; <https://www.ncjfcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Colorado-CIP-Respondent-Parents-Counsel-Task-Force-Statewide-Needs-Assessment.pdf>.

² Respondent Parents' Counsel Work Group: Final Report to the State Court Administrator, Sept. 30, 2014; https://www.coloradoorpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/RPC_Work_Group_Final_Report-1.pdf.

³ Lori Darnel and Dawn Matera Bassett, A Program Evaluation of the Colorado Office of Respondent Parents' Counsel Social Work Program, METRO. STATE UNIV. OF DENVER, DEP'T OF SOC. WORK (2019), <https://coloradoorpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ORPC-SWPP-Evaluation.pdf>.

⁴ https://coloradolab.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ORPC-IDT-Phase-I-Report_SF22_FINAL.pdf

⁵ American Bar Association, Standards of Practice for Attorneys Representing Parents in Abuse and Neglect Cases (2006), https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/child_law/aba-parent-rep-stds.pdf.

⁶ Foster Care Legal Representation, 88 Fed. Reg. 66769 (proposed September 28, 2023) (codified at 45 C.F.R. 1356), pages 66769-80.

⁷ CASEY FAMILY PROGRAMS, STRATEGY BRIEF: HOW CAN PRE-PETITION LEGAL REPRESENTATION HELP STRENGTHEN FAMILIES AND KEEP THEM TOGETHER? (Jan. 2020), https://www.casey.org/media/20.07-QFF-SFPpreventive-Legal-Support_fnl.pdf

⁸ LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION, THE JUSTICE GAP: THE UNMET CIVIL LEGAL NEEDS OF LOW-INCOME AMERICANS (2022), <https://justicegap.lsc.gov/the-report/>.

⁹ Vivek Sankaran, *Using Preventive Legal Advocacy to Keep Children from Entering Foster Care*, 3 WM MITCHELL L. REV. 40, 1036-47 (2014), <https://repository.law.umich.edu/facarticles/947/>.