



# Family Representation and Advocacy Commission

## APPROVED Minutes from October 27, 2025 Hybrid Meeting

Prepared October 28, 2025, and Revised December 5, 2025

### Members in Attendance

Chair Tim Flynn-O'brien, Retired Civil Rights and Tort Attorney  
Vice Chair John Davis, Retired Judge 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial District  
Beth Gillia, OFRA Executive Director  
Monica Corica, Civil Legal Services Attorney  
Elena Giacci, Trainer and Advocate  
Representative Pamelya Herndon, NM House of Representatives, District 28  
Bernie Lopez, Parent Advocate  
Senator Linda Lopez, NM State Senate, District 11  
Abbigale Martinez, Youth Member  
Mary Nienow, Director and Associate Professor School of Social Work, NMSU  
Alison Pauk, CIP Director, NM Administrative Office of the Courts

### Members Absent

Cristen Conley, Director, Corinne Wolfe Center for Child and Family Justice  
Joanna DeLaney, Youth Member  
Pamela Pierce, CEO Silver Bullet Productions

**I. Call to Order/Welcome.** Commission Chair Flynn-O'Brien called the meeting to order at 3:07pm.

**II. Announcements.** OFRA's newest staff were introduced: William Mutidjo (Project Manager), Miranda Gonzalez (Family Peer Support Navigator), Christine John (Behavioral Health Specialist), and Lina Beckford Duncan (Paralegal)

**III. Adoption of Agenda.** Senator Lopez moved, and Commissioner Pauk, seconded the motion to adopt the agenda without amendment. The agenda was adopted without objection.

**IV. Public Input.** No public input.

## V. Committee Reports

### a. **Executive Committee** met twice since the last meeting to discuss:

- Budget – increased case filings, especially due to the State’s CARA directive, require dedication of more funds for attorneys, making it impossible to open an office in Las Cruces this fiscal year. The Committee and the Commission expressed concern about not being able to extend interdisciplinary services to a second region of the state, especially in light of the successes of the interdisciplinary model already demonstrated in Albuquerque. Commissioners noted the need to increase communication between the Executive and Legislative Committees to effectively address challenges requiring budget/legislative solutions.
- Executive Director Search – the Committee committed to creating a job description in the next 60 days. They will share the draft job description with the entire Commission when it is ready.
  - Commissioners Corica, Pauk, Giacci, and Bernie Lopez volunteered to join the Search work group. Chair Flynn-O’Brien encouraged other Commissioners to email him if they are interested in serving as alternates

### b. **Budget Committee** met once to discuss the budget generally and the need to delay opening of the Las Cruces office.

- Discussed plan to reach legislators to show OFRA’s impact. Would like to meet with Legislative committee to work on a joint legislative/budget/communication strategy.
- Monthly meeting will be set/scheduled moving forward.

### c. **Commission Discussion of Committee Reports.** More work needs to be done to shore up OFRA’s funding, though this will be difficult in the current economic climate with the federal shutdown. More advocacy, communication, and relationship building with the Legislature is needed.

- Commission recommended reaching out to budget committees at legislature. Senator Lopez will ask the Chair of the Senate Finance Committee for a short meeting.
- Exec. Director Gillia reported on OFRA’s budget hearing before LFC, noting that LFC Director Saltee reported favorably on OFRA’s successful implementation and that data on our performance measures was well-received.
- Commissioner Corica will coordinate a joint meeting with Commissioners Linda Lopez, Giacci, and Flynn-O’Brien (Legislative, Budget, and Executive Committee members).
- Commissioner Linda Lopez sits on the Federal Funding Stabilization Committee. Given cuts to federal funding, she strongly recommends that we

communicate with leaders of the subcommittee that will be making recommendations to the LFC.

- Need for a communication campaign to educate legislators and public that:
  - OFRA provides client-focused and client-directed representation (and best interest representation for children under 14),
  - Distinguishes OFRA from CYFD, and
  - describes the monetary savings (return on investment) anticipated from OFRA's work.

**VI. Director's Report.** Director Gillia:

- a. reported on timeline for the FY25 Annual Report (distribution in December 2025);
- b. described efforts to procure a case management system and expectation that OFRA will seek funding for this purpose in the FY28 budget request;
- c. reported on FY26 budget and expenditures to date:
  - *Personnel* - \$5,671,300.00 budgeted; \$1,102,687.60 (19%) expended through 10/27/25
  - *Contracts* - \$7,919,500.00 budgeted; \$2,116,737.64 (27%) expended through end 9/30/25)
  - *All Other Costs* - \$1,140,700.00 budgeted; \$205,490.08 (18%) expended through 10/27/25
  - *Total* - \$14,731,500.00 budgeted and \$3,424,915.32 (23%) expended.
- d. Reported on the impact of continuously increasing case filings and the consequent need to adjust the current year budget to meet the increased cost of contract attorneys; and
- e. introduced Deputy Director Fong, who reported that we had excellent results in our first year of collecting and reporting on our three performance measures:
  - **1<sup>st</sup> measure (Output): Number of respondents who received services from a family peer support navigator. Target 120, Actual 132 (120 engaged in services)**  
In FY25 OFRA assigned an interdisciplinary services team, including a Family Peer Support Navigator and a Social Worker, to 132 clients. Of those, 120 clients actively engaged with their team. The whereabouts of the other 12 clients were unknown to the team despite their efforts to locate these clients. To our knowledge, these clients were also not engaged with CYFD or their case plan.
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> measure (Output): Percent of hearings where client and attorney spoke at least once prior to the day of the hearing. Target 75%, Actual 70% (for contract & staff attorneys combined)**  
Notably, we also found that OFRA's staff attorneys had an average contact rate of 84% over the reporting period. Considering the root causes of our data, we identified the following factors that may have limited the amount of pre-court contact attorneys had with their clients: caseloads for several contract attorneys remain above best practice standards; OFRA's expectations for contact with clients need clarification for contract attorneys; there were more clients whose whereabouts were unknown than originally thought or anticipated; and our data collection and quality assurance systems must be

modified to better understand current practices related to the timing, frequency, and type of contact attorneys have with clients.

- **3<sup>rd</sup> measure (outcome): Average reduction in time to permanence for children whose parent received interdisciplinary legal services compared to those whose parent did not receive these services. Target 7%, Actual 6.73%** (= children in Bernalillo County whose parent had IDS services spent 11 days fewer in foster care than children statewide whose parents did not have those services. When compared to other children in foster care in Bernalillo County only, the average time in care was reduced by 63.5%).

**VIII. Other Business.** None.

**IX. Adjournment of Meeting.** Commissioner Giacci moved to adjourn, and Commissioner Bernie Lopez seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 4:42pm.