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May 14, 2025

Jennifer Nash, Chair
Susan Mandiberg, Vice-Chair
Members of the Commission:

I am not able to join the commission meeting on May 21 for public comment so I offer the following about the comments at the last commission meeting that the reason OPDC cannot go to a workload model is because of the Legislature.

That is completely inaccurate and is a deflection of responsibility by the commission and the agency. The Legislature does not tell how OPDC is to spend its money except statutorily the agency is prohibited from paying contractors flat fees for cases. Beyond that restriction OPDC can pay contractors for their representation of people as OPDC sees fit provided it does so ethically and constitutionally.

Yes, the Legislature is not likely to give OPDC the money it requested to create the workload model OPDC proposed. That does not mean OPDC could not have created one within its current service level budget. Nor does it mean OPDC cannot after it knows what financial resources the Legislature is giving it create a workload model within those resources. What is created likely will not be what the "ideal" was if the Legislature had given OPDC the resources it requested for such a model but it can still be created and implemented.

To the extent that OPDC is saying, well we just could not implement a workload model because all that was available under the current service level was the current model just illustrates the lack of creativity and desire to create anything but the current illegal, unethical, and unconstitutional model. It could have been done and using it OPDC could have pointed out to the Legislature what is needed to create what the Legislature told them to create. Just saying we need more money is completely ineffective.

Yes, after the financial resources are known at the end of the legislative session a workload model may cost more than those resources permit, contractors may face receiving less money, or the agency may run out of money before June 30, 2027. That does not mean OPDC is forbidden to create a workload model. It continues to mean, however, that OPDC does not have the creativity and desire

to create such a model withing existing resources or to deal with the tough choices such a model will create. It continues to suggest that such a model is just window dressing and OPDC will continue to not implement one for as long as possible because, ultimately, the agency does not want to implement a workload model. It would rather use its current flat fee system, which it created using the resources it had under the case credit model, even though the Legislature has prohibited the current flat fee system, it is unethical, and it is unconstitutional. OPDC moved from a case credit model to the existing flat fee model within the resources it had for the case credit model. There is no reason, other than ultimately OPDC does not want to, that OPDC could not do the same and move to a workload model.

Saying the Legislature will not allow OPDC to pay using a workload model is wrong. The commission and the agency are the parties responsible for the continuation of the present illegal, unconstitutional, and unethical flat fee system. Start taking responsibility for your own inaction. Stop blaming others. The commission and the agency are responsible for this, not the Legislature.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Olcott Thompson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

OLCOTT THOMPSON

5/21/25

OPDC, Written Public Comment

I am pleased to share highlights from our most recent **PCRPP Case Manager Administrator Report** – demonstrating significant outcomes the program has delivered for some of Oregon’s most vulnerable families and youth.

Program Impact and Capacity

Since inception, PCRPP Case Managers have supported **over 2,800 clients**, with **500 active cases open across 10 jurisdictions**. Case Managers are **operating at full capacity**, and multiple counties are facing **waitlists due to lack of caseload capacity**. Client referrals continue to be increasingly complex.

This clearly demonstrates both the **urgent need for expanded capacity** and the **strong demand for PCRPP Case Manager support**.

Data Collection

In 2025, we began tracking **stabilization factors at case closure**. Case Managers as part of defense teams play **a critical role in connecting clients to pivotal services and supports**. Our holistic, client-centered approach helps ensure that parents, children and youth **receive the support needed to stabilize and thrive**.

The Path Forward

It is essential that our independently contracted case managers continue to receive **administrative support and fair compensation**. As OPDC develops its budget, it must prioritize these providers, who are foundational to the success of Oregon’s Parent Child Representation Program. Without adequate administrative structure and competitive pay **we risk losing these vital advocates to burnout and attrition** – jeopardizing support for families and youth who need it most.

As the Senior PCRPP Case Manager Administrator, I have seen firsthand the **profound impact that strong multidisciplinary teams have on the lives of clients**. I take great pride in the institutional knowledge I bring to this role, and it is my hope to continue training and supporting collaborative legal teams **that prioritize holistic representation and client-centered outcomes**. I look forward to continuing to share data, insights and updates with OPDC in future meetings. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or requests for additional information.

Dana Brandon, MSW

Senior PCRPP Case Manager Administrator (independent contractor)

PCRP CASE MANAGER ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

CASE MANAGER UTILIZATION

- Over 2,800 clients have been served by PCRP Case Managers to date.
- There are currently 500 open cases across all jurisdictions.
- Case Managers are operating at full capacity in every jurisdiction.
- Several counties have clients on waiting lists due to limited case manager capacity.

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS OVERVIEW

The majority of clients served fall under the parent category, with a breakdown as follows:

- **75%** are **Parents** including: 50% Mothers, 25% Fathers
- **15%** are **Children** involved in dependency cases
- **10%** are **Youth** involved in delinquency cases

DATA COLLECTION

Spotlight: Stabilization Outcomes for Clients with Closed Cases in 2025

The following data highlights the number of clients working with PCRP Case Managers who successfully accessed key stabilization resources upon case closure in 2025*:

- **48 clients** secured **Sustainable Housing**
- **47 clients** engaged in **Mental Health Treatment**
- **47 clients** secured **Public Benefits**
- **37 clients** engaged in **Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment**
- **30 clients** received **Education Support**
- **18 clients** obtained **Employment**
- **16 clients** utilized **Culturally Specific Services**

**116 case closures recorded for 2025*

Spotlight: Positive Client Case Outcomes since PCRP began

- **919 cases** resulted in **Family Reunification**
- **184 cases** concluded with clients **Stable and Ready to Work Independently**
- **123 cases** resulted in the establishment of **Guardianship**
- **95 delinquency cases** ended in **Successful Probation Completion**
- **20 pre-petition cases** were resolved **without formal filing and closed**

Dana Brandon, MSW
Senior PCRP Case Manager Administrator
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Shannon Getman
PCRP Case Manager Administrator
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MAY 2025

View results

Respondent

45

Anonymous

74:14

Time to complete

1. Full Name *

Kathleen Megill Strek

2. Organization/Entity Name *

KMS Juvenile Law, P.C.

3. Email *

Kathleen@kmsjuvenilelaw.com

4. Phone Number *

5418526158

5. Public Comments must be directly related to agenda items for this meeting. Please specify which agenda topic your comments will relate to below. *

Contract extensions

6. What type of public comment are you submitting? *

☒

Written

☐

Verbal - Virtually Via Zoom

7. Written Public Comment

If you'd like to submit attachments, please send them to info@opdc.state.or.us in addition to filling out this form

I am a full-time juvenile public defense attorney with a .95 FTE contract. I routinely work 10-hour days. I take a two-week vacation once every two years. My work day is divided between typical attorney tasks like legal research and writing and appearing in court, and accepting the emotional burden of working closely with human beings suffering from life-long deep trauma and experiencing the acute distress of family separation and the chronic distress of extreme poverty.

During a typical workday, I communicate directly with half a dozen clients regarding their progress in substance-abuse treatment and learn about the quality of their visits with their children. I listen to their achievements and complaints. I appear briefly at 8:30 am for a hearing, then spend a few hours reviewing the reams of the voluminous discovery I receive daily from ODHS. I may watch an hour or two of body cam video provided for the cases of teenagers I represent in delinquency cases. I'll speak with my legal assistant, and we will divide up the many pressing and never ending tasks that need to be done. I review drafts of pleadings, create notes for my client's files, organize trial preparation and talk with caseworkers and juvenile department counselors about their work with my clients. There will be some legal research to perform, and I'll spend some time thinking about the agenda needed for a client's upcoming family decision meeting. I'll monitor incoming email for urgent as well as non-urgent matters. I may hear that one of the parents I represent has been kicked out of their shelter and will be sleeping outside tonight. I may learn a teenager I represent is having a first psychotic episode and has been taken to the hospital. I may go to that hospital and listen as my young client tells me about their frightening hallucinations. We meet in a padded room without furnishings, only a stained mattress on the floor. Another teenager has violated their probation and is in detention. I go to detention and meet with my client in a tiny room while he cries because his parents don't want him anymore. He struggles to comprehend that no one has any place for him to go and he will stay in detention an unknown number of days. I visit the foster home of a six-year-old with a chromosomal abnormality who will be permanently disabled to make sure his needs are being met and learn what I can from the resource parent who is struggling to care for him so I can go to court prepared to advocate for this child's needs. I'll drive 2 to 3 hours in a day, sometimes more. I get home at 6:30 pm.

On top of this emotionally and physically grueling workload, I learn that the contract I work under, which pays my own and my legal assistant's salaries, as well as for health insurance, transportation, for my bar membership, continuing education, Tech Support, software and equipment, and malpractice coverage, books, paper, and supplies, all of which are becoming more expensive every month, is going to be extended. For the next 3 months, I will continue to be paid at an amount set in 2023. I do not know if I will be offered a new contract, what language it will contain, or what compensation will be included. I am certain the contract will be fairly short, perhaps another two years. I need to invest in office improvements, but I'm not sure that it's safe to do that at this point, because there is no contract on the table, and I am filled with uncertainties and doubt about whether I should continue to work in this role with nothing much to look forward to except a continuously brutal workload and not enough money to create financial security for myself or my staff. On top of all this, I work within a system where many parties seem to view myself and other public defense attorneys with hostility and contempt, and have no regard or appreciation for the many complex tasks of a public defense attorney or any understanding of the deep commitment we have to our roles as public defenders.

8. Additional Notes

I have been providing juvenile public defense services in Oregon since 2018. There is no mystery regarding why we don't have enough public defenders. There are not enough public defenders because we are significantly underpaid for the work that we do, overloaded with clients, insufficiently supported, and are forced to work on repeated cycles of short-term contracts with no certainty of renewal regardless of performance. Absent a vow of poverty, even the most highly motivated public defense attorney cannot sustain a public defense practice without adequate financial support and predictability of renewable contracts. Asking attorneys to continue to do this incredibly demanding work without adequate compensation and predictability of support will never result in the numbers of public defense attorneys needed to meet the demand.