

The Oklahoma Office of Family Representation

The Family Representation Advocacy Act, 10 O.S. § 801 et seq., established the Family Representation Advocacy Program within the Administrative Office of the Courts. AOC contracted with Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma to build the statewide office of parent and child representation, branded as the **Oklahoma Office of Family Representation**.

Gwendolyn Clegg
Director
Oklahoma Office of Family
Representation



Family Representation Advocacy Act & Program

The **PURPOSE** of the FRAP **shall be to ensure uniform and high quality legal representation** for children and indigent parents, in **deprived child actions**.

Oklahoma Statutes, Title 10 Section 801(C).



OFR is NEEDED to overcome these barriers.

Before OFR the barriers to effective representation were:

- high caseloads,
- lack of centralized oversight,
- lack of support services and practice resources,
- lack of practical and specific deprived practice training,
- lack of appellate practice,
- lack of performance oversight,
- lack of complaint process,
- inadequate attorney compensation,
- lack of practice standards,
- lack of dedicated attorney recruitment,
- attorney deserts in our rural areas
- rural vs. metro practice issues

****Parents and Children have an OK constitutional & statutory RIGHT to counsel in deprived cases!**



OFR solves **ALL** of these barriers!

The FRAP statute requires –

- (1) written Standards of Practice,
- (2) oversight of contractors,
- (3) support for contractors,
- (4) training for contractors,
- (5) an annual performance review of the contractors,
- (6) requirement of 6 hours of juvenile deprived relevant CLE each year for attorney contractors.

Oklahoma Statutes Title 10
Section 801

Training

OFR ensures all attorney contractors comply with the OK Standards of Practice for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in Deprived Proceedings. O.S. Title 10 § 801 (h).

OFR provides high-quality training:

- 188 CLE hours provided in SFY25
- 16 hours of Fundamentals Training for our Contract Attorneys
- 8+ hours of Fundamental Training for our Social Workers and Mentors
- OFR provides additional trainings i.e. Domestic Violence, Housing, Trauma Informed practice

Our trainings are on our website:

<http://www.oklahomafamilyrepresentation.org>



OFR contracts with Attorneys, Social Workers, and Mentors to provide effective and high-quality legal representation

* interdisciplinary teams

- OFR is implemented in 51 Counties = 66% of Oklahoma!
- Trial Attorneys = 133
- Appellate Attorneys = 16
- Master Social Workers = 7
- Mentors = 18 Mentors

OFR has eliminated the attorney deserts in the counties OFR has implemented!

What are interdisciplinary teams, and how do they work?



An Interdisciplinary Team = Attorney, a Social Worker and/or a Mentor working together to address the conditions that brought the children into custody.

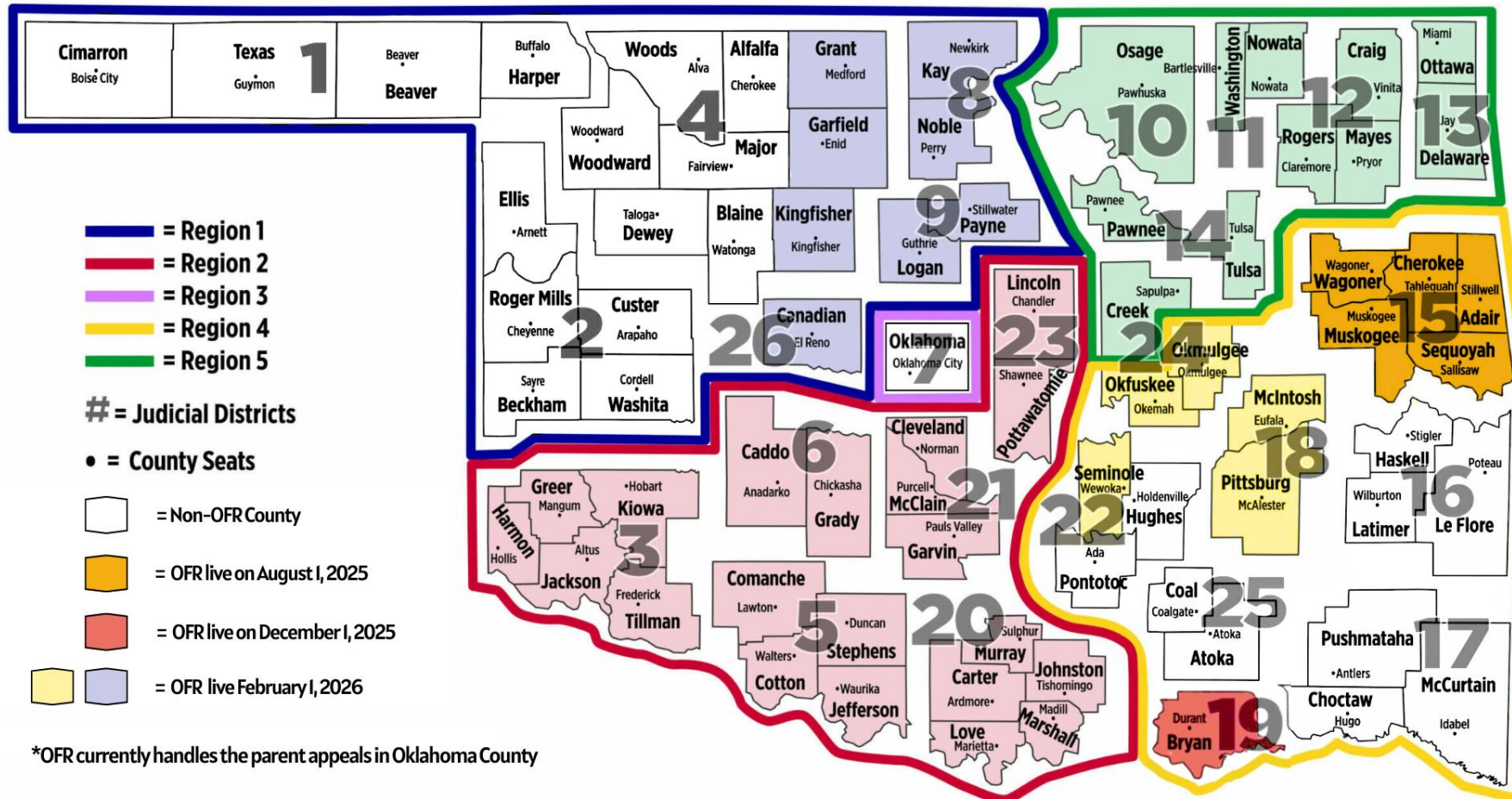
Interdisciplinary teams are assigned by OFR at the request of the contract attorney.

Teams work with clients, identifying a client's strengths and needs.

The Team uses **out-of-court advocacy** to (1) gather information, (2) increase communication, (3) advocate for the client in and out of court; and (4) the mentors are key to the engagement of clients.

From the information gathered the attorney is equipped to provide more information to the Court.

Counties where OFR is implemented



The Impact of OFR:

- Judge stated: “I can tell the cases in my court resolve quicker when the parent has an OFR IDT.”
- Judge requested OFR be implemented in his county as early as possible. He stated, “I just think we would really benefit from OFR.”
- Youth mentor stated she was so thankful that OFR existed and the possibilities OFR would give youth that were still in the system or would be aging out. She stated, “it gives me hope that what all that I went through (in foster care) can be used to help others.”
- A mother whose deprived case had been ongoing for over 2 years stated to her Mentor that she did not believe her attorney when he told her she would be getting help from an IDT, she thought it was just more words. Months later the mother told her Mentor that she would not be in Trial Reunification without the Mentor’s help. The Mother said, “I didn’t know or understand what DHS or the Court wanted from me and I felt it was hopeless, now I get it and we are going to be alright.”
- Mother stated to her IDT Social Worker: “My attorney really fought for me. This is the 1st time someone fought for me like that.”
- Two DHS District Directors from two different regions stated: “Cases resolve faster with OFR and more reunifications occur.”

Due Process In the Matter of X.W., 2026 OK 60 Full opinion

- "...the **court** has an independent statutory **duty** to "**make and keep**" **the legal record**--including the docket, findings, and orders--so that the basis for proceeding, the rulings made, and the safeguards afforded are reviewable." *Citations omitted.*
- "Where the alleged error is that **the court** **proceeded to termination without the required safeguards and without a record demonstrating them**, the absence of a record is not merely an appellate inconvenience; **it is** part of **the due process problem.**"
- "In any event, the uncertainty about which procedural path the trial court took does not control the outcome, because **due process was denied under any plausible characterization** of the April 29 proceeding."

QUESTIONS

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