

Office of the Independent Ombudsman
for State Supported
Living Centers



2017
Biannual Report
January through June



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Executive Summary

The Office of the Independent Ombudsman for State Supported Living Centers (OIO), established by the 81st Legislature, is required to issue a biannual report on the scope and activities of the Office. This report reflects our activity of that charge from January 1 – June 30, 2017. The legislation mandates that this report provide data and analysis in an aggregate and disaggregate format. The majority of this data can be found in the appendices of this report. Included in each section of the centers' profile are current demographics and a brief narrative summarizing the activities at each center during this reporting period. These summaries are the contribution of each of the Assistant Independent Ombudsman (AIO) who offices at their respective centers.

The primary responsibility of our Office is to "investigate, evaluate and secure the rights of the residents and clients of the state supported living centers and the ICF-IDD component of the Rio Grande State Center." Over the course of the seven years that our Office has been serving the residents and their families of the SSLCs, certain realities are apparent.

- Most evident is that **trust** in the integrity, confidentiality, impartiality and independence of our office can be significantly demonstrated. This is demonstrated by the fact that over one third of the concerns brought to our Office is from the staff members of the SSLCs.
- The **value** of ensuring a visible and constant presence of the AIOs at each campus and their capacity to initiate independent investigations is reflected in that almost one quarter of the concerns investigated by the Office are generated by the AIOs.
- Our presence on each campus provides the residents and their families easy **access** and familiarity with the Ombudsman which engenders a continuing relationship of trust.
- The relationships our Office has cultivated with the administration of each center and agency leadership signifies our role as a **resource** for change.

During the last legislative session, some aspects of our reports, which are accessible on the [OIO website](#), were referenced. I would urge that all of our reports be viewed in their entirety and as seen as indicators of the effectiveness of our presence at the centers over the life of our Office. The goal to ensure the quality of life and safety of the residents is foremost in our mission. As more residents transition to community settings the extension of these protections must be afforded to those living in that setting. I highlight these realities to encourage the leadership of our state to look to the success our Office when expanding protections to other vulnerable citizens of our state. We stand ready to share our insight and experience as those efforts are undertaken.

The success of any organization is not measured in statistics, charts, numbers or words in a report. The success of our endeavor is measured by the dedication of each member of the team. I am grateful to all of them for their faithful commitment to the people we serve. As changes occur in the structure of the agency, we pledge to continue to serve the residents at the most fundamental level, in their daily lives and in their homes. My gratitude to Ms. Candace Jennings, Deputy Independent Ombudsman and the entire staff of the office for their assistance in preparing this report. In addition, my thanks to Governor Abbott, his staff and the legislative leadership for their continued confidence and support. I would be remiss if I did not thank Mr. Jon Weizenbaum, retiring Commissioner of DADS, for his commitment to the success of our mission and his career of service to the citizens of our state. I am personally grateful for opportunity to serve.

Respectfully Submitted,



George P. Bithos D.D.S., Ph.D.
Independent Ombudsman for State Supported Living Center



Office of the Independent Ombudsman

Members of the OIO, back row left to right: Adam Parks (Mexia), Jerome Young (Denton), Marvin Stewart (Lufkin), Brenda Frausto (San Angelo), Phyllis Matthews (Austin), Isabel Ponce (El Paso). Second Row left to right: James Arnold (Rio Grande Center), Gevona Hicks (San Antonio), Carrie Martin (Central Office), George Bithos (Central Office), Candace Jennings (Central Office), Aletrice Jones (Central Office), Robin Seale-Gutierrez (Lubbock). Front row left to right: Kellen Davis (Corpus Christi), Jill Antilley (Abilene), Susan Aguilar (Brenham), Deatrice Potlow (Richmond). Not pictured: Sharon Nielsen (Central Office).

Background

The Office of the Independent Ombudsman for State Supported Living Centers was established for the purpose of investigating, evaluating, and securing the rights of residents and clients of state supported living centers and the ICF-IDD component of the Rio Grande State Center. Pursuant to the mandate of Senate Bill 643 of the 81st Legislative session, the Office is required to report biannually to the Governor and the legislative leadership.

The Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) provides specialized assessment, treatment, support, and medical services in state supported living centers and programs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The 12 state supported living centers (SSLCs) and the Rio Grande State Center (ICF/IDD Component) provide 24-hour residential services, comprehensive behavioral treatment services and health care services, including physician, nursing and dental services. Other services include skills training; occupational, physical and speech therapies; vocational programs and employment; and services to maintain connections between residents and their families/natural support systems.

Mission and Principles

The mission of the Office of the Independent Ombudsman (OIO) is to serve as an independent, impartial and confidential resource, assisting our clients, their families and the public with services and related complaints and issues, which deal with the state supported living centers (SSLCs). The Office serves by six principles as a foundation of practice.

Independence

The Office is impartial and independent in structure, function and appearance to the highest degree possible. The Office reports directly to the state's elected leaders in the executive and legislative branches. The employees of the Office do not act as agents of DADS or HHSC and do not hold positions within the agency that present a conflict of interest. The Office exercises sole discretion over whether or how to respond to a concern, except as directed by state law.

Flexibility

As the ombudsmen act according to standardized procedures, the Office exercises a flexible approach to meet the needs and requests for assistance in serving residents of state supported living centers.

Accessibility

The Office is accessible to residents, family members, staff members or other interested parties. An assistant ombudsman has an office at each facility and can be contacted via email, fax, telephone, mail or in person at each state supported living center. The Office maintains a toll-free number and a comprehensive web presence to continuously seek innovative avenues to increase awareness and approachability.

Confidentiality

The Office respects the confidentiality of the resident, family member(s), the SSLC staff or other involved party as well as associated records and documents. The Office is not required to notify DADS or the SSLC administration of communications made to the Office.

Integrity

The ombudsmen will maintain the highest level of professionalism in demeanor as evidenced by consistently displaying honesty, truthfulness, fairness and ethical behavior.

Credibility

The Office maintains a reputation that is credible among residents, family members, advocates, staff, the legislature and general public of the state.

Duties and Activity of the Office

The duties and powers of the Independent Ombudsman are mandated by Texas Health and Safety Code, Title 7, §555. This statute provides the Independent Ombudsman with the ability to hire an Assistant Independent Ombudsman (AIOs) at each SSLC. There is also an AIO at central office responsible for managing the required audit (referred to as Program Review), as well as training and filling in for AIOs at the SSLCs. The AIOs have the same duties and powers as outlined for the Independent Ombudsman. In addition to the Independent Ombudsman and Deputy Independent Ombudsman, there is administrative staff at central office to support operations.

The OIO continues its commitment to provide a service that is person-centered. All AIOs received training and coaching to utilize a Person-Centered Thinking (PCT) approach. Moreover, there are seven staff members, including the Independent Ombudsman, who are certified PCT trainers. PCT trainers assist the HHS Person Centered Practices initiative by facilitating training throughout the state when needed. The current Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services rules require person-centered practices to be provided to anyone receiving long term care services. Federal guidelines and state law direct this paradigm shift therefore the Office is committed to being a resource for the residents of the SSLCs, and in turn, people with intellectual and development disabilities (IDD).

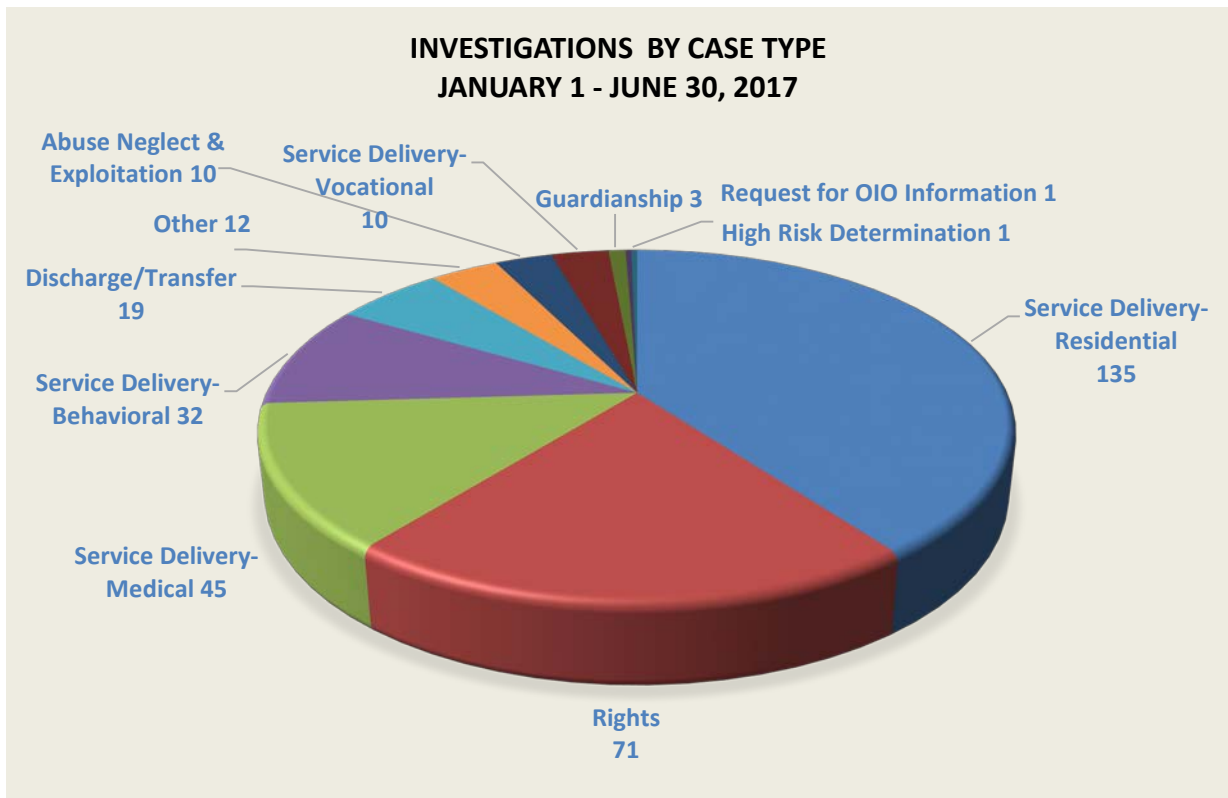
Being visible and engaged in the operations of the SSLC is the hallmark of the AIO's role. When a concern is identified, whether initiated by a complaint or by observation, the AIO records the contact and documents recommendations made to the center. The documentation and information shared with the AIO is confidential by statute. The data is utilized for trending and reporting. Over the six-month biannual period, the AIOs recorded a total of 510 contacts that came in the form of complaints (380), inquiries (43), and consults (87). Of these contacts, the majority were brought to the ombudsman's attention by staff members for a total of 213 contacts (42%). The ombudsmen initiated 95 investigations (19%). Residents contacted the ombudsman with a concern 84 times (16%). Family members and LARs made contact 76 times (15%).



Investigations

The AIOs follow standard investigative procedures for complaints and concerns in proportion to the circumstances presented. The extent of an investigation is determined by the AIO, which may include collecting evidence in various forms such as photos, video surveillance, interviews, inquiries, observations and documentation review. The findings are provided to the SSLC director or designee with recommendations to improve services and the lives of those living at the SSLCs. The AIO then monitors the facility's efforts to address the concerns noted.

AIOs investigated a total of 339 complaints in this biannual period. Most of the complaints received for investigation were regarding residential service delivery, with 135 complaints (40%). AIOs also investigated complaints regarding rights (21%), medical service delivery (13%), and behavioral support services (9%).



Referrals

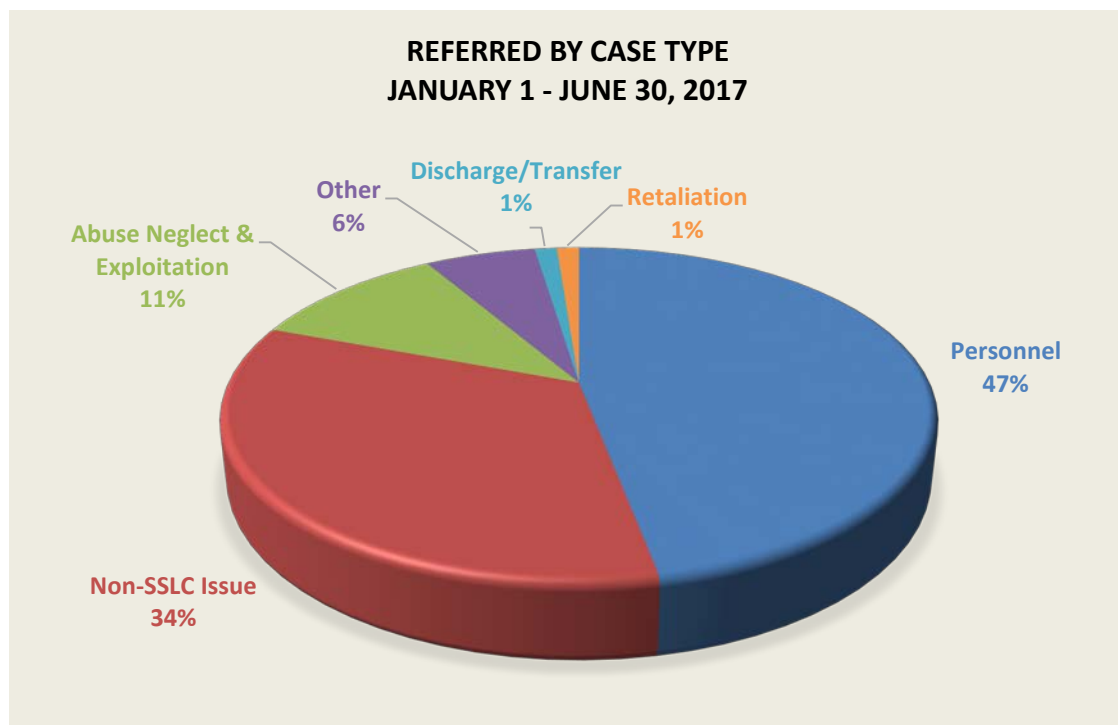
When contacted, the AIO determines whether efforts to resolve a concern are within the scope of the OIO duties or if a referral to another entity is appropriate. Employee matters are outside of the scope the Office, and all personnel matters are referred to Health and Human Services (HHS) Human Resources. The Office is also contacted frequently regarding issues not involving an SSLC.

When an AIO receives a complaint of abuse, neglect or exploitation (ANE), the AIO informs the complainant that this communication must be shared with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), and the AIO makes a report to DFPS immediately. The AIO will then communicate to the SSLC director or designee the basic nature of the ANE, name of the alleged victim, and the name and work location of the alleged perpetrator. The AIO reviews the final report of the investigation following the DFPS referral to ensure that the complaint was given due diligence.

Upon receiving a complaint that involves employee misconduct or a possible violation of licensing standards, the AIO takes steps to ensure the problem is addressed by treating it as a complaint and providing recommendations. Should the AIO find that the facility has not addressed the issue satisfactorily or that the potential for serious harm still exists, a referral to DADS Regulatory Division is made.

Upon receiving notification of criminal activity, the AIO notifies the Independent Ombudsman or Deputy Independent Ombudsman who then reports the activity to the Office of the Inspector General.

There have been a total of 83 referrals in this biannual period, including complaints, consults, and inquiries. The majority of concerns were brought forth by staff who made 38 of the contacts which were referred. Referrals that were outside the scope of duties of the AIO were personnel issues (39), inquiries not regarding residents of the SSLCs, such as long-term care (28) and concerns regarding, or initiating, an abuse and neglect investigation (9).



Incident Review

The statute that authorizes the Office to investigate complaints at SSLCs also defines the responsibility of reviewing incident investigations completed by the SSLC and other entities. An unusual incident is defined by DADS as “an event or situation that seriously threatens the health, safety or life of individuals.” There are eleven types of unusual incidents ranging from choking incidents to allegations of abuse to deaths. The AIO at each SSLC reviews all final reports of unusual incidents, abuse, neglect and exploitation allegations, criminal activity, and ICF Standard violations, including those investigated by the SSLC.

In order to evaluate the center's investigative process, the AIO reviews whether the investigation is complete, protections for residents are adequate, recommendations are addressed completely and within a reasonable timeframe, and that preventative measures are considered. The AIO also looks for any reoccurring theme or trend in incidents revealing a systemic issue and other concerns related to services, staff, training or rights.

If a concern is noted, the AIO provides a written explanation of the concern and any recommendations to the designated SSLC liaison. The AIO tracks recommendations from final reports and monitors the facility's efforts to implement them for an amount of time determined by the AIO.

The table below provides the number of unusual incidents reviewed by each AIO in this biannual reporting period.

**Incidents Reviewed by AIO
January 1 – June 30, 2017**

SSLC	January 2017	February 2017	March 2017	April 2017	May 2017	June 2017	Total	AIO Average
Abilene	0	5	9	12	14	11	51	9
Austin	13	9	8	14	11	11	66	11
Brenham	16	26	32	27	38	18	157	26
Corpus Christi	5	38	15	62	27	38	185	31
Denton	32	34	31	40	41	29	207	35
El Paso	6	17	13	30	12	6	84	14
Lubbock	27	18	24	31	32	21	153	26
Lufkin	39	19	27	32	32	22	171	29
Mexia	42	19	34	7	24	62	188	31
Richmond	11	10	5	6	5	8	45	8
Rio Grande	0	0	0*	1	0	3	4	1
San Angelo	60	10	42	31	23	25	191	32
San Antonio	23	26	49	27	16	54	195	33
Grand Total	274	231	289	320	275	308	1697	283
Monthly Average	21	18	24	25	21	24	131	

*Position was vacant

Advocacy

The ombudsman takes action upon determining if a resident, family member or LAR is in need of assistance, including advocating with an agency, provider or other person in the best interests of the resident or client and making appropriate referrals. This may entail attending Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) meetings, medical appointments or any special intervention determined by the circumstances. The ombudsman provides information about the rights of SSLC residents to all interested parties, including but not limited to, residents, staff, administration, medical personnel, community advocates and family members. The Office encourages residents to express their concerns about treatment and services received at the SSLC. The Office supports an environment that promotes self-advocacy and encourages communication between residents, family, facility staff and administration.

The ombudsman monitors activities in homes and meetings, such as planning meetings, incident management meetings, restraint reduction meetings, Human Rights Committee meetings or other instances in which relevant issues may be discussed. In addition to working on specific concerns, AIOs periodically attend IDT meetings to evaluate program service planning in general. In total, AIOs documented having attended 286 meetings in this reporting period.

In Senate Bill 643, legislation required that newly admitted residents under criminal commitment be evaluated to determine whether they pose a high risk of harm to others upon admission and then on annual basis, if deemed high risk. This high-risk determination process occurs at Mexia SSLC and San Angelo SSLC where all criminal court-committed residents are initially admitted.

A resident who has been designated as high risk results in a more restrictive living environment and has the right to appeal this decision. The AIO approaches each resident to offer advocacy and guidance throughout this appeal process. Our Office continues to work with DADS Legal and advocate groups to be a resource to the residents.

Program Review

The Office is legislatively mandated to conduct annual on-site audits, referred to as Program Reviews, to identify isolated incidents or systemic issues in the areas of:

- ratio of direct-care employees;
- adequacy of staff training;
- and ensuring that residents are encouraged to exercise their rights and are afforded due process.

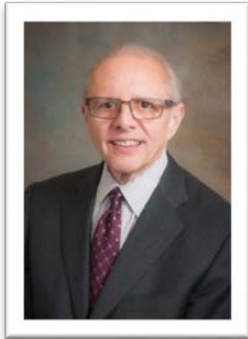
Each Program Review consists of conducting on-going monitoring and data collection throughout the year, in addition to an on-site review at each center annually. The data collected throughout the reporting period is then analyzed and presented in the Annual Report which identifies outcomes of the review by center, and aggregately, and includes recommendations derived from the information collected. Some of the recommendations outlined in the [2016 Annual Report](#) include, but are not limited to:

- Allocate funding for hiring additional direct care staff to address staffing shortages and promote more person-centered practices in providing support to residents at the centers.
- Develop and implement statewide on-the-job training standards to address consistency in training and outcomes.
- Centers make a concerted effort to include family, guardians, legally authorized representatives and actively involved persons in decision making that effects a resident's life and their freedom.

Findings and recommendations for the current 2016- 2017 reporting period will be reflected in the 2017 Annual Report and will be published and available on the [OIO website](#) in February 2018.

Central Office

George P. Bithos, D.D.S., Ph.D, Independent Ombudsman for State Supported Living Centers



Dr. George Bithos attended The University of Texas and graduated from Southern Methodist University with a Bachelor of Science in biology and anthropology. After practicing reconstructive dentistry for 28 years, Bithos retired to change the direction of his life. He read for a PhD in theology and history at the University of Durham in Great Britain. After earning his degrees, he worked in academia in Boston. In 2004, he returned to Texas to become the executive director of the Texas Conference of Churches. Bithos was appointed the independent ombudsman for SSLCs in February 2010 by Governor Perry.

Candace Jennings, MPA, Deputy Independent Ombudsman



Candace Jennings earned her undergraduate education in social work at Southwest Texas State University. While attending college in San Marcos, she began serving people with developmental disabilities as a direct-care specialist. She then gained professional experience in Bexar County as an investigator for child protective services and service coordinator and manager at the local authority. She most recently held the positions of rights protection officer and assistant ombudsman at the San Antonio State Supported Living Center. In 2008, she earned a Master of Public Administration degree at University of Texas at San Antonio. Jennings is also a recent graduate of the 2011 inaugural class of the HHSC Leadership Academy. As deputy independent ombudsman, she seeks to support the OIO by leading with compassion and integrity, expecting that the lives of SSLC residents will be positively impacted by the OIO.

Carrie Martin – Assistant Independent Ombudsman, Central Office



Carrie Martin has over 10 years of experience pursuing social justice issues and over five years of experience providing advocacy, direct care and services for adults, the aging and children with disabilities. She has a consistent record of advocating for underserved populations including: providing vocational training and employment services at a residential training facility, working with special education students, ensuring due process for indigent defendants, and performing administrative operations and internal auditing for a foster care/adoption agency. Mrs. Martin has specialized education and experience in data management, training and organization development, and program management. As the central office AIO,

Mrs. Martin serves as the program manager for Program Review and provides operational support for the office. Mrs. Martin completed graduate coursework in Organization Development at St. Edward's University, earned her Bachelor of Science in criminal justice from Texas State University. She accepted the position of Assistant Independent Ombudsman for central office in December 2014.

Sharon Nielsen, Executive Assistant to Dr. Bithos



Sharon Nielsen brings over 20 years of administrative and office management experience to the team, having worked for the federal government in Virginia and private industry in California. In 2002 she received a TWIN award (Tribute to Women and Industry) from the San Diego County YWCA for her business accomplishments and her volunteer work as a tutor of English as a second language. She joined the Office of the Independent Ombudsman in February 2011.

Aletrice Jones, MBA, Administrative Assistant



Aletrice Jones has over 15 years of administrative experience. Her previous employment includes working in public education servicing at-risk students as a data coordinator for Austin ISD, a records processor and office assistant for The Department of Special Education for Round Rock ISD, and most recently providing Executive Administrative Support for a nationally recognized rehabilitation hospital in Central Texas. Ms. Jones served in the office until January 31, 2017.

Abilene State Supported Living Center

The Abilene State Supported Living Center is one of the largest employers of Abilene, Texas and the surrounding cities. AbSSLC cares for people who require 24 hour nursing assistance and total staff care as well as people who are more independent and need less staff assistance, but require intensive behavioral support. The AbSSLC also is the home to several males under the age of 18. These young men attend different schools in the community. Some of the young men that were under 18, have turned 18 as of this reporting period and moved to different homes within campus. There have been a few admissions that were young men under 18.

	Abilene SSLC	Total SSLCs
Population	286	3026
Ages ≤21	4%	6%
Ages 22-54	50%	53%
Ages 55+	47%	41%
Level of ID: Mild	9%	17%
Moderate	16%	16%
Severe	16%	16%
Profound	57%	50%
Unspecified	0%	0.002%
Not Indicated	2%	0.004%
Health Status: Moderate	42%	36%
Severe	14%	9%
Alleged Offenders: At SSLC	0.0%	6.0%
Deemed High Risk	0.0%	0.5%
Community Transitions	2	60

Source: Demographics provided by DADS

There are currently five Units/Unit Directors and an Infirmary at AbSSLC. Each unit ranges from 4-7 homes. There are approximately 3-24 people living in each home. Usually, the homes with fewer people have more individuals who display significant behavioral issues. Each Unit has homes that serve people with various needs. One unit could include a home for people that require 24-hour nursing assistance as well as a home that serves minor males. The home for the males under 18 years old currently has three young men living in it. One young man will turn 18 shortly and move to another home. A young man will be admitted to the facility next month.

The Abilene State Supported Living Center has seven different Activity Centers across campus, its own Habilitation Department, a Dental Office, a desensitization dental office, a place where wheelchair modifications can be done, several workshops, an eatery called "The Diner," and its own laundry system that does laundry for Big Spring State Hospital as well as the Abilene, Lubbock, and San Angelo State Supported Living Centers.

DADS Regulatory entered several times throughout this six-month period for investigations

and its annual review. The facility was placed on an Immediate Jeopardy initially during the annual review due to hot water temperatures. The deficiencies were cleared once the facility rectified the safety issue.

The center continues to refer people to community-based living. The process has slowed to ensure that the living arrangement is the most appropriate for the person and support services are in place. There have been six people admitted to the facility and two people who transitioned to the community.

The Human Rights Officer (HRO) vacated her position in January. A new HRO, having previously served as a Social Worker for the center, was hired in March. A long time Unit Director also retired in June. There is a person filling in for the vacant Unit Director Position due to the hiring freeze. The Behavioral Health Director retired in March and that position has recently been filled with a tenured Behavioral Health Staff.

The Abilene State Supported Living Center opened the Lone Star Coffee and Tea House in June. This coffee shop will be open to the public as well as employees. People who live at the facility will be working alongside Vocational Services staff. The opening was announced in the local news and will allow the community to interact in a positive way with the people who live here.

Jill Antilley, Assistant Independent Ombudsman



Jill Antilley has worked for the Abilene State Supported Living Center for over 16 years. Her career began in the Recreation Department as a direct-care staff in 2000 while attending college at Hardin Simmons University (HSU). Ms. Antilley graduated from HSU in 2000 with a bachelor's degree in police administration and went to work for a juvenile correctional facility as a case manager and as a juvenile probation officer. Antilley returned to the Abilene SSLC in 2002 to serve as a qualified developmental disability professional and as the human rights officer, before accepting the position as the assistant independent ombudsman in 2010.

Austin State Supported Living Center

Austin SSLC (AuSSLC) supports people with varying degrees of intellectual disabilities, a number of whom also have physical disabilities. The center is comprised of four residential units. Residents of two of the units, one supporting males and one supporting females, require extensive nursing and personal care supports. Residents of these two units utilize wheelchairs for mobility to varying degrees, and many receive nutrition via enteral feeding. The third unit serves females and the fourth unit serves males, both providing a heightened level of

	Austin SSLC	Total SSLCs
Population	182	3026
Ages ≤21	0%	6%
Ages 22-54	31%	53%
Ages 55+	69%	41%
Level of ID: Mild	5%	17%
Moderate	12%	16%
Severe	22%	16%
Profound	62%	50%
Unspecified	0%	0.002%
Not Indicated	0%	0.004%
Health Status: Moderate	42%	36%
Severe	15%	9%
Alleged Offenders: At SSLC	0.5%	6.0%
Deemed High Risk	0.0%	0.5%
Community Transitions	0	60

Source: Demographics provided by DADS

specialized behavior supports. There is great diversity in the level of support needed to complete functional living skills among residents. The Center provides on-site Vocational and Day Programming opportunities. In addition, the facility oversees a workshop at the Austin State Hospital serving Austin SSLC residents as well as individuals residing in the community.

Significant staff turnover including management positions continues to challenge the on-going consideration of and prudent allocation of resources. Various Austin SSLC leadership staff including the Center Director provide periodic assistance to the Mexia SSLC.

The center is again accepting new residents based on availability in currently operating homes. An invitation to return to the center is first offered to people having moved during the previous downsizing initiative who are an appropriate match based on the characteristics of the home with availability.

The center hosted a Centennial Celebration on June 3, 2017 commemorating 100 years of service, honoring those who built and contribute to the Center and celebrating residents, staff, and the many accomplishments through the years. The theme, "Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future" was sponsored by the Tocker Foundation and the Friends of the Austin SSLC. Austin Mayor Steve Adler, with Austin City Councilwoman Alison Alter presenting,

proclaimed June 3 as Austin SSLC Day. An older cottage was transformed into The Tocker Foundation Historical Center and unveiled during the celebration. The historical center includes exhibits depicting Center history and accomplishments in addition to audio/visual information. The Center functions as a welcome center, a starting place for tours which will orient and educate visitors, and a meeting place for staff.

Phyllis Matthews, Assistant Independent Ombudsman



Phyllis Matthews has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from St. Edwards University and has many years of experience serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. As a contract oversight and performance manager for the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services Division for Early Childhood Intervention Services, she monitored contracted programs and provided technical assistance to programs that deliver services to children with developmental delays and disabilities. As a program specialist and later as a program compliance coordinator at the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS), she engaged in improvement efforts for state facilities serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities during the negotiations and finalization of the U.S. Department of Justice Settlement Agreement. She accepted the assistant independent ombudsman position in May 2012.

Brenham State Supported Living Center

The Brenham State Supported Living Center (BSSLC) provides services to individuals with intellectual disabilities that range from profound to mild. Many of these individuals require behavioral supports and some also require psychiatric services. BSSLC is made up of four residential units. Unit one serves individuals with medical and/or physical management needs, as well as older persons who have health conditions and physical management needs.

The second unit serves individuals who have physical management needs and/or require assistance with most activities of daily living. The third unit is comprised of three male homes, representing a wide range of ages and abilities and one cottage that serves males under age 18. The individuals that reside at unit three represent a wide range of ages; many are employed in some capacity although the majority of these individuals require some level of assistance with activities of daily living.

	Brenham SSLC	Total SSLCs
Population	266	3026
Ages ≤21	12%	6%
Ages 22-54	59%	53%
Ages 55+	29%	41%
Level of ID: Mild	7%	17%
Moderate	23%	16%
Severe	15%	16%
Profound	55%	50%
Unspecified	0%	0.002%
Not Indicated	0%	0.004%
Health Status: Moderate	29%	36%
Severe	8%	9%
Alleged Offenders: At SSLC	0.0%	6.0%
Deemed High Risk	0.0%	0.5%
Community Transitions	0	60

Source: Demographics provided by DADS

During this report period the center realigned two units in order to make a fourth unit which comprises 6 cottages. One cottage serves females under age 18, with two cottages serving adult females and the remaining cottages serving adult males. The majority of these adults work in some capacity with most requiring some level of assistance with activities of daily living.

The center provides a variety of on- and off-campus work opportunities for adults, as well as a variety of day programming activities. One individual is competitively employed and three others are working in supported employment in the local community. Some residents earn money by working on craft items in the Art Center that are sold on campus and in the community. School-aged residents attend local schools.

Numerous changes have occurred in BSSLC leadership this reporting period, including hiring a

Director of Behavioral Health Services. The Assistant Director of Administration, Director of Competency, Training and Development, Quality Assurance Director and Settlement Agreement Coordinator positions were filled by internal staff.

IDT members underwent training on root cause analysis in order to better evaluate and proactively prevent negative outcomes such as unusual incidents, falls, recurring health issues and behavioral incidents.

Construction on the Adaptive Sports Complex is progressing with completion of the front entrance and a portion of the parking lot. This field will be utilized by residents as well as the community for baseball, soccer and football. Volunteer Services Council has been successful in raising additional funds to be used towards the completion of the complex.

Repairs to the plumbing/water system to re-mediate the lead issue was completed and the center was given clearance to resume use of tap water in all locations for activities of daily living.

The center held its semi-annual Provider Fair with increased attendance by residents and staff, who had the opportunity to visit with and view information from a variety of providers. Families and guardians were invited but were not noted to be in attendance.

After attending ISPAs for one high profile resident with challenging behaviors, the AIO recommended that the administration meet with core IDT members so that they could voice their concerns relating to serving this resident. The frustration level was impacting the IDT's ability to function in a cohesive and productive manner. The administration listened to the concerns and provided guidance to the IDT. Team members later expressed appreciation to the AIO and said the recommendation and meeting was helpful.

AIO recommended that services of official sign interpreters be expanded to include more hours of service each week and that IDT/designees also explore technology and sign interpretation apps for the hearing impaired. IDT members are exploring options with guidance from administration.

A consultation with the AIO was requested from IDT members of the home that serves adolescents and the AIO recommended that IDTs be mindful not to impose blanket restrictions or rules as opposed to considering the abilities and supervision needs of each person. This came about as leadership sought to ensure that minors were protected since the majority of residents at the center are adults.

Other concerns expressed at Unusual Incident Review Committee meetings led to recommendations that staff involved in two separate unconfirmed neglect cases review video surveillance with their supervisors in order to learn from their actions and have supervisors determine retraining needs and/or disciplinary actions.

Susan Aguilar, Assistant Independent Ombudsman



Susan Aguilar earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Texas Lutheran University. She worked in the field of early childhood intervention prior to obtaining the position of Qualified Developmentally Disabled Professional at the Brenham State Supported Living Center. While at the Center, Aguilar has also served as program facilitator, person-directed planning coordinator, level of need coordinator and interim rights protection officer. She has held the position of Assistant Independent Ombudsman since 2010.

Corpus Christi State Supported Living Center

The Corpus Christi State Supported Living Center (CCSSLC) serves residents who have a range of profound to mild cognitive disabilities. There are three specialized units: one supports residents that are medically fragile with profound IDD; another provides services for residents with severe and profound IDD and some medical needs; the third unit supports residents with mild to moderate IDD with co-occurring mental illness or behavioral needs.

CCSSLC residents have access to a variety of classes, active treatment sites, various employment opportunities, an on campus computer lab, gymnasium and swimming pool, among other supports to promote independence and growth. The individuals who live at CCSSLC are active in Special Olympics and Miracle League sports. Many are employed during the week and take part in an array of recreational opportunities both on- and off-campus.

Corpus Christi SSLC has had significant staffing changes. Positions filled during this reporting period include the Director, Assistant Director of Programs, Incident Management Coordinator, QIDP Coordinator and Habilitation Therapies Director. The Human Rights Officer and Behavioral Health Director positions are currently vacant.

A recommendation to update the residents' photographs on file was made but has not yet been resolved. Also, a recommendation was provided to distinguish the differences in Interdisciplinary Team meetings and Team Integration meetings to ensure the participation of residents and LARs.

	Corpus Christi SSLC	Total SSLCs
Population	209	3026
Ages ≤21	1%	6%
Ages 22-54	54%	53%
Ages 55+	45%	41%
Level of ID: Mild	22%	17%
Moderate	12%	16%
Severe	12%	16%
Profound	54%	50%
Unspecified	0%	0.002%
Not Indicated	0%	0.004%
Health Status: Moderate	53%	36%
Severe	6%	9%
Alleged Offenders: At SSLC	3.8%	6.0%
Deemed High Risk	0.0%	0.5%
Community Transitions	4	60

Source: Demographics provided by DADS

Kellen Davis, Assistant Independent Ombudsman



Ms. Davis's career began in 1988 while going to school at Howard Payne University. She worked for the Texas Youth Commission as the Recreation Supervisor. She graduated from HPU with a degree in Physical Education and a minor in English. She went on to work for the TYC for 15 years in various roles. Ms. Davis also worked as an LVN for the University of Texas Medical Branch at a TYC facility and in nursing facilities. She was a respite supervisor for local MHMR and owned her own business. Ms. Davis worked at the Mexia SSLC for four and a half years as the Transition Specialist. She joined the Office of the Independent Ombudsman at the Corpus Christi SSLC in 2017.

Denton State Supported Living Center

The Denton SSLC currently provides services to individuals with cognitive and physical disabilities. The level of developmental disability ranges from mild to profound. The campus consists of six units. Two units serve individuals who are that medically fragile and require 24-hour nursing care. Although the majority of these individuals have physical limitations, they are provided with resources to be as independent as possible. Some need assistance with propelling their wheelchair; while others have been provided with motorized wheelchairs to move independently. The other units are home to individuals who require behavioral support. Although most of the population consists of older individuals, three individuals still attend public school.

	Denton SSLC	Total SSLCs
Population	446	3026
Ages ≤21	2%	6%
Ages 22-54	44%	53%
Ages 55+	54%	41%
Level of ID: Mild	11%	17%
Moderate	14%	16%
Severe	17%	16%
Profound	57%	50%
Unspecified	0%	0.002%
Not Indicated	1%	0.004%
Health Status: Moderate	38%	36%
Severe	14%	9%
Alleged Offenders: At SSLC	1.1%	6.0%
Deemed High Risk	0.0%	0.5%
Community Transitions	2	60

Source: Demographics provided by DADS

There are several programming and life skills areas, including a senior activities center, throughout the campus. Individuals are also provided the opportunity to work with a job coach through campus employment. Several individuals are currently working at Exxon, Chili's, Sonic drive-in and other well-known companies.

The self-advocacy groups have elected officials and are currently campaigning for new President, Vice-President and Secretary. At the previous meetings prior to nominating candidates, they discussed the voting process and why it is important.

Jerome Young, Assistant Independent Ombudsman



Jerome Young earned a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting from Texas Tech University. He began his career at Lubbock State School in 1993 as an active treatment provider. After several years in Lubbock, he moved to the Dallas/Ft. Worth area and served at the Denton SSLC, holding the positions of direct support professional, building coordinator, residential supervisor and job requisition coordinator. His reputation for client advocacy, fairness and compassion attested that he would be a valuable member of the Office of the Independent Ombudsman. He joined the OIO as the Assistant Independent Ombudsman for the Denton SSLC in February 2013.

El Paso State Supported Living Center

The El Paso State Supported Living Center campus is divided into two Units. The homes which have always been identified by numbers now have names. Unit One is now known as the Chihuahuahua Desert. It consists of the following six homes, 512 Kirkland is Palo Verde, 511 is Saguaro, 510 is Agave, 509 is Mezcal and 508 is Yucca. Homes 512, 511 and 510 are for male residents and 509 and 508 are for female residents. Unit One does not have any co-ed homes at this time. At present there are individuals who work in Food Service delivering snacks to the homes, others working in Housekeeping's laundry area and at least three individual are working under the maintenance department. Several individuals are currently working in motor pool cleaning and washing vans and there are others who work in recycling pickup and delivery.

	El Paso SSLC	Total SSLCs
Population	97	3026
Ages ≤21	4%	6%
Ages 22-54	65%	53%
Ages 55+	31%	41%
Level of ID: Mild	6%	17%
Moderate	18%	16%
Severe	18%	16%
Profound	59%	50%
Unspecified	0%	0.002%
Not Indicated	0%	0.004%
Health Status: Moderate	28%	36%
Severe	5%	9%
Alleged Offenders: At SSLC	0.0%	6.0%
Deemed High Risk	0.0%	0.5%
Community Transitions	5	60

Source: Demographics provided by DADS

Unit 2, now known as the Sonoran Desert, consists of one large building that contains three large dormitories formerly identified as A, B, and C now Jasper, Galena and Desert Rose, respectively. Tiger's Eye and Saguaro are also part of this unit and presently individuals from Tiger's Eye have been temporarily relocated to 507 Kirkland while Tiger's Eye undergoes renovation. The homes in 503 Kirkland, Jasper, Galena and Desert Rose provide for those with greater medical needs. These individuals also require support with activities of daily living and many require a wheelchair or some other form of assistance in order to move around their homes. This same building located at 503 Kirkland also includes Habilitation Therapies, Medical, Dental and Psychiatric clinics. A medical isolation room is also found at this location. A small number of individuals attend group activities or workshop outside their homes during the day. Others engage in similar activities in the common areas of their respective homes.

The Admissions and Placement office together with the Transition Specialist have successfully helped four individuals find new homes in the community. At the same time, the facility has welcomed three new individuals to the center. The center has had three deaths during these last six months.

The position for ADOA was filled during this time period. Ms. Ryan is currently working on acquiring a shuttle for the facility. The shuttle will help during mealtimes as the facility has started a new practice where individuals will have meals served in staggered increments of 15 minutes. The program is designed to allow for less crowding and greater staff assistance for the individuals who may need greater support during mealtimes.

In March the center was cleared by the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality for consumption of tap water after the facility made the necessary corrections for unsafe lead levels in the water.

The facility currently has a vacancy in the position of Behavioral Services Director. Mr. Benjamin Giraldo, resigned and accepted a lateral move to another SSLC within the organization. Two new Behavioral Specialist were hired during this time period but one has since resigned.

DADS Regulatory entered several times to conduct investigations, most of which involved active treatment, in addition the annual recertification. The facility was visited by seven surveyors and two additional surveyors from the offices of CMS. During the same week the facility was visited by Commissioner, Jon Weizenbaum, who took a tour of the facility.

In a case involving individuals who were not getting their snacks, including some who had snacks factor into their daily calorie count for weight increases, the AIO recommended Food Services and the Residential Services work together to track and document snack consumption. During this time period it was also discovered that more than a few individuals had undergone unplanned weight loss. The facility is working with Nursing and Residential Services to ensure better communication of individuals' dietary intake.

Isabel Ponce, Assistant Independent Ombudsman



Born and raised in the Sun City, Isabel Ponce went from serving the aging population to working with children. Later she came to serve adults with developmental disabilities as a residential director in the private sector. She became a certified internal investigator and began working as a case manager for a home and community service program. After seven years with the program, Ponce accepted the Assistant Independent Ombudsman position in December 2010.

Lubbock State Supported Living Center

The Lubbock State Supported Living Center currently serves residents who range from age 18 to 80 years in 15 homes. Three of the facility's 15 homes serve female residents, one serving female residents who are dually diagnosed (with IDD and psychiatric disorders). There are four homes whose residents are medically fragile, with 24-hour nursing being provided at three of these. The remaining eight homes serve male residents. Four of the eight are home to male residents who have dual diagnoses and have significant behavioral challenges.

	Lubbock SSLC	Total SSLCs
Population	186	3026
Ages ≤21	3%	6%
Ages 22-54	65%	53%
Ages 55+	33%	41%
Level of ID: Mild	16%	17%
Moderate	14%	16%
Severe	13%	16%
Profound	58%	50%
Unspecified	0%	0.002%
Not Indicated	0%	0.004%
Health Status: Moderate	42%	36%
Severe	15%	9%
Alleged Offenders: At SSLC	2.2%	6.0%
Deemed High Risk	0.0%	0.5%
Community Transitions	3	60

Source: Demographics provided by DADS

There are currently 15 residents working in the community; one is competitively employed and 14 are in supported employment. In addition, there are 35 residents who are working on campus in minimum wage positions, most with the Hearts and Hands program or at the Diner.

Since January, two residents have been admitted and two residents transitioned to live in the community. There were also two residents who were discharged to live at other non-SSLC facilities and one resident who transferred from Lubbock SSLC to San Angelo SSLC.

Over the past six months, DADS Regulatory exited the facility on eight occasions in addition to the Annual Recertification Survey which occurred in June. The facility is expected to receive standard level deficiencies in the ICF Standards areas of Governing Body, Client Protections, Active Treatment Services, Health Care Services, and Physical Environment from the annual survey.

Of the critical incidents identified by the facility utilizing the reporting matrix, there were three that seem notable. In January, a resident started a fire in his bedroom which resulted in minor damage. The second incident occurred in March and was a serious injury resulting from peer to peer aggression. In this incident, one resident choked another resident causing him to lose consciousness and have to be taken to the hospital. The resident who choked his peer was arrested. Finally in May, there was a sexual incident where three male residents

were found fondling a female peer. It appears that the incident was interrupted prior to actual sexual activity occurring; however, the female peer who functions at a much lower level than the male residents was actively resisting when staff intervened. Following investigation by the Lubbock Police Department, one of the male residents was arrested and indicted with attempted aggravated sexual assault. This resident remains incarcerated at this time.

A variety of recommendations have been made over this reporting period both through case summary reports and through other communications with the Director. Of the 10 case summaries provided to the facility over the past six months, three involved issues related to rights and documentation of due process. Recommendations were made addressing timely submission of corrections to rights documents following approval by the Human Rights Committee, completion and documentation of consents being obtained prior to HRC review and implementation of restrictions, and timely completion of emergency restrictions following initiation of a restriction on an emergency basis. Actions have been taken by the facility in regards to all three issues and improvement has been noted in all.

Four additional case summary reports addressed programmatic delivery issues. One addressed the lack of skill acquisition plans for six residents. Another addressed issues related to the need for weight loss to be addressed for 12 residents. The other addressed issues related to the lack of a consistent presence of Behavior Services staff in the work and program areas to assist with training for consistent implementation of behavior support plans and identification of emerging issues. The final issue dealt with aggression between residents not being addressed on a consistent basis. Policy deficits were pointed out and it was recommended that the policy be revised. It was also recommended that some oversight of the process be established. The facility implemented these recommendations and improvement has been noted in issues consistently being addressed per the policy guidelines.

Following a reported concern regarding minimum staffing requirements for an identified home, an investigation was completed and recommendations were made about staffing levels based upon the needs of the residents. The facility is well aware of the staffing challenges and continue to actively work to resolve those issues.

An issue with accurate data collection was also addressed and when the follow up was completed, significant improvement was noted.

An investigation was initiated at the request of the facility regarding an alleged theft of money by a resident from a staff member. The resident's Interdisciplinary Team recommended that this money be repaid by the resident. There were concerns regarding if the resident actually stole the money. Following completion of the investigation, there was not sufficient evidence to show that the resident took the money. The recommendation was made for the resident to not repay the staff person for the missing money.

Robin Seale-Gutierrez, Assistant Independent Ombudsman



Robin Seale-Gutierrez earned her Bachelors of Arts in psychology in 2004 from Texas Tech University and plans to complete her master's degree in the near future. Seale-Gutierrez has worked at Lubbock State Supported Living Center for over ten years in various roles including a psychological assistant, qualified intellectual disability professional (QIDP), QIDP coordinator and most recently the assistant director of programs. Seale-Gutierrez is a graduate of the 2009 Building the Bench program where she obtained her certified management professional certificate. Prior to working at Lubbock State Supported Living Center, Seale-Gutierrez served as a parent advocate for those receiving special education services by serving on multiple committees and advisory boards for two school districts. Seale-Gutierrez joined the Office of the Independent Ombudsman in June 2014.

Lufkin State Supported Living Center

The Lufkin State Supported Living Center (LfSSLC) provides support services for people with profound to mild intellectual and physical disabilities. There are four units serving both men and women. All units are capable of providing 24 hour nursing services, but only two currently provide this service. These two units provide medical services and supports to several medically fragile people. The Center also provides services to 17 adolescent individuals (17 and under). Two residences for adolescents, one male and one female, are located in the Oak Hill Unit. Public school services are provided by the Central Independent School District both on the LfSSLC campus, and the CISD campus. Several people living at the Center require intense Behavioral Health Services due to extreme challenging behavior that can pose a threat of injury to themselves and others.

	Lufkin SSLC	Total SSLCs
Population	295	3026
Ages ≤21	11%	6%
Ages 22-54	44%	53%
Ages 55+	45%	41%
Level of ID: Mild	8%	17%
Moderate	11%	16%
Severe	19%	16%
Profound	62%	50%
Unspecified	0%	0.002%
Not Indicated	1%	0.004%
Health Status: Moderate	33%	36%
Severe	13%	9%
Alleged Offenders: At SSLC	0.3%	6.0%
Deemed High Risk	0.0%	0.5%
Community Transitions	4	60

Source: Demographics provided by DADS

LfSSLC continues to actively seek community placement for people who are ready for transition and needed services can be met in the community. There are four smaller residences at the Center that are designated as transition homes and are used to prepare people for transition to community living. Currently there are eight active referrals. Over the past six months the Center has placed five people (no adolescents) into a community setting, transferred two people to another SSLC, and admitted nine people (three adolescents). Over the past six months, two people returned to the facility due to unsuccessful community placement. The Center hired a new Medical Director, Dr. Mary Manis, who started March 2017, and a full time Psychiatrist, Dr. Emilie Becker, who started in April 2017. The Center utilizes Advanced Practice Registered Nurses in addition to full time physicians. Other key administrative professional staff positions which hired new directors include Incident and Risk Management and Residential Services.

The Center underwent its annual re-certification survey by DADS Regulatory in May 2017. Citations were given in the general areas of program implementation, client rights, and medical services. The Center was cleared of these citations in June 2017. Currently the

Center is carrying citations in the general areas of medical services (2) and governing body (1). Plans of correction are being developed.

LfSSLC has also been participating in corrective action plans (CAPS) directed by DADS State Office in the areas of pneumonia, skin integrity, quality assurance, protection from harm, and engagement. The Center meets regularly with DADS State Office staff to discuss plans of improvement and progress in these areas.

Marvin Stewart, Assistant Independent Ombudsman



Marvin Stewart earned his bachelor's degree in psychology and his Master of Arts in community counseling from Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. He has worked at the Lufkin State Supported Living Center for over 20 years, serving in various capacities such as unit psychologist and supervising unit psychologist. Stewart transferred to the Quality Assurance Department and served as Program Compliance Monitor, where he also fulfilled the duties of Deputy Human Rights Officer. He accepted the Assistant Independent Ombudsman position in August of 2011.

Mexia State Supported Living Center

Mexia SSLC provides services to individuals who function in the profound to mild range of intellectual disabilities. Senate Bill 643 designated Mexia SSLC as the forensic facility, and all new admissions come through the court system. This is reflected in the high number of residents who are alleged offenders as well as other demographic that are unique to this center. The majority of residents are male (89%). Also, 45% of the population is under the age of 30 and 70% of the population has resided at Mexia SSLC for 10 years or less. Ten percent of the population is considered a Minor. Only 29% of the adult population has a guardian assigned. 80% of the Individuals require a Behavior Support Plan.

There are six units on campus, and four of those units are designated as forensic. Longhorn Unit houses up to 52 juvenile male alleged offenders. Whiterock Unit houses up to 47 adult alleged offenders in 6 homes, with Whiterock 3 being designated the High Risk home. This home will only have individuals who have been deemed High Risk through the High Risk Determination (HRD) process. Shamrock Unit houses up to 59 adult male alleged offenders in 5 homes. Barnett Unit houses up to 51 males, ages 18 and up. Some of the individuals need staff assistance with completing their self-care and daily living skills. Martin Unit serves up to 65 individuals, both male and female. The most medically fragile individuals live within the Martin Unit. Some individuals utilize wheelchairs and require more staff assistance than any of the other units. Martin Unit provides 24 hour nursing care. The Facility has developed a new unit called the Central Unit. This Unit has three homes, two of which are de-certified homes. Central 1 home is the only certified home at this time.

Vocational training is provided in several areas on campus, as well as in the community. There is a large workshop that does contract work and two other smaller workshops. There is also a recycling crew that collects paper and cardboard from Mexia and neighboring cities, as well as a mowing crew. There is a greenhouse which sells plants to the public all year round, with a high volume of poinsettia sales during the holiday

	Mexia SSLC	Total SSLCs
Population	247	3026
Ages ≤21	21%	6%
Ages 22-54	58%	53%
Ages 55+	21%	41%
Level of ID: Borderline	1%	0%
Mild	46%	17%
Moderate	28%	16%
Severe	6%	16%
Profound	19%	50%
Unspecified	0%	0.002%
Not Indicated	0%	0.004%
Health Status: Moderate	26%	36%
Severe	6%	9%
Alleged Offenders: At SSLC	53.4%	6.0%
Deemed High Risk	5.7%	0.5%
Community Transitions	12	60

Source: Demographics provided by DADS

season. The facility woodshop repairs furniture in the facility and it also builds and sells wood outdoor furniture to the public. Mexia SSLC has a General Store in the City of Mexia. This store will allow products from the Woodshop as well as the greenhouse to be sold in town at a designated retail space. The General Store will also provide employment opportunities for the individuals of MSSLC. School aged individuals attend classes at Mexia ISD at the Mexia ISD Development Center. Mexia SSLC has also started a mowing crew who will contract with community residents to provide basic lawn maintenance and a paint crew who have completed several painting jobs at Mexia SSLC.

In January 2017, Mexia SSLC was struck by a Tornado at 3:00am. Fortunately, no one was injured during the event. The storm caused an estimated 3 million dollars in damages and caused three individuals to move to a new home. The storm also knocked out the facility's warehouse and Laundry. The warehouse was relocated to the National Guard Armory in Mexia, which had been vacant. The Central Unit was damaged in the storm. This Unit had 3 homes in it, Central 1, 2, and 3. Central 3 is now able to have individuals reside in that home. Plans to restore and replace damaged buildings are already in progress. Mexia SSLC is continuing their plan to remodel the homes. Progress is being made in this area.

The facility is continuing with the HRD process for new admissions and for annual updates. MSSLC is working to facilitate transfers of individuals (who are non-forensic) to community settings or to other SSLCs. Appeals for the individuals who have been deemed high risk are tentatively scheduled for July 2017. All individuals who have appealed have asked for the Office of the Independent Ombudsman's assistance in their appeal. There have been 13 individuals evaluated since January 2017. Six individuals were deemed to be high risk. Of those, two do not wish to appeal. Four are in the appeal process although one person does not want assistance from the OIO with his appeal.

Mexia SSLC was placed on two separate Immediate Jeopardies in April of 2017. The facility has received a Directed Plan of Correction to solve the matters involved in this Regulatory visit. They are currently in the process of completing this Directed Plan of Correction. Mexia SSLC has received assistance from State Office and other SSLC staff to attempt to complete this plan. Mexia SSLC has implemented several things related to peer to peer aggression due to concerns and citations by DADS Regulatory.

Mexia SSLC has seen a few key positions change. The facility is currently still looking to hire a Director of Residential Services, and has an Interim at this time. The facility has hired a new Assistant Director of Administration, Director of Quality Assurance, and Incident Management Coordinator. An interim Human Right's Officer has also been named.

Individuals with pending criminal charges have assigned attorneys. The AIO identified that these individuals do not have support to stay in contact with their respective attorney in order to keep them apprised of their progress. The AIO recommended that the facility have a designated person to liaise with the attorneys, so that the residents can be adequately represented in court hearings. Mexia SSLC's Social Workers will be tasked with obtaining and

maintaining communication with any attorney that is still representing an Individual at Mexia SSLC.

Some restrictive practices at Mexia SSLC were not being implemented with due process. HRC Referral's and Individual Service Plan Addendums were taking weeks to be reviewed in HRC. This is not providing the individuals due process and is in conflict with current policy. After reviewing HRC documents and following HRC for three months it was determined that it was a prioritization issue and a training issue. An interim Human Rights Officer has been following up on all Emergency Restrictions to ensure that policy is followed. Also, each unit is tracking Emergency Restrictions to ensure they are following policy.

The Human Rights Committee was continually cancelled due to a community representative not being physically present. This delayed due process for individuals scheduled for review that week. According to regulations, members should attend by an interactive method to allow for asking questions. Upon recommendations made by the AIO and DADS Regulatory, Mexia SSLC is now allowing the community representative to attend by phone.

Adam Parks, Assistant Independent Ombudsman



Adam Parks was raised in Mexia, Texas. He attended Stephen F. Austin State University where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in psychology. After graduation, he began his professional career as a conservatorship caseworker for the Department of Family and Protective Services in Angelina and Shelby County Texas. Parks then accepted the position of qualified intellectual disability professional (QIDP) at Lufkin State Supported Living Center. He was later appointed lead QIDP for the Oak Hill Unit. He also served as a standing member of the human rights committee during his time working at Lufkin State Supported Living Center. Parks accepted the position of Assistant Independent Ombudsman of the Mexia State Supported Living Center in February 2014.

Richmond State Supported Living Center

Richmond State supported Living Center (RSSLC) opened in 1968. The center provides campus-based direct services and supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The 241-acre state supported living center employs approximately 1200 staff. The state supported living center serves a 13-county area: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Hardin, Harris, Jefferson, Matagorda, Orange, Waller and Wharton. RSSLC has a total of 24 homes. Trinity, San Antonio and Leon Homes are divided into four living areas on each of the homes identified by side A, B, C, D. Pecos, San Jacinto and TJ5, TJ6, TJ7, TJ8, TJ9, Nueces, Guadalupe, Lavaca, and Sabine. Trinity D is the only Co-ed home on Campus.

	Richmond SSLC	Total SSLCs
Population	317	3026
Ages ≤21	5%	6%
Ages 22-54	52%	53%
Ages 55+	46%	41%
Level of ID: Mild	10%	17%
Moderate	10%	16%
Severe	18%	16%
Profound	60%	50%
Unspecified	2%	0.002%
Not Indicated	0%	0.004%
Health Status: Moderate	52%	36%
Severe	4%	9%
Alleged Offenders: At SSLC	1.3%	6.0%
Deemed High Risk	0.0%	0.5%
Community Transitions	11	60

Source: Demographics provided by DADS

There are three work centers on campus where the residents attend from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm. The Main Workshop has contractual work where the residents perform a variety of job skills and are paid on a production rate. The Angelina Workshop provides for an extension of the Main Workshop. The Colorado Pica Workshop has a work program designed for individuals that exhibit pica behavior. The materials used at this workshop are approved for a safe environment. RSSLC has a retirement environment for residents 55+ located at the Forever Young building on campus. The program offers for a slower pace environment while still having the benefits of socialization, staff engagement and maintaining skills by way of arts, crafts, music, literature, and sensory.

RSSLC recently added an Art Exploration Class to its Work Center. Construction and improvements projects for an outside basketball court, steeper speed bumps, and peculiarities with seating for the resident's safety and enjoyment were completed.

During this reporting period there were three deaths, 14 residents were discharged, and a total of 11 residents were admitted to the Center.

Although there are Administration positions vacant this period, RSSLC has hired Direct Support Professionals, physicians, and a Chief Dietician to continue their dedication to maintain continuity of care and services to the resident.

DADS Regulatory entered approximately 12 times and substantiated four incidents and issued three citations.

RSSLC continued their outreach to the community by hosting the Spring Provider Fair and committing to help save lives at the 33rd Annual Blood Drive. The center is working to maintain the areas of engagement and active treatment by having on-campus events. To name a few, First Annual Basketball 3-on-3 basketball tournament, National Flag Day which involved participation from the Sheriff's Department, Gospel Fest, and Autism Awareness Day.

The AIO continues to meet the Director bi-monthly to share updates. The AIO has made many recommendations to the facility resulting from cases of complaints, observations, meetings, documentation review in IRIS, and after reviews from DFPS Investigative Reports and the Center has adopted most of them. The most recent recommendation made was to implement a process to ensure that details of an emotional assessment is shared with the IDT members. This will help to ensure protective measures for the resident are implemented as well as minimize the possibility of the omission of pertinent information not discussed or shared with the entire IDT.

During the past six months, awareness of the role of the AIO increased in requests by the resident, the resident's family, or staff for the AIO's involvement. The AIO presents to the New Employee Orientation class monthly, visits and monitors the homes and share concerns with administration and team members, and most importantly with the residents and guardians, family members, and off-campus entities.

Deatrice Potlow, Assistant Independent Ombudsman



Deatrice Potlow earned a Bachelor of Science in office administration in 1997. Shortly after graduating she began working at a local hospital as a medical transcriptionist. She relocated to Houston, Texas for career advancement and began a career with the State of Texas. During her tenure of employment, she served as an investigator for children, adults and persons with disabilities. Prior to being hired in October 2012 as an Assistant Independent Ombudsman, she worked as a facility investigator who was responsible for investigating allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation at the Richmond SSLC.

Rio Grande State Center

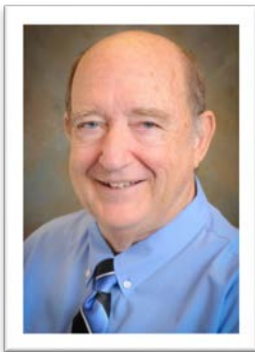
The Rio Grande State Center is composed of three facilities that are part of the Texas Department of State Health Services state hospital system. It has a mental health clinic that includes a forensic unit, an outpatient health clinic and an intermediate care facility that provides services to 60 residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This ICF component served by the OIO is comprised of two homes, El Paisano and La Paloma.

The El Paisano home serves independent individuals, who tend to have more behavioral challenges. The La Paloma serves individuals who are medically fragile.

	Rio Grande Center	Total SSLCs
Population	57	3026
Ages ≤21	5%	6%
Ages 22-54	74%	53%
Ages 55+	21%	41%
Level of ID: Mild	5%	17%
Moderate	23%	16%
Severe	26%	16%
Profound	44%	50%
Unspecified	0%	0.002%
Not Indicated	2%	0.004%
Health Status: Moderate	18%	36%
Severe	2%	9%
Alleged Offenders: At SSLC	0.0%	6.0%
Deemed High Risk	0.0%	0.5%
Community Transitions	4	60

Source: Demographics provided by DADS

James Arnold, Assistant Independent Ombudsman, retired



James Arnold attended the University of Texas (UT) at Austin and Texas A&I (now Texas A&M) in Kingsville to complete his Bachelor of Arts in music education. While attending UT Austin, Arnold joined the Air Force. Following his military career, Arnold completed two master's degrees, one in educational psychology from East Texas State University and the other in counseling psychology. He joined the Commerce Police Department and was promoted to sergeant. Later he accepted a psychologist's position at the Rio Grande State Center in Harlingen. He also served as Human rights officer before accepting the Assistant Independent Ombudsman position in 2010.

Mr. Arnold retired from state service in February after many years of dedicated service to the residents of the Rio Grande Center, seven of which were served as the AIO.

Horacio Flores, Assistant Independent Ombudsman



Mr. Horacio Flores hails from the Rio Grande Valley and attended Texas A&M Kingsville where he earned his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology. He began his career with the State of Texas working for the Department of Family and Protective Services as an Investigator for Child Protective Services in Nueces, Kleberg, Duval and Jim Hogg counties. Mr. Flores then accepted the position of Qualified Intellectual Disabilities Professional (QIDP) at Corpus Christi State Supported Living Center. Shortly thereafter he was appointed to a Lead QIDP. Mr. Flores then relocated to the Rio Grande Valley and accepted the position of QIDP at the Rio Grande State Center in Harlingen. Mr. Flores accepted the position of Assistant Independent Ombudsmen of the Rio Grande Center in April 2017.

San Angelo State Supported Living Center

San Angelo SSLC (SGSSLC), located about 15 miles north of San Angelo in Carlsbad, is home to people with profound to mild developmental and physical disabilities. There are 18 homes including a transition home for residents transitioning from SGSSLC to the community. The majority of residents are independent in their daily living skills. Two homes are dedicated to geriatric residents and two for medically fragile residents. There are two homes that serve people with a Pica diagnosis and autistic features. These homes will soon have a back yard area that provides a safe, calming area for the residents to enjoy. The backyard will have some sensory items as well.

One home serves juvenile females, many of whom were referred to the SGSSLC by juvenile courts. Two homes are dedicated to serving males who have inappropriate sexual behavior, many of whom have been charged with sexual offenses. SGSSLC employs staff specialized in treatment for this population. SGSSLC operates a competency restoration program for residents admitted through the courts because they have been found incompetent to stand trial for criminal offenses. A large number of SGSSLC's population has a dual diagnosis (IDD with a mental illness) requiring behavioral health services.

	San Angelo SSLC	Total SSLCs
Population	215	3026
Ages ≤21	9%	6%
Ages 22-54	68%	53%
Ages 55+	23%	41%
Level of ID: Mild	60%	17%
Moderate	21%	16%
Severe	7%	16%
Profound	10%	50%
Unspecified	0%	0.002%
Not Indicated	1%	0.004%
Health Status: Moderate	22%	36%
Severe	5%	9%
Alleged Offenders: At SSLC	11.6%	6.0%
Deemed High Risk	0.0%	0.5%
Community Transitions	10	60

Source: Demographics provided by DADS

SGSSLC provides many employment opportunities to residents. To date, there are 124 residents at the work center, six residents working off campus in enclave work, one resident in supportive employment, and 28 residents working on campus in various positions. The cultural services/day habilitation assists the residents in promoting independence and enhancing their skills. The All Faith Chapel offers a variety of classes for the residents including bible study, band, choir, guitar, piano, hand bells, percussion, and hand signing. The residents hold a monthly self-advocacy meeting and publish a monthly newsletter.

During this biannual period, the center had 10 admissions, 11 community placements, four transfers to SGSSLC, three transfers from SGSSLC, one discharge, and one death.

There were a total of eight visits from DADS Regulatory resulting in no citations. Regulatory conducted an Annual Survey in April resulting in 23 citations. SGSSLC was placed on Immediate Jeopardy (IJ) on June 15th for home temperatures above Code. The IJ was lifted on June 17th.

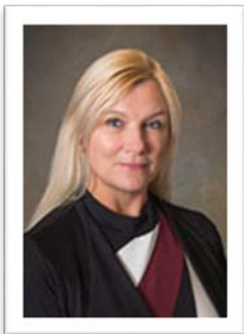
There was a critical incident where a resident with criminal charges for sexual offenses sexually assaulted a female resident. The incident was reported to law enforcement.

SGSSLC reassigned the majority of the QIDP's to better match the QIDP's skills with each home. The center has struggled to remain fully staffed with Social Workers.

A parent reached out to the AIO for assistance after losing contact with staff at SGSSLC and getting no responses to her contact attempts. The parent had been kept very informed until the resident turned 18. It was discovered that the staff did not communicate with the parent because the resident was now an adult without a guardian and made no attempt to obtain consent from the resident. The AIO recommended the staff be re-trained on the SGSSLC's policy on keeping families informed. The SGSSLC staff also educated the parent on the resident's rights to consent to information as well. Visits with the resident and the parent confirms that the parent is now being kept informed along with the resident's informed consent.

AIO observed a meeting where the resident was speaking Spanish but the SGSSLC staff were all speaking English. The paper documents provided to the resident were in English as well. The SGSSLC staff reported that the resident understands and speaks English but prefers Spanish so they did not feel the need to speak Spanish or provide an Interpreter. The AIO recommended always using the resident's preferred communication method and to always have an interpreter available, as well as staff from the resident's home and classes that use the resident's preferred communication method. The SGSSLC administration retrained staff on preferred methods of communication and how to arrange interpreter services. Observing meetings and speaking to staff confirms that Spanish-speaking staff are available for the residents.

Brenda Frausto, Assistant Independent Ombudsman



Ms. Frausto obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology with a minor in Sociology from Angelo State University. She began her career at the San Angelo State School in 1991 as an active treatment provider then later assumed the role as the Admission and Placement Coordinator. Ms. Frausto was also the Admission Coordinator for MHMR Service of the Concho Valley. For the past 13 years, Ms. Frausto has worked for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Ms. Frausto has served as a Guardian Advocate with and was a member of the Tom Green County Coalition Against Violence. Ms. Frausto joined the Office of the Independent Ombudsman in November, 2016.

San Antonio State Supported Living Center

The San Antonio State Supported Living Center (SASSLC) opened in 1978 and serves individuals with intellectual disabilities, ranging in age from 18 to 82 years. SASSLC remains active in regard to admissions to the center and community placements from the center. Since January 2017 there are currently nine individuals who have been referred for community placement. The center has received six admissions and/or transfers, with one transfer received from another SSLC. There have been five community transition, one discharge and three transfers to other SSLCs.

The campus is located in southwest San Antonio near several shopping venues and business which are frequently visited by residents. The

SASSLC is comprised of eight residential homes: two homes specialize in providing medical monitoring and 24-hour nursing services, two homes specialize in providing support for individuals with behavioral challenges, and the other four homes provide services ranging from total care needs and physical management to minimal assistance with activities of daily living.

The residents have access to a Developmental Center which accommodates vocational workshops, habilitation programs, gymnasium, swimming pool, and computer lab. SASSLC currently has 113 residents with vocational employment on campus and nine residents employed and working off-site at community establishments. Sensory and retirement programs are also provided as day habilitation services. Leisure and social programs include resident membership in self advocacy group, Aktion Club community service projects and training for Special Olympics.

Clinical services includes on-site pharmacy, dental clinic, nursing services, nutrition services, and speech and habilitation therapies. The Center hired a new physician, Dr. Ellen Leonard, a full time Lead Psychiatrist, Dr. Lesia Tricket and registered dietician, Ernestina Gonzales.

Several key administrative professional staff positions, which have experienced changes in the past six months, include the Assistant Director of Programs, Residential Unit I Director,

	San Antonio SSLC	Total SSLCs
Population	223	3026
Ages ≤21	2%	6%
Ages 22-54	61%	53%
Ages 55+	36%	41%
Level of ID: Mild	14%	17%
Moderate	17%	16%
Severe	20%	16%
Profound	49%	50%
Unspecified	0%	0.002%
Not Indicated	0%	0.004%
Health Status: Moderate	26%	36%
Severe	7%	9%
Alleged Offenders: At SSLC	0.9%	6.0%
Deemed High Risk	0.0%	0.5%
Community Transitions	3	60

Source: Demographics provided by DADS

Admission Placement Coordinator and Post Move Monitor. Changes in the Admission Placement department has presented challenges with community placement and the center has received additional support from state office leadership.

Changes in Direct Support Professional (DSP) work schedule to address staffing challenges such as hold overs, did not produce expected improvements to DSP ratios. The administration continues to actively work at addressing staffing issues. Efforts to decrease effects on service delivery include additional staffing support from vocational, habilitation and behavioral departments.

The Department of Justice Settlement Agreement Monitoring Visit round 12 occurred in May 2017. Over the past two monitoring visits, multiple areas sustained high performance scores and were be moved to the category of requiring less oversight. The report also highlighted areas in which continued focus is needed, such as medical and nursing care and annual planning process. The monitoring team complimented the DSPs on knowledge of residents and support services received. An administrative campaign was initiated following the monitoring visit emphasizing renewed focus on basic care areas with focus of reducing falls and soft tissue infections.

Over the past six months, DADS Regulatory entered the facility to conduct investigations on six occasions and is currently working on plan of corrections for standard level deficiencies in the areas of Facility Staffing and Client Protections. SASSLC is awaiting review of corrective plans and Annual Recertification Survey (which last occurred July 2016).

The administration has been transparent in its operations. AIO is included in review of incident investigation findings and has been welcomed to observe during departmental meeting, employee trainings and when developing plans for systematic changes.

AIO has made numerous recommendations related to individual services and systemic improvements. The facility implemented these recommendations and improvement has been noted in issues consistently being address according to policies and guidelines.

The AIO also expressed concerns related to practices relating to investigating alleged sexual incidents between residents. The AIO recommended that the center establish written guidelines for sexual incidents with residents receiving individualized care and remove unnecessary invasive procedures and treatments.

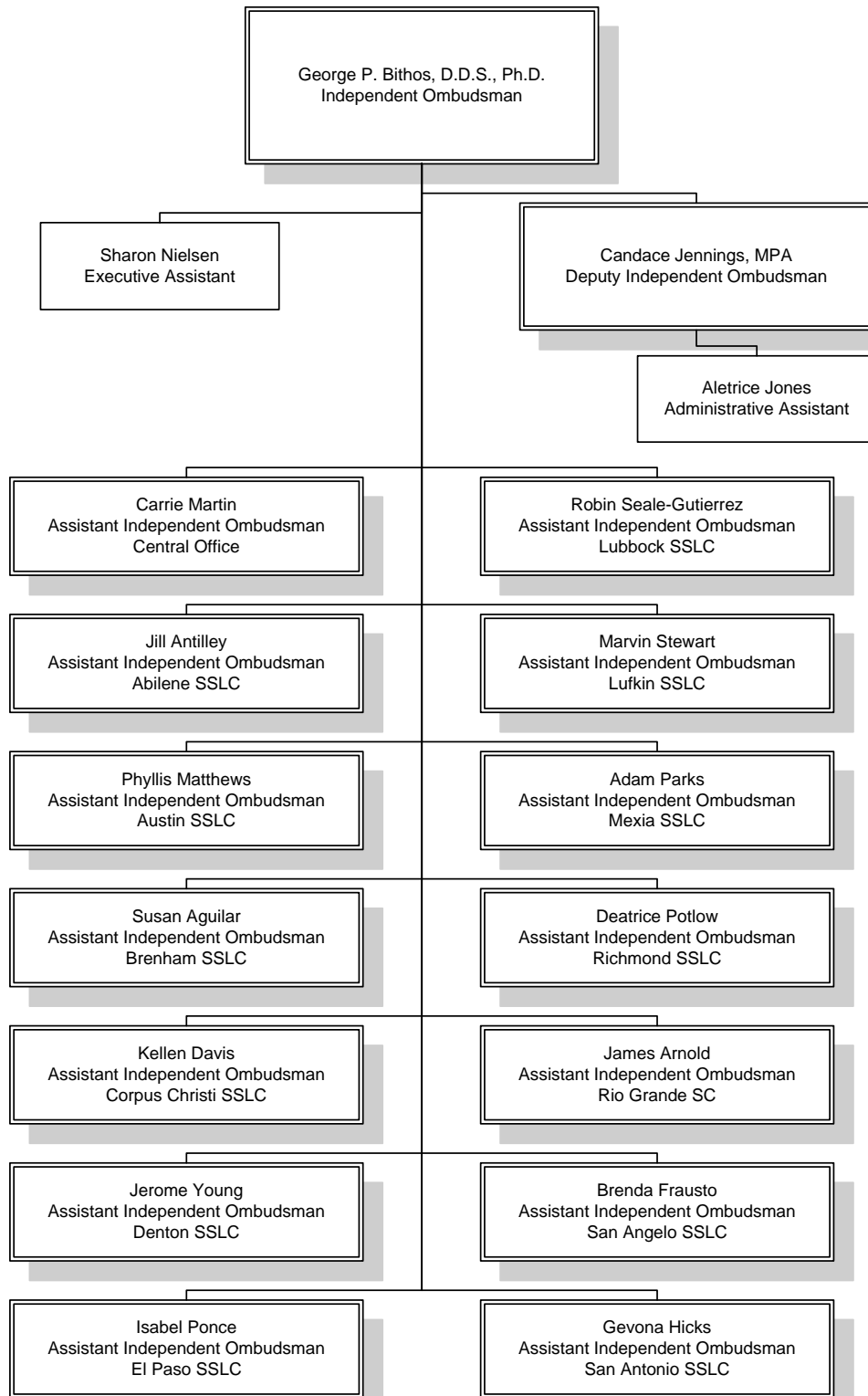
Related to community placement and transfer request, AIO recommended routine review of facility referrals and transfers to ensure progress towards placement, timely transfers and adequate post-move support. The administration implemented, and continues to facilitate, weekly meetings with Admissions Placement and QIDP Departments.

Gevona Hicks, Assistant Independent Ombudsman



Gevona Hicks earned her Bachelor of Science in psychology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where she also earned a certificate in gerontology. She relocated to San Antonio, Texas in 2001 and worked with infants and toddlers at a local children's shelter. She began her career supporting children and adults with developmental disabilities as a team lead and then case manager, supervising multiple group homes in San Antonio, for an intermediate care facility and home and community service provider. Hicks began her employment with the state of Texas in 2006 at Austin SSLC prior to transferring to San Antonio SSLC where she worked as a qualified intellectual disability professional. Hicks served as human rights officer for three years prior to joining the Office of the Independent Ombudsman for the San Antonio SSLC in April 2014.

Organizational Chart



Appendix: Data

Contacts by Case Type by SSLC, January 1, 2017 through June 30, 2017.

Case Type	Abilene SSLC	Austin SSLC	Brenham SSLC	Corpus Christi SSLC	Denton SSLC	El Paso SSLC	Lubbock SSLC	Lufkin SSLC	Mexia SSLC	Richmond SSLC	Rio Grande Center	San Angelo SSLC	San Antonio SSLC	Totals
Abuse Neglect & Exploitation	1	1	1	1	0	0	5	7	2	3	0	0	4	25
Discharge/Transfer	0	0	3	1	0	1	5	0	5	0	1	2	4	22
Guardianship	4	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	9
High Risk Determination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Non-SSLC Issue	0	5	3	2	3	1	4	3	0	5	1	1	0	28
Other	0	4	0	3	1	6	8	0	0	2	0	0	3	27
Personnel	3	3	2	0	10	4	4	5	1	6	0	0	1	39
Request for OIO Information	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
Retaliation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Rights	4	3	3	10	0	7	32	9	12	2	2	4	14	102
Service Delivery-Behavioral	1	2	2	1	0	13	9	3	0	1	0	1	3	36
Service Delivery-Medical	1	8	2	0	4	4	11	2	0	1	1	1	15	50
Service Delivery-Residential	6	8	10	1	11	27	16	12	6	24	3	10	18	152
Service Delivery-Vocational	0	0	1	0	0	5	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	11
Total	21	35	27	19	29	69	100	43	30	45	9	19	64	510

Contacts by Relationship to Resident by SSLC, January 1, 2017 through June 30, 2017.

Relationship To Client	Abilene SSLC	Austin SSLC	Brenham SSLC	Corpus Christi SSLC	Denton SSLC	El Paso SSLC	Lubbock SSLC	Lufkin SSLC	Mexia SSLC	Richmond SSLC	Rio Grande Center	San Angelo SSLC	San Antonio SSLC	Totals
Family	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	4	1	0	4	4	19
Family LAR	4	1	3	1	0	7	2	2	0	5	0	4	14	43
Friend	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Guardian (LAR)	0	2	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	6	0	1	0	13
Ombudsman	0	13	1	8	1	7	20	8	5	10	4	3	15	95
Other	2	7	0	1	2	5	7	4	1	2	0	3	0	34
Self	1	3	3	4	7	8	27	1	12	4	2	4	8	84
Staff	12	9	18	5	14	41	41	27	8	13	2	0	23	213
Unknown	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	1	0	0	8
Total	21	35	27	19	29	69	100	43	30	45	9	19	64	510

Contacts per Month per SSLC, January 1, 2017 through June 30, 2017.

SSLC	January '17	February '17	March '17	April '17	May '17	June '17	TOTALS
Abilene	8	3	2	4	1	3	21
Austin	6	5	5	4	5	10	35
Brenham	8	2	4	0	7	6	27
Corpus Christi	0	5	1	3	3	7	19
Denton	5	6	5	4	5	4	29
El Paso	13	11	10	13	11	11	69
Lubbock	19	8	20	21	20	12	100
Lufkin	7	11	6	10	3	6	43
Mexia	4	4	7	7	3	5	30
Richmond	5	7	11	7	7	8	45
Rio Grande	1	2	1	4	0	1	9
San Angelo	3	5	2	2	3	4	19
San Antonio	16	10	12	11	5	10	64
TOTALS	95	79	86	90	73	87	510

Contacts by Action Type by SSLC, January 1, 2017 through June 30, 2017.

Action Type	Abilene SSLC	Austin SSLC	Brenham SSLC	Corpus Christi SSLC	Denton SSLC	El Paso SSLC	Lubbock SSLC	Lufkin SSLC	Mexia SSLC	Richmond SSLC	Rio Grande SSLC	San Angelo SSLC	San Antonio SSLC	Totals
Complaint	4	23	22	16	20	62	74	25	25	35	7	16	51	380
Consult	13	5	3	0	3	2	25	13	5	7	1	1	9	87
Inquiry	4	7	2	3	6	5	1	5	0	3	1	2	4	43
Total	21	35	27	19	29	69	100	43	30	45	9	19	64	510

Appendix: Certified Person-Centered Thinking Trainers

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requires person-centered planning and services be provided to all Home and Community-Based Services programs (HCBS), intermediate care facilities (ICF), nursing facilities, mental health services, Community First Choice (CFC) services, and home health services. The State of Texas partners with the Institute for Person-Centered Practices for development of a person-centered thinking and person-centered plan facilitation training, which is tailored to teach facilitators to meet the person-centered planning requirements contained in the federal requirements.

The Office of the Independent Ombudsman for SSLCs endorses and strongly supports the philosophy and practices of person centeredness. Certified trainers are required to provide this essential training. Beginning in 2013, HHS, DADS and the OIO sponsored candidates for this rigorous training. The following members of this office have successfully completed the training and have been certified as Person-Centered Thinking Trainers by the Institute for Person-Centered Practices and the Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices:

Dr. George P. Bithos
Ms. Candace Jennings
Ms. Susan Aguilar
Ms. Jill Antilley
Ms. Gevona Hicks
Mr. Adam Parks
Ms. Robin Seale-Gutierrez
Ms. Phyllis Matthews (candidate for certification)