

Kern County Commission On Aging

Judy Snyder, Chairperson
5357 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93309
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REGULAR COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES

October 20, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

Richard Prado Senior Center
2101 Ridge Road, Bakersfield, CA 93305
and via Zoom

OPENING

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Snyder called the meeting to order at 1:11 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE & MOMENT OF SILENCE:

The flag salute was completed, and a moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

*(*Chairperson, **Vice Chairperson, *** Parliamentarian, ****Secretary)*

Commission Members Present:

In Person – ***Susan Bodnar, Sherry Gomez, Barbara Goodlow, Norma Jackson, **Jan Lemucchi, Ellen Linder, ****Jeremy Oliver (non-voting), Yolanda Prado, Miguel Salazar, and *Judy Snyder

Virtually – None

Excused Absences: Gloria Brown, Sonia Dhillon, Doris Duquette, Anthony Estrada, Anabel Hernandez, Julie Juarez-Ceja, and Christie Ray

SECRETARY OLIVER CONFIRMED A QUORUM WAS PRESENT IN PERSON.

Honorary Commission Members Present:

None.

Aging and Adult Services Staff Present:

Laura M. Juarez – Office Services Coordinator
Colleen Philley – Program Manager
Michele Gomez – Program Manager
Angela Domingos – Senior Nutrition Program Coordinator
Julie Baca – Senior Nutrition Program Coordinator

GUESTS:

In Person: Peggy Langels, Irene Mendoza, Maria Barajas, Carlos Mendez, Adela Granados, Esperanza Cordero, Socorro Yanez Graciela Yanez, Lucia C., Amelia Vega, Reynaldo Martinez, Rafel Duran, Guillermina Silva, Daisy Neri, J. Ramon Becerra, Catherine Vasquez, Kimberly Salas

Virtually: Monica Fitzgerald, Ashley Melednez, Chad Acker, Sara Swertfager

CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

COMMENTS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Public Comments:

We heard from Guillermina Silva, Socorro Yanez, Esperanza Hernandez, Rafael Duran, and Amelia Vega. Commissioner Prado translated from Spanish to English. There was a discussion about issues with some games being played and karaoke at the senior center and some feel there is a lack of respect. Commissioner Prado said she hadn't heard about this and will discuss this further with the seniors. Another shared she is very happy to come to the center. She has lots of friends and feels everyone greets each other just fine. Everyone is different and has different opinions. Another senior shared how each person is unique and brings their own talents. They came up with a program where they all dressed in an outfit or regalia representing their country or state where they're from, and they shared together their art, culture, beliefs, etc. It turned out well and everyone enjoyed it. They did this every Friday in May, and again on September 16th. They have more plans to continue with this program.

Commissioner Comments :

None.

ACTION ITEMS

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion made to approve September 15, 2025, Regular Commission on Aging meeting minutes with one amendment to pages 1 & 3.
Motion: Lemucchi; **Second:** Goodlow; **Abstention:** None; **Objection:** None.
Motion carried.
- **APPROVAL OF HONORARY COMMISSIONER – STEPHANIE LYNCH:** Motion made to appoint Stephanie Lynch as an Honorary Commissioner.
Motion: Prado; **Second:** Goodlow; **Abstention:** None; **Objection:** None.
Motion carried.

SERVICE PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS:

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS) – Daisy Neri

Daisy Neri attended in person and provided updates that are happening with the Medi-Cal program due to the Big, Beautiful Bill. Some changes that are happening effective September 1st have to do with our elder and disabled population. Starting January 1, 2026,

Medi-Cal will once again consider assets (what you own) when reviewing eligibility for seniors and people with disabilities as part of the application and renewal process.

WHO AFFECTED:

Medi-Cal members and applicants whose eligibility is based on age (65+), disability (physical, mental, or developmental), or long-term care needs.

KEY INFORMATION:

- The **asset limit** is \$130,000 for one person. Each additional household member adds \$65,000 to the asset limit, up to 10 members per household.
- Assets include bank accounts, cash, and anything over one home and one vehicle.
- **Some assets don't count**, like the home you live in, one vehicle, household items, and certain savings, like retirement accounts.
- If you are already a Medi-Cal member, assets will be reviewed at your annual renewal. **Income rules are not changing.**

Someone asked if homes in Mexico count towards assets and she responded that property in Mexico does count. She also reminded seniors that the Medi-Cal renewal packets have gone out and to please complete and return them.

RICHARD PRADO SENIOR CENTER – Angela Domingos

Angela Domingos reported that the Richard Prado Senior Center is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. for the seniors to gather, socialize, sing Karaoke, and play cards. Lunch is served daily from 12:00 p.m. - 12:30 p.m. in the dining room for a daily average of 25 seniors with an additional 370 meals being home delivered by the Meals on Wheels drivers each day. Currently, there are 375 seniors receiving a weekly delivery of 5 frozen meals through the Revolution Foods program. All of this is being managed by 2 Site Coordinators, Vanntha Chann and Paula Segura, and it is the only site that has a receptionist, Christina Lemons, to help with the office flow of seniors, drivers, and 2 phone lines. The Senior Inc. group office is open Monday - Friday of each week, and activities sponsored by The Senior Inc. include daily DJ that provides music as well as Karaoke on Tuesdays and Thursdays; Zumba once a month; Fitness Class every Monday and Wednesday; Loteria at 9:30am and Sewing Club after lunch every Wednesday. In addition to the regular Friday dancing, this month also offers two special dances with the Birthday dance to honor all the celebrants this Friday, October 24th, and next week on October 31st for a Halloween Dance. Costumes are encouraged but not required to join in on the fun.

GENERAL SERVICES - PARKS AND RECREATION – Isaac Preston

Not in attendance. No report.

VETERANS SERVICE – Jose Lopez

Not in attendance.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES – Sara Swerffager, SPHN

Sara was present virtually and gave the following report:

Vaccination Updates:

- California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recently joined with Washington, Oregon, and Hawaii as the West Coast Health Alliance (WCHA) to have consistency with vaccine recommendations. These recommendations are based on guidelines from trusted professional medical organizations including The American Academy of Pediatrics, The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology and The American Academy of Family Physicians. The recommendations are required under Assembly Bill 144, which includes but is not limited to requiring health plans to cover immunizations and gives pharmacists the ability to administer immunizations.
- CDPH and WCHA continues to recommend COVID-19 vaccination for:
 - All aged 6- 23 months and 65 years and older
 - All planning pregnancy, as well as those who are pregnant, postpartum, and lactating
 - People with underlying medical conditions, risk factors for severe disease or those who are immunocompromised
 - Anyone in close contact with those with risk factors
 - Anyone who chooses protection.
- Seasonal flu vaccination is also recommended for those 6 months and older and the 2025-2026 should be available at your pharmacy or through your doctor.
- RSV vaccine continues to be routinely recommended once in a lifetime for all persons 75 years and older, those 50-74 years of age with risk factors for severe disease, infants younger than 8 months, and pregnant women 32-36 weeks gestation.

Public Health Education and Awareness Campaign - Disease Fighters!

- They highlight **Influenza** awareness and prevention this month.
- Please see our website for tips to reduce your risk of catching seasonal flu <https://www.kernpublichealth.com/healthy-community/community/disease-fighters>

KERN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES (BHRS) – Chad Acker

Chad Acker attended virtually and gave the following report:

Propositions 36 & 47:

- Prop 36 established treatment-mandated felonies for some drug offenses.
- Since December 2024, 276 referrals entered Kern's SUD treatment system.
- Kern BHRS received **\$8 million in Prop 47 funds** to support the *Kern New Beginnings Program*, covering services tied to Prop 36 (evaluations, case management, housing, etc.) for three years.

Youth Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) & Family Resource Center (FRC):

- A new **16-bed youth CSU and Family Resource Center** are under construction, funded by a BHCIP Grant.
- Expected completion: **Fall 2026**.
- Will serve as a hub for youth crisis care and family support.

Expanded Adult Access Sites:

- Adult access and assessment services are expanding across Bakersfield.
- Goal: improve convenience, reduce barriers, and increase engagement in treatment.
- Beginning on October 20, screening and assessment services previously provided only at the Mary K. Shell Access and Assessment Center will now be available at multiple community sites, making it easier for clients to get connected to care.
- The Bakersfield locations are as follows:
 - North – Henrietta Weill Memorial Child Guidance Clinic – 661 Roberts Lane
 - Northeast – Northeast Recovery and Wellness Center – 3715 Columbus Street
 - Southeast – Southeast Recovery and Wellness Center – 1600 East Belle Terrace
 - South – Clinica Sierra Vista – 3117 Wilson Road
 - West – West Recovery and Wellness Center – 5121 Stockdale Highway (Suite #275)
 - Central – Clarvida – 2821 H Street
- This change is part of our commitment to improving access and ensuring the highest quality of care for our community. Please note that limited access services will continue to be available at Mary K. Shell

Active RFPs (Requests for Proposal):

- Three RFPs are open for:
 1. Adult & Adolescent Outpatient SUD Services
 2. Adult & Children's Outpatient Specialty Mental Health Services
 3. Youth CSU & Family Resource Center
- Supports service expansion and program updates.

Senate Bill 43 (SB 43):

- Expands "gravely disabled" definition to include severe substance use disorders.
- Kern BHRS has completed **49 of 97 implementation items (50%)**.

- Full implementation expected **by January 1, 2026.**
- Trainings for clinical staff to come.

County Integrated Plan:

- Work has begun on the **three-year Behavioral Health Services Act plan**, due **June 30, 2026.**
- Will outline how funding is used for mental health and substance use programs.

Media Training:

- Staff completed professional training to improve communication with the public and media.

EMPLOYERS' TRAINING RESOURCE (ETR) – Peggy Langels

Peggy Langels appeared in person and gave the following report:

They have several new grants, the largest of which is the state Displaced Oil and Gas Worker Grant. This grant runs through 3/31/2027 and is to assist laid off oil and gas workers with finding new employment or entering a training program that will hopefully replace their current wage rates. Job opportunities and recruitments can be found on their website, www.America'sJobCenterofKern.com and on their Facebook page. They also have their weekly Job Hub in person at the Recruitment Center, 1215 Olive Dr., Suite C in Bakersfield every Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. This is where their Job Developers announce new jobs and upcoming recruitments for the week, as well as having employers present. Hall Ambulance EMT Academy will be starting January 27, 2026, and deadline to apply is November 14, 2025. Veteran's Job Club is held online and in person every Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. at Southeast AJCC. If you know someone that is interested in training, they have in person orientations on Tuesdays at 9:30am at the Southeast AJCC and Virtual Orientations on Thursday's at 9:30 a.m. There are many workshops being held on a weekly basis through the AJCC partner EDD; Mock Interviews, The Expungement Process, Veteran's Job Club Workshop, State Employment Workshops, and CalJOBS Virtual Workshops. ETR website is located at <https://www.employertrainingresource.com/> and the AJCC Workshop is located at <https://www.americasjobcenterofkern.com/>. SER Jobs in the southeast office is still not taking any applications at this time.

PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES – Catherine Vasquez

Catherine Vasquez appeared in person and gave the following report:

Home Access Grant

Is an Americans with Disabilities (ADA) grant for wheelchair ramp, grab bars, and walk-in shower for low-income disabled persons. Owner-occupied and rental property are eligible if the property owner agrees to the work. An inspection is completed to determine specific needs, and all work is done by licensed contractors.

Home Improvement Loan

To replace air conditioner, heater, roof, electrical, plumbing, windows, insulation, floors, and paint. Available to low-income owner-occupied single-family residence. Zero interest, deferred payment loan due and payable in full when the owner no longer occupies the property.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC) – Jessica Carrillo

Not in attendance.

VICTIM WITNESS PROGRAM – Kayla Pinkston

Not in attendance.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS - AASD SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION REPORT

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Jeremy Oliver

Jeremy Oliver reported the following:

FEDERAL

Awaiting the passage of a Continuing Resolution to end the Federal Government shut down.

STATE

The State is awaiting full assessment of federal impacts. The California Department of Aging (CDA) is moving forward with making changes in connection with the passage of SB-1249 Mello-Granlund Older Californians Act. Impacts will be on Area Agencies on Aging structures, boundaries and most significantly funding formulas. Please be sure to look for any presentations related to new funding formulas under the Interstate Funding Formula (IFF) as they are changing the categories that are used to allocate funding to all Area Agencies on Aging.

DEPARTMENT

The Department continues to monitor all changes at federal and state levels.

It's open enrollment now until December 7th for Medicare recipients. Our HICAP staff are working on comparisons to assist anyone who may have questions related to their Medicare. Reminder if you are dual covered by Medi-Cal and Medicare you can make changes outside the open enrollment period.

Adult Protective Services is awaiting confirmation of Home Safe program funding allocation to the county.

In-Home Supportive Services is struggling to keep up with incoming referrals and to complete all annual assessments on CFCO cases. In the month of July, 1,548 CFCO cases were overdue out of (18,000 IHSS cases total), penalty is \$134,557.92 (reminder this is only 50% of the cost of the penalty for this year). IHSS staff have been working diligently to reduce the total CFCO overdue cases/month while maintaining existing cases and have brought the total overdue down to 612 cases by the end of September. We are awaiting the assessment

of the penalty for September (we estimate around \$50-60K). They continue to have delays in new intakes and reduced response times due to the shift in workloads. Please note they need to make this shift so they do not incur additional costs that could result in loss of staff, which will only cause further delays in responding to the needs of IHSS clients.

As for the Ombudsman program, the State has designed new posters for residents' rights. They will share copies as they become available. They do know that they will have multiple languages available on the posters as well.

BREAK: 2:19 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

OPERATING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BYLAWS COMMITTEE – S. Bodnar

Commissioner Bodnar reported the revised Bylaws are going before the Board of Supervisors for approval and adoption tomorrow, October 21st.

CALIFORNIA SENIOR LEGISLATURE (CSL) – J. Lemucchi, J. Snyder

Vice Chair Lemucchi reported that beginning tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday and Wednesday of this week, the CSL members will be having its annual session, and Assembly and Senate members will be voting on the top 10 priorities to hopefully get them submitted as State Bills. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of next week, she and Chair Snyder will be leaving for Sacramento for the CSL General Session.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENT – S. Gomez

Commissioner Gomez reported the following:

Recently Reappointed: None.

New Appointments: None.

Resignations/Retiring:

1. Jane Decker – submitted a letter stating she would be resigning effective September 30, 2025.

Expired Terms:

1. Yolanda Prado – term expired 09/08/2025.

Appointments Soon to Expire:

1. Sonia Dhillon – for term expiring 09/15/2025.
2. Doris Duquette – for term expiring 09/29/2025.

Laura said she will get letters out to the appointing entities for those who emailed her stating they wish to continue serving on the COA.

Vacancies:

1. District 1 – for term expiring 06/17/2026.
2. District 1 - for term expiring 05/04/2027
3. District 5 – for term expiring 06/17/2027

New Applications Received:

1. Julie Parsons applied and Laura is waiting to receive the application from the Clerk of the Board's office.

Follow up on Previously Submitted Application:

1. She reached out to Suzann Gray is said she is still interested in serving on the COA but not until after January or February 2026.

This concludes the Commissioner Appointment Report for October 2025.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – A. Estrada; E. Linder

Commissioner Linder reported they have some ideas in the works and will share more pending the outcome of this afternoon's COA Foundation meeting.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – S. Bodnar; S. Gomez; J. Lemucchi; Y. Prado; C. Ray; J. Snyder

Chair Snyder reported that the Executive Committee met October 1, 2025, and asked for feedback on Lake Isabella issues. Also discussed Commissioner recruitment. She contacted Supervisor Peter's office, and she will be meeting with the Chief of Staff, Leigh Ann Cook, at 10:00 a.m. on November 4th. She asked Laura to prepare the minutes from the COA meeting in Lake Isabella so she could take a copy of it to give to Chief of Staff Cook. She requested Commissioner Gomez attend the meeting with her to discuss the Commissioner recruitment and appointment process. The Executive Committee will be developing a protocol or policy for Commissioner when asked to speak, how to approach speaking in public, etc. Chair Snyder and Vice Chair Lemucchi will be creating an outline of information and possibilities to bring back to the Executive Committee to discuss. Other items discussed will be shared during Operating Committee reports.

IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS) ADVISORY – A. Hernandez

No report.

LONG TERM CARE – S. Dhillon; D. Duquette; N. Jackson; C. Ray

No report.

MARKETING & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE – A. Estrada; D. Duquette; J. Juarez-Ceja; M. Salazar; Y. Prado; J. Snyder

Commissioner Prado reported she received a call from Bakersfield Family Medical Group and confirmed the COA will be participating in their Senior Health Expo on November 1st at 9:00 a.m. She will reach out to see who would like to attend with her.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE –G. Brown; B. Goodlow; N. Jackson

No report.

SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY – S. Bodnar; B. Goodlow; A. Hernandez; C. Ray

The Committee provided reports on the following senior centers:

Commissioner Goodlow:

- Shafter Senior Center: She followed up with Shafter Senior Center about the broken refrigerator. Stephanie informed her the refrigerator had been repaired and that everything was going well. Attendance is good. Commissioner Goodlow asked Stephanie to notify her if there were any changes and if she needed help with anything.
- Taft: She attempted to contact Casey at the Taft Senior Center for a follow-up, but there was no answer, so she left a message that she was doing a follow-up on the repair of the steam table.
- Tehachapi Senior Center: Mr. Louis stated that everything was ok. Attendance was good and the programs are active.
- Bakersfield Senior Center: Mrs. Parker was notified by Mr. Pelz, Executive Director of the Housing Authority, that there is an assumption that the housing application will be successful and to plan to relocate by the end of March 2026. The construction will start in May 2026. There is great participation in the activities. The meals are good but there are a lot of meals being taken to go rather than staying at the center to consume.
- Remember Veterans Day is November 11th.

Parliamentarian Bodnar:

- Ridgecrest Senior Center – After community protest, the senior center's hours were restored, and the City of Ridgecrest is in the process of hiring a 16-hour position to keep the place open outside of meal serving hours.

Commissioner Christie:

- Ben Austin Senior Center – The center appreciates the fast response from Isaac Preston, Ex-Officio Member of Kern County General Services, who helped expedite the repair of their air conditioning. She talked with Connie, and they are still trying to work out the monthly bill for the landline at the center. She is requesting assistance from Supervisor Parlier's office about this matter but has yet to receive a response.

- Delano Senior Center – The seniors are doing great and thanked her for asking about them.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE – D. Duquette

No report.

THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING COUNSEL OF CALIFORNIA (TACC) – S. Dhillon; S. Gomez

Commissioner Gomez shared that they had a brief meeting on October 9th because they are anticipating meeting together during the annual C4A conference in November 2025. They have some new Commissioners on the board. They presented the findings from the Palisades and Eaton fires and that will also be presented at the C4A Conference. Some of the things that they did find were:

1. Disaster Onset & Emergency Communication Challenges
2. Mobility, Planning, and Evacuation Challenges
3. Emergency Response Issues During Eaton Fire
4. Evacuation Center & Medical Care Issues
5. Recovery & Housing Challenges
6. Long-Term Care Facility Closures & Care Disruptions
7. Behavioral Health & Social Isolation
8. Long-Term Systemic Issues
9. Infrastructure, Environmental, and Housing Pressures
10. Community-Based Resilience Models
11. Future Preparedness Concerns

There have been reports of a lack of disaster-related scams and a lack of legal advocacy. There was also a report tied to the future of health, aging, and longevity, 5 key steps for Area Agencies on Aging:

1. New Longevity Life Stages
2. Matching our Health spans to our Lifespan
3. Averting Mass Elder Poverty
4. Eliminating ageism
5. Activating a New Purpose for Maturity

TRANSPORTATION – J. Lemucchi; M. Salazar

Vice-Chair Lemucchi shared that on October 14, 2025, she attended the State Disability & Aging Community Living Advisory Committee (DACLAC). The meeting was brief giving Legislative Updates. On October 15, 2025, she attended the Kern Council of Government (Kern COG)'s Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC). This brief meeting provided updates on Cal Trans grant from 2021 "Program & Projects 5310". Two Kern agencies received monies totaling \$1.663 mil for 12 vans & busses. The two agencies were: Bakersfield ARC and NAPD. When asked if those attending had any questions, she stated that COA meetings are held throughout Kern County at Senior Centers and the biggest complaint COA receives from older adults is the lack of transportation throughout all of Kern. Irene Enriques, regional planner with Kern COG said she'd put her in touch with Kern Transit. Angela Willis, public works manager with Kern Transit emailed her the next day saying

Irene passed on this message. She provided a quick review of Kern Transit services. She asked if she would share with Kern Transit the specific concerns being brought up to COA's attention, that Kern Transit would be happy to see how they can address the needs. She also stated Kern Transit would be happy to discuss these concerns. She replied to Angela's email with an invitation to be a presenter at future, rural COA meetings to provide what older adults have available to them regarding public transportation.

Commissioner Salazar attended a virtual Kern COG meeting on September 15th for stakeholders asking for input on how to improve transportation for older adults, those with disabilities and caregivers, and the understanding of needs in those areas. They want to focus on accessibility, mobility, and change in policy to improve and expand these services in rural communities. It was a brainstorming session. Vice Chair Lemucchi mentioned that there is clearly a disconnect between the September stakeholder meeting and the SSTAC committee. SSTAC is made up of the different public transit systems throughout all of Kern County as well as the community service agencies serving people with disabilities, older adults and the public at large.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION – G. Brown; E. Linder

Prior to the meeting, the Commission recognized 25 senior nutrition volunteers for their volunteerism. Volunteers will continue to be recognized as they visit different senior centers throughout the county.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- **Centenarian Recognition Program Parliamentarian** – Chair Snyder reported a number of applications were submitted; however, a couple have passed prior to their birthday. The committee will continue to recognize Centenarians. She encouraged Commissioners to spread the word about our program and if you need a copy of the flyer, to reach out to Laura and she'll send it again.
- **COA Gathering** – There will not be a COA holiday luncheon this year. Instead, Commissioners will meet mid-morning on December 10th at AASD to assemble and distribute candy canes to staff. Snacks will be provided by Jeremy.
- **Business Cards** – Chair Snyder reminded Commissioners that Laura has business cards for Commissioners who need them. She also provided the order form for ordering COA shirts and name badges. The Department will pay for your name badge, but if it is lost or needs to be replaced, it will be at your own expense. Shirts are also at your own expense.
- **Email to AASD Staff** – Commissioner Linder suggested the Commission sending an email every month or quarter to AASD staff through Laura to let them know the Commission is thinking of them and just to acknowledge the work staff do for our older adults. Chair Snyder said she likes that and wants to work with her committee on something and bring it to the Exec. Committee.

NEXT MEETINGS:

EXECUTIVE MEETING	REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, November 4, 2025 (due to C4A conference beginning Wednesday) 1:30 pm Via Zoom If interested in attending via Zoom, please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052.	Monday, November 17, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. Ben Austin Senior Center 1751 McKee Road, Bakersfield, CA 93307 (COA Ex-Officio Members and the public may attend in person or via Zoom. Please contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052 for the link to join)

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Oliver
Secretary

JO/lj