



We have the legal right of way.

DISABILITY RIGHTS OHIO

Federal Fiscal Year 2020 Programmatic Priorities

Disability Rights Ohio is a non-profit organization with a mission to advocate for the human, civil, and legal rights of people with disabilities in Ohio.

We seek to fulfill this mission through numerous types of advocacy including: systemic, individual, policy and, when necessary, through the legal system. Disability Rights Ohio strives to provide support to as many people as possible. In order to maximize our impact with the resources available, we seek community input every year to focus our priorities on issues where we can have the most effective impact.

Disability Rights Ohio envisions a society in which people with disabilities are full and equal members in all areas including:

A society in which people with disabilities enjoy the rights and opportunities of all people, particularly in the electoral process. This year, Disability Rights Ohio will:

- Engage in targeted voting outreach and systemic advocacy that is focused on encouraging and assisting with participation in the election process
- Work to provide information and advocacy for those who wish to vote in the November 2019 General Election and the March 2020 Primary Election, including staffing a hot line on Election Day

A society in which people with disabilities are empowered.

This year, Disability Rights Ohio will:

- Support self-advocates to empower their voices and the organizations they run
- Continue work to expand supported decision-making as an alternative to guardianship in collaboration with self-advocates, families, stakeholders and policy-makers, with a focus on self-advocacy and supported decision-making for transition age students

A society in which people with disabilities make decisions about where, how and with whom they will live. This year, Disability Rights Ohio will focus on:

- Continue the collaboration with Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services on Recovery Requires a Community to redress the segregation of individuals with mental illness in nursing facilities and the related lack of access to community mental health services
- Individual and systemic advocacy on the new rule for assessing needs and administering the waitlist for Medicaid waivers for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities

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**OHIO DISABILITY RIGHTS LAW
AND POLICY CENTER, INC.**



- Individual and systemic advocacy for individuals in, or at risk of going into, a nursing facility because of a denial or reduction of services, with a focus on Home Choice changes and empowering individuals who want to move into the community
- Individual and systemic advocacy for individuals who are denied nursing services under delegated nursing rules
- Policy advocacy on provider capacity concerns in all systems including Medicaid Managed Care, mental health and developmental disability systems
- Advocacy to protect rights and redress discrimination by local government when zoning or other ordinances threaten integrated housing options for individuals with disabilities (e.g. restrictions on “group homes”)
- Implementation of the Ball v. DeWine settlement agreement, including court approval and fairness hearing process
- Policy advocacy to encourage the state to invest in more scattered site, affordable accessible housing and accessible transportation options
- Evaluating capacity and adequacy of kids behavioral health services, including the state budget focus on multi-system youth

**A society in which people with disabilities make decisions about where they learn.
This year, Disability Rights Ohio will focus on:**

- Systemic work on juvenile justice and school to prison pipeline issues, including collaboration with Ohio Department of Education (ODE), monitoring facilities, systemic complaints, and individual representation in select cases
- Implementation of the *Doe v. Ohio* settlement agreement, including the court approval and fairness hearing process
- Expanding individual and systemic advocacy in the 11 districts identified in the Doe settlement with a focus on integrated services and least restrictive environment (LRE), academic achievement, access to behavior supports, assistive technology and transition services
- Policy advocacy on restraint and seclusion, specifically advocating for a complaint process as part of ODE’s rule on seclusion and restraint
- Systemic advocacy to address denials of education in institutional settings, including residential treatment facilities and juvenile detention facilities
- Addressing barriers to school based mental health services including policy advocacy on the new mental health services in schools initiatives from state budget
- Implementing and supporting the Ingram White Castle Special Education Fellow program



A society in which people with disabilities make decisions about where they work.

Disability Rights Ohio will:

- Continue work on the Seneca Re-Ad matter to ensure the rights of individuals working in non-integrated work environments are protected, including minimum wage and reasonable accommodations necessary to eliminate discrimination
- Through the Client Assistance Program
 - Participate in the State Rehabilitation Council to monitor and partner on the activities of the state vocational rehabilitation (VR) authority called Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD)
 - Address blanket denials by OOD through individual advocacy and litigation where services are denied without individual analysis or because of policies that conflict with federal law
 - Engage in targeted outreach to transition age youth to connect them to services and empower self-advocacy
- Address barriers to competitive employment for students and young adults transitioning from secondary education, including access to transportation
- Provide benefits counseling through our WIPA program to Social Security beneficiaries returning to work

A society in which people with disabilities are free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Disability Rights Ohio will:

- Monitor a variety of facilities and other regulated entities with a focus on places where people with disabilities are isolated;
- Investigate allegations of abuse and neglect in a variety of settings where necessary to ensure systems and service providers are held accountable, policy changes are made, and individuals with disabilities are safe including:
 - allegations of suspicious deaths, serious injury, restraint and seclusion, sexual abuse, significant environmental concerns or systemic rights violations
 - nursing facilities, with a focus on significant environmental conditions and inappropriate use of locked units
 - large private and public ICFs for individuals with I/DD, including cultures of abuse, a lack of trauma informed care, and a lack of access to assistive technology
- Engage in systemic advocacy regarding lack of access to mental health services and the consequences (e.g., suicide risk, restrictive housing) in jails and prisons



- Redress accessibility barriers caused by new technologies in jails and prisons that impairs the ability of inmates with disabilities to ask for services or raise concerns (e.g. new electronic grievance systems)
- Monitor state psychiatric hospitals and advocate for treatment environments, policies and procedures that promote recovery and comply with legal and accreditation standards, including engaging with partner agencies to address the level system for forensic patients
- Collaborate with state and community partners to advocate for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in prisons who need services, including community based services to help them re-enter their communities
- Advocate for people with disabilities who are victims of crime
- Implement the Social Security representative payee review program

Disability Rights Ohio will also:

- Take necessary steps to enforce the statutory access under federal and state law to facilities, individuals and their records;
- Provide information and education on a range of disability policy and legal issues to state, local, and federal officials;
- Conduct outreach and training to people with disabilities, their families and advocates, including analyzing the effectiveness of outreach to underserved communities.

In addition to its systemic advocacy, Disability Rights Ohio will continue to build direct service capacity by:

- Providing robust information and advice to maximize our ability to assist people with disabilities to self-advocate;
- Help individuals enforce their rights and get the services they need by providing merit based limited representation to remedy the dispute at the earliest possible opportunity. The following factors will be considered in deciding if limited representation can be provided:
 - Does the law support the individual's goal?
 - Can the individual's goal be achieved through limited representation, such as negotiation?
 - Has the individual already tried self-advocacy without success?
 - Is there a risk of harm, institutionalization or significant rights violation?

