



**Disability  
Rights** OHIO

We have the legal right of way.

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## **DISABILITY RIGHTS OHIO**

### Federal Fiscal Year 2019 Programmatic Priorities

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**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.**

**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:**

- Work to provide information and assistance to voters or those who wish to vote in the November 2018 election, including staffing a hot line on Election Day;
- In anticipation of the 2018 general election, engage in systemic advocacy to protect the right to vote of individuals who are hospitalized on Election Day and as a result are denied ballot access by county and state officials
- Take steps to ensure that access to voting information and the registration and balloting process is not discriminatory and accessible to all

**A society in which people with disabilities are self-directed.**

**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, and to effect needed reforms in Ohio's protective services and guardianship systems.



## **A society in which people with disabilities make decisions about where, how and with whom they will live.**

### **Disability Rights Ohio will:**

- Redress housing discrimination in areas of systemic concern where policies or practices are a barrier to full integration into the community;
- Address in partnership with legal services and others housing as a preeminent issue related to disability and poverty to promote access to decent, safe, accessible, affordable housing;
- Investigate and in select cases address undue segregation of people in nursing facilities or at risk of being placed in a nursing facility, including reporting on the implementation of Recovery Requires a Community, evaluating its achievements (including impact on individuals), areas for improvement, and potential strategies to improve implementation;
- Prosecute the case of *Ball v. Kasich*, which will require Ohio to expand options for community based long term service and supports and competitive and integrated employment;
- By working in coalition and by representation in individual cases, take steps to ensure that
  - the system of long term services and supports for people with disabilities has sufficient capacity to meet the needs of those with higher and more diverse service needs,
  - service providers are compensated at a rate that ensures recruitment and retention of qualified staff, and
  - that eligibility and assessment tools do not restrict services in such a way as to pose a threat to the health and safety of waiver recipients;
- In partnership with Centers for Independent Living, the Developmental Disabilities Council, and other stakeholders, continue to evaluate access to transportation, both intra and interstate, for people with disabilities.

## **A society in which people with disabilities make decisions about where they learn.**

### **Disability Rights Ohio will:**

- Take steps to address discrimination in post-secondary education and ensure that needed accommodations are provided to qualified individuals;
- With a focus on implementation of section 511 of the Workforce Investment Opportunities Act, monitor implementation of new transition requirements and engage in direct legal advocacy in select cases to overcome barriers to transition;
- Prosecute the case of *Doe v. Ohio* to ensure quality integrated education for students with disabilities in Ohio schools;
- Continue in coalition with parent advocates and students to investigate implementation of state rules on restraint and seclusion of students; reporting by schools; and enforcement or other compliance efforts by the state;
- Take action to address denials of education in institutional settings, including residential treatment facilities and juvenile detention facilities;

- Work to address systemic injustices within the education system for student with disabilities to improve our school’s mental health supports while decreasing criminal justice response to disability related behaviors.
- Implement and support 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 activity to end discriminatory licensure and other practices that bar otherwise qualified applicants and professionals from employment;
- Building on a successful outcome in the Seneca Re-Ad matter, leverage additional remedies on behalf of individuals working in non-integrated work environments, 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,
  - Evaluate current practices of the VR authority to maximize outcomes for individual clients, particularly where standards under federal law are at issue, in access to job training and higher education, self-employment, and where the client is a transitioned age youth;
- Pursue representation where the person is part of a return to work program and seeks to return to or retain employment and experiences employment discrimination or denial of reasonable accommodations

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

### **Disability Rights Ohio will:**

- Monitor facilities and other regulated entities where people with disabilities are isolated and segregated;
- Pursue strategies to remedy abuse, neglect, and significant rights violation in residential treatment facilities and other institutions;
- Review reports and complaints about abuse or neglect and investigate where necessary to ensure systems and individuals are held accountable, policy changes are made, and individuals with disabilities are safe;
- Engage in advocacy for systemic policy changes to increase access to mental health treatment and to correct systemic rights violations, with a focus on treatment for forensic patients in Ohio’s state hospitals, adequate mental health care for inmates in Ohio’s prisons, and therapeutic treatment for children in youth residential treatment facilities and with the assistance of an expert, evaluate and pursue strategies to eliminate systemic violations and promote community integration under Title II of the ADA;
- Evaluate and engage a municipal jurisdiction to address policy level failures to effectively communicate or otherwise accommodate individuals with disabilities during their interactions with law enforcement.

### **Disability Rights Ohio will also:**

- Take necessary steps to enforce the statutory access under federal and state law to individuals and their records;
- Provide information and education on a range of disability policy and legal issues to state, local, and federal elected officials;
- Conduct outreach and training to people with disabilities, their families and providers, including operation of a fee for service speakers' bureau.

### **In addition to its systemic advocacy, Disability Rights Ohio will continue to build capacity at its "front door" by:**

- Providing robust information and advice to assist people with disabilities to self-advocate;
- On disability issues where the merits of the case warrant, provide limited representation in order to remedy the dispute at the earliest possible opportunity. Prompt resolution of the legal issue saves all parties time and money, and allows the client to access needed services or benefits in a real time fashion, without the delay and risk of prolonged litigation.