

STATE PROTECTION & ADVOCACY SYSTEMS (P&As)

Using the power of the law to uphold the human rights of people with disabilities

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P&As

P&As (one in every state and territory) are powerful legal partners in the developmental disabilities (DD) network — a collaborative group of organizations and advocates working to empower people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to make informed decisions and participate fully in their communities.

FUNDED BY THE DD ACT, P&As:



PROTECT
the civil rights and dignity of people with disabilities.



SUPPORT
clients in advocating for themselves.



EDUCATE
stakeholders to improve state policies.



COLLABORATE
with community partners to find alternative solutions to litigation.



INFORM
the public about injustices against people with disabilities.

P&As USE LEGAL TOOLS TO HELP PEOPLE:



- Access health care
- Stay safe in their schools and communities
- Receive accommodations so they can participate fully in community activities
- Access individualized supports and services they need for their education
- Pursue competitive, integrated employment
- Live independently in the community, not institutions

DID YOU KNOW? P&As SPEND ONLY ~3% OF THEIR TIME ON LITIGATION.



THE POWER OF ACCESS

P&As have the legal power and authority to go anywhere people with I/DD live, work, study, or play if neglect or abuse is suspected or their rights are violated.

ONE CASE CAN CREATE CHANGE

“George” lived in a 160-person residential facility. While recovering from a broken arm, George engaged in self-injurious behavior. The facility’s protocol for preventing injury included physical restraint of both arms if other methods failed. Although that was inappropriate due to George’s broken arm, the facility failed to develop an appropriate safety plan. For nearly three weeks, they continued to use the two-arm restraint, which caused additional injuries.

George’s family reported the situation to a state agency responsible for preventing

abuse. When it wasn’t resolved, they contacted their P&A, which used its access authority to obtain records from the state agency and the facility. The P&A found violations of key protocols and evidence that the state agency failed to conduct a thorough investigation. As a result, the state agency reopened its investigation. In addition, the facility revised its policies, identified appropriate interventions, and immediately trained staff to use them, ensuring the safety and well-being of George and other residents.

“I can’t imagine, without legal advocacy, what the world would be like for people with disabilities. It’s essential that we are present.”

Executive Director, Wyoming P&A