

Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services http://transition.acf.hhs.gov/programs/aidd

# Fact Sheet: Protection and Advocacy Systems

Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&As) work at the state level to protect individuals with developmental disabilities by empowering them and advocating on their behalf. There are 57 P&As in the United States and its territories, and all are independent of service-providing agencies within their states.

Along with the other Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities grantees, P&As are dedicated to the ongoing fight for the personal and civil rights of individuals with developmental disabilities. P&As provide legal support to traditionally unserved or underserved populations to help them navigate the legal system to achieve resolution and encourage systems change. P&As ensure that individuals with disabilities are able to exercise their rights to make choices, contribute to society and live independently.

## **Beyond Litigation**

While their focus is most often legal, P&As also engage in a full range of other efforts to promote the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities.

P&As often provide information and referrals, as well as training and technical assistance to service providers, state legislators and other policymakers. They also conduct selfadvocacy trainings and raise public awareness of legal and social issues affecting individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

#### In FY 2011, P&As:

- Served 21,374 individual clients
- Remedied 9,470 cases of complaints of abuse, neglect, discrimination, or rights violations
- Helped 6,580 students receive education and support to reach their educational goals

# Working Toward Inclusive Education and Independent Living

P&As provide substantial advocacy and legal services on educational issues, and work to ensure that students receive an appropriate education in an inclusive setting.

P&As have also made great strides in increasing the opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities to make decisions for themselves about where and with whom they live.

## Olmstead and Other Cases

P&As have been involved in a significant number of landmark cases and work closely with other entities, especially State Councils on Developmental Disabilities and University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. P&As work to implement the U.S. Supreme Court's 1999 decision in *Olmstead* v. *L.C.*, which requires states to eliminate unnecessary segregation of people with disabilities, and to ensure that they receive services in the most integrated setting possible.