

2023 Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Prevent and stop abuse and neglect in any setting where people with disabilities live or receive services, with a focus on individuals and communities experiencing multiple forms of discrimination.

- Objective 1: Educate people with disabilities on residents/patient bills of rights and assist them in exercising their rights by providing short term legal assistance to patients/residents of institutions (i.e., state psychiatric hospitals) and licensed HCBS settings (i.e., group homes), related to patient/resident rights.
- Objective 2: Find and stop abuse and neglect and provide rights-based education to patients and residents of state psychiatric hospitals and Developmental Centers by conducting quarterly monitoring.
- Objective 3: Identify misplaced youth with disabilities as well as ensure that youth residents are free from abuse and neglect and are knowledgeable about and can exercise their rights in youth psychiatric facilities, detention facilities, and facilities licensed by Juvenile Justice Commission through targeted monitoring and rights-based education.
- Objective 4: Respond to allegations of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or unexplained death of individuals in institutions and licensed settings through primary and secondary investigations and self-advocacy assistance.
- Objective 5: Investigate patient safety at state psychiatric hospitals, focusing on Trenton Psychiatric Hospital, with the intent of engaging in systemic advocacy.
- Objective 6: Represent the interests of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have a state Bureau of Guardianship Services guardian in end-of-life consultations with BGS, as required by state regulation.
- Objective 7: Ensure that beneficiaries of Social Security and Supplemental Security Income are not financially exploited or subject to abuse or neglect by representative payees through the Social Security Administration review process.

Goal 2: Ensure that people with disabilities, particularly individuals and communities experiencing multiple forms of discrimination, can access equitable services, supports, and necessary resources needed to live and thrive in the community.

Employment

- Objective 1: Ensure equitable access to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services for VR applicants and clients by providing legal representation emphasizing IPE development, informed choice, and access to appeal rights.
- Objective 2: Increase awareness of VR services, VR client rights, and the Client Assistance Program (CAP) through outreach and education about CAP to Vocational Rehabilitation constituencies, with a focus in the Black and LatinX communities, including VR clients and prospective VR clients, VR agencies and staff, and other stakeholders.
- Objective 3: Advocate equitable access to options for, and increase access to, competitive, integrated employment with a focus on VR clients with complex medical, physical, BH needs, and those experiencing multiple forms of discriminations consistent with NJ's Employment First strategy.
- Objective 4: Remove overpayments that are barriers to employment by providing short-term legal representation to Social Security beneficiaries.

Community Based Services and Supports

- Objective 1: Increase the ability of youth with disabilities to access to community-based services and supports with a focus on providing information about the Children Systems of Care eligibility criteria, application process, services available, and appeal rights. Provide legal representation to underserved and unserved youth, with a focus on youth in Family Resource Care and Black and LatinX with respect to adverse Medicaid decisions as well as denial or termination of CSOC or PerformCare services.
- Objective 2: Ensure that adults with disabilities access community-based services and supports with a focus on providing information about Medicaid waiver eligibility criteria, application process, services available, and appeal rights. Provide legal representation with respect to denial, reduction, or termination of Medicaid eligibility and Medicaid long-term services and supports with an emphasis on people with disabilities who are experiencing multiple forms of discrimination.
- Objective 3: Identify institutionalized adults with disabilities, and in particular those with serious mental illness, IDD, and TBI in state psychiatric hospitals, Developmental

Centers, and nursing homes and provide legal representation related to transition to HCBS, and make recommendations to state partners regarding legally based home and community-based solutions to move these individuals to the most integrated settings.

Housing

- Objective 1: Educate state Medicaid agency and other state partners on the federal home and community-based settings rule to ensure that the implementation of rule fully complies with the federal law, especially related to landlord/tenant protections under New Jersey law and provide short-term legal advice to people with disabilities related to implementation of the HCBS rule.
- Objective 2: Increase supply of affordable, accessible housings, especially for those with complex medical and behavioral health needs, that align with delivery system of community-based services and supports through collaboration and systemic advocacy with state partners.
- Objective 3: Increase DRNJ's capacity to provide high-quality self-advocacy assistance and access to self-advocacy materials as well as information and referral related to acquiring and maintaining affordable, accessible housing.

Transportation

- Objective 1: Advocate for effective state oversight of Medicaid non-emergency medical transportation provided by Modivcare, with a focus on ensuring that people with disabilities are provided accessible vehicles for those using wheelchairs, walkers, who may use oxygen machines or any equipment to be transported with the person.
- Objective 2: Engage in collaborations and systemic advocacy regarding accessible transportation for people with disabilities including Accesslink, NJTIP, NJTransit, and county-based transportation.

Education and Transition Services for Youth

- Objective 1: Ensure access to pre-ETS and transition services, emphasizing Individual Educations Plan (IEP) and Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) development, informed choice, financial support for college and graduate school, and access to appeal rights to ensure equitable access to transition and VR services by providing legal assistance to students and youth between the ages of 14-22, especially youth with disabilities who experience multiple forms of discrimination (i.e., youth in Resource Family Care, Black and Latinx youth).

- Objective 2: Assure youth in Mercer and Essex Counties who are experiencing school-based discipline or are involved in the youth-justice system receive appropriate educational school-based services and supports in the least restrictive environment as well as Medicaid, CSOC and PerformCare services through information and legal representation.
- Objective 3: Provide I&R and short-term limited legal assistance to students with disabilities and families, especially those experiencing multiple forms of discrimination, regarding educational rights under IDEA as well as potential referral to pro bono legal resources.

Healthcare

- Objective 1: Educate people with disabilities regarding COVID-related health issues and rights (i.e., the right to have a support person during hospitalizations) and assist them in exercising their rights by providing short-term legal assistance.
- Objective 2: Educate people with disabilities regarding accessing Medicaid Private Duty Nursing and Medicaid out-of-state providers and assist them in exercising their rights by providing information and referral as well as self-advocacy assistance.

Voting

- Objective 1: Operate voting hotline for people with disabilities who have questions about voting or are experiencing difficulties voting and provide disability expertise to existing voting hotlines including Election Protection and the New Jersey League of Women Voters.
- Objective 2: Educate people with disabilities regarding their voting rights and how they can become eligible to vote by collaborating with the Boggs Center and NJCDD to update the voting guide, *Voting: It's My Right*, distributing resources to individuals and policymakers, and training to groups of people with disabilities.
- Objective 3: Raise awareness of issues related to voting for people with disabilities with state election officials through regular educational meetings.
- Objective 4: Increase voting registration by collaborating with REV UP NJ on voting registration rally and collaborating with state psychiatric hospitals to help register residents.

Goal 3: Eliminate policies and practices that discriminate against people with disabilities, with an emphasis on limiting unnecessary guardianship for people with disabilities.

- Objective 1: Expand the knowledge and use of supported decision-making to reduce the number of unnecessary guardianships in New Jersey through collaboration with key stakeholders.
- Objective 2: Restore capacity of those subject to guardianship or challenge a guardian's decision by providing legal representation to individuals with disabilities, especially those experiencing multiple forms of discrimination.
- Objective 3: Improve accessibility at places of public accommodation, government services, and healthcare settings through systems advocacy with state agencies.
- Objective 4: Ensure that tenants with disabilities can access a working enforcement mechanism when faced with housing discrimination in the form of denials of accommodations or modifications by providing information and referral and short-term legal advice.
- Objective 5: Promote the right to reasonable accommodations in the workplace for employees with disabilities by providing information and referral and short-term legal advice.
- Objective 6: Improve access to polling locations by responding to complaints regarding polling location accessibility.
- Objective 7: Improve accessibility of vote-by-mail ballots by advocating for electronic delivery and return.
- Objective 8: Ensure that election officials have knowledge about removing barriers that people with disabilities experience which prevent them from accessing the vote.