

# DISABILITY RIGHTS NEW JERSEY

ADVANCING JUSTICE. ADVOCATING INCLUSION.



30  
YEARS OF SERVICE

## SPONSORSHIP PROPOSAL



# WHAT WE STAND FOR

**Disability Rights New Jersey** is a non-profit legal advocacy organization appointed by the Governor in 1994 to be New Jersey's designated Protection and Advocacy system for people with disabilities, under federal law. For 30 years, we have fought within the legal system to uphold the promise of *Olmstead*, and advance the human, civil, and legal rights of people with disabilities. Through our work, we promote the self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration of people with disabilities into all facets of community life.

Disability Rights NJ is the **only** statewide organization empowered with a unique and powerful access authority to monitor any and all facilities where people with disabilities, live, work, attend school, and receive services to ensure freedom from abuse and neglect.

We provide a wide array of services for individuals with disabilities, their families, and stakeholders in the disability community, at no cost. We investigate allegations of abuse and neglect, provide legal representation, self-advocacy resources, and information and referrals to individuals with disabilities and their families, and engage in outreach, education, and training throughout the state. Across our advocacy services, we have assisted over 30,000 individuals and indirectly impacted over 765,000 people with our systemic litigation and policy advocacy.



# BY THE NUMBERS

**30,000+**

Individuals served

**765,432+**

Individuals impacted through our systemic litigation



**911,300+**

10.3% of the New Jersey population report having at least one disability

**OUTREACH & EDUCATION:**

5,160+ events reaching

**454,500+**

**RECIPIENTS OF NEWSLETTER & EBLASTS:**

**6,401**

each mailing

**SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS:**

 4,447

 561

 1,161

 506

**6,675**





# WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## **NJ State Psychiatric Hospital Lawsuit:** Systemic Litigation Resulting from our Multi-Year Investigation of Abuse, Neglect, and Rights Violations

In February 2024, Disability Rights NJ filed a lawsuit in the United States District Court of New Jersey against the State of New Jersey, the NJ Department of Health, and the NJ Department of Human Services. The lawsuit addresses the significant harm faced by individuals confined to the State psychiatric hospitals who are subjected to abusive and neglectful conditions and who are ready for discharge, but still held involuntarily due to lack of mental health services in the community. These practices violate the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This lawsuit advocates for the, approximately 1,150, people confined to the State psychiatric hospitals.

We filed our lawsuit after a multi-year investigation at the State psychiatric hospitals. Disability Rights NJ maintains a consistent, weekly presence at each of the State psychiatric hospitals responding to allegations of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse against patients. Disability Rights NJ's significant presence has also highlighted systemic problems throughout the hospitals that keep individuals who are ready for discharge confined unnecessarily for months and even years. Of the 1,150 people, approximately 20% are patients who are ready for discharge, but still confined to the hospitals because there are not appropriate mental health services for them in the community. We have found that these hospitals, which were created to care for and treat individuals in need of help, only further traumatize, stigmatize, and dehumanize some of our most vulnerable citizens.

New Jersey-based litigation specialty firm Javerbaum Wurgaft Hicks Kahn Wikstrom & Sinins, P.C. is co-counsel in this lawsuit alongside Disability Rights NJ attorneys.

## **Medicaid Terminations After the End of the Public Health Emergency:** Ensuring People with Disabilities Remain on Medicaid Services Essential for Community Living

With support from the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities, Disability Rights NJ represented more than 70 Medicaid recipients at risk of Medicaid terminations as a result of the Medicaid unwinding process at the end of the Public Health Emergency (PHE). The moratorium on Medicaid termination that began in March 2020 ended concurrent with the end of the PHE.

In April 2023, people with disabilities who rely on Medicaid home and community-based services to live full, inclusive lives in the community began a renewal process that resulted in the loss of Medicaid for many people. Disability Rights NJ stepped up, providing individual legal representation, education through webinars and in-person events, and systemic advocacy through regular meetings with the state Medicaid agency. Nearly all of our clients retained or were restored to Medicaid. We helped solve systemic issues related to faulty notices, failure to review recipients for Medicaid eligibility under different program rules, and importantly, kept several children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) on Medicaid while the state works to fully implement a waiver program designed to serve this population.



# WE'RE CHANGING LIVES



## **Nursing Home Residents with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: A Public Report Addressing the Missed *Olmstead* Opportunity Garnered National Attention**

In October 2023, Disability Rights NJ published the report **“Person First: An Investigation and Legal Analysis of People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in New Jersey Nursing Homes.”** Extensive legal research and legal analysis, combined with interviews with 350+ residents with IDD at 70 different New Jersey nursing homes culminated in this report. Our report made numerous findings and recommendations to effectuate systemic change to ensure that people with IDD are not improperly placed in nursing homes when they could live in community settings.

Ultimately, our findings and recommendations emphasized the implementation of a robust *Olmstead* plan, or the ability for individuals with disabilities to live and receive services in the least restrictive setting appropriate to their needs. We also urged the State to fully implement meaningful person-centered policies to promote self-determination for nursing home residents.

The report garnered national attention, and Disability Rights NJ presented our findings and recommendations to hundreds of advocates, stakeholders, and policymakers. Disability Rights NJ will continue to use the findings and recommendations in the report to advocate for numerous systemic changes in New Jersey.

## **Youth Justice Project: Advocating for Justice-impacted Youth to Return to School with Supports and Services**

Disability Rights NJ’s Youth Justice Project, first established in 2020, is now a recognized partner in the Mercer County and Essex County juvenile justice courts. The Youth Justice Project’s efforts are focused on helping justice-impacted youth with disabilities or suspected disabilities obtain appropriate educational programs, services and placements. This year, Youth Justice Project attorneys successfully challenged the educational practices in one of the state’s juvenile detention centers, ensuring that they will be in accordance with state regulations. Disability Rights NJ additionally supports justice-impacted youth as they transition from detention centers to their community through the transition advocate program. The Youth Justice Project plans to expand into other counties when resources become available.

## **Investigation of Residential and Educational Facility for Youth with IDD: Collaboration with P&A Network**

Disability Rights NJ was contacted by our counterpart in New York to advise us they were conducting an abuse and neglect investigation into a residential school for youth with IDD and autism and they had identified four students placed there from New Jersey. We collaborated with P&A’s from other states and offered assistance to the affected students and families. We notified the NJ Departments of Education and Children and Families of the allegations and investigation of the school and urged them to take necessary action to ensure any current NJ students were safe from harm, and that no NJ students were sent there in the future. We spread awareness to the larger community of families of children with disabilities about the risk of abuse and neglect when educational institutions lack monitoring and oversight.



# YOU CAN BE A PART OF THE CHANGE

## BECOME A SPONSOR

We have five event sponsorship levels available that will guarantee your organization recognition. However, donations of any amount are welcome.

LEVEL	INVESTMENT	RECOGNITION
PLATINUM	\$5,000	Table of 10; Corporate logo or family name listed on home page and event page of website, mention in digital platforms, and program listing.
GOLD	\$2,500	4 Tickets; Corporate logo or family name listed on home page and event page of website, mention in digital platforms, and program listing.
SILVER	\$1,000	2 Tickets; Corporate logo or family name listed on donor page of website, mention in digital platforms, and program listing.
BRONZE	\$750	1 Ticket; Corporate logo or family name listed on event page of website, and program listing.
Ad Journal Only	Ad in program: \$500 for full page, \$250 for half page, \$125 for quarter page, and \$50 for listing only	

## CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

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