STATEMENT OF PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES, AND CASE SELECTION CRITERIA
CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES 2024

THE MISSION of Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services (DRDC) is to ensure that District of Columbia residents with disabilities have the legal rights to which they are entitled, including the right to be free from harm, the right to individual choice, and the right to full inclusion in the community.

The following are the priorities and objectives for the Protection and Advocacy Program for Children and Adults with Developmental Disabilities (PADD):

1. **Goal:** Corrective action will be taken when people with developmental disabilities are subjected to abuse and neglect in institutional settings and schools and by District-funded providers so that they are free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violations of their legal and human rights.
   
   a. Monitor adult and youth inpatient facilities, schools and community-based residential and day settings to identify and address instances of rights violations and abuse and neglect of people with developmental disabilities.
   
   b. Investigate allegations of individual and systemic abuse and neglect of people with developmental disabilities in institutions and schools and people with developmental disabilities receiving services from District-funded providers and advocate for appropriate corrective action.

2. **Goal:** People with developmental disabilities will receive quality supports, consumer choice, and services in the most integrated setting from the Department on Disability Services, the Department of Health Care Finance, the Department of Behavioral Health, Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services and other appropriate District agencies and programs.
   
   a. Provide individual representation and group advocacy to people with developmental disabilities seeking appropriate and necessary supports in the most integrated setting from the Department on Disability Services (DDS), Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF), the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) and other appropriate District agencies.
   
   b. Participate in meetings and conduct presentations for people with disabilities, community organizations, and government committees to advocate for people with
developmental disabilities’ right to have their choices respected and to receive quality services in the most integrated and appropriate setting.

c. Educate and inform policymakers on proposed policies, rules, or other proposals that impact the right of people with developmental disabilities to receive quality supports in the most integrated setting and to have their choices respected.

3. **Goal:** People with developmental disabilities who need decision-making support will have access to such support in the least restrictive manner and will have their right to make their own decisions and choices recognized and respected.

   a. Provide training, advocacy and technical assistance to people with disabilities, family members, and the community about the right of people with developmental disabilities to make their own decisions and options for surrogate decision-making and supported decision-making and coordinate with advocacy groups to advocate for alternatives to guardianship.

4. **Goal:** Children and youth with developmental disabilities will receive appropriate special education services in the least restrictive environment, and appropriate behavioral support, and appropriate secondary transition services from the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), public charter schools, or other government agencies.

   a. Conduct outreach and education to administrative and policymaking bodies, schools, the community, families, and students to promote the inclusion of children with developmental disabilities, with appropriate modifications and accommodations, in the general education classroom, advocate for special education services in the least restrictive environment through individual representation of children with developmental disabilities, and educate parents and children about their rights under the IDEA.

   b. Conduct outreach and education to administrative and policymaking bodies, schools, the community, families, and students about their rights under the IDEA and the importance of quality inclusive secondary transition services to improve such services and provide individual representation so transition-age youth with developmental disabilities can be linked to available community services and supports from adult-serving DC agencies and community providers.

5. **Goal:** Represent prospective class members in **MJ v. District of Columbia** to promote their rights under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Medicaid statute to intensive community-based mental health services in order that District youth with developmental disabilities and serious behavioral challenges can thrive in their community and are not institutionalized.

   a. Litigate class members' claims in **MJ v. District of Columbia** and prepare and respond to motions filed by the defendants.
CASE SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Cases related to the protection of the legal and human rights of individuals with developmental disabilities which fall within the aforementioned objectives; and

2. Cases in which the client is a resident of the District of Columbia.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

While Disability Rights DC (DRDC) at University Legal Services (ULS) recognizes that every situation is important, please note that case acceptance is dependent upon available resources, including staff time. If your case is not accepted and you wish to file a grievance, please submit your grievance in writing to ULS’ Executive Director. Current clients may also submit a grievance to the Executive Director about the quality of DRDC’s representation and regarding a decision to close a case. In addition, an individual who receives mental health or other services, his/her family members or representatives may also submit a grievance regarding DRDC’s advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities and role as the DC protection and advocacy program. If requested, an individual may lodge an oral grievance with a DRDC staff member who shall put the grievance in writing and submit it to the Executive Director. The Executive Director may be reached at:

Jane Brown, Executive Director
University Legal Services
220 I Street, N.E., Suite 130
Washington, D.C. 20002
(202) 547-0198 Phone
(202) 547-2662 Fax
(202) 547-2657 TTY
jbrown@uls-dc.org

The Executive Director shall respond in writing within thirty (30) days of receipt of a grievance from any client or prospective client, or community member who has an interest in the operation of the protection and advocacy program.

A grievant may appeal the Executive Director’s decision to the ULS Board of Directors within ten (10) days of the written decision of the Executive Director. The decision of the ULS Board of Directors shall be final and not subject to further appeal or review. Client confidentiality shall be maintained.

The Executive Director shall report grievances to the Board of Directors annually.