STATEMENT OF PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES, AND CASE SELECTION CRITERIA
PROTECTION & ADVOCACY FOR BENEFICIARIES OF SOCIAL SECURITY 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 priorities and objectives reflect DRDC’s commitment to remove barriers to securing, maintaining, or regaining gainful employment for beneficiaries of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

1. **Assist beneficiaries in securing access to meaningful opportunities to prepare for employment that is consistent with their interests, preferences, and capabilities.**
   a. Advocate for access to employment-related programs that lead to competitive employment at competitive wages.
   b. Provide information, referral, and advocacy services regarding services and supports that may impact a beneficiary’s ability to obtain, maintain, or retain employment, including but not limited to transportation services, personal care assistants, assistive technology, and healthcare.

2. **Advocate against employment discrimination that serves as a barrier to work for SSI and SSDI beneficiaries through direct representation, outreach and education, and alternative dispute resolution.**

3. **Assist beneficiaries with disputes before the Social Security Administration (SSA) and other agencies involving work-related benefit decisions that are clearly a barrier to securing, maintaining, or regaining gainful employment.**
   a. Advocate for correct application of work incentive programs related to SSI and SSDI, including trial-work periods (TWP), extended periods of eligibility (EPE), impairment-related work expenses (IRWE), Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS), continuing Medicaid coverage, and other programs.
   b. Assist beneficiaries in disputes before SSA and other public-benefits agencies related to overpayments that impede beneficiaries’ ability to secure, maintain, or regain employment.
4. Conduct outreach and provide education and training to beneficiaries of Social Security, government agencies, employers and educators, and providers of transition services to inform them of the availability of work incentives and employment programs in both the public and private sectors.

**CASE SELECTION CRITERIA**

DRDC accepts cases for Social Security beneficiaries who reside in the District of Columbia and whose complaint falls within the aforementioned priorities.

**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.