



**DISABILITY RIGHTS
CONNECTICUT**
Justice. Community. Inclusion.

Disability Rights Connecticut

“Connecticut’s protection and advocacy system”

Programs & Services

Disability Rights Connecticut, Inc. (DRCT) is dedicated to identifying and advocating for the elimination of barriers that people with disabilities face in exercising their civil, legal and human rights. As Connecticut’s protection and advocacy system, DRCT works to improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities, their families and the disability community. The following are DRCT’s programs and activities.

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL (I&R)

DRCT staff provides information and referral services, short-term advocacy assistance and technical assistance to persons with disabilities, family members, legal representatives, policymakers and others interested in disability issues. The unit is, in many cases, the entry point to DRCT for new callers and others who contact the agency. Depending on the need presented, staff may provide information, connect callers to appropriate advocacy or legal DRCT staff, or make referrals to relevant outside agencies.

CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP)

CAP provides consultation and advocacy assistance to protect the legal rights of applicants and recipients of vocational services of the vocational rehabilitation system in Connecticut. CAP’s primary focus is helping clients of the vocational rehabilitation service system, most notably the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) and Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB). DRCT staff also address complaints by applicants or clients of Connecticut’s Independent Living Centers and provides information about Title I (employment) of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (PAAT)

PAAT provides advocacy and legal representation to individuals with

disabilities who are trying to access assistive technology devices and services. DRCT also provides education and self-advocacy training to people with disabilities, family members and others in an effort to increase knowledge about assistive technology devices and services.

PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (PADD)

The PADD program was created by the federal Developmental Disabilities Bill of Rights and Assistance Act (DD Act). The DD Act requires DRCT as a “protection and advocacy system,” to be independent of service systems; to have access to client records; to have the authority to conduct investigations and to pursue legal and administrative remedies on behalf of clients of the Developmental Disabilities service system; to provide information and referral services; and to educate policymakers about issues of concern to persons with developmental disabilities. Individuals served under PADD must meet the definition of developmental disability as defined in the DD Act.

The DD Act defines Developmental Disability as a chronic mental and/or physical impairments which manifests itself before the age of twenty-two. The impairments tend to be life long and result in substantial limitations in three or more of the major life areas: self-care, receptive

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and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-determination, capacity for independent living and economic self-sufficiency.

PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS (PAIMI)

Under the PAIMI program, DRCT provides legal and advocacy representation, investigation, monitoring, and other activities to ensure the rights of individuals with mental illness under state and federal laws. DRCT is specifically required to investigate reports of abuse and neglect of persons with mental illness and other complaints raised by people with mental illness who reside in supervised facilities or community settings. PAIMI program staff advocates for appropriate discharge plans, consumer choice, and respectful, relevant supports.

PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR INDIVIDUALS RIGHTS (PAIR)

PAIR is authorized to provide consultation and representation for people with disabilities who are not eligible for P&A services under the PADD, PAIMI and CAP programs, described above. PAIR funding allows DRCT to advocate for many individuals who may not qualify for services under its other programs.

PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR PERSONS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (PATBI)

PATBI is funded by a grant from the United State Department of Health and Human Services and provides education, advocacy representation and legal assistance to individuals with acquired or traumatic brain injury (TBI).

PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR VOTING ACCESS

PAVA works to ensure that a wide range of individuals with disabilities participate in the electoral process through voter education, training of poll officials, registration drives, polling place accessibility surveys, Election Day monitoring, and other activities related to the voting rights of people with disabilities in Connecticut.

PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR BENEFICIARIES OF SOCIAL SECURITY (PABSS)

Under the PABSS program, DRCT staff provide information and advice about vocational rehabilitation and other employment services as well as advocacy assistance, legal representation, and other services necessary for a Social Security Beneficiary to secure or regain employment. Individuals who have a barrier to obtaining work, and receive Social Security Disability (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are eligible under the PABSS program.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION MONITORING

Thanks to the Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2018 (H.R. 4547), DRCT has the authority to make sure that people with disabilities have good representative payees who do their jobs correctly. DRCT monitors these representative payees through in person visits, by giving educational trainings, and through developing corrective action plans. DRCT reports the information it gathers back to the Social Security Administration (SSA.) This way, DRCT and the SSA can work together to help prevent incidents of financial exploitation.

For more information, contact us at:

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