



Disability Rights

F L O R I D A

35 Years of Rights Protections

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Advocacy. Equality. Dignity.

Speakers

Disability Rights Florida Intake Staff

- Ann Robinson, Intake Manager
- Paul Finch, Intake Coordinator
- Linda Rollins, Mental Health Coordinator

Learning Objectives

- Understand the history of the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) System and Client Assistance Program (CAP).
- Obtain a working knowledge of Disability Rights Florida as an example of one of the largest P&A's (also houses the CAP program).
- Increase your knowledge of other key disability resources/referrals in each state.

National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)

- The nonprofit membership organization of the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Systems and Client Assistance Programs (CAP).
- Collectively, the P&A/CAP network is the largest provider of legally based advocacy services to people with disabilities in the United States.

Exploring NDRN website

- P&A grants and CAP program:
<http://www.napas.org/en/about/paa-cap-network.html>
- Locate the P&A in your state:
<http://www.napas.org/>
- Disability Etiquette:
<http://www.napas.org/en/media/disability-etiquette.html>

Mental Health Bell



- Located in the Lobby of the National Headquarters of the Mental Health Association in Virginia.

Disability Rights Florida

- Disability Rights Florida is a member of the National Disability Rights Network, AIRS and the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (FLAIRS) – a state affiliate of AIRS.
- Headquarters in Tallahassee with offices in Tampa and Hollywood – several telecommuters around the state.

Disability Rights Florida

- Disability Rights Florida is the designated P&A system/Client Assistance Program for individuals with disabilities in Florida.
- Disability Rights Florida has authority and responsibility under eight federal grants.
- Established in 1987, Disability Rights Florida is a statewide, not-for-profit corporation.

Our Mission

To advance the quality of life, dignity, equality, self-determination, and freedom of choice of persons with disabilities through collaboration, education, advocacy, as well as legal and legislative strategies.

Disability Rights Florida

- Access to education, employment and independence.
- Better laws, policies and practices.
- Elimination of abuse and neglect.

Authority to Pursue

- **Legal**
- **Administrative**
- **Other appropriate remedies**

Authority to Access

- **Facilities**

- Including state hospitals, crisis stabilization units, residential treatment facilities, short term residential treatment centers, group homes, intermediate care facilities for individuals with DD, jails, prisons, and other types of facilities.

- **Records**

- With consent of individual, legal guardian or court order
- And in special cases, without consent

Priorities

- **Abuse, neglect or rights violations in institutional and residential settings**
 - Inappropriate restraint and seclusion use
 - Restriction of communication
 - Discharge planning or release
 - Failure to provide medical treatment
 - Denial of information about rights
 - Use of service animals

Priorities

- **Community placement**
 - Alternatives to institutionalization
- **Access to publicly funded benefits and services, particularly home and community based services**
 - Waiver services
 - Medicaid state plan services

Priorities

- **Access to vocational rehabilitation and blind services**
 - Including integrated/competitive employment opportunities
 - Outreach to private corporations to promote employability and assistive technology

Priorities

- **Equal access to public and private programs and services including:**
 - Businesses
 - Transportation
 - Airports
 - Postsecondary education
 - Recreation
 - Housing and
 - Assistive technology

Priorities

- **Least restrictive alternatives to guardianship**
- **Voting rights and civic participation**

Priorities

- **Self-empowerment and rights of individuals to gain greater control over important life decisions**
- **Control over use of public benefits and personal assets**

What is Wrong with This Picture?



Assistive Technology, Devices and Services

- “Technology is one of the primary engines for economic activity, education and innovation in the Nation, and throughout the world.” From AT Act of 2001
- Protection and Advocacy for Assistive Technology (PAAT) program specifics.



National Pass It On Center

- Recycle Assistive Technology and provide to those in need.
- Locations in your state for AT recycling programs - <http://www.passitoncenter.org/>

Our Intake Operation

- Large P&A intake unit for Issue based teams.
- Centralized Intake in Tallahassee.
- MH/Institutional hotline, Spanish line, general intake and online intake.
- Approximately 7,000 service requests per year.

Florida's Intake Initiative

- 7 FTE's Certified Information and Referral Specialists (CIRS) and 1 part-time position.
- 2 bilingual specialists (English/Spanish).
- Two employees have worked at a 211.
- Professional and positive customer service.

Florida Experience

- Benefits of professional Certified Information and Referral Specialist (CIRS) credential for our intake unit.
- Key competencies coincide with P&A intake needs and I&R provision.
- National webinar provided to NDRN August 30, 2011 encouraged connections with AIRS and I&R agencies.

Our Connection with other I&R systems

- Knowledge of general community resources meets a critical need of callers in the current economy.
- People with disabilities may also have other needs.
- Allows us to be a better resource for our clients.
- Benefits of participation in AIRS and FLAIRS training conferences.

I&R Resources

- Find your P&A @ <http://www.napas.org/>
- State Technology Assistance Programs - <http://assistivetech.net/webresources/stateTechActProjects.php>
- Disability Specific Consumer Groups and Affiliates in each state such as: MS Society, Epilepsy Foundation, etc.
Vocational Rehabilitation Programs
<http://rsa.ed.gov/programs.cfm?pc=basic-vr>

I&R Resources

- Aging and Disability Resource Centers –
<http://www.adrc-tae.org>
- Independent Living Centers – I&R, independent living skills training, peer counseling, and individual and systems advocacy:
<http://www.ilru.org/html/publications/directory/index.html>

Advocacy Now

- Will shape services and opportunities for individuals with disabilities in this century.
- Rapidly changing technology and AT systems will benefit our clients.
- Our systems must continue to evolve and support innovation.



Disability Rights

FLORIDA

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