Disability Rights Ohio 101

Advocacy for Kids with Disabilities
Presenters

- Melissa Day, Advocate
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- Kristin Hildebrant, Senior Attorney
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- Alison McKay, Attorney
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Who we are

- Disability Rights Ohio (DRO) is a non-profit corporation
- Ohio’s designated Protection and Advocacy System and Client Assistance Program
- To advocate for the human, civil and legal rights of people with disabilities in Ohio
Contact information

• Disability Rights Ohio
• 200 Civic Center Drive, Suite 300
• Columbus, Ohio 43215
• 614-466-7264
• 800-282-9181
• Disabilityrightsohio.org
Our staff

• Intake specialists receive calls and provide information & referral
• Attorneys and advocates provide advocacy services to people with disabilities
• Policy and communications staff educate Ohioans and policy makers about the agency and disability rights
How we advocate

- Client directed
- Confidential
- Individual and systemic advocacy
Eligibility for our services

• People with disabilities
• No income requirement
• Clients are not charged for services
Services provided

• Information and referral
• Self Advocacy Assistance
• Limited Representation such as negotiation
• Legal Advocacy services including administrative actions and court litigation
Special education team

• The special education team provides advocacy to children with disabilities from birth through age 22
• The team advocates for children aged 0-3 who receive services through Ohio’s early intervention program
Special education team

- We provide various levels of assistance to students who are eligible for services under IDEA part B.
- Services range from information to attendance at IEP meetings and negotiation and representation in hearings and court on priority issues.
Special education team

• Current priority issues include:
  School to prison pipeline issues
  Restraint and Seclusion
  Transition
  Significant denials of education
  Disciplinary cases
Special education team

• Our Fellow program provides help with IEP meetings for families regardless of issue. The program covers the following counties:
  Delaware
  Fairfield
  Franklin
  Licking
  Madison
  Pickaway
  Union
Special education team

• Systemic work is being done to improve education services in Ohio
• We are working with the department of education on implementation of a settlement seeking to improve literacy, LRE, transition, school climate etc. in Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Lima, East Cleveland, Toledo, Youngstown and Zanesville
Special education team

• Self Advocacy Materials are available on our website:
  FAQs
  Sample letters
  Negotiation Skills for Parents
Client Assistance Program

- CAP Advocates for and protects the rights of individuals with disabilities who are applying for or receiving vocational rehabilitation (VR) services from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD)
- The CAP also assists people who are applying for or receiving federally funded services from Independent Living Centers throughout Ohio
Client Assistance Program

• We advocate for students who want services through OOD. We can
  • Provide information about VR services
  • Advocate if you:
    – Have been turned down for VR services
    – Have concerns about your rehabilitation counselor
    – Are not satisfied with the VR services you are receiving
    – Do not agree with a decision to close your case
    – Have other problems with VR services
Client Assistance Program

• We can advocate for students who experience discrimination in employment
  – CAP can:
    • Provide information on your rights under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act
    • Give you information about how to make a reasonable accommodation request
    • Provide information about where you can file a complaint
Client Assistance Program

• We can advocate for young adults who receive services from an independent living center.
  • Independent living services include:
    – Information and referral services
    – Independent living skills training
    – Peer counseling
    – Individual and systems advocacy
    – Services that help you move from an institution to a home in your community
    – Services that help you remain in your home so that you do not need to move to an institution
    – Services that help you transition from school to postsecondary life
Client Assistance Program

• We can help transition age youth 14 – 24
  – assist "students with disabilities" with transition planning who are eligible for OOD services
    • to ensure that students receive necessary transition services and support from OOD before graduation.
      – Pre-Employment Transition Services
  – assist "youth with disabilities" with transition planning to receive help from community partners such as OOD under Title IV of WIOA and OhioMeansJobs under Title I of WIOA
Client Assistance Program

• We can help students access postsecondary training
  – Assist students transition from high school to postsecondary training by
    • Ensuring they receive services from OOD that support their employment goal in accordance with their IEP/504 and IPE
    • Taking steps to address discrimination in postsecondary education and ensuring that needed accommodations are provided
Client Assistance Program

• We can help young adults who have already graduated
  – Get information about and referral to OOD
  – Assist them with receiving VR services to help prepare, obtain, or maintain competitive integrated employment
    • that are consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and informed choice
Other DRO Teams

• Community Integration
  – Protecting the rights of people where they live (e.g., access to medically necessary services, Medicaid waivers, assistive technology; community access)

• Medicaid Pro Bono Program
  – Connecting people with volunteer attorneys and paralegals who provide free representation in certain Medicaid appeal cases

• Abuse and Neglect / Victims of Crime
  – Protecting the right of people to be free from physical and emotional harm by providers and others

• Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) and Representative Payee

• Policy
  – Building coalitions, partnerships and policy expertise
The Resource Center provides information to support individuals in learning more about disability rights and available resources to advance their self-advocacy efforts.

The DRO website contains numerous resources organized by disability topic.

http://www.disabilityrightsohio.org/resource-center
Social Media

• Like us on Facebook, www.facebook.com/DisabilityRightsOhio
• Follow us on Twitter @DisabilityRtsOH
• Join our email list: http://www.disabilityrightsohio.org/newsletter
Questions?