



Disability Rights Ohio is the protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities in Ohio. Our mission is to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities in Ohio.

Disability Rights Ohio believes:

- People with disabilities should have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else;
- People with disabilities should be able to make decisions about where and how they want to live, learn, work and play;
- People with disabilities should be able to get the services they need;
- People with disabilities should never be abused, neglected, exploited or discriminated against.

Disability Rights Ohio finished an 18-month investigation to find out how people with developmental disabilities live

- We visited many different places to see where people with developmental disabilities live and work and what services they receive;
- We went to institutions (big and small).
  - Examples: Big places where more than 20 people live in one building. They spend a lot of their time in this same building. They eat their meals with other people with developmental disabilities. They do not have choices about what they will eat or who they will spend their days with. They only get to go out and do activities like shopping or eating out once or twice a month.
- We talked with people with developmental disabilities that receive services in the community;
  - Examples: Small homes with 3 or 4 people. They have some choices about what to do or what to eat or who to do things with, but still not as much individual choice as everyone should have.
- We also visited different employment and day programs to see how and where people with developmental disabilities spent their days;
  - Examples: Workshops where individuals had the option to work on one or two tasks, and often did not make minimum wage.
- We found that most of the time people with developmental disabilities have to work and live their lives separate from the community;

People First of Ohio “Revival of Advocacy in Ohio”

August 16, 2014



- We found that people with developmental disabilities have very few opportunities to interact with people who do not have a disability;

In Ohio, there are about 7,000 people with developmental disabilities living in institutions

- Thousands of people with developmental disabilities are on wait lists for community services (like the IO waiver)
- Most people with developmental disabilities have to wait many, many years to get the services they need so they can live in community

The state of Ohio gives most of their money for employment services to places that people with developmental disabilities don't want to go, like big sheltered workshops, where you don't earn minimum wage and are separated from the community

Ohio has not tried to make things better for people with developmental disabilities

- Ohio said they will build smaller institutions, but these are still segregated
- Ohio has Employment First but most people with developmental disabilities that want jobs, don't have jobs that pay minimum wage

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Olmstead* said that Ohio had to provide services to people with developmental disabilities in the community and must not separate people with developmental disabilities from people that don't have disabilities

The ADA and *Olmstead* apply to residential programs and now also apply to employment services

Last month Disability Rights Ohio sent a letter to the state officials, including the Governor

- We told these state officials about our findings from our 18-month investigation;



- We asked them to meet with us so that we could fix these problems and fix the system so that people with developmental disabilities could live and work in the community and receive the services they needed ;
- We wanted to meet so we would not have to file a lawsuit;
- The director of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) said they were willing to meet with us; and
- We do not know if Ohio really wants to fix the system

**SELF-ADVOCATES ARE REALLY IMPORTANT!**

You are the only ones who can tell your story about where you want to work and where you want to live

Disability Rights Ohio cannot make real change without the help of self-advocates like you!

What can you do right now?

- Tell your family or provider what you want to do with your life. If you want to work, tell them that. Ask for help in finding a job. Ask for help to get training for a job. Ask for help in deciding what you want to do.
- Talk to other people with developmental disabilities.
- Help people with developmental disabilities to speak up and say what they want to do with their life!
- Call Disability Rights Ohio if you need help or if you have ideas you want to share. Our phone number is 1-800-282-9181. Press “2” to talk to one of our intake specialists.
- Call your County Board of Developmental Disabilities, provider or the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities to share your ideas with them
- Tell your story and become involved

If you have questions about your rights, or you would like to know more about Disability Rights Ohio and the programs and services that we offer, please call us at 1-800-282-9181. Press “2” to talk to one of our intake specialists.

**We can only make change if we all work together!**