



ADVOCACY CENTER

SERVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND SENIOR CITIZENS

What is the Advocacy Center?

The Advocacy Center (AC) is Louisiana's protection and advocacy system. The Advocacy Center protects and advocates for the human and legal rights of persons living in Louisiana who are elderly or disabled.

What do we do?

The Advocacy Center provides 6 types of assistance:

Information and Referral – The Intake Specialists at the Advocacy Center are extremely knowledgeable about resources throughout Louisiana. They often suggest alternatives when AC cannot assist with an issue. AC also publishes a variety of flyers, booklets, and reports. These are available free of charge.

Legal Assistance - The Advocacy Center represents clients in areas of the law designated as priorities by its Board of Directors. Legal representation includes counseling, advice, research, negotiation, administrative review, administrative hearing, state office review, litigation, and class action. If a person needs legal representation in a non-priority area, the staff can make referrals to other sources of legal representation. Legal assistance is offered only when the issue is specifically related to the disability of the client.

Systems Advocacy -The Advocacy Center works to improve systems that are used by people who are elderly and/or have disabilities, including education, health, legal, social services, transportation, and vocational systems. Most of our systems advocacy work is carried out by teams who meet as needed to achieve a system-enhancing objective. Occasionally a team will include persons from outside the agency. Other systems advocacy work may consist of individual AC staff participating in task forces outside AC.

Outreach and Training-The Advocacy Center educates others about the legal rights of persons who are elderly and persons who have disabilities through presentations to groups, participation on committees and task forces, media campaigns, technical assistance flyers, and educational booklets. Training offered by AC may be in response to requests from specific groups or set up by AC in response to needs identified by the staff.

Legislative Information and Education – The Advocacy Center provides information to legislators and people with disabilities about laws and pending laws of concern to the disability and senior communities.

Ombudsman Visits – The ombudsmen at the Advocacy Center visit persons in nursing homes and community homes to protect residents' rights and ensure a high quality of life for all residents.

Who do we serve?

The Advocacy Center serves persons with physical or mental disabilities, residents of nursing homes and clients of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services throughout Louisiana. We have a separate program serving persons over 60 who are residents of Orleans, Plaquemines, and St. Tammany parishes, even those who do not have a disability.

How to request help:

If you think that you or someone you know needs the services of AC, please call us. You can speak to the secretary or leave a message, briefly describing the issue. Be sure to include your name, the client's name (if different from your name), and a telephone number (#) where you can be reached during business hours.

Then what?

Within 3 business days, an Intake Specialist will call you to discuss the problem in greater detail. If telephone communication is difficult, we can visit in person. The Intake Specialist will try to offer as much help as possible. If the issue fits within the agency priorities, the Intake Specialist will make a referral to a member of the legal team. You will be contacted within 2 weeks. If AC cannot assist

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