



Annual Report

FY 2021

DRA Board of Directors

Mark George, President

John Jones, Vice President

Scott Hall, Treasurer

Nancy Sullivan

James Mason

Shannon Rivas

Jane Browning

Tricia Ambeau

Raysha Clark

Erika Cross

PAIMI Advisory Council

The Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) Advisory Council supports Disability Rights Arkansas by working with its staff and Board of Directors to develop priorities for the agency's PAIMI program. Advisory members oversee the general effectiveness of the program and work with staff to bring about any needed changes.

James Mason, Chair

Cory Bates, Vice Chair

Kim Weser, Past Chair

Dorcas Johnson, Secretary

Elaine Williams

Meggin Mews

Roger Isbell

Letter From Leadership

Disability rights are civil rights.

Throughout a challenging year, this statement has been our mantra here at Disability Rights Arkansas.

Fiscal Year 2021 was a challenging one, to be sure. The global pandemic presented no shortage of barriers to Arkansans with disabilities, and rather than addressing these barriers, the 93rd Arkansas General Assembly waged a full-on assault against the civil rights of Arkansans, including those with disabilities.

While DRA staff transitioned to working from home, the calls for advocacy did not stop. In fact, they increased. Whether seeking secure employment, trying to get special education services for their children, or simply seeking needed support to live independently, many Arkansans were left feeling isolated as providers reduced services for lack of adequate staff or funding.

Yet, we persevered! As advocacy responsiveness shifted to a virtual environment, DRA staff responded to every challenge without missing a beat.

The Board of Directors, Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) Advisory Council, and agency staff came together to redefine how we provide advocacy to Arkansans with disabilities. The traditional monitoring activities, never more important, shifted to virtual monitoring. Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings were conducted virtually. Meetings with coalition partners shifted from the conference table to the Zoom room.

Refusing to let a virtual environment create even more barriers, DRA held its first-ever statewide conference virtually in April 2021. It presented a Herculean effort for our staff, but it was a success.

Once we had our first virtual convening under our belts, we planned more: We will be holding quarterly webinars throughout Fiscal Year 2022 on a variety of topics. The webinars will allow individuals who are unable to attend in person to participate virtually, and later, the webinars will be available to view on our YouTube channel. There's no substitute for convening in person, but it is our hope that virtual training opportunities will allow us to reach even more people throughout the state.

While no one knows what challenges Fiscal Year 2022 will bring, you can count on DRA to advocate for the civil and legal rights of Arkansans with disabilities. Whether it's in person or over Zoom, in the courtroom or at the Capitol, DRA is more committed than ever to providing the tireless and vigorous advocacy Arkansans need and deserve.

With your continued support, we can do great things in the coming year.



Tom Masseau
Executive Director



Mark George
2021 Board President

Guardianship

DRA received a grant from the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities to hold an in-person conference for guardians and individuals with disabilities to learn more about guardianship, the roles of the guardian, the rights of people under guardianship, and some less restrictive alternatives. When the pandemic made an in-person convening impossible, we developed a comprehensive set of materials about guardianship, alternatives to guardianship, accounting materials and other tools, including a pleading that wards can use to petition the court to have their right to vote reinstated.

Guardianship isn't the only choice - and it's not always the right choice. During the 2021 legislative session, Representative Julie Mayberry introduced a supported decision-making bill, and while it didn't pass, DRA will continue to work with Rep. Mayberry, other policymakers, coalition partners, and self-advocates to advance less restrictive alternatives to guardianship.



**View Our Resource Guide for
More Information about Guardianship**



**Alternatives to
Guardianship**



**Self Determination: The
Right to Make Decisions; the
Dignity of Making Mistakes**



**Guardianship: Is it
Always the Right
Choice?**



Tragedy Prompts Action to Limit Use of Restraint and Seclusion

Act 1084 Makes Schools Safer For Kids With Disabilities

During the 2021 legislative session, DRA joined community advocates in support of HB1610, sponsored by Representative Jimmy Gazaway (R-Paragould). This bill sought to reduce the use of restraint and seclusion in schools by codifying the previously voluntary Department of Education guidelines regarding the use of these methods. The bill ultimately passed both houses and was signed into law by Governor Hutchinson on April 30, 2021.

Restraint and seclusion are intended to keep a person from harming themselves or others, and only as a last resort. These methods are harmful, dangerous, deeply traumatizing, and used far too often against people with disabilities.

Reducing or eliminating the use of restraint and seclusion has been a goal of ours for years. But the urgency of that goal was tragically brought into relief this year following the death in June 2020 of a 42-year-old man who lived at Booneville Human Development Center.

As a result of our investigation, we were able to have the policy concerning calling 911 changed. We are participating in the Behavioral Consultation Committee that DHS has developed. We are hoping to do away with mechanical restraints and make improvements to behavior support plans. DHS has agreed to bring in an outside consultant to review some of these issues.

Restraint and
Seclusion:
Hayden's Story



Restraint and
Seclusion | School
Should be a Safe Place



What is
Seclusion?



“The System is Broken”: Using Access Authority to Keep Children Safe and Hold Facilities Accountable

Whether a facility is for-profit or non-profit, Arkansas’s psychiatric residential treatment facilities (PRTFs) share some pervasive, systemic issues that place the children residing in these facilities at risk for abuse, neglect and exploitation. And while the pandemic has made monitoring the facilities a challenge, monitoring activities in the PRTFs remained a critically important part of our work this past year.

Last year, DRA launched a major public awareness campaign to shed light on the dismal state of Arkansas’s PRTFs. We

called for higher standards (Arkansas’s standards for this type of facility are among the lowest in the nation), greater transparency, and more accountability. Since that campaign launched, the PRTFs have come under intense media scrutiny.

During this fiscal year, DRA staff developed a database of publicly available information, all obtained through public information requests, from the various agencies that are responsible for oversight of the PRTFs. You can view this information at disabilityrightsar.org/prtf.

Monitoring Visits

Facility	Police Reports	Serious Occurrence Reports	OLTC Surveys	Notice of Incidents	PRLU Licensing Reports	Total
CFYF LR	69	33	5	34	29	170
CFYF Monticello	3	0	2	2	3	10
Delta	0	1	0	1	3	5
Little Creek	42	7	0	27	15	91
Methodist LR	113	79	2	30	22	246
Methodist Dacus	5	17	0	12	8	42
Millcreek	41	27	4	33	8	113
Perimeter Forrest City	6	43	5	69	10	133
Perimeter Ozarks	13	3	2	5	7	30
Perimeter West Memphis	29	2	0	1	5	37
Piney Ridge	52	25	5	30	29	141
Timber Ridge	1	0	0	0	3	4
Youth Home	13	27	1	10	7	58
Total	387	264	26	254	149	1080



Protecting Your Right to Vote

The 2020 election was one of the most consequential election cycles of our lifetimes, and DRA staff worked diligently to raise awareness about the election, educate Arkansans with disabilities about how to register and cast their ballots, and ensure that people with disabilities were fully able to exercise their right to vote.

As part of the Protection and Advocacy for Voting Access (PAVA) program, DRA staffers travel to every polling place in every county in the state, inspecting each polling site to ensure that it is accessible. When we find architectural or technological barriers we work with county officials to ensure that election officials are trained in the needs and

rights of voters with disabilities, and that these barriers to voting are removed.

In June, following a DRA investigation of polling places in Newton County, the U.S. Department of Justice conducted their own investigation and subsequently entered into a settlement with county officials to address architectural and other barriers that made voting inaccessible to people with disabilities during the 2020 primary elections. County officials are taking steps to bring its elections process into compliance with the ADA, including appointing an ADA Coordinator and providing training for election officers, poll workers, and county employees.

Department of Justice
Press Release



We're Still Waiting

For people with disabilities, the regular session of the 93rd General Assembly was marked as much by what it didn't do as by what it did. As the session dragged on, disability advocates became increasingly frustrated by the long list of needs that went unaddressed by the legislature.

Disability Rights Arkansas worked to mobilize our coalition partners to call attention to the unmet needs of people with disabilities. Together, we composed an "Open Letter to the Arkansas Legislature," calling upon legislators and the Governor to begin addressing the pressing needs of people with disabilities.

The message was simple: We're still waiting. And we're not going away.

An Open
Letter to the
Arkansas
Legislature



#arleg #arpx

213
Attendees



211
Hours
Watched

499

Community
Board
Messages



50

Discussion
Topics
Posted

DRA Virtual Conference

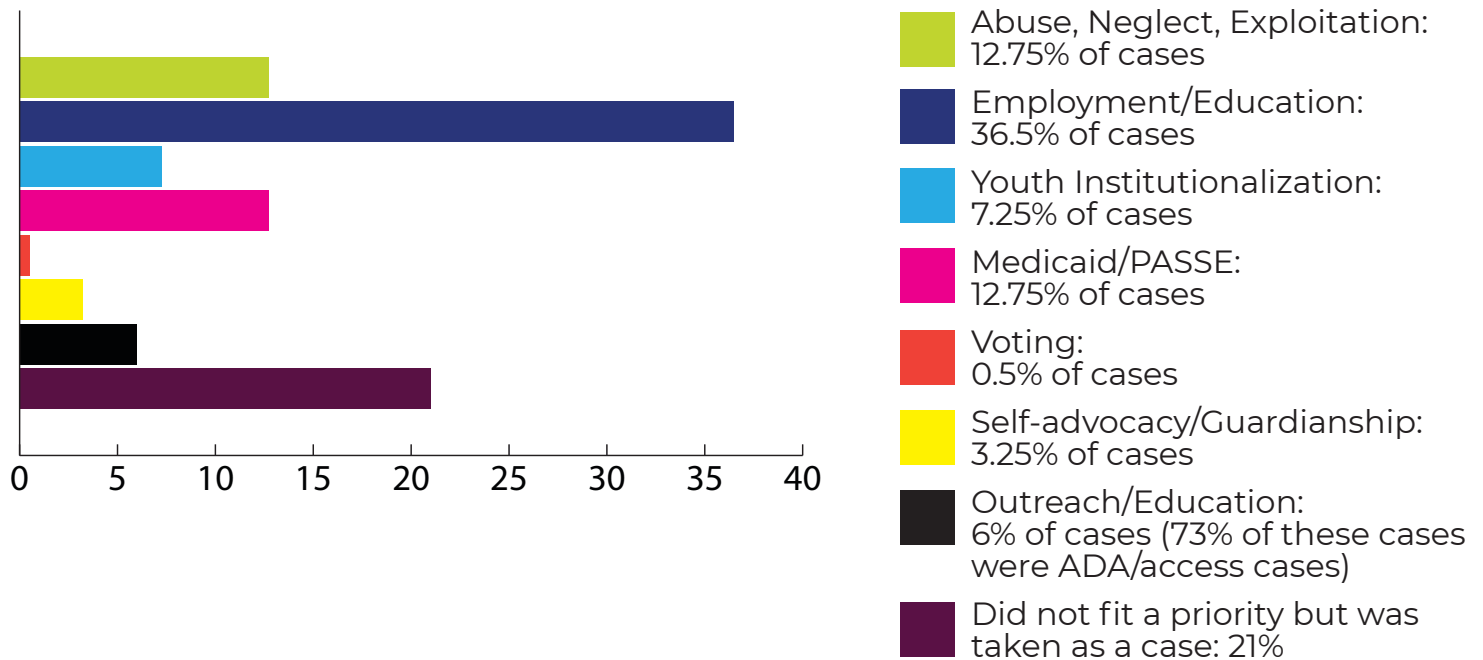
In April 2021, DRA held our first-ever statewide conference. Planning began in the Fall of 2019 on an in-person conference, but as the threat of the global pandemic spread, we made the difficult decision to pivot to a virtual conference.

Without missing a beat, DRA staff and the planning committee kicked into high gear - and our inaugural Statewide Conference was a success! Sessions focused on special education, Medicaid/PASSE, and disability law. We were excited to be joined by speakers from across the country. Even more significantly, the conference provided an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the vast knowledge and expertise under our very own (virtual) roof as DRA staff presented timely and important information to those in attendance.

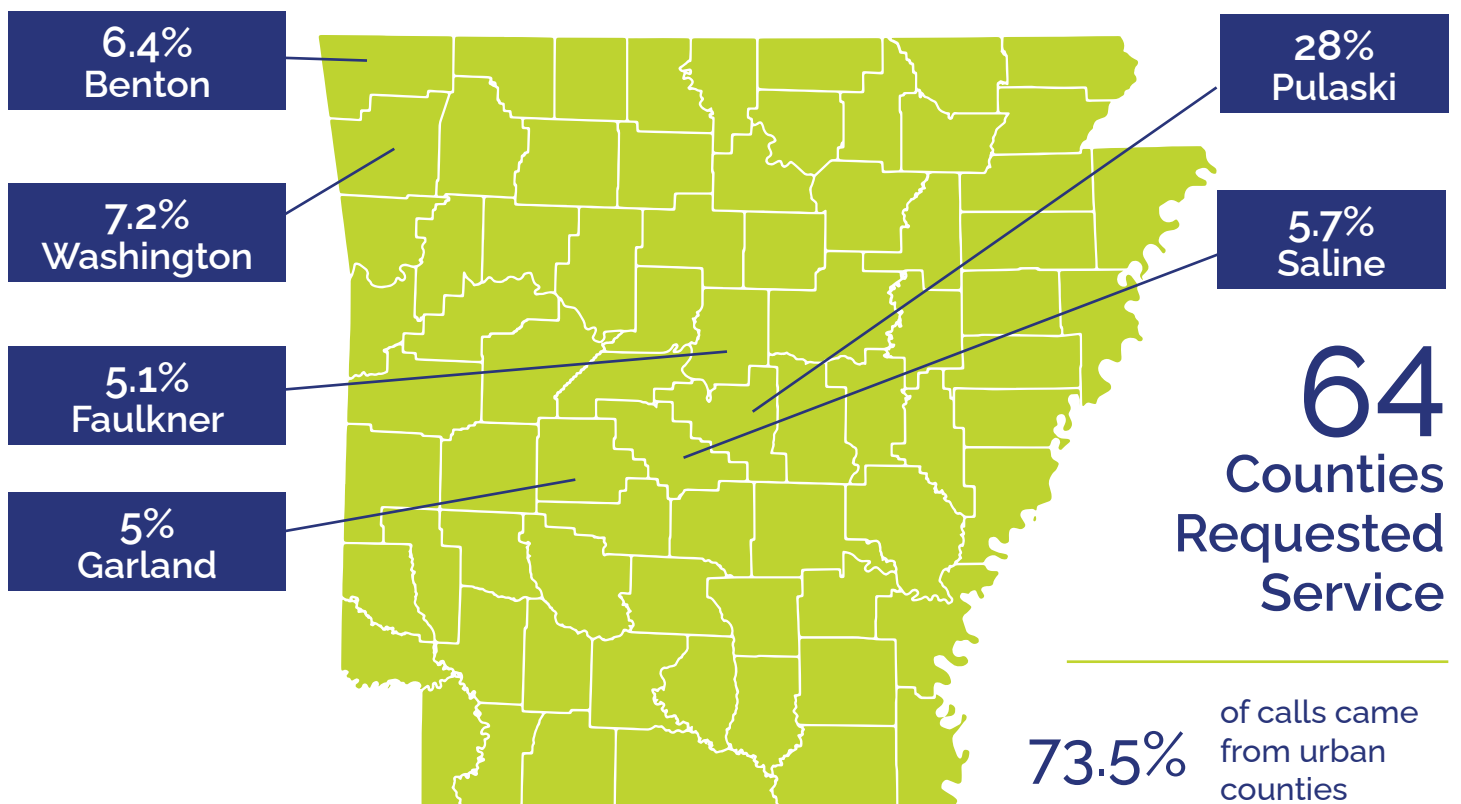
With our first large-scale virtual event under our belts, planning began on a series of webinars to be presented quarterly throughout the 2022 fiscal year.

DRA By the Numbers

Percentage of Cases by Priority



Most Calls by County



2021 Statement of Financial Activities

Year Ended September 30, 2021

Revenues	Without Donor Restriction	With Donor Restriction	Total
Federal Grants	\$1,835,923	-	\$1,835,923
Program Revenue	-	\$12,688	\$12,688
Other	\$10,794	\$1,038	\$11,832
Total revenues and support	\$1,846,717	\$13,726	\$1,860,443

Expenses	Without Donor Restriction	With Donor Restriction	Total
Program Services	\$1,347,279	-	\$1,347,279
Management and General	\$506,917	-	\$506,917
Fundraising	\$5,370	-	\$5,370
Total expenses	\$1,859,566	-	\$1,859,566

Change in net assets	\$(12,849)	\$13,726	\$877
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Net assets, beginning of year	\$60,840	\$183,376	\$244,216
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Net assets, end of year	\$47,991	\$197,102	\$245,093
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Revenue by Program

Assistive Technology - PAAT	\$44,669	2%	
Access to COVID-19 Vaccines	\$24,318	1%	
Beneficiaries of Social Security - PABSS	\$96,496	5%	
Client Assistance Program - CAP	\$126,028	7%	
Developmental Disabilities - PADD	\$461,099	25%	
Individual Rights - PAIR	\$121,674	7%	
Individuals with Mental Illness - PAIMI	\$406,784	22%	
Traumatic Brain Injury - PATBI	\$42,203	2%	
Voting Access - PAVA	\$96,500	5%	
Social Security Rep Payee - SBSSB	\$325,795	18%	
Self Advocacy Network Development - SAND	\$77,284	4%	
Other Grants, Donations, etc.	\$37,593	2%	
Total Expenditures		\$1,860,443	





400 W. Capitol Ave. #1200
Little Rock, AR 72201



Your support changes the game
for people with disabilities.

Support DRA with a one time
or monthly donations on our website
at disabilityrightsAR.org

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