

Disability Rights Nebraska-Who We Are & What We Do

Disability Rights Nebraska is a nonprofit organization that advocates alongside and on behalf of people with disabilities. We are independent of any public or private organization or agency. We have the authority to protect and advocate for the rights of Nebraskans with disabilities. There are many different methods of protection and advocacy that we use, including:

- legal advice and representation;
- public policy advocacy;
- systems change;
- relationship-based advocacy (Citizen Advocacy);
- self-advocacy skill development; and
- training for inclusive education volunteer lay advocates.

Our organization began in 1977 and we are part of the national Protection and Advocacy (P&A) system. The United States Congress required the creation of a P&A organization in every state and territory of the United States. Disability Rights Nebraska receives grants which provide us with funding so we can do work in all categories of disability.

P&A organizations have a unique authority to enforce both state and federal laws that affect the rights and various benefits, services, and supports available to individuals with disabilities. This authority includes investigating abuse and neglect in institutions, community settings, and programs that serve people with disabilities. Disability Rights Nebraska staff regularly visit facilities in order to monitor, investigate, and attempt to remedy harmful conditions in places where people with disabilities learn, live, and work.

Who We Serve & Why

Although it is proven that disabilities in no way diminish a person's right to fully participate in all areas of life, many people with disabilities have been kept from doing so because of discrimination. In addition, society continues to isolate, segregate, and segregate individuals with disabilities. Due to strong work by self-advocates, volunteer advocates, and advocacy organizations, some positive

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changes have taken place. But too often, discrimination continues to deny people with disabilities the access and opportunities necessary to live the lives they would choose. For more than forty years, Disability Rights Nebraska has worked alongside and on behalf of people with disabilities to help make sure the legal rights, human rights, dignity, and worth of all individuals with disabilities are recognized, promoted, and defended. Our work together has shown all of us the importance of sharing our individualized gifts, talents, competencies, and life experiences with each other and with society. Disability Rights Nebraska's Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024 through 2028 is a continuation of our commitment to this important work.

What Is Our Vision and Mission?

The Vision and Mission Statements below serve as a guide to our work and they provide the foundation for our Fiscal Years 2024-2028 Strategic Plan.

Disability Rights Nebraska Vision Statement: Disability Rights Nebraska envisions a world where human rights are protected, differences are celebrated and all people have value, visibility, and voice.

Disability Rights Nebraska Mission Statement: Disability Rights Nebraska uses a combination of strategies to promote, protect, and advocate for the legal and human rights of all people with disabilities. We support people with disabilities to help ensure they gain the benefits of full inclusion in their home, community, education, and/or employment. Our support begins with people with disabilities who are the most vulnerable and who live in congregated, isolated, and/or segregated settings.

Disability Rights Nebraska Values Statement:

We believe that:

- Disability is a natural part of the human experience.
- All people have worth, value, and contribute to humanity.
- People with disabilities should have valued roles in their communities
- Disability rights are human rights.
- Lived experiences of people with disabilities are vital to guiding our work.

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- People with disabilities should have real choices and control of their lives.
- Growth and change are possible.

We believe in:

- Dignity of risk
- Encouraging courage
- Truth, transparency, accountability
- Utilizing our federal authority to aggressively pursue equality
- Being steadfast, brave, deliberate, and persistent

Focus Areas:

- Freedom from Harm
- Most Inclusive Settings
- Engaging People with Disabilities in Advocacy

Focus Areas, Images of the Future, Goals, & Strategies

Focus Area: Freedom from Harm

Image of the Future: People with disabilities have legal and human rights that protect their health, safety, personal integrity, and self-determination. Disability Rights Nebraska will protect and advocate for vulnerable people with disabilities, beginning with those living in congregated, isolated, and segregated settings, to ensure their rights are not violated and they are free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and untimely death.

Goal 1: Identify, monitor, and advocate for change in places where people with disabilities learn, live, and work.

Strategies:

- Facility and Program Monitoring
- Targeted Outreach
- Collaborative Partnerships
- Targeted Media Relations
- Public Education and Awareness

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- Capacity Building and Resource Development
- Public Policy Advocacy

Goal 2: Investigate and respond to allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation using a range of approaches to ensure that vulnerable people with disabilities are free from harm.

Strategies:

- Investigations
- Direct Legal Representation
- Limited Advocacy
- Information and Referral
- Self-Advocacy Support
- Targeted Media Relations
- Public Education and Awareness
- Public Policy Advocacy
- Capacity Building and Resource Development

Goal 3: Support and sustain a network of local and independent Citizen Advocacy programs to keep vulnerable people free from harm.

Strategies:

- Program Funding
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Funding Safeguards
- Contract Management
- Capacity Building and Resource Development

Focus Area: Most Inclusive Settings

Image of the Future: We recognize disability as a natural part of the human experience. People must be able to live the lives that they choose, and their lives must be free from abuse, discrimination, exploitation, harm, isolation, and neglect. Disability Rights Nebraska envisions a society where all people have the supports they need in order to experience self-determination by making their own real and meaningful choices — a society where all people are free to pursue opportunities in order to

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live culturally valued lives in fully integrated communities that are free from barriers, exploitation, and stigma.

Goal 1: Advocate for people with disabilities to learn, live, and work in the most inclusive settings.

Strategies:

- Educate Self Advocates, Parents, Allies, Professionals, and Providers
- Public Policy Advocacy
- Targeted Media Relations
- Public Education and Awareness
- Collaborative Partnerships
- Investigations
- Direct Legal Representation
- Systemic Advocacy
- Lay Advocacy Training
- Limited Advocacy
- Information and Referral
- Self-Advocacy Support
- Capacity Building and Grant Writing

Goal 2: Support and sustain a network of local and independent Citizen Advocacy programs to advocate for vulnerable people to live in the most inclusive settings.

Strategies:

- Program Funding
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Funding Safeguards
- Contract Management
- Capacity Building and Resource Development

Focus Area: Engaging People with Disabilities in Advocacy

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Image of the Future: People who experience disabilities are the experts when it comes to their own lives. Disability Rights Nebraska advocates for all people with disabilities having access to services, skills, and supports needed to pursue their hopes, dreams, and things not yet imagined.

Goal 1: Provide opportunities for people with disabilities to learn about becoming effective advocates. Then, support them in advocating about things that impact their lives.

Strategies:

- Self-Advocacy Education
- Leadership Education
- Systems Advocacy Education
- Public Policy Advocacy
- Collaborative Partnerships
- Media Relations and Public Awareness
- Capacity Building and Resource Development
- Lay Advocacy Training