



Disability Rights Wisconsin Annual Report 2018

Protection and advocacy for people with disabilities



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As Wisconsin's designated Protection and Advocacy system, Disability Rights Wisconsin uses multiple strategies to protect the rights and promote the full inclusion of individuals with disabilities. We do this through direct casework and by addressing detrimental systemic issues. 2018 was a year filled with advocacy and activities to further these goals.

We said farewell to Executive Director Dan Idzikowski after 4½ years of leadership. Much appreciation goes to Laura Hanson who stepped in as Acting Director, and then to Lois Simpson, our Interim Director who worked with the Board of Directors and staff to design a new organizational structure. As a result of the new structure, Kit Kerschensteiner was elevated to Director of Legal and Advocacy Services and Mitch Hagopian was named Managing Attorney for the Communities and Institutions team. Other staff had significant or small shifts in responsibilities or supervision. As 2018 drew to a close, DRW's Board of Directors selected Lea Kitz as the new Executive Director. Kitz had been the Program Manager of DRW's Family Care and IRIS Ombudsman Program since 2011.

We have been fortunate to add new and energetic talent to our staff and we warmly welcome them all. Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye to a number of valued staff, some who had been with us for many years. One was our long-time Finance Manager Carol Nelson, who administered our accounting needs for 11 years. We had to bid farewell to Advocacy Specialist Jo Cauley (18 years) and Rice Lake Office Director and Supervising Attorney Jodi Hanna (19 years).

We designated Attorney Samir Jaber as Diversity Officer to formalize our desire to create a welcoming, inclusive environment for all people with disabilities and our employees. Attorney Jaber has co-chaired DRW's Diversity Committee for several years and as the agency's decisions and policies have developed, he and others have challenged and encouraged decision makers to keep diversity initiatives moving forward.

This year we implemented a new federal program—Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Representative Payees (PABRP)—through the Social Security Administration (SSA). The new program is designed to ensure proper practices by representative payees who assist individuals with disabilities to manage their money.

It is impossible to express enough gratitude to DRW's staff—in every area of responsibility and at every level. There was a lot of change to absorb and respond to, and it is no surprise to us that everyone did it with grace, energy, creativity and optimism. We have also appreciated our partnerships with our many advocacy partners and individuals and families involved with protecting rights and access. We can't do this work alone and we are so much more effective in collaboration. Thank you to all!



Peter Sayner
President, Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter R. Sayner".



Lea Kitz
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lea Kitz".

Plan the Possibilities for Youth in Transition Project

Working is a part of everyday life for most adults. However, people with disabilities who want to work often face barriers in obtaining competitive and integrated employment.

Competitive and integrated employment refers to people with disabilities working in typical job environments with coworkers who do not have disabilities and earning wages consistent with others who perform the same or similar work. Working is important for people with disabilities because it can help improve overall quality of life by increasing self-reliance, reducing poverty, and improving health outcomes. It can also help to decrease costs for the Medicare and Medicaid systems.

Advocates at both the national and state levels are working to eliminate employment barriers, by focusing on systems change for youth with disabilities who are in the process of transitioning into adult systems. New federal regulations, such as those under the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), require the state and local school districts to ensure that students with disabilities have meaningful opportunities to prepare for, obtain, and advance in competitive, integrated employment. Yet, many parents and guardians of youth with disabilities are not aware of the opportunities presented by these new requirements, and schools are challenged to implement them. Often, the expectation of attaining employment is low because they don't believe it is possible. These issues tend to be more prevalent in rural school districts that do not have as many options or resources in their local communities such as transportation or jobs.

With financial support from the Otto

Bremer Trust Foundation, Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW) implemented a project in northwest Wisconsin called Plan the Possibilities. The project focused on developing an

interactive set of resources for youth with disabilities and their parents or guardians to understand these new laws and requirements and raise expectations for the student's future. One of these resources is a set of videos about six young adults with disabilities and how they overcame challenges as they transitioned to employment or further education. To facilitate learning from the videos there are two sets of discussion worksheets that correlate to the stories: one for students and one for parents/caregivers. There is also a workbook for students to help them consider their goals for the future and actively participate in the Post-Secondary Transition process with their school and providers.

Jo Pelishek, DRW advocate in our Rice Lake office and project lead for Plan the Possibilities, works with students and their families on issues related to transition. To spread the word about this project and provide information about the new laws and requirements, she has participated in trainings and/or exhibits to at least 15 groups in northwest Wisconsin and close to 10 state conferences with plans to continue efforts through 2019.

DRW provides advocacy to all areas of Wisconsin to support youth with disabilities and their families so they understand their rights, learn to ask the right questions in working with schools and vocational providers, and get the support they need to plan the possibilities for their future.



“Promoting future employment, independence and community living for students with disabilities, I believe, is best done by showing students and families practical steps and successful stories of others who have achieved them. That’s what this project is designed to do.”

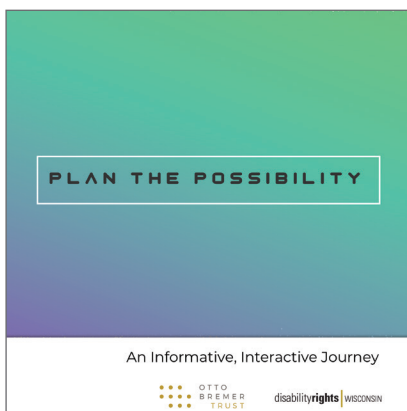
*—Jo Pelishek,
Plan the Possibilities Project Lead*

For more information about **Plan the Possibilities** go to our website: <http://www.disabilityrightswi.org/plan-the-possibility/>

Prior to this project, DRW developed a document called “The Key to Your Future: Understanding the Post-Secondary Transition Plan” which provides detailed information about the transition process and links to other helpful resources as well. This information can be found at: <http://www.disabilityrightswi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/The-Key-to-Your-Future-Understanding-the-Postsecondary-Transition-Plan.pdf>

Development of Plan the Possibility materials included collaboration and partnerships with several students and families, local and statewide agencies, school districts, providers, and many others.

DRW thanks all who participated in helping to provide a fresh look at the transition process through this project!



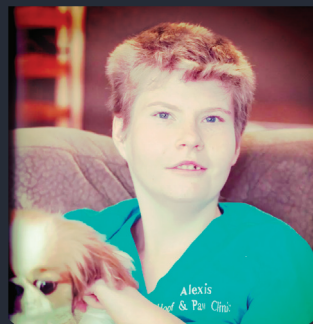
Transitioning Youth Partners



Hannah Sloan



Cody Kirchner



Alexis Olson



James Pederson



Lindsey Moreland



Zach Brennan

Gio's Story

Giovanni (Gio) is happiest when he is watching Disney movies or riding his adaptive bike, but even these moments of enjoyment require constant care.

Gio has Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome, a severe form of epilepsy. He also has autism, is non-verbal, intellectually and developmentally delayed, and deals with mobility challenges. He has had multiple brain surgeries and as many as 100 seizures a day at points throughout his childhood. Now 13, Gio needs the constant presence of a personal caregiver to ensure his safety, take care in feeding him, change his clothing throughout the day, help him with many of his daily needs, and assist him in doing some of the things he enjoys most.

It simply is not safe for Gio to be alone for any length of time, even at home. It takes a great deal of time to ensure he is safe and cared for with the dignity and respect he deserves.

Since 2010 Gio's parents, Ron and Charlotte, received a slowly increasing number of personal care hours from the state because as Gio grew, so did his required additional care. But in 2017, the state suddenly cut his personal care hours from 49 to 21 hours a week. The significant reduction came without warning in June, and with Gio soon to be home from school for the summer, there was no way that Ron and Charlotte, both with full-time jobs, could adequately provide for Gio's needs. So, Ron quit his job to care for Gio.

At the same time, Ron and Charlotte began navigating the state system so they could advocate for the hours that Gio needed. They quickly discovered this was a complicated task. To present a case that effectively challenged this significant reduction in hours, Ron and Charlotte knew they needed the expertise of someone who knew how to navigate the system. Fortunately, a friend offered them

the name of Attorney Mitch Hagopian at Disability Rights Wisconsin.

"Mitch got involved right away and was very passionate about helping us," Ron shared. "He took time to learn about our situation and worked with us to gather the documentation and start formulating a plan." With expertise in how to interpret the state's justification of the newly determined personal care hours, Mitch helped Ron and Charlotte specifically assess the areas in which the state's determination did not match Gio's real need for care.

Working with Mitch, Ron and Charlotte provided the judge and the state with over 90 pages of documentation to

support the argument for additional hours. This included details of Gio's long-term care issues, letters from his treating physician, a supporting letter from a caregiver who had worked with Gio for many years and information related to Gio's unique needs. Mitch prepared Ron and Charlotte for the

hearing so they could stay focused on the areas where they had the best chance of regaining care hours.

In January of 2018, seven months after the reduction in hours from the state, the judge ruled in Gio's favor. His care hours were restored to a level that matched his actual needs. Ron shared, "I don't believe we would have been able to get the personal care hours back without Mitch. Charlotte and I think about all the people who struggle to access the care they need for their loved ones. We know we were lucky to have the right connections and to find Mitch to help us put it all together. It gave us the greatest chance of success. But there are so many people out there trying to fight these things on their own, and we hope our story will show them that help is available."

"Mitch got involved right away and was very passionate about helping us. He took time to learn about our situation and worked with us to gather the documentation and start formulating a plan."



Giovanni



Jimmy's Story

Jimmy's favorite thing in the whole world is his family. He loves to learn and asks questions about everything.

If someone doesn't know the answer, he knows how to find it using his technology: he just asks Alexa or pulls out his assistive technology. He loves looking out his new window at the birds, and with a smile, he shares that he really appreciates his new bathtub that his cousin Traci fought so hard to get him.

Jimmy is 33, has autism, cerebral palsy, ulcerative colitis, seizure disorder, and vision impairment that impacts his depth perception. He has significant mobility issues and needs assistance moving about to prevent him from falling. He is easily overstimulated, and can become frustrated, agitated and overwhelmed. Fortunately, he is able to help manage sensory overload by calming himself in a bath. With the right environment that helps Jimmy manage his sensory needs, he thrives. Being able to modify his home made all the difference to Jimmy's quality of life.

Jimmy had become increasingly withdrawn and despondent living in Iowa. His mother had passed away suddenly and lack of resources from the state forced his father, a registered nurse, to leave his job to care for Jimmy because personal care workers would not show up for their shifts.

Traci, Jimmy's cousin, invited Jimmy and his dad and brother to live with her husband and five daughters until they identified a place where Jimmy would be happier. In a very short time, Jimmy was improving. He enrolled in the IRIS program so that he could start receiving needed services. Traci saw his need for a quiet, loving space, and she saw over time how a bath was essential to sooth him

during periods of sensory overload. She began to consider how to make modifications to their home to help him thrive. Jimmy spent most of his daytime hours in the calm of the finished basement. The only bathtub was on the second floor of the home. This arrangement did not offer the accessibility to the bathtub that Jimmy desperately needed. When he was highly agitated, it became very difficult to get him up two flights of stairs only to wait outside a bathroom that was often being used.

"Just don't give up," says Traci. "It gets hard sometimes, but there are people at DRW that have the knowledge to help you learn how to advocate for your loved one in a way that gets them what they need. This road can be hard, but I want others to know they can do it. They just need to reach out."

One day, an IRIS worker visited. In conversation, Traci mentioned how it would significantly impact Jimmy's quality of life if he had his own bathtub in the basement. The IRIS worker explained that Jimmy could make a request for a One-Time Expense (OTE) which, if approved, would pay for a home modification. Traci and the IRIS team assessed the needs and made a request to the state to add a bathtub and install egress windows in the basement. Traci wrote a request for the OTE but the request was denied by the IRIS program, as was Traci's appeal to the state Department of Health Services. She was feeling defeated.

Traci had one last option, to request a State Fair Hearing, but this seemed overwhelming. The letter denying the

home modifications for Jimmy had the number to Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW), so she reached out. Traci was transferred to DRW's Family Care & IRIS Ombudsman Program. This team works with individuals with disabilities on long-term care supports to get the services they need to remain independent in the community. Ombudsman, Jennifer Espinoza-Forlenza contacted Traci to review Jimmy's situation and offer assistance. Jennifer explained that she could help Traci develop a strategy to tell Jimmy's story at the hearing and describe his needs to the Judge in a clear and compelling way. The call left Traci uplifted enough to try one more time.



Jennifer provided expertise with the hearing process so that Traci and Jimmy could focus on the important facts. Jennifer helped Traci to understand the type of information that the Judge needed to hear. She explained the appeal process, shared important resources, and helped Traci understand how the hearing would unfold. Jennifer's assistance helped Traci feel confident that she could speak for Jimmy.

With tools in hand, Traci appealed only the expansion of the bathroom so that a bathtub could be installed. She and her husband decided to use their own resources for the windows in the basement to provide Jimmy sunlight and a safe escape.

At the hearing, the state presented the perspective that this request was simply a convenience and not medically necessary. However, Traci was ready. She shared, "When it was my turn, because of Jennifer's guidance, I was able to make my points about Jimmy's autism and how the bathtub was a necessity for his quality of life. It wasn't a convenience, but a health and safety issue. I explained how important it was for him to have immediate access to a bath to calm him. I knew I had to stress my points about his need for a better life, how amazing he is, and how badly I want him to live here. So, I did."

Two weeks later, Traci was approved for the OTE to add the bathtub to the basement bathroom. Jennifer was the first one to tell Traci, "I knew you could do it!"

"Just don't give up," says Traci. "It gets hard sometimes, but there are people at DRW that have the knowledge to help you learn how to advocate for your loved one in a way that gets them what they need. This road can be hard, but I want others to know they can do it. They just need to reach out."



Jimmy

Nancy's Story

Nancy Schouten is a strong self-advocate who is a survivor of domestic violence. As a trauma survivor, she lives with a dissociative disorder, PTSD, and depression.

Highly stressful situations can exacerbate symptoms of dissociative disorder to the point Nancy becomes unable to function. When this happens, she is typically taken to a crisis bed until she is feeling better. If it is a more severe episode, she is transferred to the hospital. Through the years she had always been treated with kindness and respect. But in October 2017, Nancy had an episode where she was hospitalized and this time, things were very different.

Nancy was taken to the hospital and was placed in the acute section of the Behavioral Health Unit at the hospital. Typically, within a day she would be moved to a regular unit where she was cared for until being released. This time, however, she was held there.

While there, the psychiatrist in charge prescribed psychotropic medications that Nancy did not want to take because of a prior experience with the same doctor overmedicating her. The prior period of overmedication had caused a prolonged state where Nancy was hardly able to function and, because of this, was placed in a community-based residential facility. She has no memory of the months she was overmedicated. Thankfully, a nurse practitioner recognized the symptoms of overmedication and helped Nancy safely transition off the extra medication so she could function again.

Due to her prior experience, Nancy informed her nurses that she wanted to take only the medications that her nurse practitioner (NP) had prescribed, but the psychiatrist at the hospital did not agree and prescribed others. Nancy was afraid of being overmedicated again so she requested to be discharged. The psychiatrist filed a statement with the court that prevented her release. Eventually Nancy was released, but was terribly afraid that if she had another episode, she would end up back in the same place. She was determined she would not be treated this way again.

Nancy began making calls to the hospital and the county to see if she could do anything to create a plan other than one that included her going back to the hospital. Nancy asked her psychologist, nurse practitioner, community support program case manager, and county social worker what she could do, but no one seemed to know how to help.

Nancy explained, “I got so worried about the whole thing, this whole process got so stressful, and I got so scared about my wellbeing and mental health, that I ended up moving into my sister’s house in another state.” Eventually, Nancy stumbled upon a link to Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW) when looking at the National Alliance on Mental Illness website. So, she reached out.

Karen Lane, Advocacy Specialist at DRW responded—and that’s when everything began to change. Karen shared, “Nancy just wanted to come back home and be able pick the hospital where she would go in case she was in need of hospitalization. But she was told that she didn’t have a choice, and that her only choice was the local hospital where the psychiatrist didn’t believe her diagnosis and treated her with psychotropic medication that had a severe impact on her.” Karen knew Nancy had the right to create a crisis plan, and that the county had a responsibility to help. Nancy said, “Karen took me by the hand and we went step





by step by step. I realized I never could have done this myself, because the county was not going to cooperate – and I didn’t personally hold the knowledge of the system or the expertise to get what I needed from them. What I discovered I needed was a coordinated crisis plan where the county, a mental health service provider contracted to provide comprehensive community services, the police department, and the hospital worked together to make sure my needs were addressed.”

Karen filed a complaint with the state Division of Quality Assurance and they came back with several citations stating that the county was responsible for the coordination of crisis service. The county was required to play this role—and they finally began to do it. It took 9 months, but Nancy finally felt secure in having a plan that would be best for her.

Nancy closed with, “I am so thankful for Karen at DRW. She has helped me become a much better advocate for myself because she taught me so much along the way. I have also been able to extend that to others who are struggling in similar situations and that feels good. At the very least I can direct them to DRW because I know they will take them seriously and help them.” Nancy also tries to help DRW get the word out about their services by leaving information in places she thinks others would be looking.



“I am so thankful for Karen at DRW. She has helped me become a much better advocate for myself because she taught me so much along the way. I have also been able to extend that to others who are struggling in similar situations and that feels good. At the very least I can direct them to DRW because I know they will take them seriously and help them.”



Karen Lane, Advocacy Specialist

Protection and Advocacy System

Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW) is the Governor appointed and federally mandated Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agency for people with disabilities in Wisconsin. DRW is part of a national network of P&A agencies throughout the United States and its territories. The P&A is a system that utilizes a combination of federally funded programs to address disability related issues affecting people in Wisconsin through individual and systems advocacy using a variety of tools and remedies.

Systems Focus

DRW's mission is to challenge systems and society to achieve positive changes in the lives of people with disabilities and their families. To accomplish this, our team of P&A advocacy specialists and attorneys work on public policy issues at local, state, and national levels; participate in grassroots initiatives in partnership with self-advocates and other advocacy agencies; conduct investigations, monitor situations, and release reports related to wrong-doings taking place at various institutional-type settings.

Highlights of our systems work in 2018

Education

- **Continuing efforts to improve the Seclusion and Restraint (SR) Law regulating Wisconsin public school districts.**

DRW, Wisconsin Family Ties, WI FACETS, and several school stakeholders made recommendations for needed changes to improve the SR law and a bill was drafted. Some of these recommendations include increasing transparency and oversight by requiring restraint and seclusion data be reported to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) as well as school boards, requiring schools to provide written incident reports to parents, training that focuses on de-escalation, and implementing policies for schools to review each incident and strategies to prevent future incidents.

In March of 2018, the bill was circulated for co-sponsorship and received bi-partisan support. The bill was introduced near the end of the session but did not get a vote in that legislative session. Late in 2018, DPI asked for some changes to the bill and it was re-drafted. A revised version will be reintroduced in 2019.



DRW works to protect the rights of people with disabilities with a focus on

- Protection from abuse and neglect
- Access to needed services and supports
- Participation and engagement with their communities
- Disability discrimination
- Access to education in an integrated setting
- Self-determination and having autonomy over their lives

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- **Raising awareness and improving engagement** of parents who have students with disabilities in the Milwaukee Public Schools. DRW conducted a series of trainings on career and college ready Individualized Education Programs (IEP's) about the new IEP forms and the planning process. There was a focus on reaching minority and underserved populations.



Access to Services

- **Improving the rate-setting methodology for Children's Long-Term Support** through formal comments and testimony at several community forums hosted by the Department of Health Services (DHS). DRW advocated for a flexible, tiered rate determination policy for children's services. This effort included an "exceptions" policy that would permit deviation from the standard rate in cases where either 1) a child's unique care needs required care or caregivers that was more expensive than the standard rate or, 2) a shortage of qualified providers required a higher rate in order to attract providers. Our recommendations were adopted by DHS and included in their initial draft of policies related to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) mandated rate-setting initiative.
- **Improving prior authorizations for Medicaid services** through ongoing quarterly meetings with DHS Division of Medicaid Services (DMS) prior authorization staff and representatives of professional associations of the therapeutic arts (PT, OT and SLT). These meetings focused on ways to streamline the prior authorization process for therapies and durable medical equipment and to ensure that Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) is considered when developing policies related to services for children and young people.

DRW represents the IDD (Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities) consumer perspective in this group. In 2018 this group was able to: 1) eliminate prior authorization for therapy evaluations 2) increase authorization periods from six months to one year 3) clarify that school-based therapy should not be considered duplicative of outpatient therapy, and 4) modernize (and make more expansive) the durable medical equipment (DME) coverage policy for standers. All of these improvements were things DRW has been seeking and working to achieve for many years.

Self-Determination

- **Advocating to enact a Supported Decision-Making (SDM) Agreement law**, DRW provided policy makers with the IDD perspective on the value and benefits of enacting a supported decision-making agreement law.

In collaboration with the Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD), the ARC of Wisconsin and the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR), DRW engaged with individual legislators and Department of Health Services (DHS) personnel to explain how SDM works and how it benefits people with IDD, particularly as an alternative to guardianship. DRW testified about the benefits of SDM before the Senate and Assembly Committees tasked with reviewing the SDM Agreement bill. Following enactment of Wisconsin's SDM Agreement law, DRW encouraged DHS to quickly create and make available on-line, the state sanctioned SDM Agreement form.

Civil Rights

- **Advising the court in an employee discrimination matter**, DRW submitted an amicus curiae brief to the Wisconsin Supreme Court regarding the proof necessary in an employment discrimination claim based on failure to accommodate a disability.
- **Representing several individuals with employment discrimination claims** at Walmart after receiving numerous calls from Walmart employees with disabilities whose jobs are being eliminated or threatened. It appeared that Walmart was making a nationwide effort to eliminate job positions of employees with disabilities who need job coaches, job carving or other accommodations.
- **Providing training and technical assistance to homeless shelters** to educate them on their obligations to accommodate people with disabilities and to understand the rights of people with disabilities using their services to be free from discrimination.
- **Partnering with the Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council** to assist individuals with disabilities who are facing housing discrimination issues including lack of accessibility, denial of emotional support animals, and lease modifications. DRW has a work-sharing agreement with the council and we work together to seek appropriate resolutions for people with disabilities.

Protection and Advocacy System

- **Providing a series of trainings across the state and in the Hmong community on basic disability rights.** The day long training focused on special education, disability benefits, fair housing, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Protecting Voting Rights

DRW works to protect the voting rights of people with disabilities and to ensure their full participation in the electoral process. Our voting access work is supported by our Protection and Advocacy Voting Access (PAVA) grant and through the Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition which DRW coordinates in partnership with the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD). DRW also staffs the Disability Rights Wisconsin Voter Hotline which provides advocacy assistance (1-844-DIS-VOTE).

Highlights of this work in 2018 include:

- Developed and disseminated the Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition Know Your Rights video available in English and Spanish.
- Developed 12 new voting resources.
- Disseminated over 50,000 postcards promoting disability voter registration.
- Reached over 5000 people with the Disability Vote Coalition Facebook page www.facebook.com/wisconsin-disabilityvote/
- Provided advocacy assistance to 50 individuals.
- Expanded our partnerships to have a broader cross disability reach, including Wisconsin Council of Blind and Visually Impaired, Wisconsin Association of the Deaf, Special Olympics of Wisconsin, and others.
- Disseminated 50,000 postcards to promote voter registration and increase awareness.
- 415 voters responded to our survey regarding voter participation and accessibility in the August primary
- Worked with the Wisconsin Election Commission to address training for election officials and poll workers, accessibility, and other practice and policy issues.

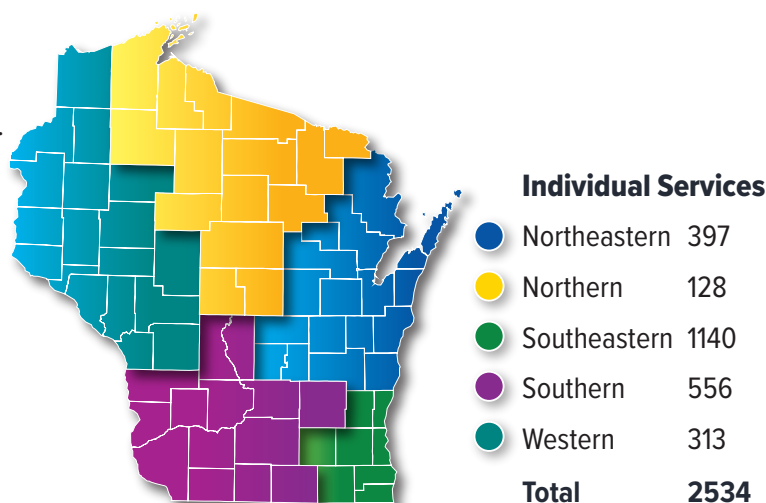
Individual Services

Our Protection and Advocacy programs provide a variety of services to support individuals with disabilities on a variety of disability related issues. Due to high demand for P&A services, we have to limit the number of cases we can accept. Depending on the nature of the situation and resources available, our team of Intake Specialists take info about the request for help and forwards the intake to our Advocacy Specialists and Attorneys who may provide:

- **Information and Referral (I&R) services** providing information, resources, or referrals to other agencies that can best help with particular concerns.
- **Technical Assistance** or short-term help through coaching, advice, sharing resources and tools to support people to advocate for themselves or on behalf of a person with a disability.
- **Individual Case Representation** providing more substantial support or representation for people with disabilities.
- **Legal Representation** in court or administrative hearings to resolve a dispute, make an appeal, or protect an individual's rights.

The following is a breakdown of P&A services provided to individuals in 2018.

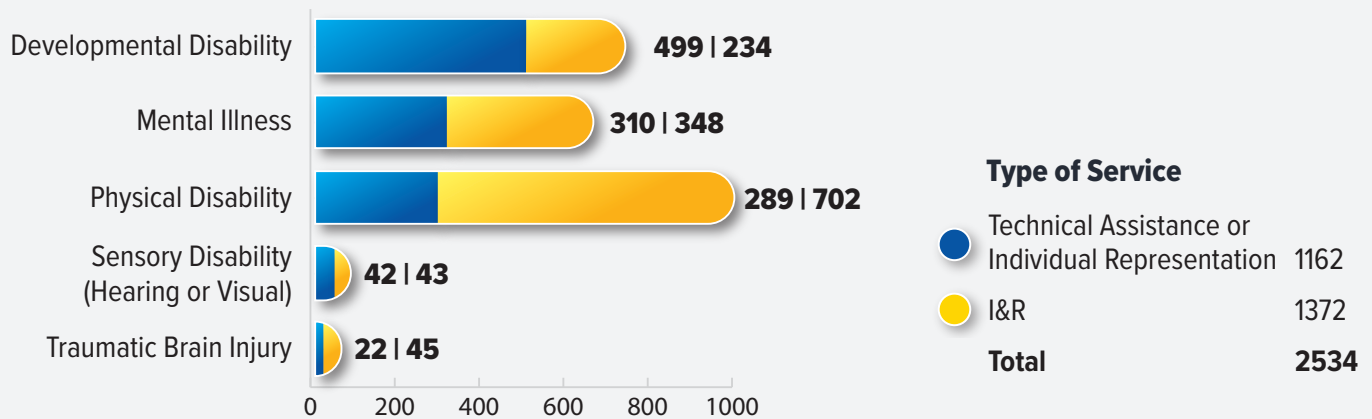
Demographics for All Services by Region



Total Number of Services Provided



By Primary Disability of Client

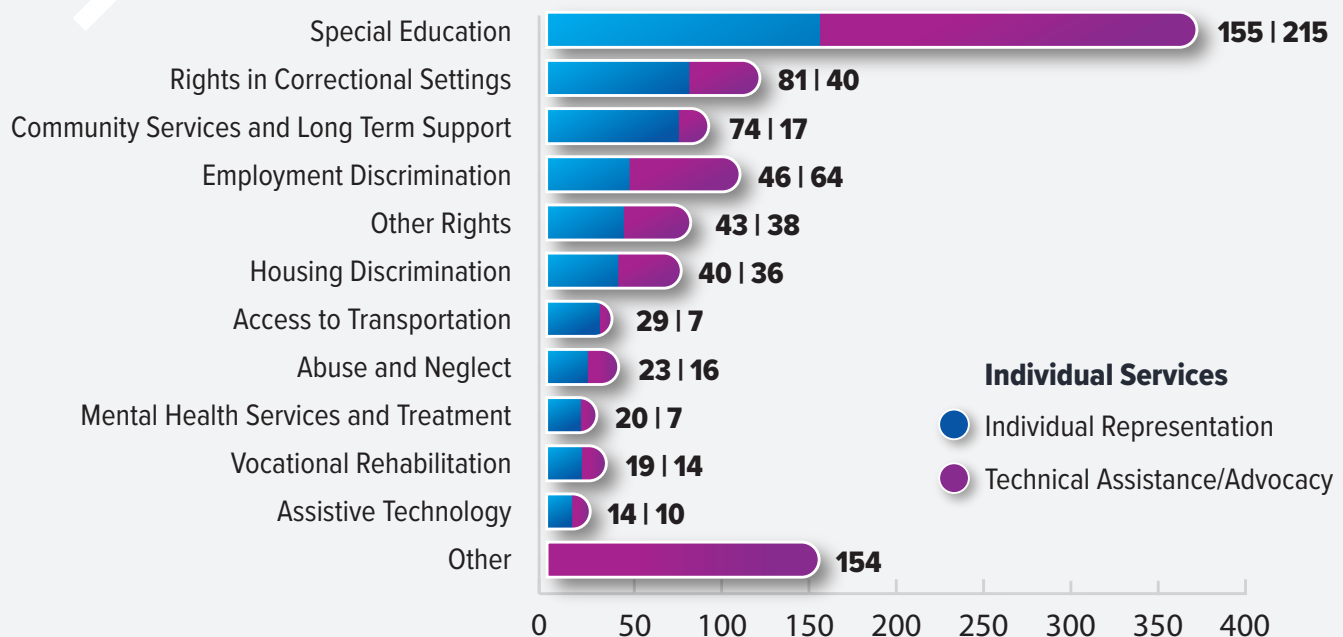


Information and Referral Topics

I&R Issue Areas | I&R



Issues for Clients Receiving Services

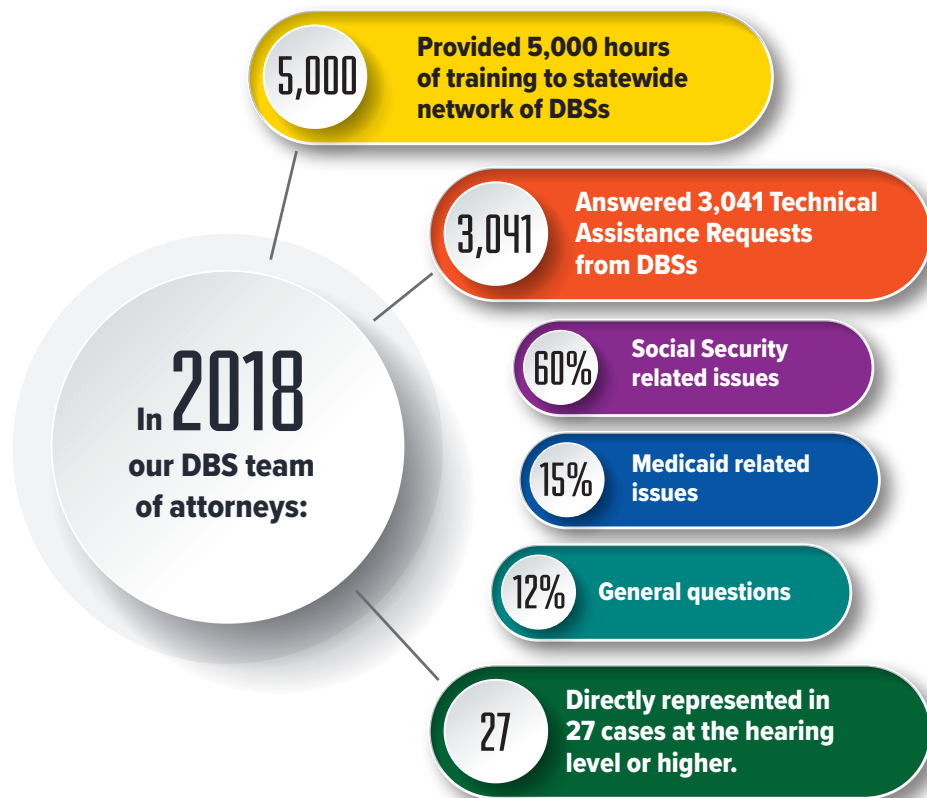


Activities and Outcomes

Benefits Team

Disability Benefits

The Department of Health Services contracts with DRW to provide technical assistance support and training for the Disability Benefits Specialists (DBSs) at Aging and Disability Resource Centers. This support ensures that DBSs can best help individuals with disabilities receive the benefits to which they are entitled and that match their needs. When formal legal intervention is required, DBSs can refer their clients to DRW for direct representation.



Disability Drug Benefit Helpline- Medicare Part D

There were 512 calls for assistance made to the Disability Drug Benefit Helpline in FY18. This includes requests from Medicare beneficiaries as well as professionals and providers around the state.



The SSI Managed Care External Advocacy Project (SSI-MC EAP)

serves people enrolled in SSI-related Medicaid and HMOs (Health Maintenance Organizations) in Wisconsin. SSI-MC EAP provides information for people who have questions about the SSI Managed Care Program and provides advocacy services to people enrolled in SSI HMOs.

In 2018, the SSI-MC EAP provided 158 callers with information and referral and provided advocacy on 336 cases. In 2018, enrollment expanded to include approximately 18,000 more people who were enrolled in Medicaid HMOs.



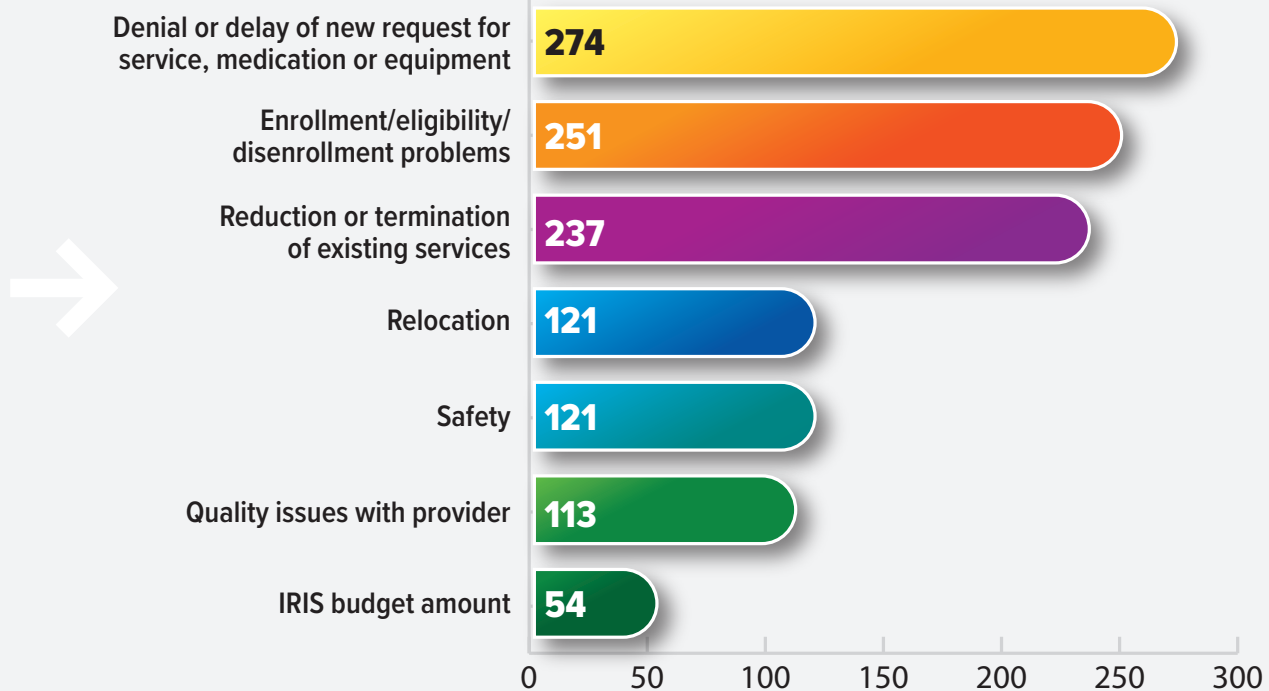
Family Care and IRIS Ombudsman Program (FCIOP)

The Department of Health Services (DHS) contracts with DRW to provide Ombudsman (advocacy) services for people between the ages of 18-59 who participate in or are seeking eligibility for Wisconsin's Long-Term Care programs: Family Care, Family Care Partnership, Program for All-Inclusive Care of the Elderly (PACE), and IRIS. People who are enrolled in Family Care/Family Care Partnership and PACE (FC/FCP) or IRIS set up care plans that identify what services or supports they will receive and who will provide them. At times, some of the 52,891* members in FC/FCP and 18,290* participants in IRIS experience a problem with receiving approval for certain things they need, or sometimes they have eligibility issues. When issues arise, program participants can ask DRW for help from an independent ombudsman. Ombudsmen work with individuals to find ways to informally resolve the situation when possible, and they can help with formal appeals.

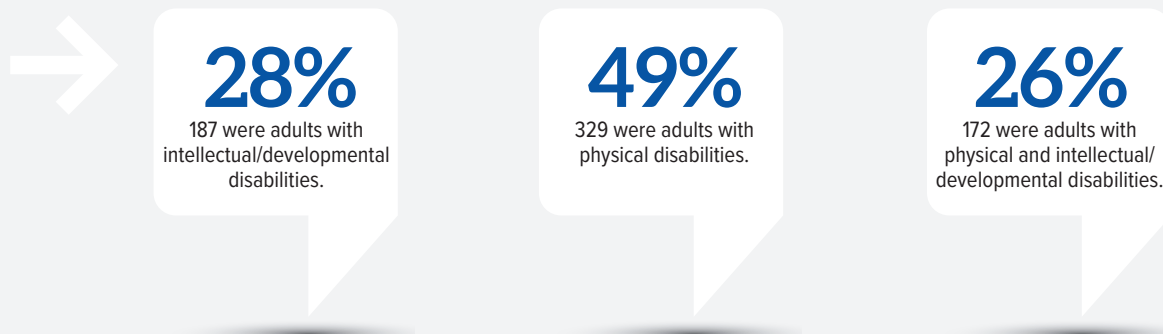
*Numbers of program participants per DHS data as of 1/01/2019

In 2018, FCIOP received a total of 770 requests for help from 671 people.

The most common situations people called for were:



Of those requesting Ombudsman Services (ages 18-59):



Activities and Outcomes

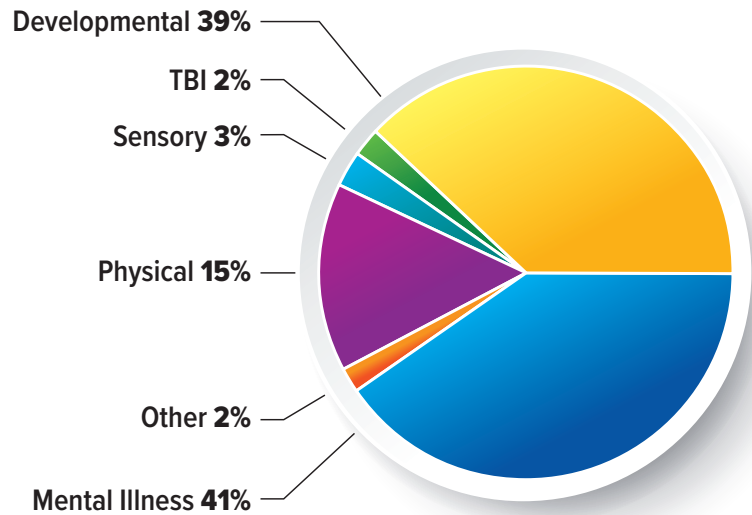
Victim Advocacy Program

Our Victim Advocacy program provides direct service to individuals with disabilities who experience crime, even if the crime has not been reported. Our Victim Advocacy Specialists work to ensure that each eligible person receives the advocacy, services, and support that is desired to move forward, find justice, and obtain safety and stability in whatever form the victim/survivor needs.

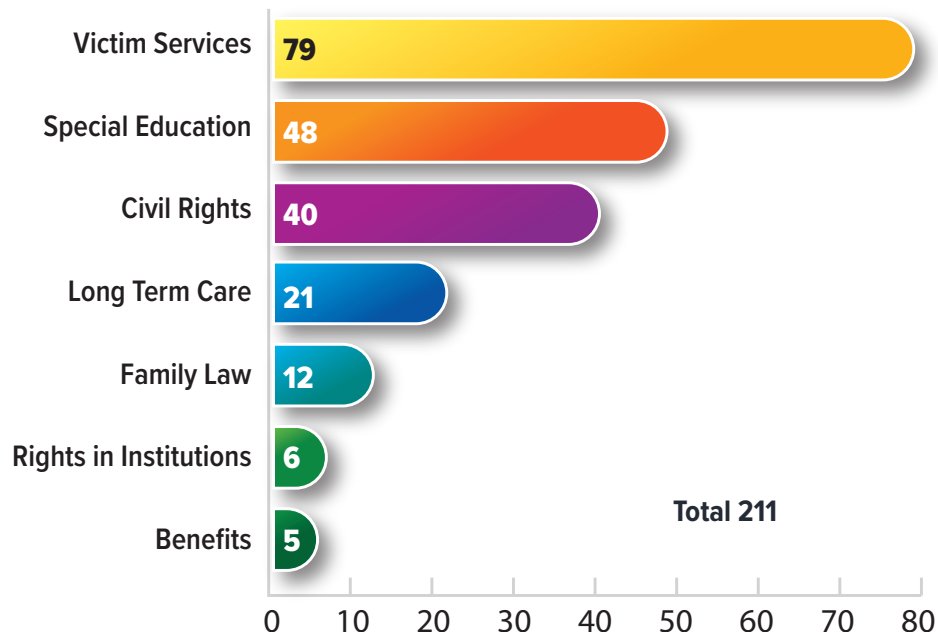
In 2018, DRW received 211 requests for victim advocacy services and provided services to 197 individuals including:

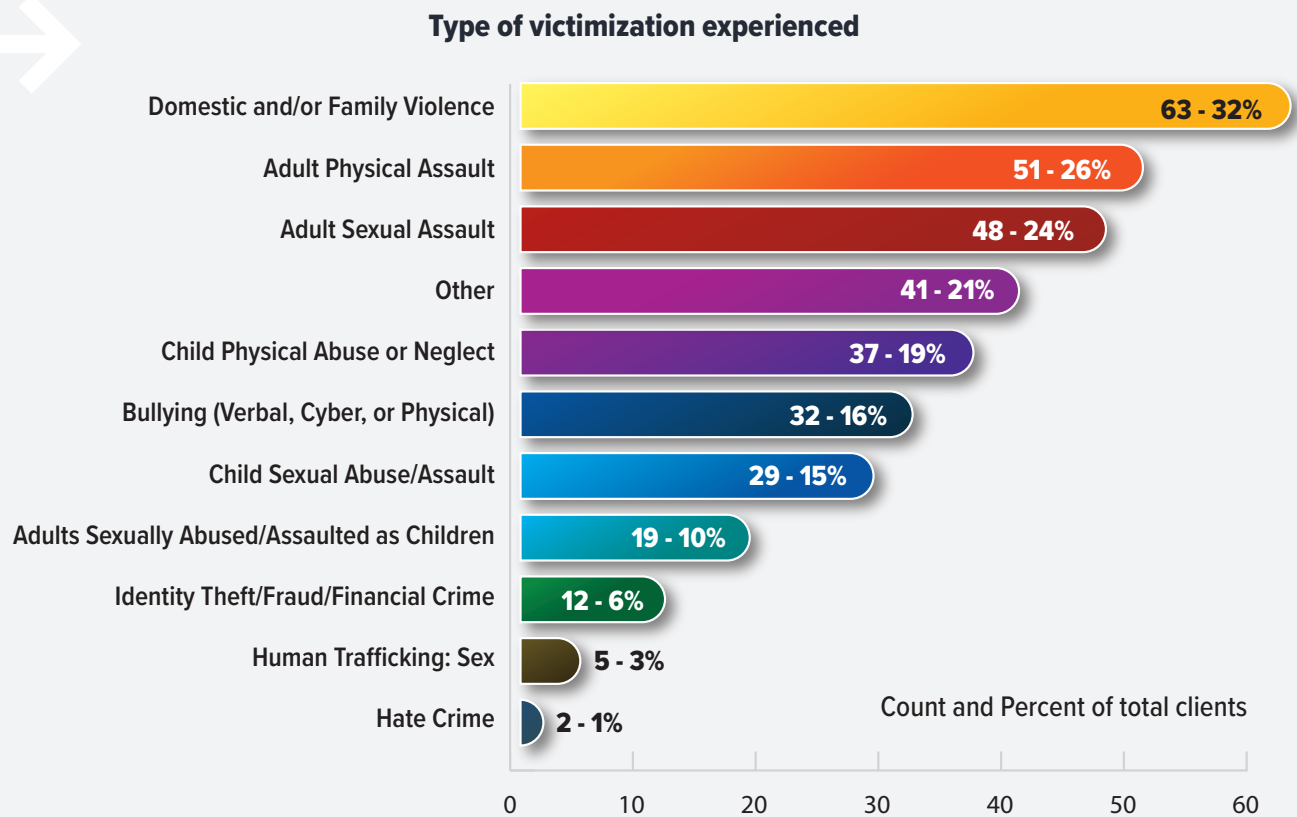
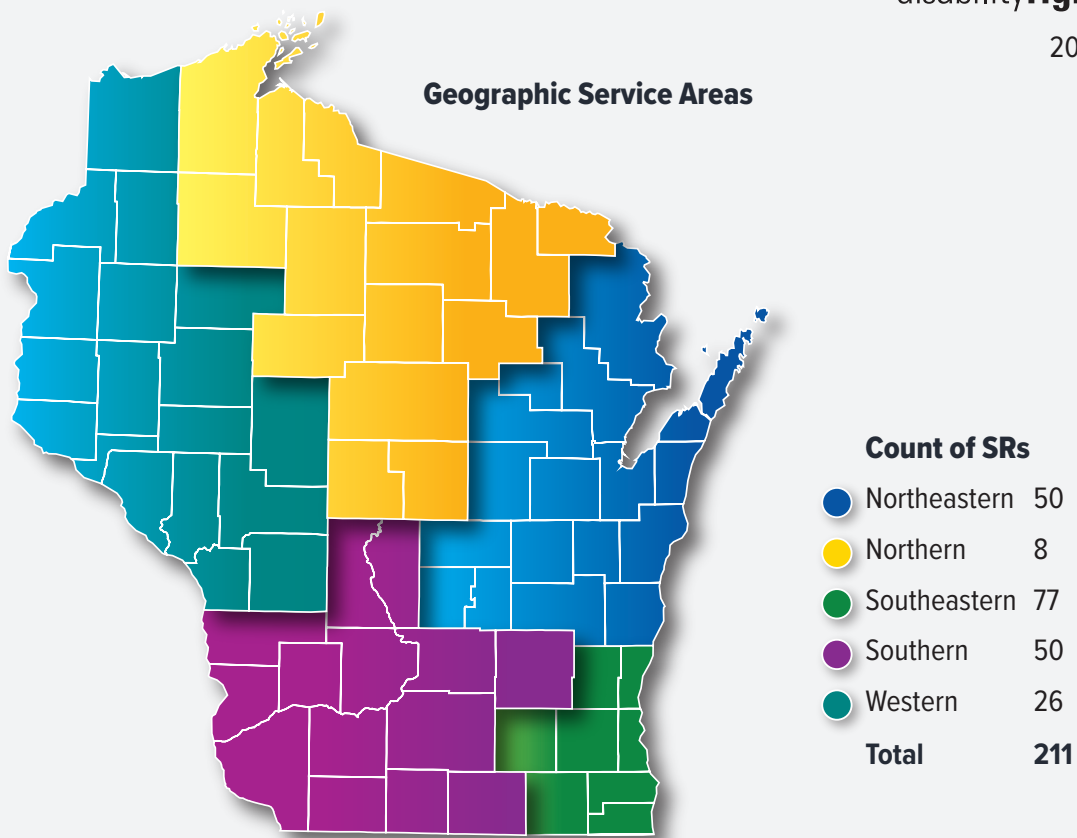
- Information and Referral
- Individual advocacy or accompaniment
- Emotional support or safety services
- Criminal/Civil Justice System Assistance

Types of disabilities represented for individuals requesting services



Requests for Service by Issue Area





2018 Financials

Summary Statement of 2018 Financial Activity

Total Revenues: **\$5,672,163**

Total Expenses: **\$5,770,687**

Unrestricted Net Assets, beginning of year: **\$379,538**

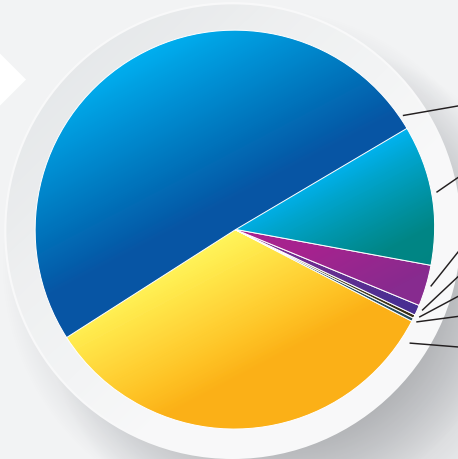
Unrestricted Net Assets, end of year: **\$362,516**

Temporarily Restricted Net Assets, beginning of year: **\$147,811**

Temporarily Restricted Net Assets, of year: **\$120,752**

Change in Net Assets: **-\$44,081**

Revenue FY 2018



State Awards: **\$2,819,044 - 49%**

Contracts: **\$625,781 - 11%**

Federal Grants: **\$195,886 - 3%**

Contributions & Foundation Grants: **\$152,522 - 2.7%**

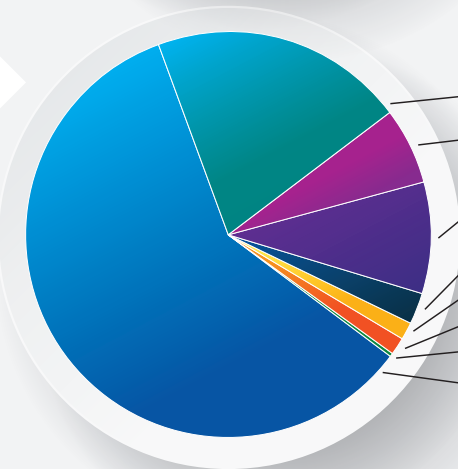
Legal Fees: **\$17,529 - 0%**

Interest/Other: **\$450 - 0%**

Federal Awards: **\$2,057,017 - 36%**

Total Revenue FY 2018: \$5,672,163

Expenses FY 2018



Fringe Benefits: **\$1,175,457 - 20.4%**

Fees/Contracts/Dues/Insurance: **\$347,559 - 6%**

Occupancy: **\$522,490 - 9%**

Travel: **\$137,399 - 2.4%**

Printing & Subscriptions: **\$87,116 - 1.5%**

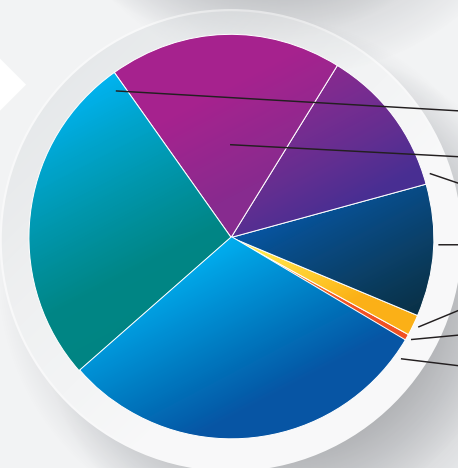
Training & Conferences: **\$75,598 - 1.3%**

Advertising: **\$20,598 - 0.4%**

Salaries & Wages: **\$3,404,470 - 59%**

Total: \$5,770,687

Expenditures by Program



FC/IRIS Ombudsman: **\$1,542,403 - 26.7%**

DBS Program Attorney: **\$1,080,055 - 18.7%**

SSI-MC & Med D: **\$682,210 - 11.8%**

Victim Advocacy: **\$618,374 - 10.7%**

Fundraising & Lobbying: **\$84,792 - 1.5%**

Training & Consultation: **\$24,665 - 0.5%**

Protection & Advocacy: **\$1,738,188 - 30.1%**

Total: \$5,770,687

2018 Donors



Champions (\$1,000.00 to \$50,000.00)

Anonymous (1)
Donald Bruessel
Community Alliance of Providers of WI
Helen & Jerry Geyso
James Buchanan & Maira Nogueron
Salawdeh Law Office
Jeffrey Simmons & Brenda Weix
WI Equal Justice Fund

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Dean & Deborah Zemel
Theresa Zenchenko

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Kathryn Dunn
Nathan & Louise Elbaum
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Sarah Flaschberger
Laura Gulig
Ralph & Jacqueline Gulig
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Dan Lococo
Ann Marie & Frank Osowski
John & Dolores Quaal
Cathy Ramos
Jane Sadusky
Eva Shiffrin
Eva Shiffrin & Jeff Burkhart
Marla Stephens
Diana Sullivan
John Teske Jr.
Dennis & Diane Voit
Judith and Wayne Zitske

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Timothy & Mary Foley
Mark & Mary Gloudemans
Tom & Lynn Hirsch
Mike St John
Mike McCabe
Rob Owens
Diane Padrutt
Laura & Mark Rathmann
Daniel Reilly
Jama Smith
Tricia Tienor
Ruth & Ralf Zielinski

2018 Shout Out



Disability Rights of Wisconsin (DRW) is proud to be a member of Community Shares of Wisconsin and Community Shares of Greater Milwaukee.

Community Shares is a member-directed federation of non-profits who are working to advocate for social change at the local, state, and national levels. As a member of CSW, DRW has a seat on the board, opportunities to network with other non-profits and organizations with similar goals, and access to resources and support to help us expand our capacity to serve our clients.

DRW receives donations from Community Shares through its various campaigns, participation in workplace giving, and the annual CSW Big Share fundraising event in March.

To learn more about Community Shares, please visit:

Community Shares of Wisconsin at www.communityshares.com

Community Shares of Greater Milwaukee at www.communitysharesmke.org



Donations to DRW help support efforts to meaningfully impact public policy, legislation, and other projects that affect the lives of people with disabilities and their families throughout the State of Wisconsin.

Check out our website at www.disabilityrightswi.org to learn more about upcoming events and trainings, find helpful resources, and opportunities for you to take action on important issues concerning people with disabilities.



How to contact us:

Toll Free:
800-928-8778
email: info@drwi.org

SSI-Managed Care External Advocate:
800-708-3034

Disability Voting Rights Helpline:
844-DIS-VOTE/844-347-8683

Disability Drug Benefit Helpline:
800-926-4862

disabilityrightswi.org

**Offices: Madison • Menasha
Milwaukee • Rice Lake**



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