



Protection & Advocacy for Virginians with Disabilities

Annual Report

2023



OUR MISSION:

To advance **independence**, **choice** and **self-determination**; protect legal, human and civil rights; and eliminate abuse, neglect and discrimination of people with disabilities through **zealous** and **uncompromising** legal advocacy and representation.

800-552-3962 | www.dLCV.org
1512 Willow Lawn Dr., Suite 100,
Richmond, VA 23230

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

As is true for many of you, 2023, had its ups and downs for dLCV. **We continue to push for both systems reform and individual remedies**, always hoping we have struck the right balance. But in spite of an ever-increasing need for advocacy in the disability community, and ever-increasing costs, dLCV's grants and resources remain static. We are facing the hard reality that we can not continue to provide the expansive services that are so badly needed.

For example, in 2023, we had to severely restrict our advocacy for children in special education services. We receive more calls for help in special education than in almost every other area of our work, but we do not have any dedicated funding that directly supports that work. It has been a heartbreaking decision for us and for all of you as well.

But we have not abandoned children! We have done outstanding advocacy for children who receive Medicaid, for children who are in institutional settings, and for children who have been abused by licensed caregivers. In these areas, in particular, **we seek both systemic change and individual fixes**, hoping that we can do something to keep the harm from re-occurring for anyone else.

In the pages that follow, you'll see some of our individual and systemic successes. You can find out about even more by visiting our website www.dlcvt.org or [social media pages](#).

You can also help us address our limited resources by volunteering with dLCV or offering financial support. **We are grateful to all of you** for joining in our vision of a Commonwealth that no longer has any barriers that keep people with disabilities from achieving their best lives.



COLLEEN MILLER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



facebook.com/disabilitylawva



instagram.com/disabilitylawva



twitter.com/disabilitylawva

WHO WE ARE



The disAbility Law Center of Virginia is the designated Protection and Advocacy organization for Virginians with disabilities.

Formerly a government agency, we transitioned to a **fully independent nonprofit** organization in 2013. While many organizations work to support people with disabilities, only protection and advocacy agencies (P&As) are federally mandated to **protect the basic human rights of people with disabilities**. This means we have a unique level of access authority to monitor institutions and organizations that serve people with disabilities, including access to thousands of incident reports from around the state. Our services include information and referral, legal representation, technical assistance, short-term assistance, systemic advocacy, monitoring and training for Virginians in need. **Our services are provided free of charge.**

We operate primarily using grant funding from the federal government, however, as may be unsurprising to many, **the needs of Virginians with disabilities have grown to exceed the resources the federal government provides for these programs**. Without a community of supporters, our ability to reach Virginians with disabilities and improve their lives would be greatly diminished.

WHAT WE DO

dLCV performs work in a variety of focus areas.

Here's some highlights from the year:

- Advocated for **systemic changes** that support people with disabilities within the Virginia General Assembly, including an additional \$50,000 in funding for curbside voting services.
- Provided **information, resources and referral** to 2,442 individuals.
- Reached 25,304 individuals through our **training programs**.
- **Reviewed 21,225 Serious Injury Reports and 5,450 Abuse and Neglect Reports** submitted from various facilities for people with disabilities across the state.
- Supported 57 clients in seeking **employment supports** via our Client Assistance Program and Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- Determined **accessibility compliance in voting**, which involved surveys of over 550 polling locations, hosting 5 voting rights workshops, and distributing voting information to underserved community groups.

DISABILITY RIGHTS AND RESOURCES SUMMIT

BREAKING BARRIERS TO ADVANCE ACCESS

dLCV hosted its annual **DisAbility Rights and Resources Summit** on September 21, 2023. This virtual event began with a Welcoming Address from dLCV's Executive Director, Colleen Miller, and an Opening Keynote session by **James Harris**, the **Founder of The HEALing Hub and Men to Heal**. This was followed by 20 different breakout sessions and workshops in the following five tracks: **systemic, education, employment, community, and intersectionality**.

Continuing to host the annual summit virtually allowed for increased safety and accessibility. **dLCV will continue to use the virtual platform in order to promote accesibility across the state**, as we consider factors like access to transportation and lodging to be potential barriers for some of our attendees. The event exceeded expectations by educating 230 registered attendees and reaching 153 new supporters across the Commonwealth.

From our attendees:

*"This is one of the **best disability trainings**. and it is free! dLCV brought us the **best experts** in the local area and in the field."*

*"It was very **informative**. I feel **empowered** after this event today."*

5,004

ENGAGEMENTS
WITHIN THE EVENT
PLATFORM

1,674

EVENT REGISTRATION
PAGE VIEWS

5,1919

TOTAL MINUTES
ATTENDEES USED
THE EVENT
PLATFORM

1,741

SUPPORTERS REACHED
VIA EVENT EMAIL
BLASTS

SPONSORED BY



O'HAGAN MEYER
ATTORNEYS & ADVISORS

DID YOU KNOW

that recordings of our Summit Sessions are available on our YouTube Channel?

 <https://www.youtube.com/TheDisAbilityLawCenterofVirginia>



EMPLOYMENT

Jaden had difficulty keeping a job due to his anxiety. dLCV empowered him to advocate for himself to get the services he needs.

Jaden is a client of a **Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)** office. Jaden has **severe anxiety** and **orthopedic disabilities**. Jaden does not have trouble getting a job, but **he has trouble keeping a job** due to his anxiety. Jaden contacted dLCV because he wanted to change his employment goal on his **Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)**. dLCV met with Jaden and the Manager of his DARS office. This manager originally denied his request for a Vocational Evaluation, as well as the possible change in his IPE goal.

dLCV then sent a request for an Informal Administrative Review of Jaden's file to the Director of Field Rehabilitation Services for DARS. **She completely reversed the Office Manager's decision and stated DARS would provide an extensive Vocational Evaluation by a DARS evaluator.** She further stated that DARS will re-consider his employment plan goal once the evaluation is completed. Jaden was pleased with this outcome and **finally felt heard** by DARS. He thanked dLCV staff for believing in him and making the Vocational Evaluation possible. Due to dLCV's advocacy, **Jaden was better able to access career support services he is entitled to.**

In 2023:

*dLCV completed **57 service requests** for the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services.*



According to CDC estimates from 2021, only 49.1% of Virginia's adult disability population is employed, compared to 68.8% of their nondisabled peers.

Employment supports are key to empowering people with disabilities to live independent lives.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

dLCV helps individuals with disabilities live, work, and spend time in their communities.



Ann is a deaf woman who enjoys art and wishes to learn more about it. Ann was excited to attend classes at a large art-based non-profit located in Alexandria, Virginia. Ann had attended classes at this non-profit before, but they had limited, if any, utility. While she could see the art, **she couldn't understand the spoken instruction.**

When Ann contacted the disAbility Law Center of Virginia, an advocate sent an initial demand letter and received a minimal response that the non-profit's attorney was reviewing the complaint.

Nonetheless, the class Ann registered and paid for began with no interpreter provided. dLCV then prepared an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complaint to the United States Department of Justice on the client's behalf and filed it after approval.

Then, perhaps due to the DOJ complaint, perhaps due to the passage of time, dLCV received response. **The non-profit agreed to provide interpreters in ASL for Ann.** Ann contacted them as instructed and got the interpreter - thus being able to learn art and engage in her community.

To ensure people with disabilities have equal access to public accommodations, dLCV:

*collaborated with the **Virginia Supreme Court** and **educated 47 ADA Coordinators** statewide about the Americans with Disabilities Act and Virginians with Disabilities Act*

INSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

dLCV ensures people with disabilities are free from abuse and neglect and can access all appropriate services.

dLCV conducts **regular monitoring of conditions at Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center**. There, our emphasis is on ensuring the provision of appropriate special education and vocational rehabilitation services. **Children in these facilities are still entitled to a free-and-appropriate public education**, which includes consideration for special education needs.

dLCV visited all housing units within the facility every quarter. As a result of monitoring, **dLCV provided services to 21 residents on a range of critical issues**, including special education services, vocational rehabilitation services, allegations of abuse and neglect, access to mental health and medical services, and concerns regarding the excessive use of solitary confinement.

Justin, a distressed Bon Air resident **in need of mental health evaluations** and treatment, found unwavering support in dLCV's advocacy. dLCV assisted in navigating the complex system, ensuring Justin received the necessary evaluations and treatment for his mental health concerns.

dLCV's relentless efforts **broke down barriers**, connecting Justin with professionals who **devised a tailored treatment plan**. Through their uncompromising advocacy, dLCV illuminated a path to healing, offering **hope and relief** to Justin. Justin now strides towards a brighter future, armed with tools to **confront and conquer** his mental health challenges.

This year, dLCV:

reviewed approximately
21,225 Serious Injury and Death reports and **5,450 Abuse and Neglect** reports submitted through the *Computerized Human Rights Information System*.



Analyzing this data helps us identify and address systemic patterns of abuse and neglect.

VOTING RIGHTS

dLCV surveyed over 550 polling sites for accessibility on Election Day. ✓ ✓ ✓

While there were many localities that were more accessible than others, dLCV published a report and met with the State Board of Elections (ELECT Board) to discuss the findings. dLCV's Executive Director continued outreach about the survey process and shared results with press contacts at WTVR CBS 6.

dLCV also **presented 5 workshops** and disseminated voting rights information to **12 underserved community groups** across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Voting rights brochures and information were translated to Arabic, Chinese, English, Spanish and Vietnamese. These were widely disseminated on dLCV's website and social media. **These efforts reached over 550 Virginians.**



In the summer and early fall of 2023, dLCV:

- Participated in the [REV UP](#) nationwide voting collaboration.
- Attended REV UP's statewide event in August.
- Distributed 1,000 Spanish and English voting rights posters at resource fairs.
- Distributed voting rights information to 32 Assisted Living Facilities.
- Distributed voting rights information in American Sign Language and English to 110 people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deaf Blind.
- Presented at a National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) sponsored training about polling surveys and how to interpret data.

DID YOU KNOW...? In the 2023 Legislative Session, an additional \$50,000 in funding was allocated to strengthen curbside voting programs in VA.

REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE PROGRAM

When Social Security beneficiaries are subject to fraud or exploitation, dLCV's Representative Payee program can help.

What are Representative Payees?

A representative payee is a person or organization appointed to **receive benefits from the Social Security Administration** on behalf of people who do not manage their own benefits. A large portion of folks who use representative payees are people with disabilities.

This year, dLCV assessed **every** Adult Protective Services report, Computerized Human Rights Information System report, Critical Incident Report, and Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility report involving **financial exploitation**. This included analysis of over 170 reports. Of these 170+ reports, 11 concerned a single provider. **Spotting patterns of abuse is an important strategy for prevention of future manipulation.**

In 2023:

*dLCV's Representative Payee program completed a total of **56 site reviews.***



FINANCIAL PICTURE

The disAbility Law Center of Virginia receives support from core federal grants that provide the basic foundation for our work as the protection and advocacy system.

We also receive additional funding from individual donors and corporate sponsors to provide additional programs and services that advance our mission.

Core Federal Grants

PADD: Advocacy for individuals with developmental disabilities to promote full inclusion.

PAIMI: Advocacy for individuals with mental illness to address conditions in mental health facilities.

PABRP: Advocacy to protect beneficiaries of Social Security who have representative payees to be free from exploitation.

PAIR: Protection and advocacy for individual rights to enforce the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal laws.

CAP: Client Assistance Program to help people with disabilities to be employed.

PAVA: Voting rights advocacy to ensure that people with disabilities have full access to voting.

PAAT: Advocacy to assist people with disabilities to find appropriate assistive technology.

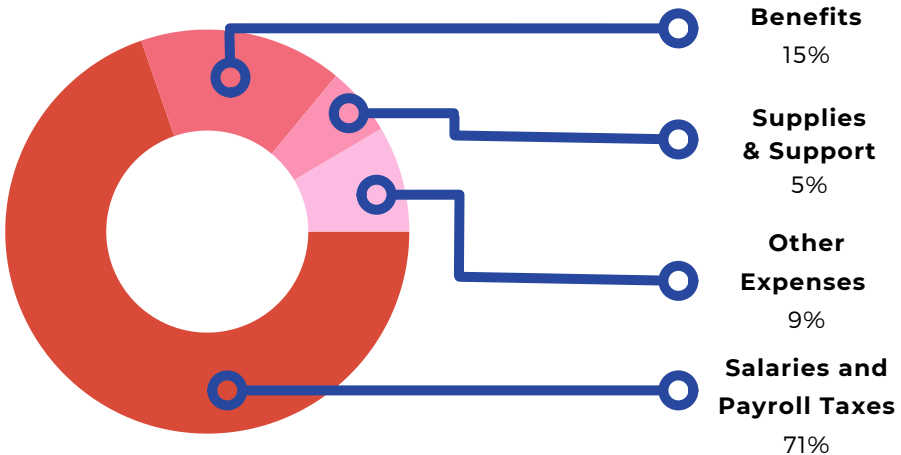
PABSS: Advocacy to assist beneficiaries of Social Security to be able to return to work.

PATBI: Advocacy for improved services for people with traumatic brain injuries.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

REVENUE AND SUPPORT	FY 2023	% OF TOTAL
Developmental Disabilities – PADD	\$ 710,820	18%
Mental Illness – PAIMI	\$ 753,430	19%
Representative Payee – PABRP	\$ 716,024	18%
Individual Rights – PAIR	\$ 413,798	11%
Client Assistance Program – CAP	\$ 583,941	15%
Other Grants & dLCV Fundraising	\$ 252,500	7%
Voting Access – PAVA	\$ 121,239	3%
Beneficiaries of Social Security – PABSS	\$ 148,945	4%
Assistive Technology – PAAT	\$ 93,867	3%
Traumatic Brain Injury – PATBI	\$ 92,042	2%
TOTAL REVENUES	\$3,886,60	100%

Expenses by Category



2023 LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Donna L. Gilles, President
Sierrah M. Chavis, Vice-President
Sally Conway, Secretary
Stacy Ruble, Treasurer
Bolor Amarsanaa
Sean Campbell
Henry Claypool
Greg Crapanzano
Diana Crosswhite
Harry L. Gewanter
Carrie Knopf
Gavriel Legynd
Cameron Lynch
Angela Thanyachareon
Carol Tuning
Thomas Walk
Tyler Williamson
Charlotte Woodward
Evan Wrinkle
Zipporah Levi-Shackleford, PAIMI Chair
Colleen Miller, Ex Officio, dLCV Executive Director

PAIMI ADVISORY COUNCIL

Zipporah Levi-Shackleford, Chairperson
Heidi Campbell, Vice-Chairperson
Brandon Cassady, Secretary
Lisa Coates
Caroline Gendelman
Allen Weston
David Gold
Jennifer Spangler
Steve Hornstein
Joseph Stafford
Staci Young

JOIN US IN OUR MISSION

Our organization also has several committees that are comprised of a combination of staff, board members, and volunteers. These committees include:

- Building Purchase Task Force
- Executive Committee
- Finance Committee
- Governance Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Personnel Committee
- Public Awareness and Goals Committee
- Resource Development Committee

Interesting in learning more about involvement in and selection for the dLCV board, PAIMI Council, or board committees?

Email us at info@dldcv.org to learn more.

You can earn more about **all** opportunities to get involved at: www.dldcv.org/volunteer



Connect with us

 @disAbilityLawVA

 @disAbilityLawVA

 @disAbilityLawVA

 **disABILITY**
LAW CENTER
OF VIRGINIA
Protection & Advocacy for Virginians with Disabilities