



**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Department on Disability Services**  
**Developmental Disabilities Administration**

---

## **How to File a Complaint**

### **1. What is advocacy?**

Advocacy means speaking up and fighting for your rights. You have a right to services and supports to help you live the most independent and productive life possible. You also have the right to receive the services and supports you need.

The Department on Disability Services (DDS) **must** respect your rights, follow the law and follow their own rules (policies). There will be times when you don't agree with DDS's decisions, or feel that those who work with you are not listening to you. If DDS or your service provider has ignored you, refused to give you what you have asked for, or asked you to leave their program, you can fight (appeal) their decision by contacting the DDS Rights and Advocacy Specialist (RAS) for help.

### **2. What type of problems can DDS help me resolve?**

#### **a. Relationships**

- Do you want to go on dates?
- Do you want to go to church?
- Do you want to make more friends?
- Do you have children?
- Do you want to learn more about taking care of them?
- Do you have questions about sex?
- Is someone hurting you or taking your money?

#### **b. Living conditions**

- Do you want to move?
- Do you need help in your home?
- Do you want to learn how to cook?
- Do you want to live alone?
- Do you get along with your roommate?
- Do you want to pay your own bills, be your own representative payee?
- Do you need a plan in case of an emergency?
- Do you need a new wheelchair, hand rails, a ramp, or other home modifications?

#### **c. Transportation**

- Do you know how to ride public transportation?
- Do you have problems with Metro Access?





**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Department on Disability Services**  
**Developmental Disabilities Administration**

- Do you want to learn to drive a car?

**d. Medical/ Health**

- Do you like your doctor?
- Do you want to refuse medication or medical treatment?
- Do you want to learn how to make healthy eating choices?

**e. Employment/ Vocational Services**

- Do you need help getting a job?
- Do you want to make more money?
- Do you want to learn new job skills?

**f. Other problems?**

### 3. Who do I call for help?

You (individuals, providers, family members and other interested parties) may contact the DDS Rights and Advocacy Specialist (RAS) and ask for help. You must file your complaint in writing by:

- Filling out the internal resolution form, or
- Sending an email to the RAS asking for help to fill out the form, or
- Calling the RAS and asking them to fill out a complaint form for you.

*Important! You must request an internal resolution within 90 days of the alleged violation. If you miss the deadline, you may not be able to ask DDS to resolve your problem.*

The RAS can be reached at:

Department on Disability Services  
Developmental Disabilities Administration  
1125 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: (202) 730-1802  
Fax: (202) 730-1841  
Email: [dds.complaints@dc.gov](mailto:dds.complaints@dc.gov)

### 4. What does the RAS do to resolve my problem?

- The RAS will try to reading reports, and
  - The RAS may identify a problem.
- resolve the problem by making phone calls, scheduling meetings to discuss the problem. DDS staff person who can help fix your



1125 15<sup>th</sup> Street N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005  
202.730-1700 [www.dds.dc.gov](http://www.dds.dc.gov)



**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Department on Disability Services**  
**Developmental Disabilities Administration**

- c. The RAS will send the form to the DDS staff person within **5 business days** of receiving the resolution form, unless asked not to.

**5. What do I do if I am not satisfied with the action proposed by the RAS or representative designee?**

If the RAS or staff person (representative designee) fails to fix the problem, the staff person will attempt to fix the problem through alternative dispute resolution techniques by:

- a. Holding a meeting within **15 business days**; and
- b. Making sure that a DDA decision-maker and other relevant individuals attend the meeting to resolve the complaint.

**6. What if I am not ready to ask DDS for help?**

Call the service provider and ask them to help you resolve your problem. All DDS service providers are required to have an internal complaint process and to have their own human rights committees. You may request a meeting with the provider, or attend a meeting of the provider HRC.

**7. If I was denied eligibility for DDS services can I ask for an “Internal Resolution”?**

**No.** Denials of DDS eligibility must be appealed to the Manager of the Intake and Eligibility Unit (Level I) and the DDS Deputy Director (Level II). Call DDS at (202) 730-1700.

**8. What if I am having problems with the DDS’ Rehabilitative Services Administration (RSA)?**

If you are having problems with your vocational services through RSA, you may call the Clients Assistance Program (CAP). The CAP program is administered by University Legal Services (ULS). CAP advocates can help you solve problems with your DOR counselor or help you advocate on your behalf for vocational services when you pursue legal, administrative, or other ways to protect your rights. You can reach the **CAP Program** by telephone at: (202) 547-0198 ext. 116.

**9. Are there additional resources available to help me advocate for what I want?**





**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Department on Disability Services**  
**Developmental Disabilities Administration**

**Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH):** If you are receiving Medicaid and have a problem with your services and supports you may file for a Medicaid Fair Hearing at:

One Judiciary Square  
441 4th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 442-9094

**DC's Office of Human Rights (OHR):** Resolves issues of discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and/or education. (202) 727-4559. [www.ohr.dc.gov](http://www.ohr.dc.gov).

**Mayor's Office on Disability Rights (ODR):** Resolves allegations of violations of the District's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and related disability-rights laws. (202) 724-5055. [www.odr.dc.gov](http://www.odr.dc.gov)

**The Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities:** Provides advocacy, monitoring and legal representation for individuals with developmental disabilities. (202) 448-1450. [www.dcqualitytrust.org](http://www.dcqualitytrust.org)

**University Legal Services (ULS):** D.C.'s Protection and Advocacy office, providing legal assistance for individuals with disabilities. (202) 547-0198. [www.uls-dc.org](http://www.uls-dc.org)

**Project Action!** You may receive advocacy assistance from a peer and/or learn how to advocate for yourself by attending monthly meetings with Project Action. Please contact Rebecca Salon at (202) 730-1700 or [rsalon@verizon.net](mailto:rsalon@verizon.net), or Phyllis Horton of Quality Trust at (202) 448-1450 or [pholton@dcqualitytrust.org](mailto:pholton@dcqualitytrust.org), and ask to be added to the Project Action! mailing list.

