



Protection & Advocacy Project

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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P&A Announces 2026 Focus Areas

(Bismarck, ND) The Protection & Advocacy Project (P&A) is the leading civil rights organization for North Dakotans with disabilities. The agency is committed to equality and inclusion for people with disabilities in all aspects of life.

After gathering input from the public and reviewing statewide needs, P&A has identified three primary focus areas for 2026: 1) abuse, neglect, and exploitation, 2) community inclusion, and 3) criminal/juvenile justice. Survey responses highlighted these as top concerns, with 29% of respondents identifying abuse, neglect, or exploitation; 53% pointing to various aspects of community inclusion; and 10% naming justice system issues as the most pressing.

Work under the abuse, neglect, and exploitation focus area will include investigating reported concerns, monitoring service providers, reviewing representative payees, and engaging in education and collaboration to strengthen protections.

The focus area of community inclusion will emphasize access to community-based services, education, employment barriers, voting rights, and assistive technology (AT). Education work will include advocating for educational rights in areas such as seclusion and restraint and least restrictive environment. Employment advocacy will include addressing barriers to self-sufficiently due to issues with transportation, employment rights, reasonable accommodations, transition planning, or challenges with vocational rehabilitation or independent living services. Specific efforts around AT will focus on addressing inappropriate denials of or barriers to disability-related technology.

Efforts in criminal and juvenile justice will center on ensuring the rights of people with disabilities are recognized and enforced within the justice system, including access to appropriate treatment and support.

P&A provides services at no cost to eligible individuals with disabilities. These services include information and referral, self-advocacy assistance, advocacy representation, legal representation, and protective services.

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