

FY2016 PADD PRIORITIES in new format

Adopted 9/17/2014

Edited version

Case acceptance is based on four factors:

- (1) the client meets the federal definition of an individual with a developmental disability;
- (2) the case is within the PADD priorities;
- (3) the case has merit (sufficient evidence to support the claim); and
- (4) there are sufficient staff resources to take on the case.

Goal A: People with disabilities have access to needed health care/long term care; children with developmental disabilities and/or mental health needs will receive needed services and supports.

Priority A1: Represent individuals with disabilities seeking access to needed health care/long term care when issue is disability, duration of services, covered services, due process or EPSDT.

Priority A2: Engage in legal and systems advocacy to maintain or increase access to health care including access to EPSDT services, long term care services and children's developmental and mental health services including due process issues such as adequacy of denial/termination/reduction notices.

Priority A3: Monitor implementation of Integrated Family Services (IFS) initiative.

Priority A4: Engage in systems advocacy to protect the interests of Vermonters with disabilities in the context of Vermont's State Innovation Model grant.

Goal B: Students with disabilities are educated in the most integrated appropriate educational setting, are not harassed, are not unlawfully disciplined, and are not unlawfully suspended or expelled from their educational program. Students with disabilities receive an appropriate transition from school to employment and independent living. Resources permitting: Students with disabilities are identified, evaluated, and receive a free and appropriate public education and related services. Eliminate use of truancy proceedings for students with disabilities. Federal and Vermont entitlements and procedural protections are preserved.

Priority B1: Work on cases involving students with disabilities who have been disciplined (including use of Restrictive Behavior Interventions), suspended or expelled from school due to disability-related behaviors, or who are at risk of suspension or expulsion from school due to disability-related behaviors, or who are involved in truancy proceedings. Where resources permit, provide advocacy for students who are not otherwise receiving a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Priority B2: Provide individual advocacy for students who are transitioning out of school including graduation issues (forced early graduation and participation in graduation activities) and access to adult and/or vocational services.

Priority B3: Provide individual advocacy for students placed in alternative programs.

Priority B4: Engage in legal and systems advocacy to ensure appropriate educational services for IEP/ 504 plan students at Woodside Juvenile Rehabilitation facility.

Priority B5: Monitor implementation of AOE Rules on use of restraint and seclusion in Vermont schools; investigate complaints of inappropriate/unlawful use of restraint and seclusion in Vermont

schools and alternative programs.

Priority B6: Engage in systems advocacy to preserve and protect Federal and Vermont entitlements, including advocacy to address Vermont’s definition of “adverse effect” in making special education eligibility determinations and problems with Vermont’s administrative complaint process.

Goal C: Worked toward improved access to appropriate services/supports in the least restrictive and most integrated settings.

Priority C1: Advocate for people with disabilities in nursing homes, long-term care homes, correctional facilities and other restrictive settings for whom appropriate services/supports may be available in more integrated settings.

Goal D: Advocate to improve access to Developmental Services for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Priority D1: Provide individual advocacy to children, adults, or families seeking access to developmental services or whose developmental services have been reduced or terminated; Provide individual advocacy in grievances and appeals from service provider decisions

Priority D2: Engage in systems advocacy to maintain and increase access to developmental services for Vermonters with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including commenting on proposed regulations, policies, legislation and procedures affecting access to developmental services, and serving on relevant advisory and ad hoc committees to assure increased and expanded access to developmental services for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Goal E: Provide advocacy to ensure people with intellectual and developmental disabilities do not have unnecessary or unnecessarily restrictive guardianships.

Priority E1: Provide direct case representation in selected cases including representation for individuals seeking to become their own guardians.

Priority E2: Serve on Probate Oversight Committee to ensure consistent best practices among Vermont Probate Courts and practice statewide;

Priority E3: Working with Green Mountain Self Advocates, to explore and develop alternatives to guardianship in Vermont.

Goal F: Access to and preservation of SSI benefits for income eligible children under age 18 or turning 18 whose benefits are terminated on the basis of disability. Maintain maximum SS benefits for adults who are disabled and working.

Priority F1: Provide representation at administrative law judge (ALJ) level hearings for children under the age of 18 or turning 18 where issue is disability, or, for adults, where client is working and disabled and issue is overpayment or CDR.

Goal G: Provide advocacy to improve access to government services and programs as provided in Title II of the ADA.

Priority G1: Provide individual advocacy in response to client complaints about accessibility and lack of accommodations in government services such as higher education, Reach Up, judicial and corrections systems - including people with disabilities who have been victims of crime, and parents with disabilities in the child protection system.

Priority G2: Provide technical assistance to the Communication Support Project and support its management as resources permit to ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities receive communication support in judicial and other proceedings.

Priority G3: Engage in legal and systems advocacy to insure that state and local emergency planning efforts include considering the needs of people with disabilities. Assistance will be offered should a residential care or nursing home desire help in preparing a disaster plan.

Goal H: Ensure that adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities living independently, in institutions, juvenile treatment programs or in parental, family, group or developmental homes, are free from abuse, neglect or rights violations.

Priority H1: Where appropriate, conduct investigations of allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation of adults or children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Make referrals to Adult Protective Services (APS) where appropriate.

Priority H2: Engage in legal and systems advocacy to ensure Vermont's compliance with laws relating to the protection of vulnerable adults and children.

Goal I: Increase knowledge and awareness of the civil and legal rights of people with disabilities

Priority I1: Provide at least 10 trainings to consumers, families, advocates, service providers & the general public on the civil and legal rights of individuals with disabilities