



# 2021 Annual Report

Protection and advocacy for Virginians  
with disabilities

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

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# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

At the disAbility Law Center of Virginia (dLCV), we know that the challenges faced by people with disabilities in Virginia are complex. Some of the issues we see are the result of simple misunderstandings, while others are issues that are rooted in a disability service system with historic, inherent flaws.

Some problems can be resolved with a phone call, an explanation, or simply time to cool off. Others require systems-wide lawsuits or massive legislative changes. And, of course, there is everything in between.

We, here at dLCV, are fortunate to have an equally wide range of tools at our disposal to address those challenges. At one end, we develop training programs, educational videos, and straight-forward fact sheets to reach as many people as we possibly can and maybe even enable them to be their own advocates. At the other end, we investigate systemic issues, gathering input from all over the state and from representatives of different communities to resolve problems that have developed over years and decades.

The vast majority of problems presented to us are resolved with just a few hours of advocacy on our part; but, some require years and years of investigation, legal action, and legislative initiatives.

In the pages that follow, you will see some examples of individual cases we were able to remedy, systemic change initiatives we accomplished, and statistics that show just how huge some of the remaining problems really are.

You can be a part of the solutions that we seek! Visit our webpage to learn more about your rights and the rights of your neighbors, friends, and family members who have disabilities. Speak up when you see injustice and reach out to help others who are fighting for justice, too. Join us as a volunteer or supporter! The more we join together in this struggle, the more we will overcome!

**COLLEEN MILLER**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



# 2021 DISABILITY RIGHTS AND RESOURCES SUMMIT

## LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RACIAL EQUITY

dLCV hosted its annual Disability Rights and Resources Summit on September 23, 2021. This virtual event began with a Welcoming Address from dLCV's Executive Director, Colleen Miller, and an Opening Plenary by Dr. Kimberly Knackstedt, the Director of Disability Policy in the Domestic Policy Council at The White House, and Dr. Janice Underwood, the Chief Diversity Officer for Governor Ralph Northam's Office. This was followed by 12 different breakout sessions and workshops, and even a couple of comedic performances by Comic Ray Bullock.

Hosting the annual summit virtually allowed for increased safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, but also, allowed for more people to view and attend the event. dLCV exceeded expectations with over 200 registered attendees for this year's summit. Additionally, dLCV remained committed to the summit's theme by working with speakers that were Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). In the three topic tracks of (1) Resources, (2) Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement, and (3) Education, over half of the speakers were BIPOC and empowered the voices and experiences of racially marginalized people with disabilities.

## SPONSORS





# EMPLOYMENT

**Kate needed assistance from the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative (DARS) services. dLCV empowered her to advocate for herself and become a DARS client.**

The Morris family called dLCV because their daughter, Kate, needed adult services from the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). When dLCV had the initial meeting with DARS, the family felt discouraged and turned away. dLCV wrote a letter to the manager expressing our concerns and stating that Kate deserved the opportunity to apply for services, which resulted in a second meeting where Kate applied for services from DARS.

When dLCV met with DARS and the family to advocate for services, DARS informed dLCV that Kate was now a DARS client! The client advocated for herself very well in the meeting and answered all of the questions from DARS staff. At the end of the meeting, everyone applauded because they were pleased that Kate is now a DARS client. The family stated that this meeting would not have happened without dLCV assistance.

**In spite of a very difficult 2021 for everyone:**

*dLCV provided educational employment training material to 225 individuals with disabilities from 15 Employment Service Organizations (ESO) across the state.*



# COMMUNITY RESOURCES

**dLCV helps individuals with disabilities live, work, and spend time in the community.**

Patricia, an adult who is deaf and has mental health support needs, was admitted to a state-operated psychiatric hospital and encountered communication barriers throughout her stay. The most effective form of communication for Patricia is ASL; yet, she had limited access to interpreter services while undergoing inpatient care. Patricia reached out to dLCV upon her discharge and dLCV offered to write to the hospital's administrator to share her concerns and request a corrective action plan to protect her and other individuals who are deaf in the future. Specifically, dLCV requested the hospital immediately designate an ADA Coordinator and publish ADA grievance procedures as required by federal law. The hospital quickly agreed to both, developed a new policy codifying this change, and created posters to hang throughout the facility to help residents and staff with disabilities alike understand their rights and how to file a complaint!

**In 2021, dLCV:**

*reviewed and ranked over 22,000 serious incident reports, 5,000 of which involved COVID-19.*



# INSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

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

Stacy complained that the state hospital confined all patients to their rooms by closing all day rooms and solariums. dLCV investigated and found that the day rooms and solariums were closed for financial reasons and due to the hospital's inadequate numbers of staff. Since this violated both the patients' legal and human rights, dLCV contacted the Office of Human Rights (OHR) to attempt to coordinate a joint complaint and approach. OHR was first unresponsive, then delayed, and finally declined to make a joint complaint. dLCV then made the complaint independently and the facility Director provided a plan of correction which the client approved. dLCV remained in the case until the client advised that the corrective action plan had been fully implemented as agreed.

**During this Fiscal Year, dLCV:**

*conducted 54 monitoring visits in adult facilities and 19 accessibility surveys at state-licensed nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and ICF/IIDs.*





# VOTING

dLCV followed-up on FY20's landmark victory - a lawsuit that advocated for individuals with print disabilities and visual impairments to be able to vote absentee in a private manner. The outcome of this lawsuit was shared widely in collaboration with the Client Assistance Program (CAP), the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, and the American Council for the Blind (ACB). Additionally, all 5 plaintiffs from the lawsuit were able to vote privately and independently on Election Day due to dLCV's work and representation.

Throughout FY21, dLCV staff and volunteers surveyed over 400 polling locations on Election Day, where they found issues with curbside voting, path of travel to the door, and parking in 86% of locations. dLCV prepared a report based on the violations found from the surveys and submitted it to all 138 members of the "General Assembly" (GA). Due to dLCV's educational efforts and several meetings with various GA members, the GA passed a bill requiring all polling locations to have appropriate signage for curbside voting in future elections. The Governor signed this bill into law in March 2021

**dLCV determined accessibility compliance in:**

*75 voter registrar offices, and sent informational fact sheets to all 133 voter registrar offices in the Commonwealth of Virginia.*



# REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE PROGRAM

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

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, dLCV has altered its rep-payee beneficiary interview process. The majority of beneficiaries are unable to participate in virtual reviews, and phone interviews limit dLCV's ability to fully understand the needs of the beneficiaries and their living situations. Therefore, dLCV reviewers have conducted socially-distanced interviews in outdoor locations whenever possible.

Additionally, due to COVID-19 procedures, dLCV reviewed inspection reports by the Virginia Department of Social Services instead of conducting site visits. dLCV reviewed 610 of these reports, and impacted up to 4,000 individuals with disabilities, many of whom receive Social Security benefits.

**dLCV's Representative Payee program:**

*initiated 104 Representative Payee reviews and spent 106 hours providing information and referrals to Social Security beneficiaries with Representative Payees.*

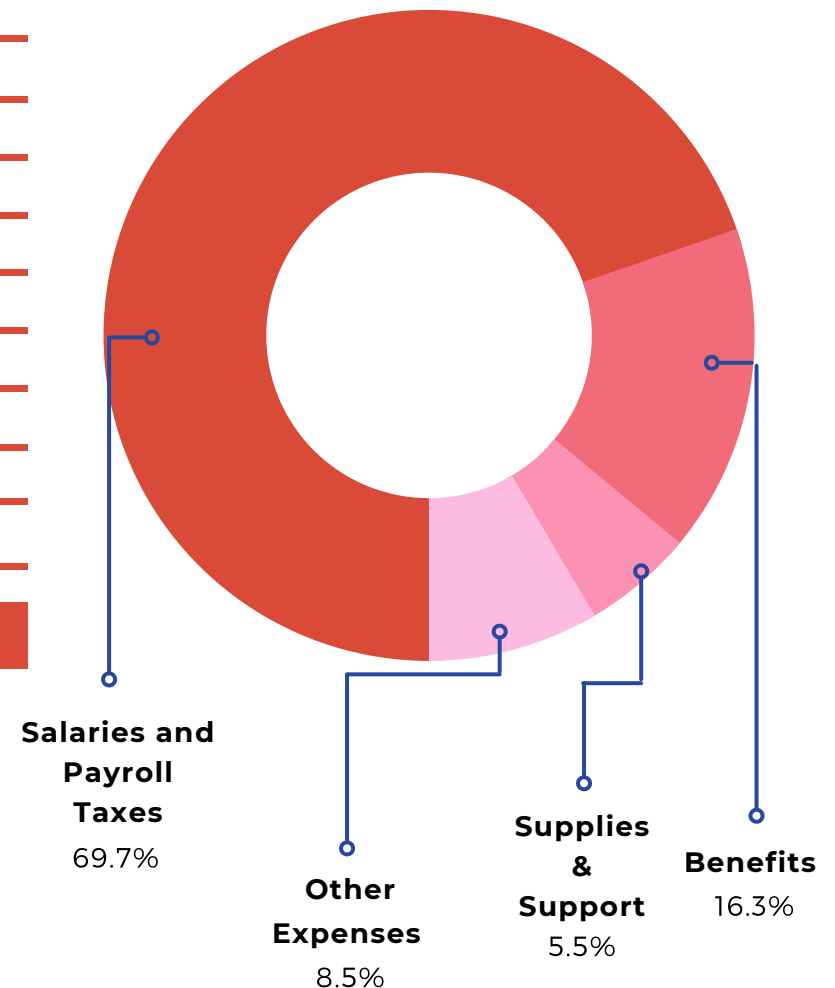




# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

REVENUE AND SUPPORT	FY 2021	% OF TOTAL
Developmental Disabilities – PADD	\$ 782,792	23.16%
Mental Illness – PAIMI	\$ 676,109	20.00%
Representative Payee – PABRP	\$ 588,029	17.40%
Individual Rights – PAIR	\$ 380,319	11.8.38%
Client Assistance Program – CAP	\$ 283,408	8.38%
Other Grants & dLCV Foundation	\$ 282,386	8.35%
Voting Access – PAVA	\$ 103,201	3.05%
Assistive Technology – PAAT	\$ 100,921	2.99%
Beneficiaries of Social Security – PABSS	\$ 100,000	2.96%
Traumatic Brain Injury – PATBI	\$ 82,886	2.45%
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$3,380,051</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Expenses by Category



# 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.

# 2021 LEADERSHIP

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## JOIN US IN OUR MISSION

Our mission is 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.

We envision a Commonwealth free of legal barriers for individuals with disabilities.

With your support, the disAbility Law Center of Virginia is able to continue to provide legal rights protection PAIMI Council members: and advocacy services for individuals with disabilities.





# Connect with us



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