



**disABILITY LAW CENTER**

OF VIRGINIA



Protection & Advocacy for Virginians with Disabilities

# **PAIMI ADVISORY COUNCIL**

## **INFORMATION GUIDE**

# **A GUIDE TO DISABILITY LAW CENTER OF VIRGINIA'S MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL**

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# PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

**What is a P&A?**

**What is PAIMI?**

**What are you asking me to volunteer for?!**

You're not alone in the confusion! These are questions we often hear when trying to recruit members for the Mental Health Advisory Council. This guide was created to provide a brief overview of disAbility Law Center of Virginia (dLCV), the protection and advocacy (P&A) system, and most importantly, an in-depth understanding of dLCV's Mental Health Advocacy Council, also known as PAIMI Advisory Council.

If you're new to the Council, please use this guide for reference. If you're considering joining, we hope this guide motivates you to submit that application!

# WHAT DOES THE P&A DO?

P&As protect the rights and wellbeing of people with disabilities through protection and advocacy efforts.

Our services include:

- Information and referral
- Legal representation
- Technical assistance
- Short-term assistance
- Systemic advocacy
- Monitoring and training

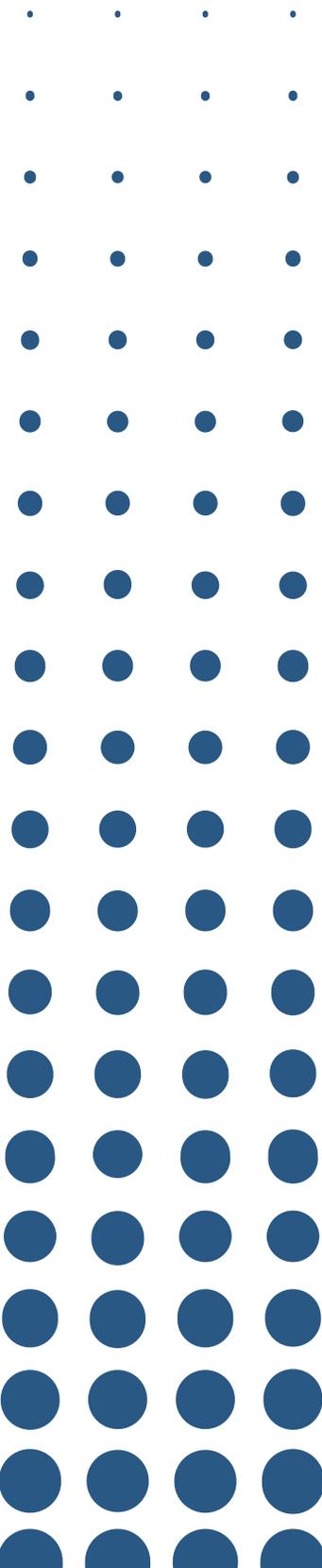
All services are free of charge and independent from state and federal governments.

NATIONAL  
**DISABILITY RIGHTS**  
NETWORK

Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Disabilities



# DLCV OVERVIEW



## VISION

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

## MISSION

The disAbility Law Center of Virginia's 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.

# WHAT IS PAIMI?

## WHAT DOES PAIMI STAND FOR?

PAIMI (pronounced pam-me) refers to Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness. PAIMI is a federally grant-funded program that requires all P&A organizations have a mental health advisory council.

## PAIMI ADVISORY COUNCIL'S MISSION

The PAIMI Advisory Council's (PAC) mission is to provide recommendations to the Governing Board of disAbility Law Center of Virginia on policies and goals to be implemented to assure that individuals, covered by the PAIMI Act, are free from abuse, neglect, and related rights violations.



# WHAT DOES THE PAC DO?

## **The PAC advises dLCV on mental health in institutions through...**

- Collaboration on yearly objectives
- Recommendation on policy changes needed
- Identifying and alerting dLCV to abuse, neglect, and/or rights violations
- Providing perspectives from consumers and providers

## **The expectations and responsibilities of Council members include:**

- Attend and actively participate in quarterly meetings
- Review and comment on materials sent prior to Council meetings
- Recruit members for the PAIMI Advisory Council
- Observe and provide input on dLCV's actions and objectives regarding PAIMI
- PAIMI members have the opportunity to participate on Board of Director committees

# WHO IS ON THE COUNCIL?

## TYPES OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Council has a variety of perspectives from diverse members such as:

- People who have received or are currently receiving mental health services
- Parent/Legal Guardian of a minor who has received or are currently receiving mental health services
- Attorneys
- Mental health professionals
- Mental health providers
- Those knowledgeable about mental health

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD MEMBER

We often get asked what the Council looks for in prospective members. Here are a few traits that help make the Council stronger:

- Contributes to discussion
- Open-minded and collaborative
- Takes initiative on tasks
- Most importantly, passionate about issues regarding institutions and mental health

# MEETING INFORMATION

## HOW OFTEN DOES THE COUNCIL MEET?

The Council meets quarterly, four times a year, on a Saturday.

## HOW LONG ARE THE MEETINGS?

Meetings start at 10:30 AM and the average meeting time is between three to four hours each session.

## ARE MEETINGS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC?

Yes! Meetings are public and anyone can come to a meeting, but you have to be a Councilmember to vote and have input on Council activities.

## WHAT DOES A TYPICAL MEETING LOOK LIKE?

Meetings typically include:

- Public comment
- Discussion about trends in institutions
- Updates on dLCV's work under PAIMI
- Updates on dLCV's work at the general assembly as well as litigation
- Asking Council members for feedback or assistance on activities under PAIMI

# COUNCIL BENEFITS

1

Increase knowledge about mental health issues in Virginia

Learn more about rights of individuals in institutions

2

3

Advocate for people in institutions to have their voices heard

Gain leadership and networking experience

4

5

Understand mental health policies and legislation

Advise dLCV's mental health objectives

6

# BYLAWS AT A GLANCE

## COUNCIL COMPOSITION

The PAIMI Advisory Council Bylaws require that the council is made up of:

- 12-15 individuals
- Multidisciplinary and community perspectives
- 60% are individuals currently receiving or have received mental health services

## MEMBERSHIP TERMS

A membership term is four years. Council members can serve up to two back-to-back terms. After a member has served on council for eight years, they must take a two year break. Members can re-apply after the two year break.

## ATTENDANCE

We understand that life happens. We ask that if a member has to miss a meeting, to let either the Chairperson or liaison know ahead of time. Because there are only four meetings, if a member has two or more unexcused absences, the Council can vote to revoke their membership. The person can always re-apply.

# BYLAWS AT A GLANCE

## LEADERSHIP

There are three formal positions that make up the Council's leadership team: Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. The positions have the following responsibilities:

### Chairperson:

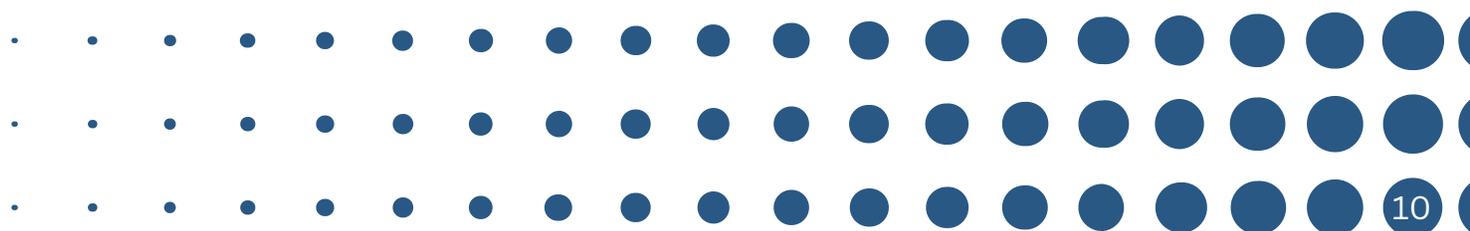
- Preside at all meetings
- Oversee committees
- Represent the PAIMI Advisory Council
- Serve on the Board of Directors

### Vice Chairperson:

- Assist the Chairperson in their duties
- Serve as the Chairperson when they are absent

### Secretary:

- Create and approve meeting minutes



# BYLAWS AT A GLANCE

## TERMS OF OFFICE

Leadership will be elected at the last meeting of each calendar year.

## NOMINATIONS

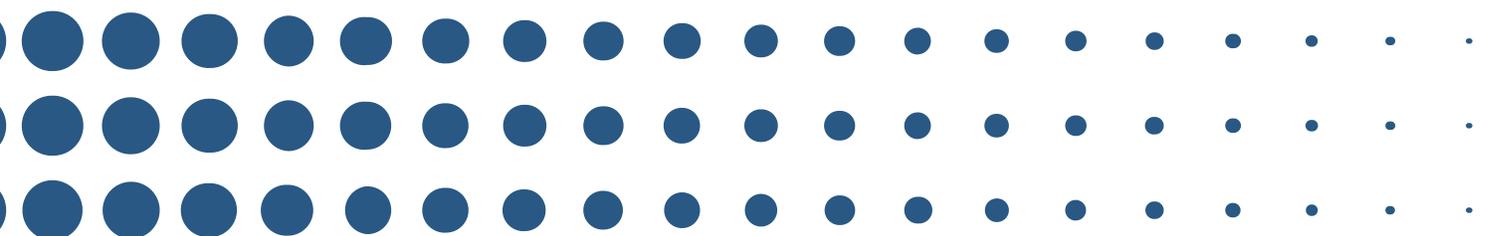
Members can self-nominate or be nominated by another member for each leadership position.

## ELECTIONS

Voting on nominations takes place at the last meeting of the year. An affirmative vote of the majority is required for election of officers.

## COMMITTEES

Focused committees can be brought up by both members and leadership and must be approved and voted on by the Council to be enacted.



# HOW TO JOIN PAC

## GETTING INVOLVED

The following are the steps to apply and connect with the PAIMI Advisory Council:

**STEP ONE:** Submit an application. Applications can be found on [dlcv.org](http://dlcv.org).

**STEP TWO:** Meet with the Liaison and Chair to learn more about the Council.

**STEP THREE:** Attend a council meeting.

**STEP FOUR:** If interested in getting involved, attend a second meeting.

**STEP FIVE:** If nominated to join, the Board Chair makes final decision.

**STEP SIX:** Receive email from liaison with final decision.

# CONTACT US

## WANT MORE INFORMATION?

If you are interested in learning more about the PAIMI Advisory Council, contact us at:



info@dLCV.org



1-800-552-3962



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Richmond, VA 23230



<https://www.dlcv.org/>

Check out the online application on dLCV's website using the QR code.

