



Disability Rights Tennessee (DRT) is Tennessee's Protection & Advocacy System that provides legal advocacy services to people with disabilities across the state with numerous issues. The mission of DRT is to protect the rights of Tennesseans with disabilities, and in doing so, DRT has represented more than 40,000 clients across the state since 1978.

What services or resources does this agency provide?

DRT accepts legal and advocacy cases according to areas of work identified with input from the community. The areas of work help determine the types of direct advocacy and legal cases DRT can accept. DRT seeks to resolve all issues at the lowest level possible. Current areas of work include:

- Investigation of abuse and neglect in institutions and community settings
- Access school supports including IEP, 504 plans, Functional Behavior Plans (FBA), and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)
- Removing communication barriers in healthcare, business, and government settings
- Equal access to business, government, and public settings
- Addressing selected discriminatory policies and practices
- Access to employment services such as, Vocational Rehabilitation, Ticket to Work and more through the Client Assistance Program



(CAP)

- Access to assistive technology, the voting process, and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) resources and services

In addition to direct legal and advocacy services, DRT provides all callers with information and referral and self-advocacy training. DRT also engages in multiple collaborative initiatives to advance systemic and public policy change for people with disabilities.

What areas of Tennessee do they serve?

DRT provides advocacy services across the state.

Is there a cost and, if so, who pays?

The services provided by DRT are free of charge.

For which students might this agency be appropriate?

Students or adults who have been denied services



or civil liberties (e.g., right to have a job, right to live in a community) due to their disabilities should seek the help of DRT.

Who is eligible to receive their services/ supports and when?

Any Tennessean with a disability who has had their civil liberties and rights violated is eligible for services through DRT.

What is the referral process?

What documents are needed?

There is no referral process. Simply call 1-800-342-1660 or fill out an online form to be considered for services. The link for the form can be found here: <http://www.disabilityrightstn.org/get-help>. In deciding whether direct services can be provided, DRT will consider several factors including the availability of resources and the ability to advance the disability rights movement in Tennessee.

What is the family's responsibility?

The family should connect with DRT to learn more about their rights and their student's rights as they navigate different disability agencies and resources.

What is the student's responsibility?

In becoming a self-advocate, the student should reach out to DRT if they believe their rights are being violated.

What is the responsibility of an educator?

If the educator is aware of any issues that might be violating the student's rights they should inform the parents about the legal resources and services

Where can I learn more?

Visit their website at:

<http://www.disabilityrightstn.org/>

that DRT can provide.

How (and when) do you involve them in the transition planning process?

- The educator can invite a representative from DRT to do a presentation on rights/responsibility for people with disabilities.
- The family should consult with DRT if the school is not providing certain rights or documentation during the transition process, as early as age 14.
- The educator can provide materials and information about DRT and the services that they provide in order for them to be informed in case any legal issues arise in the future.

What questions should I ask of my local AJC?

- What if I am being discriminated against, but it is a type of case that DRT is not currently accepting?
- What are my rights in applying for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services?
- Where can I find free legal assistance with issues that are not directly related to my disability?

Additional contact information:

- Give them a call at: 1-800-342-1660
- Send them an email at: GetHelp@disabilityrightstn.org