

Pathways to Justice: *Get the Facts*

Interacting with your State's Protection and Advocacy Organization (P&A)



To learn more about P&As, go to the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)'s website, www.ndrn.org. Find your state's P&A: www.ndrn.org/en/ndrn-member-agencies.html.



National Center on Criminal Justice & Disability NCCJD™

For more information, visit our website at:

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What is a P&A?

A P&A is a designated agency in your state that provides civil rights advocacy services only to people with disabilities. P&As make sure that people with disabilities are treated with dignity and provided their legal rights in institutions where they are housed, including jails and prisons.¹ There is a P&A agency in every state and U.S. territory.

How The P&A Can Help You When You Are Involved With The Criminal Justice System?

Your P&A does not handle any criminal law issues, but they may be able to help you in other ways. If you are arrested, the P&A cannot help you defend yourself. In some cases, the court will appoint you a lawyer to be your defense counsel.

However, if you are a person with a disability, P&As can help you with other legal problems. Each P&A decides what kinds of advocacy issues to take. For example, if you are a person with a disability, P&As can help you find out:

- Your rights to accessibility and accommodation in the facility.
- How to get your prescription medication if you are in a facility.
- What to do if someone you know is a danger to themselves or others.
- How to get mental health services while you are in the facility.
- What to do if you have other special needs.
- How to restart benefits like Social Security before getting out of prison.
- What to do if the conditions of confinement in the jail or prison are dangerous to your safety and well-being

How the P&A Might Help

Joe is arrested for shoplifting and charged. In some states he may not be eligible for a public defender. If Joe calls his state's

Protection & Advocacy Organization (P&A) Fact Sheet

P&A, the P&A cannot be Joe's criminal defense lawyer. The P&A may be able to:

- Make sure he has the disability related accommodations he needs during his time in the criminal justice system (trial, jail, or prison), such as making sure he can use his wheelchair, get a sign language interpreter if he needs one, doesn't lose good time credits because of an issue related to his disability, or gets medication he needs.
- Help ensure the continuation of education in jail or prison if he has a right to it.
- Help Joe with re-entry after his sentence is served (accessing healthcare, getting job related services if he is eligible for them.)



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