



Join Your Voice with Ours! **Together We're Stronger!**

What if giving from the heart helped change the lives of individuals with disabilities, older adults and their families in Colorado? Rest assured that your year end donation to Disability Law Colorado will impact lives throughout the Centennial state – up and down the Front Range, to rural communities on the Eastern Plains and across the Mountain Frontier and Western Slope.

Your gift will help fuel the fire of disability rights advocacy as we work to promote systems change, protect rights and improve lives. But we cannot accomplish this alone. Please partner with us and join your voice with ours by making a year end donation.

Take a look at some of our 2018 highlights, and discover how your support impacts lives of individuals with disabilities, elders and their families. Together, we change lives.

Together We Change Lives

- 1** Give on Colorado Gives Day - Tuesday, December 4. No need to wait, you can schedule your gift today! (www.coloradogives.org/DisabilityLawCO)
- 2** Return the enclosed remittance envelope along with your tax-deductible donation. Consider making your donation a holiday gift!
- 3** Encourage your family & friends to make a year end donation. Give a gift in honor, memory or celebration of someone.

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DISABILITY LAW COLORADO

Highlights of Our Life-Changing Work in 2018

Throughout 2018 Disability Law Colorado was involved in individual casework, filed administrative complaints, pursued administrative appeals, conducted neutral investigations, worked through committees on systemic issues, provided training to hundreds of people on various disability-related topics and made a major impact in the legislative session on behalf of people with disabilities and elders.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman & Legal Assistance Developer for Elders

In 2018 Disability Law Colorado celebrated three decades as the home of the Colorado State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and the Legal Assistance Developer Program. In 2016 the State PACE (Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) Ombudsman joined the Long-Term Care Ombudsman. These programs are administered under a contract with the Colorado Department of Human Services and work in partnership with the state's 16 Area Agencies on Aging. Disability Law Colorado successfully competed for a new five-year contract in 2018 with additional funding approved by the legislature.

In 2018, Kelsey Lesco, Legal Assistance Developer for Elders, continued her appointment to the **Office of the Public Guardianship Commission**. Kelsey also offered technical assistance to attorneys who provide free legal services to older people with the greatest social and economic need. Legal assistance can include: housing and foreclosure; guardianships and conservatorships; consumer issues; financial exploitation, including misuse of a power of attorney by a family member or friend; denials, reductions or terminations of needed public benefits; and preparing advance directives, deeds and wills.



Protection & Advocacy System

It has been a tremendous year for the Protection & Advocacy staff. In 2018 Disability Law Colorado enjoyed victories for individual clients, across systems and legislatively. We continue to stand our ground and fight every day for the rights of people with disabilities. Disability Law Colorado reorganized our Protection & Advocacy (P&A) Staff into teams rather than by grants. **The P&A Teams include: Education Team, Access Team, Facilities Team, and Community Integration Team. In 2018 we recorded: 794 Information & Referrals (I&R's) and a total of 586 Case Services.** We served clients aged 2 to 90 in 51 of Colorado's 64 counties. Thirty-nine percent of our cases were from rural areas, while 61 % were in urban settings. In addition to taking over 3,000 calls and conducting over 1,000 intakes, staff from all teams contributed to our work. To read the full Protection & Advocacy report visit: www.disabilitylawco.org/P&Areport2018.

A Place to Call Home - Disability Law Colorado has been working with an individual in his 50's for almost two years, trying to help him move out of a nursing home and into a host home through the Colorado Choice Transitions Program. There have been many roadblocks along the way, including family members who oppose transition, nursing home staff opposing transition, and the unavailability of a transition coordinator for a long period of time, but we have stuck by his side throughout. Happily he was able to leave the nursing home and move into a host home of his choosing. He now has a Bronco's themed room (per his request) and is already enjoying eating new foods and taking outings in the community.

At Last! A Red Rocks Concert Season Everyone Can Enjoy - After more than a year of litigation and negotiations, our staff, together with the Civil Rights Education and Enforcement Center (CREEC) and the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition (CCDC), reached a resolution with the City of Denver in a class action suit regarding physical accessibility at Red Rocks. While little can be done to increase physical accessibility at the City's historic amphitheater, the lawsuit charged the City with failing to ensure that the few accessible seats that exist were being bought and used by people requiring accessibility features. The settlement requires vast changes in the sale of tickets and enforcement of policies at the famous venue. Monitoring compliance with the agreement will continue for two years, but most reports from the summer concert season were positive.



Legislative Victories

Disability Law Colorado was actively engaged in the 2018 Colorado Legislative Session. We reviewed and analyzed 99 bills, including contacting legislators or testifying in committee hearings regarding 19 bills.

- **Mental Health Treatment for Individuals in the Criminal Justice System [SB18-249, 250, 251 and 252]:** We worked diligently with various stakeholders to address the problem of individuals languishing in jails awaiting appropriate mental health treatment. In 2011, Disability Law Colorado sued the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) for failing to timely evaluate and treat detained individuals who were incompetent to stand trial. A criminal defendant must be competent (able to understand the proceedings and assist in their defense) before criminal prosecution against them may proceed. The case resulted in a settlement, but CDHS has consistently failed to timely treat this vulnerable population. As a result, CDHS proposed four bills this legislative session. We strongly supported three of the bills (SB18-249, 250, 251), all of which passed, and opposed one bill (SB-252), which died on the last day of the legislative session.
- **Family Preservation for Parents with Disability [HB18-1104]:** Disability Law Colorado worked with stakeholders in the family law community to help pass this law establishing protections for parents or prospective parents with disabilities in domestic law situations, including divorce and custody, adoptions, foster care and guardianships. Specifically, the law requires that a court consider supportive parenting services and other necessary reasonable accommodations.
- **Medicaid Fraud Control Unit [HB18-1211]:** This bill formalizes the unit in the Department of Law and requires the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to include information about the Unit in any correspondence regarding explanation of benefits sent to Medicaid beneficiaries.

