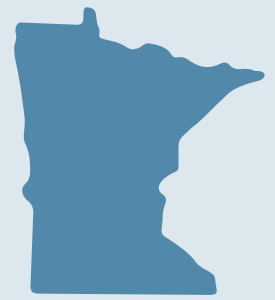




Minnesota Disability Law Center Impact Report

July 2026

Making a difference in Minnesota



Advocacy for people with disabilities

Thank you for taking in our proof-of-performance summary highlighting the impact of the **Minnesota Disability Law Center** (MDLC), October 2024 to July 2026.

A lookback at Fiscal Year 2025 (FY2025) shows MDLC provided individual case services to about **1,000** people with disabilities in **67%** of Minnesota counties.

In this same timeframe, MDLC engaged in systemic advocacy to **protect people with disabilities from marginalization, abuse and neglect** in **100%** of Minnesota counties.

Systemic advocacy includes:

- Monitoring and investigations
- Class action litigation
- Legislative advocacy
- Polling place accessibility
- Representative payee reviews

By the numbers

MDLC targets its advocacy efforts to create lasting and systemic change to benefit people with disabilities in Minnesota. Our numbers reflect FY2025 data.



\$4 Million

in benefits to clients, derived from class action lawsuits and individual cases.



23,000 People

with disabilities have been positively impacted through MDLC litigation.



27 Facilities

monitored to protect people from abuse and neglect in residential treatment centers, schools and juvenile detention.



121 Polling sites

surveyed to ensure an estimated **8,300** voters with disabilities had access to the polls.



12 Bills

at the MN Legislature, received policy expertise from MDLC. As an example of legislation considered, making healthcare plans accessible to 21,000 employed people with disabilities, people on waivers, and people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Impact examples

MDLC's work, from monitoring and investigations to individual cases, is focused on making the biggest impact to benefit Minnesotans with disabilities.



Sonja Peterson

Special Education

Our lawsuit *Jett v. K.O.* connected our clients and members of this class action to more than \$1.4 million in compensatory education services. Remainder of the settlement will be distributed to **The Arc Minnesota, Autism Society of Minnesota** and **Multicultural Autism Action Network** to continue advocacy work on behalf of Minnesota students with disabilities.



Chad Wilson

Rideshare Access

Rideshare company **Lyft** repeatedly denied transportation to our client Tori Andresen and her guide dog Alfred — featured on the cover of this report. MDLC pursued the case twice with the **Minnesota Department of Human Rights**. As a result, MDHR is monitoring Lyft to ensure drivers follow legal and policy-based obligations when called to transport individuals with service animals. Impact and subsequent media attention extends nationally.



Jessica Heiser

Seclusion in Schools

Focused on ending solitary confinement of children with disabilities in schools, MDLC strategically addressed “seclusion rooms” through policy advocacy, litigation and monitoring. After monitoring 80+ registered seclusion rooms in Minnesota, we published “**Children in Confinement: Seclusion in Schools**,” garnering national attention. This report was instrumental in fending off 2026 legislative challenges to the ban on the seclusion for Minnesota’s youngest learners.

Our mission

Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC), a division of **Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid**, is the federally designated **Protection & Advocacy** agency in Minnesota for people with disabilities. The mission of MDLC is to advance the dignity, self-determination, and equality of individuals with disabilities.

MDLC seeks to make lasting and systemic change to benefit people with disabilities in Minnesota by engaging in advocacy at the legislature, creation of self-advocacy resources, litigation and other legal services.

In addition to advocacy, MDLC has **federal authority** to monitor and investigate service providers to protect people with disabilities from abuse and neglect.

“

Our superpower...

is our **access authority**. As the designated Protection & Advocacy agency for the state, we have federal access authority to go into sites and facilities serving people with disabilities that other people cannot access. Through this work, we shine a light on conditions people with disabilities face and engage in systemic solutions.”

— Director **Eren Sutherland**, Minnesota Disability Law Center



Help us set priorities

Please complete this survey to help MDLC focus its work.

