

Minnesota Disability Law Center
Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid
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5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
Fiscal Years 2027-2032

Purpose of this Document

This strategic plan identifies Minnesota Disability Law Center's priorities for fiscal years 2027-2032 and explains how it will advance those priorities across Minnesota.

Who We Are

Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC) protects, advances, and strengthens the legal rights of people with disabilities in Minnesota. MDLC, a division of Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid (MMLA), conducts the work and fulfills the federal mandates of the Protection & Advocacy Organization (P&A) for people with disabilities in Minnesota.

What We Value

Throughout its history, MDLC has advocated for the right of people with disabilities to receive services in the most integrated community setting possible and to ensure people with disabilities are safe from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. MDLC's mission has always focused on advancing the dignity, self-determination, and equality of people with disabilities. MDLC keeps these values as central to its work.

In addition, MDLC incorporates the values within the Minnesota Human Rights Act, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid's Racial Justice Values Statement, and disability justice movements to guide its work. MDLC strives to respond to the intersectional needs of disability communities, recognize the wholeness of people with disabilities, listen to the voices of those most impacted, work in cross-disability solidarity, and create long-term sustainable change.ⁱ

What We Do

MDLC uses legal, policy, and advocacy approaches to protect, advance, and strengthen the legal rights of people with disabilities in Minnesota. As the P&A, MDLC uses its federal access authority to protect people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation through its monitoring and investigation work.

MDLC's work addresses legal problems impacting people with disabilities at the individual and systemic level. MDLC is uniquely positioned to advocate for state-wide change through its legal and policy work.

MDLC seeks to create quality legal rights materials that can assist people with disabilities in advocating for their rights.

Our Four Strategic Goals

1. Eliminate Abuse and Neglect
2. Increase Integration and Decrease Discrimination
3. Increase Access to Appropriate Services
4. Increase Statewide Awareness of MDLC as an Advocacy Resource

Goal 1: Eliminate Abuse and Neglect

MDLC places primary emphasis on protecting persons with disabilities from abuse and neglect. This includes guarding against the following:

- physical abuse;
- neglect of health and safety needs;
- improper use of restraint and seclusion; and
- financial exploitation.

MDLC primarily meets this goal through its monitoring and investigation work, and representative payee reviews. MDLC relies on credible reports of concern to identify facilities that warrant further monitoring. MDLC also seeks to ensure its monitoring work reaches the four corners of Minnesota. Where entrenched service issues are identified, MDLC will conduct monitoring and investigation projects with the goal of publishing public reports to impact policy and systemic change and may engage in litigation.

Goal 2: Increase Integration and Decrease Discrimination

MDLC seeks to maximize clients' opportunities to live, work, and participate in their communities. MDLC helps clients obtain individualized community-based services and supports in each of the following areas:

- Education;
- Housing & Home Services;
- Transportation; and
- Employment.

MDLC also works to protect clients' civil rights and to eliminate discrimination in the above areas, as well as in the access to the following:

- Services provided by local, county or state government (public services) and
- Businesses serving the public (public accommodations).

MDLC primarily meets this goal through its policy and legal work. MDLC's legal work includes individual cases and impact cases that improve integration and decrease discrimination for larger groups of Minnesotans with disabilities.

Goal 3: Increase Access to Appropriate Services

MDLC seeks to maximize client choice and client direction among appropriate services and supports. MDLC also seeks to maintain and increase funding available to meet clients' service and support needs.

MDLC helps persons with disabilities access and maintain services and supports in each of the following areas:

- Education;
- Housing & Home Services;
- Transportation;
- Employment; and
- Health care.

MDLC primarily meets this goal through its policy and legal work. MDLC's legal work includes individual cases and impact cases that improve access to appropriate services for larger groups of Minnesotans with disabilities.

Goal 4: Increase Statewide Awareness of MDLC as an Advocacy Resource

In order to respond to the needs of people with disabilities in Minnesota effectively, MDLC must engage in outreach and education efforts. MDLC conducts outreach and education to historically underserved communities and engages with advocacy partners.

MDLC strives to meet this goal through all its work. MDLC utilizes its website, know your rights materials, publications, media engagement, and communications to ensure statewide awareness of its work.

ⁱ Sins Invalid, *10 Principles of Disability Justice*, <https://sinsinvalid.org/10-principles/>.