

## **FY2026 PADD PRIORITIES**

**Case acceptance is based on four factors:**

- (1) the client meets the federal definition of an individual with a developmental disability;**
- (2) the case is within the PADD priorities;**
- (3) the case has merit; (sufficient evidence to support the claim) and**
- (4) there are sufficient staff resources to take on the case.**

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## FY2026 PADD PRIORITIES

| GOAL                                                                                                                                                                                                     | PRIORITY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Annotations |
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| <b>Goal A. People with disabilities have access to needed health care/long term care; children with developmental disabilities and/or mental health needs will receive needed services and supports.</b> | <b>Priority A1:</b> Represent individuals with disabilities seeking access to needed health care/long term care when issue is disability, duration of services, covered services, due process or EPSDT. Priority given to cases involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) children and youth inappropriately placed or held in emergency departments due to lack of mental health services;</li> <li>(2) services and discharge planning for children and youth transitioning from residential placements.</li> </ul> |             |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Priority A2:</b> Engage in legal and systems advocacy to maintain or increase access to health care treatment, and protection;_EPSDT services, long term care services, Pediatric High Tech Nursing Services and children’s developmental and mental health services and including due process issues such as adequacy of denial/termination/reduction notices. Comment on proposed Health Care Administration Rules (HCAR) and other proposed rules affecting access to health care for people with disabilities.             |             |
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| <b>Goal B:</b><br><b>Students with disabilities will have increased access to enforcement of rights (against unlawful discipline, restraint, and seclusion) and participation in their education and</b> | <b>Priority B1:</b><br>(a)Work on cases involving_students with disabilities who have been disciplined, suspended, or expelled from school due to disability-related behaviors, who are at risk of suspension or expulsion due to disability-related behaviors, who are involved in truancy proceedings; or                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |             |

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| <b>transition to adulthood.</b>                                                                                      | (b) Where resources permit, work on developing a SEVA program in Vermont in partnership with DD Council and Vermont Family Network, and supervise 13-15 volunteers who would assist families seeking advocacy support in up to three priority areas (1) transition services; (2) integration into general classroom; and (3) IEP implementation cases, the latter two areas currently falling within Priority B1(c).                                                                                                                              |  |
|                                                                                                                      | <b>Priority B2:</b> Provide individual and systems advocacy for students placed in and transitioning out of alternative programs and at Woodside Juvenile Rehabilitation Center or any successor programs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |
|                                                                                                                      | <b>Priority B3:</b> Continue to investigate complaints of inappropriate/unlawful use of restraint and seclusion in Vermont schools and alternative programs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
|                                                                                                                      | <b>Priority B4:</b> Monitor and comment on proposed State Board of Education rules.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
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| <b>Goal C: Ensure access to appropriate services/supports in the least restrictive and most integrated settings.</b> | <b>Priority C1:</b> Provide counsel and advice, and where resources permit, full representation to advocate for people with disabilities in nursing homes, long-term care homes, correctional facilities, inpatient hospital settings, and other restrictive settings for whom appropriate services or supports may be available in more integrated settings. This priority also includes preservation of housing for individuals at risk of losing housing and being placed in more restrictive, less integrated settings, or becoming homeless. |  |
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| <b>Goal D: Advocate to improve access to Developmental Services for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.</b>                         | <b>Priority D1:</b> Provide individual advocacy to children, adults, or families seeking access to developmental services or whose developmental services have been reduced or terminated; provide individual advocacy in grievances and appeals from service provider decisions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Priority D2:</b> Where resources permit, engage in systems advocacy to maintain and increase access to developmental services for Vermonters with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including monitoring changes to Vermont’s DD services funding, commenting on proposed regulations, policies, legislation and procedures affecting access to developmental services, including any proposed changes to how the state defines and assesses “developmental disability” for purposes of DDS eligibility determinations, and the state’s implementation of “conflict free case management.” Advocate for DD System to address “workforce crisis” and its impact on access to services. Serve on relevant advisory and ad hoc committees to assure increased and expanded access to developmental services for Vermonters with intellectual and developmental disabilities. |  |
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| <b>Goal E: Provide advocacy to ensure people with intellectual and developmental disabilities do not have unnecessary or unnecessarily restrictive guardianships.</b> | <b>Priority E1:</b> Provide direct case representation in selected cases including representation for individuals seeking to become their own guardians.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Priority E2:</b> Serve on Probate Oversight Committee to ensure consistent best practices among Vermont Probate Courts and practice statewide;                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p><b>Priority E3:</b> Working with Green Mountain Self Advocates and the Office of Public Guardian, explore and develop alternatives to guardianship in Vermont.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve on Supported Decision Making (SDM) workgroup.</li> </ul>                                                |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
| <p><b>Goal F: Access to Public Benefits (SSI, Unemployment Insurance <i>and</i> state and federal payment programs) Access to and preservation of SSI benefits for income eligible children under age 18 or turning 18 whose benefits are terminated on the basis of disability. Ensure access to Unemployment Insurance and Disaster-related state and federal payment programs.</b></p> | <p><b>Priority F1:</b> Provide representation at administrative law judge (ALJ) level hearings for children under the age of 18 or turning 18 where issue is disability.</p>                                                                                                                                                 |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p><b>Priority F2:</b> Provide counsel and advice and, where resources permit, full representation to individuals to ensure access to Unemployment Insurance and any Disaster-related state and federal payment programs where the issue is disability and health issues creating a barrier to UI benefits.</p>              |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p><b>Priority F3:</b> Engage in systems advocacy and provide individual representation, as resources permit, to ensure full access for adults and children with disabilities to Social Security disability benefits, including both Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).</p> |  |

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| <b>Goal G: Provide advocacy to Improve access to government services and programs as provided in Title II of the ADA.</b>                                    | <b>Priority G1:</b> Provide individual advocacy in response to client complaints about accessibility and lack of accommodations in government services such as higher education, Reach Up, judicial and corrections systems - including people with disabilities who have been victims of crime, and parents with disabilities in the child protection system. |  |
|                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Priority G2:</b> Provide technical assistance to Communication Support Project and support to its management as resources permit to ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities receive communication support in judicial and other proceedings.                                                                                    |  |
|                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Priority G3:</b> Engage in legal and systems advocacy to ensure that state and local emergency planning efforts include considering the needs of people with disabilities. Assistance will be offered should a residential care or nursing home desire help in preparing a disaster plan.                                                                   |  |
|                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |
| <b>Goal H: Ensure that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are not discriminated against in hiring, employment, and advancement</b> | <b>Priority H1:</b> Provide individual advocacy in response to client allegations of disability-based discrimination in employment. Provide ongoing advice and individual case representation where clients need assistance due to disability in Attorney General's or Human Right's Commission's investigation and mediation processes.                       |  |
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| <b>Goal I: Ensure that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are not discriminated against in businesses open to the public under Title III of the ADA, including not discriminated against in housing.</b>                                           | <b>Priority I1:</b> Provide individual advocacy in response to client allegations of disability-based discrimination in businesses open to the public, including health care and housing.                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| <b>Goal J: Ensure that adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities living independently, in institutions, juvenile treatment programs, or in parental, family, group or developmental homes, are free from abuse, neglect or rights violations.</b> | <b>Priority J1:</b> Where appropriate, conduct investigations of allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation of adults or children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Make referrals to Adult Protective Services (APS) and Department for Children and Families (DCF) where appropriate.                       | DLP to clarify that Priority J1 includes DCF referrals for allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation of children where appropriate, recognizing that staff are not mandated reporters under state law and would do so only at the direction of the client. |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Priority J2:</b> Working with the Mental Health Law Project of VLA, DRVT and the DLP will provide outreach, advocacy, and legal assistance to children with intellectual and developmental disabilities at the Brattleboro Retreat and in other institutional, residential, mainstream, and alternative educational settings. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| <b>Goal K: Increase knowledge and awareness of the civil and legal rights of people with disabilities.</b>                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Priority K1:</b> Provide at least 3 trainings to consumers, families, advocates, service providers & the general public on the civil and legal rights of individuals with disabilities.                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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