



## Statement of Goals and Priorities Fiscal Year 2024

**Individuals with disabilities will be free from abuse, neglect, and violation of individual rights.**

- Identify and investigate instances of rights violations of individuals with disabilities in any/all public and private living settings.
- Investigate 100% of all allegations of abuse, wrongful death, or neglect received by DRMS.
- Continue to pursue systemic litigation against Mississippi Department of Corrections regarding lack of medical care, mental health care, and ADA accessibility.
- Investigate cases of suspected financial exploitation for Mississippians with a disability who have a representative payee.
- Continue monitoring correctional facilities across the state and investigating complains of abuse or neglect, including restraint or seclusion of adults in jails, prisons, and other institution-like settings.
- Pursue injunctive relief against unlicensed personal care homes across the state of Mississippi.
- Pursue any and all access litigation which may arise from increasing monitoring and investigation efforts.
- Monitor forensic service issues that may result in inappropriate housing of incarcerated individuals with severe mental illness.
- Advocate against employment discrimination for SSI and SSD beneficiaries.
- Advocate for people with traumatic brain injuries.



**People with disabilities will be fully included in their communities and have access to appropriate, individualized services that will enhance their ability to live safely, independently, and with the best quality of life.**

- Protect and advance the rights of students with disabilities to an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment with appropriate services and support.
- Promote full participation in the electoral process for individuals with disabilities, including educating candidates on campaign accessibility and encouraging exercise of constitutional rights.
- Monitor and advocate for accessibility across Mississippi, including community accessibility and access to fair housing.
- Ensure individuals with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations in the workplace.
- Advocate for PAIMI eligible children to receive appropriate psychiatric services, including rights protection and appropriate discharge and recovery planning for those residing in facilities, as well as home- and community-based support.
- Ensure that adults with mental illness and other disabilities receive timely competency evaluations and assist with conditional releases where necessary.
- Assist beneficiaries with disputes involving work-related benefit decisions that are clearly a barrier to securing, maintaining, or regaining gainful employment.
- Advocate for people with disabilities seeking access to quality services through Mississippi Medicaid to allow them to live in an integrated community setting.
- Assess data obtained during 2023 Elections with direct polling site surveys as determined by consent decree between Hinds County and U.S. Department of Justice.
- Explore creating a group of individuals with or familiar with traumatic brain injury to provide input and help further DRMS' reach to the community.



**DRMS will spread its mission and increase awareness of disability rights by educating both the disability community and the general public about DRMS services, self-advocacy, and disability awareness.**

- Provide materials to parents, families, and individuals to help educate them regarding their rights at school, filing state complaints and other self-advocacy issues, including but not limited to, the distribution of a welcome packet.
- Network with other agencies and nonprofits to build working relationships in order to better advocate for people with disabilities.
- Distribute new "Disability Support in Higher Education" booklet to students, transition coordinator, and ADA coordinators at the college level.
- Build a working relationship with the Mississippi Department of Education as to find ways that each organization can assist the other in accomplishing its mission.
- Develop a specific and strategic plan prior to the 2024 Legislative Session; educate policymakers at local, state, and federal levels.
- Plan and promote outreach events, particularly in underserved areas of the state, potentially partnering with other nonprofit organizations for these events.
- Increase fundraising efforts through events, outreach, media, and Board of Directors involvement.
- Develop articles about employment programs for inclusion in newsletters and social media to promote awareness in the community.
- Continue to collaborate with the Developmental Disabilities Network to produce materials, conduct outreach, and organize educational events.
- Continue to work with NDRN and other resources to create up to date education materials to effectively communicate DRMS' mission and services.