



**State of Connecticut  
Independent Office of the Ombudsperson for Developmental Services  
460 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06017**

**January 2023 Monthly Report to the Council on Developmental Services**

**Assistance to Individuals and Families**

In relation to my duties as Ombudsperson, between 12/1/2022-1/24/2023, I assisted approximately 44 individuals, families, advocates, guardians, DDS staff, legislators, state agencies, providers, and members of the community on numerous issues including:

1. Individual rights.
2. Legal representative rights and responsibilities.
3. Eligibility.
4. Issues/complaints about private providers.
5. Issues/complaints about DDS.
6. Issues/problems related to staffing crisis.
7. Quality of supports.
8. Abuse & neglect.
9. Health & safety.
10. Understanding & navigating DDS system.
11. Communication.
12. Waiting lists and wait times for waiver services.
13. Issue/complaints with fiscal intermediary.
14. Employment supports.
15. Day supports.
16. Residential supports.
17. Other supports.
18. Transportation.
19. Respite.
20. ADA and other disability rights information and referral.
21. Information/research/referral/coordination with other state agencies and legislators.
22. Information/research/referral community resources.
23. Information/research/referral on school issues.
24. Information/research/referral on youth services & supports.
25. Questions about ARPA and other DDS initiatives.

To address these concerns, I connected families with resources and information inside and outside of DDS, and maintained regular contact with the following people and entities within DDS:

- Commissioner Scheff,
- Regional Directors & Assistant Regional Directors,
- Case Manager Supervisors & Case Managers
- Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Self Determination Directors
- Health Management Director
- DDS Legal Department
- Director of Case Management
- Self Determination Directors

- DDS Abuse & Investigation Division.
- DMHAS, DCF, DAS.

### **Interaction with DDS, other state agencies and community organizations**

- Member of DDS Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee and DEI Strategic Planning Committee.
- Member of State Employee Leadership Network (SELN) Strategic Planning Steering Committee and SELN Leadership Subcommittee.
- Member of Council on Developmental Disabilities.
- Member of the Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Co-chair of ARPA Individual & Family Engagement Committee.
- Member of ARPA Advisory Committee.
- Attended DDS state-wide and regional meetings including incident command calls, forensic meetings, waiver team meetings, provider leadership meetings and others.
- Monthly meeting with Commissioner Scheff.
- Monthly meeting with Deputy Commissioner Velardo.
- Monthly meeting with DDS Health Management Administrator.
- Bimonthly meeting with DDS Director of Case Management.
- Regular meeting and collaboration with DDS Director of Diversity Equity & Inclusion.
- Meetings and consultation with advocacy organizations including The Arc Connecticut, the CT Family Support Network, and Disability Rights CT.
- Consultation with ARPA consultants Deloitte & the McDowell Communications.
- Consultation with Council on Developmental Services subcommittee on DDS Abuse & Neglect process.
- Attended DD Council Bridging the Gap between Aging and Disability Services presentations.
- Met with DMHAS to better understand services & supports.
- Met with Keep the Promise advocates to share information about DDS supports.
- Met with Rewarding Work to explore supports for people with IDD.
- Member of BRS CT Competitive Integrative Employment Grant Individualized Supports Subgroup

### **Areas of Concern**

- Impact of staffing crisis on access supports, person centered planning, advocacy, provider flexibility and quality of supports.
- Supporting, protecting, and encouraging individual and family advocacy.
- Provider accountability.
- The lack of support options for individuals with developmental disabilities who are not eligible for DDS funding.
- Disproportionate guardianship statistics in CT as compared to other states, and the lack of information on alternatives to guardianship.

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Shannon Jacovino  
Ombudsperson  
January 25, 2023**