

Nevada Disability Advocacy & Law Center

The Nevada Disability Advocacy & Law Center (NDALC) is a private, nonprofit organization that serves as Nevada's federally mandated protection and advocacy system for the human, legal, and service rights of individuals with disabilities.

NDALC was designated as Nevada's protection and advocacy system by the Governor in March 1995, and is funded by federal grants and charitable, tax deductible contributions of private citizens.



Services provided by NDALC include: information and referral, education and training, investigation of abuse or neglect, legal services, technical assistance, policy/legislative work, administration, and legislative developments.

NDALC has offices in Reno, Las Vegas and Elko, with services provided statewide.

All services are offered at no cost to eligible individuals in accordance with NDALC's available resources and service priorities.

SOUTHERN OFFICE

2820 W. Charleston Blvd., Suite B-11
Las Vegas, NV 89102
Phone: 702-257-8150
Toll Free: 1-888-349-3843
Nevada Relay: 711
Fax: 702-257-8170
lasvegas@ndalc.org
Se Habla Español

NORTHERN OFFICE

1875 Plumas Street, Suite 5
Reno, NV 89509
Phone: 775-333-7878
Toll Free: 1-800-992-5715
Nevada Relay: 711
Fax: 775-786-2520
reno@ndalc.org
Se Habla Español

ELKO OFFICE

905 Railroad Street, Suite 104B
Elko, NV 89801
Phone: 775-777-1590
Toll Free: 1-800-992-5715
Nevada Relay: 711
Fax: 775-753-1690
elko@ndalc.org

WWW.NDALC.ORG

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**NEVADA DISABILITY
ADVOCACY & LAW CENTER**

SELF-ADVOCACY



To self-advocate means :

- ***To speak for yourself***
- ***To defend yourself and make your own decisions***
- ***To plead your case to the people who have what you need***

Step 1

Preparation ...

- Define the issue. Know what you want and what barriers you are encountering.
- Know the names of any person(s) with whom you are communicating, and any relevant dates to the issue(s).
- Research and understand the system. Familiarize yourself with the specific laws or policies under which you are protected.
- Is there a specific department or agency with which to work? Is there a complaint or appeals process?
- Are there timelines that need to be followed?
- Know your rights and responsibilities.
- Contact NDALC or another advocacy group to ask questions about your rights and to learn about other helpful advocacy strategies.



Step 2

Communication ...

- Make a list of acceptable solutions or compromises. Sometimes, the next best solution is better than no solution.
- If there is a policy or regulation involved, ask for a copy of it.
- Ask to speak with a supervisor or administrator if you are not having success with the current person with whom you are speaking.
- Communicate your concerns in writing if necessary. Make notes prior to meeting to keep you focused.
- Be respectful and listen to what others are saying. Do not engage in arguing or name calling.
- Be patient and stay calm.
- Ask questions if something is unclear.



Step 3

Documentation ...

- Provide requested information in a timely manner.
- File any relevant complaints or appeals. Save copies of any complaint you file. Be aware of any timelines involved.
- Keep a notebook of the information you have gathered and notes on any important conversations you have had.
- Save copies of relevant receipts, emails, and/or letters received.

Step 4

Follow-Up ...

- Confirm the key elements with all parties.
- Ensure all parties are knowledgeable of the intended outcome.
- Allow time for the process to work. Try not to be frustrated or intimidated.
- Continue to keep records of all important conversations.
- Continue to follow up until you feel the issue has been resolved.
- Involve other people or advocates if you have done all that you can do on your own.