



## DD Ombuds Statute Change: RCW 43.382

### Problems:

- 1) Development Disabilities Administration (DDA) only provides the DD Ombuds with contact information for people residing in state-licensed facilities. The DD Ombuds does not have contact information for anyone eligible for or receiving other DDA services.

Without the ability to contact DDA eligible clients, the DD Ombuds is prevented from completing mandated duties to prevent abuse and neglect such as informing people of their rights and responsibilities and resolving complaints. Currently, the person with developmental disabilities or their legal guardian may not learn about the DD Ombuds unless their DDA Case Manager or their state contracted service provider tells them about DD Ombuds services.

- 2) The DD Ombuds does not have access to DDA's electronic data management system. Therefore, the DD Ombuds must request the documents from DDA in order to resolve a problem for a client or their guardian, or monitor the services. Currently both the DDA Case Manager and DDA supervisor are notified that the DD Ombuds has requested the client records. The DD Ombuds must wait for the Case Manager to release the documents - which at times has taken weeks. This prevents the DD Ombuds from resolving the concern quickly, puts the complainant at risk for retaliation, and threatens the necessary independence of the DD Ombuds to prevent abuse and neglect as the legislature intended.

### Solutions/Proposals:

The DD Ombuds is proposing statute changes to fix these problems and wants to ensure the support of the DD advocacy community and legislators.

- 1) Clarify language in the statute to enable DDA, Department of Children, Youth and Families, and the Health Care Authority the ability and timeline to provide information to the DD Ombuds.
- 2) Add language to the statute to allow the DD Ombuds electronic access to DDA's data information system to investigate and monitor complaints independently.

### Questions or comments?

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