



Public  
policy

IDEAS TO SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH IDD

# Fix Systemic Gaps with Washington's Abuse Investigations and Mortality Reviews

Noah Seidel, Office of the DD Ombuds, [noah@ddombuds.org](mailto:noah@ddombuds.org)

## Who is working on this issue?

Office of the Developmental Disability Ombuds (DD Ombuds)

## Advocacy areas

Civil rights; community services and supports; health care; housing

## What is the problem you are trying to solve?

- Washington is behind on abuse and neglect investigations in residential-service settings. This has led to a significant delay in completing investigations and resolving complaints.
- There are also gaps with how Washington conducts mortality reviews for individuals with developmental disabilities receiving residential services from the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA).



## What is your proposed solution?

- Create clear policies and procedures to hold DDA and providers accountable for the safety of participants in residential settings, including adult family homes, community residential services, assisted living and nursing facilities, and intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

1. Create internal controls in Residential Care Services to comply with requirements to ensure timely and comprehensive investigation of complaints of provider practice and client abuse and neglect.
2. Mandate Residential Care Services to have a specific mortality investigation protocol/review of suspicious deaths.

3. Create a mandatory reporting requirement for DDA to report suspicious deaths to the medical examiner or the coroner's offices.
4. Examine DDA's mortality review process to identify gaps and assess internal controls for timely and accurate reviews.
5. Create and fund increased quality assurance mechanisms for DDA to use with residential providers.
6. Review how DDA enforces residential quality standards from their contracted providers.

### Why is this a good solution?

This helps prevent abuse and neglect.

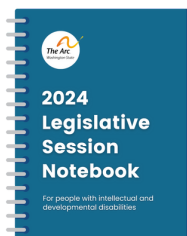
We do not have an adequate abuse and neglect reporting and investigating mechanism in Washington state.

This leaves people vulnerable for continued abuse and neglect.

There should be clear policies and procedures to hold DDA and service providers accountable when a person is being abused, neglected, or passes away while using DDA administered services.



What is the fiscal impact?	Is there a bill number?	Is there a legislator working on this issue?
Unknown	Not yet.	Not known



**2024 Legislative Session Notebook.** Issue papers are provided as a courtesy and reflect the advocacy of named individuals or organizations.