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ALABAMA DISABILITIES ADVOCACY PROGRAM
July 21, 2014

The Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP) is part of the nation's federally-funded protection and advocacy (P&A) system. ADAP provides legal services to Alabamians with disabilities to protect, promote and expand their rights. ADAP's vision is one of a society in which persons with disabilities are valued and exercise self-determination through meaningful choices, and have equality of opportunity. ADAP is part of the [National Disability Rights Network \(NDRN\)](#).

Find us on the Web
www.adap.net

Special Education in Alabama: A Right Not a Favor

New edition just released!



ADAP is pleased to announce the publication of the newest edition of its popular special education parent manual – “Special Education in Alabama: A Right Not a Favor” (RNF).

RNF helps families and child advocates understand how to access special education services and ensure that eligible children with disabilities are provided the free, appropriate public education to which they are entitled. The manual is written in lay-friendly terms and is filled with helpful advocacy tips and resources.

Publication of RNF was underwritten by a generous grant from the [Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities](#).

The first edition of RNF was published in the mid-80's. Since its last revision and printing in 2007, 50,000 free copies have been distributed across the state.

To view the manual on-line, click [here](#). To order copies, click [here](#).

Jeff Ridgeway receives Ricky Wyatt Lifetime Advocacy Award



Jeff Ridgeway was awarded the Ricky Wyatt Lifetime Advocacy Award by the ADAP at a ceremony held in Madison, AL on July 17.

In presenting the award, James Tucker, ADAP's Executive Director, praised Jeff's self-advocacy efforts, noting that Jeff has been advocating for the rights of Alabamians with disabilities for decades. According to Tucker, Jeff's tenacity and unwavering spirit greatly contribute to his ability to be a strong self-advocate.

Jeff spent several years advocating against the use of the "r-word." His advocacy, along with others, led to a respectful language bill that was passed by the Alabama Legislature in 2009 and which changed the name of the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation to the Alabama Department of Mental Health. Jeff continues to support and promote Alabama's Employment First bill.

Jeff, as usual, was humble when accepting the award. He emphasized that his self-advocacy was not about him, but about all persons with disabilities. As Jeff put it, "everyone should have the chance to live, work, and experience life."

Several of Jeff's friends attended the ceremony, including Ellen Gillespie, former ADAP Executive Director; Vicki Turnage of Ability Alliance; People First representatives; and State Representative Dan Williams.

Jeff is the second recipient of the Ricky Wyatt Lifetime Advocacy Award. The first was given to Nic Dupree of Mobile in 2006

Reauthorized Workforce Investment Act: Important Implications for Persons with Disabilities



Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is about to be complete with the legislation heading to President Obama for signature.

The bill, known as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), broadly overhauls the nation's workforce development and adult education systems and includes specific provisions related to adults and youth with disabilities – particularly those with significant disabilities.

Recognizing that a high proportion of students with disabilities leaves high school without being employed in competitive integrated employment or being enrolled in postsecondary education, the bill enhances support and service coordination to assist students as they transition from school to postsecondary life.

Among other things, the bill mandates that states use at least 15% of vocational rehabilitation funding to support students while they are still transitioning out of school. It also imposes significant restrictions on when youth (24 years old and younger) can be employed in sheltered employment settings. The bill requires that states develop a unified four year state plan which 1) meets the requirements of each of the bill's core programs (state grants, adult education, employment services, and state vocational rehabilitation programs) and 2) accommodates the needs of individuals with disabilities by demonstrating how the state plans, and related local plans, will comply with accessibility requirements of, for example, the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Look for a more detailed summary of the implications of the WIOA on persons with disabilities in ADAP's next newsletter. In the meantime, read more about the bill [here](#) and [here](#).

"[The WIOA] prioritizes competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities, particularly young people with disabilities who are transitioning from education to employment, by ensuring that these individuals have the skills and training necessary to maximize their potential. The amendments also include better alignment of disability programs in order to ensure that individuals receive the services, technology, and support they need in order to live inclusive, successful lives."

Statement of the Managers to Accompany the WIOA

Alabama Department of Mental Health Transitions Patients to "New Bryce"

On July 15, the Alabama Department of Mental Health (DMH) transitioned all patients from "Old Bryce" to its brand-new facility off Helen Keller Drive in Tuscaloosa.

Recognizing the potential for concern among patients, ADAP representatives attempted to personally speak with all patients prior to the move to answer questions. On the day of the move, ADAP had representatives present at both "Old Bryce" and "New Bryce" to monitor the move to ensure that the rights of the patients were adequately addressed. We are pleased to report that there were no major incidents; DMH is to be commended for its thorough planning and implementation of the move. In the future, ADAP representatives plan to meet with each patient at "New Bryce" to assess, evaluate, and address, any problems which may have arisen afterwards in the transition.

The new Bryce facility has a maximum capacity of 268 patients and will serve civil and forensic patients in need of longer term placement and stabilization prior to return to the community.

Mobile Units to Travel State to Provide Voter ID Cards

The Alabama Secretary of State's office will restart its mobile unit tour of Alabama to provide free photo voter ID cards. From July 22 through October 8, the mobile unit will travel to 17 counties.

The cards are for voters who don't have a driver license or other form of photo ID needed to vote under the state's photo voter ID law, which was in effect for the first time in the June 3 primary.

Voters can also get the free photo voter IDs at their county Board of Registrar's office or the Secretary of State's office.

To see where the voter ID mobile unit will be stopping, click [here](#).



HAVE PRESENTATION. WILL TRAVEL.

Do you need a speaker for an upcoming meeting? ADAP provides education and training on a wide variety of disability-related topics including: the Americans with Disabilities Act, Medicaid waivers, guardianships, special education, general disability rights, and transition services for youth. If you are interested in making arrangements for ADAP to come speak at one of your meetings, contact Anita Davidson at 205-348-5107 or at akdavidson@adap.ua.edu



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Our mailing address is:

The University of Alabama
Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program
Box 870395 - Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0395
website: www.adap.net
e-mail: adap@adap.ua.edu