



Statement of Goals and Priorities Fiscal Year 2026

Note: Priorities are based on FY2025 funding levels and if there are changes, it would change the scope of work for the fiscal year.

Individuals with disabilities will be free from abuse, neglect, and violation of individual rights.

- Identify and investigate instances of rights violations of individuals with disabilities in any/all public and private living settings.
- Investigate 100% of all allegations of abuse, wrongful death, or neglect received by DRMS.
- Investigate cases of suspected financial exploitation for Mississippians with a disability who have a representative payee.
- Monitor correctional facilities across the state and investigating complaints of abuse or neglect, including restraint or seclusion of adults in county jails, prisons, and other institution-like settings. Gather data and research for a potential filing of litigation in focus areas.
- Monitor presence of unlicensed personal care homes across the state of Mississippi and pursue remedies for closure or licensure.
- Pursue any and all access litigation which may arise from increasing monitoring and investigation efforts.
- Monitor forensic service issues that may result in inappropriate housing of incarcerated individuals with severe mental illness.
- Advocate against employment discrimination.
- Advocate for people with traumatic brain injuries.
- Monitor issues with service animals.



People with disabilities will be fully included in their communities and have access to appropriate, individualized services that will enhance their ability to live safely, independently, and with the best quality of life.

- Protect and advance the rights of students with disabilities to an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment with appropriate services and support.
- Monitor for educational conditions for students with disabilities who are in the juvenile justice system.
- Monitor and advocate for accessibility across Mississippi, including community accessibility (including educational facilities), access to fair housing, and access to assistive technology.
- Ensure individuals with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations in the workplace.
- Host legal clinics on Medicaid, higher education, disability financial planning, and other timely topics around the state.
- Ensure that adults with mental illness and other disabilities receive timely competency evaluations and assist with conditional releases where necessary.
- Advocate for people with disabilities seeking access to quality services through Mississippi Medicaid to allow them to live in an integrated community setting.
- Assist beneficiaries with disputes involving work-related benefit decisions that are clearly a barrier to securing, maintaining, or regaining gainful employment.



DRMS will spread its mission and increase awareness of disability rights by educating both the disability community and the general public about DRMS services, self-advocacy, and disability awareness.

- Network with other agencies and nonprofits to build working relationships in order to better advocate for people with disabilities.
- Utilize previously created resources such as *Disability Support in Higher Education* and the *Disability Etiquette Booklet* to educate and cover inquiries in areas where we cannot provide direct client services.
- Distribute educational resource booklets to students, parents, families, schools, transition coordinators, and ADA coordinators to help educate students at all levels on their rights and other self-advocacy issues.
- Develop a specific and strategic plan prior to the 2026 Legislative Session; educate policymakers at local, state, and federal levels; specifically, advocate for updating codes and licensure/monitoring for unlicensed personal care homes.
- Plan and promote educational and outreach events, particularly in underserved areas of the state, potentially partnering with other nonprofit organizations for these events.
- Increase fundraising efforts through events, outreach, media, and Board of Directors involvement.
- Develop articles about employment programs for inclusion in newsletters and social media to promote awareness in the community.
- Collaborate with the Developmental Disabilities Network to produce materials, conduct outreach, and organize educational events.
- Work with NDRN and other resources to create up to date education materials to effectively communicate DRMS' mission and services.
- Monitor federal legislation and executive orders to stay current on impact for disability community and potential threats to DRMS mandate and funding.