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Top Questions for DRTx Chatbot

## General

What is Disability Rights Texas?

Disability Rights Texas is the protection and advocacy agency for Texans with disabilities. Protection and advocacy agencies are sometimes called P&As. They were created in the early 1970s because of a national news story about Willowbrook, a large home in New York for children with disabilities. [The news report by Geraldo Rivera](https://youtu.be/xPvQpWEdxoY) (warning: video contains some disturbing scenes) showed poor living conditions and bad treatment of the children there. It led to the US Congress passing a law in 1975 saying that every state in the US needed to have an agency to protect and fight for the rights of people with disabilities. In 1977, Disability Rights Texas opened its doors as the P&A for our state. Over time, our mission has grown with more laws passed giving more rights to people with disabilities. Watch this video to learn more. Disability Rights Texas is a 501(c)(3). Employer Identification Number (EIN): 74-1916289.

## Things We Consider

Since demand for our services far exceeds the availability of our staff and attorneys, cases are selected based on available resources and our [priority areas](https://disabilityrightstx.org/en/what-we-do/selecting-our-priorities/). If your problem is not accepted as a case, you have the [right to appeal our decision](https://disabilityrightstx.org/en/getting-help/appeals-and-complaints-process/).

In deciding whether we can represent you directly, we will consider:

* The details of your case
* Other resources available to you
* Your ability to advocate for yourself
* Whether your problem falls within one of our service areas as determined through public surveys and board approval
* Availability of resources within our organization
* The extent to which your case may benefit others with disabilities

Please remember that we only represent people with disabilities.

## What We Don’t Do

Unfortunately we are not able to provide financial assistance, and we do not provide legal services in the following areas:

* Bankruptcy
* Criminal Law
* Family Law (divorce, child custody, etc.)
* Identity Theft
* Malpractice
* Mortgage Foreclosure
* Personal Injury
* Probate
* Property
* Social Security Determinations or Appeals
* Wills

## Next Steps

To apply for our services, you go through our intake process. Next, you can learn about what to expect during the [intake process](https://disabilityrightstx.org/en/getting-help/intake-process/), or you can [apply for our services](https://disabilityrightstx.org/en/getting-help/how-to-apply-for-services/) to get the intake process started.

For information about other organizations, programs, and services that could help you, visit our [Other Sources for Help](https://disabilityrightstx.org/en/getting-help/other-help/) page. If you need general information and referral regarding services available to people with disabilities in Texas, please call 2-1-1.

### How do I apply for help from Disability Rights Texas?

To apply for our services, you will go through our intake process either online, by phone, or by sign language phone. To get an idea about what information you’ll need to provide during intake, and also what to expect once your intake is complete, read the information below or watch the [DRTx Intake Process video](https://youtu.be/81wm7FPbNZs).

### Information You Provide

During intake, we’ll ask you to provide the following information:

* Your name, address, and phone number, so that we can reach you later if we have more questions.
* The nature of your disability.
* Some facts about your problem (what happened and when, why, and how it happened) to help us determine how best to help you.

**If you have documents related to your issue, have that information ready when you go through intake, whether online or by phone.**

### After You Apply

Once we have completed your intake, we will contact you about your case within 10 business days. If we are able to investigate your claims or accept your case, you will receive an acceptance letter.

If we cannot help you directly, we may be able to provide useful information and referrals. You can also visit our [Other Sources for Help](https://disabilityrightstx.org/en/getting-help/other-help/) page for information about other organizations, programs, and services that could help you.

If we deny your request for services and you are dissatisfied with this decision, you can file a case denial appeal. A case denial appeal must be filed within 20 days of the denial letter. For information about filing a case denial appeal, visit our [Appeals and Complaints Process](https://disabilityrightstx.org/getting-help/appeals-and-complaints-process/) page.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### General Questions

**What are my rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act?**

The ADA provides many protections for persons with disabilities. These protection include, but are not limited to, housing, access to public places, service animals, or accommodations. DRTx may be able to provide assistance depending on the type of issue you are facing. DRTx recommends you go to <https://disabilityrightstx.org/en/category/accessibility/> for more information about the ADA.

Do you provide attorney services on criminal matters/cases?

DRTx is not able to provide attorney services or direct legal representation for persons with disabilities in criminal matters.

DRTx can sometimes provide technical assistance to criminal attorneys that are representing persons with disabilities that need assistance in providing legal information regarding the rights of a person with disabilities under the ADA or provide information to the Court involving criminal matters of persons with disabilities in the criminal justice system, like providing ASL interpreters in a Court setting.

**Can you give me financial help?**

DRTx is not able to provide direct financial assistance. DRTx does not have resources to be able to distribute cash monies to any individual>

**Can you help me apply for Social Security?**

DRTx generally does not provide assistance with applying for Social Security benefits in the first instance. DRTx notes that there are community actors that do provide assistance for persons with disabilities, such as those diagnosed with Mental Health issues, e.g., the Local Mental Health Authority found in all of the counties in Texas.

**Can you help me apply for food stamp/SNAP?**

DRTx may be able to assist with securing SNAP benefits in cases where there may be issues with the application process or where a person with a disability is facing chronic food insecurity.

**Can you help me apply for Medicaid?**

DRTx may be able to assist with applying for Medicaid in cases where there may be issues with the application process or where the person with a disability is facing chronic healthcare issues and where the person with a disability may be eligible for certain types of Medicaid waivers.

### Alternatives to Guardianship

**Can you help me get a guardianship over my parent/child/sibling?**

DRTx does not provide assistance to place an individual under a guardianship. DRTx’s philosophy is that a person with a disability should be in the community in the “least restrictive environment”.

**My family members are trying to put me under a guardianship, can you help?**

DRTx may be able to help after investigating your circumstance and finding they show that there is no longer a need for guardianship because your health has improved or you are able to care for yourself with or without supports in the community.

**What are alternatives to guardianships?**

There are various alternative to guardianships. A few examples are Supported Decision Making Agreements, Powers of Attorney, Declaration of Guardian, Mental Health Directives, Representative Payees to help you handle your money, and/or Special Needs Trusts, Managed Trusts, Able Accounts for your money or benefits.

**Can you help me with Adult and Protective and Family Services (APS) because they are coming to my house?**

After investigation, DRTx may be able to assist in securing supports and services in the community which may eliminate the need for APS intervention.

**Can you help me meet with a probate court investigator?**

After investigation, DRTx may be able to assist under certain circumstances, if appropriate, in either helping provide self-advocacy resources or provide direct advocacy for the person with a disability.

**Can you help me get out of a guardianship?**

After investigation, if appropriate, if you meet the requirements of the Court’s rules for restoration and if you have adequate supports and services in the community, DRTx may be able to assist.

**What is a Supported Decision-Making Agreement?**

A SDMA is an agreement between a person with a disability and their choice of a person who can support you by attending meetings or appointments to help you understand information presented to you so you can make informed decisions. It occurs when people receive assistance from one or more trusted friends, family members, professionals, or advocates to help them understand the situation they face and choices and options they have so they can make their own decisions.

**What is a Power of Attorney?**

A Power of Attorney is a written document that authorizes someone to make decisions or take actions on your behalf. It is a document that gives another person the authority to make decisions like paying bills, talking to doctors, or helping with Social Security or other benefits.

**Can you help me file a complaint against my Guardian from abusing and neglecting me?**

After investigation, DRTx may be able to assist under certain circumstances, if appropriate, in either helping provide self-advocacy resources or provide direct advocacy for the person with a disability in the Court setting.

### Housing

**Can you help me find an apartment or house?**

DRTx is not a direct support service provider; therefore, we cannot directly assist you in searching for an apartment or a house. DRTx can refer you to your local Housing Authority where you can find assistance.

**Can you help me with the housing authority?**

DRTx may be able to assist you if you are having a legal issue with your local Housing Authority, for example, if you are being refused an accommodation during the application process because of your disability.

DRTx may be able to assist you if you feel that you are being discriminated by the Housing Authority on account of your disability.

DRTx may be able to assist you if you are experiencing a legal issue involving the application or renewal of your Section 8 voucher.

DRTx may be able to assist you if you are under a threat of losing or having your Section 8 voucher terminated by the Housing Authority on account of your disability.

DRTx may be able to assist you if are seeking an accommodation because of your disability.

DRTx may be able to assist you if you feel that you are experiencing a violation of the Fair Housing Act.

**Can you help me find subsidized housing?**

DRTx does not directly assist in a search for subsidized housing; however, DRTx can provide you information to refer you to your local Housing Authority.

**Can you help me with my problems with my landlord?**

DRTx may be able to assist you with many landlord and tenant issues; for example, if your landlord is refusing to acknowledge or provide an accommodation needed by you on account of your disability, DRTx may be able to assist.

**Can you help me fight an eviction from my home/apartment?**

DRTx may be able to assist you fight an eviction if it involves an issue, e.g., discrimination on account of your disability.

DRTx may not be able to provide assistance if the sole reason for the eviction is based only on the issue of non-payment of rent.

**Can you help me with my landlord who won’t allow my service dog in the apartment?**

DRTx may be able to assist you if your landlord is not allowing you to have a service dog. The use of or having a service dog is generally protected under that Fair Housing Act.

DRTx also recommends that you go to https://disabilityrightstx.org/en/video/drtx-legal-tip-video-series-rights-and-responsibilities-of-service-animal-owners/

**Can you help me with housing discrimination?**

If you are a person with a disability who feels that the landlord is discriminating against you on account of your disability, DRTx may be able to help.

Find out more about [our new online tool](https://disabilityrightstx.org/en/handout/how-to-report-housing-discrimination/) that can help you take action. Go to the DRTx website if you believe you have been discriminated against under the Fair Housing Act at https://disabilityrightstx.org/en/housing-discrimination-complaint-generator/

**Can you help find utilities assistance?**

DRTx does not provide assistance in helping find utility assistance because such utility benefit programs are administered by the City and County programs.

DRTx may be able to provide assistance if you are seeking assistance in getting an accommodation based on your disability, for example creating a payment plan for your utility bill or getting your services from being terminated or reinstated due to issues involving your disability.

**Can you help me make the landlord provide me with a “handicapped” parking space at my apartment?**

DRTx may be able to assist in securing a “handicapped” parking space if it reasonable and necessary.

**Can a Housing Authority take my housing voucher away from me?**

It is possible for the Housing Authority to take away or terminate if there is a violation of program or lease rules. Each case is fact specific.

**Can you help me get an apartment on a lower floor because I am a person with a disability?**

DRTx may be able to assist under certain circumstances if the request is reasonable and necessary.

**Can you help me make my Landlord renew my lease?**

DRTx may be able to assist in certain situations. It will depend on the circumstances that are driving the decision to not renew your lease.

**Can you help me file a complaint with my landlord because my neighbor/another tenant is harassing me?**

DRTx may be able to assist in the failure to renew a lease under certain circumstances if they are on account of your disability.

DRTx may be able to help if the neighbor or landlord is harassing you or failing to assist in solving the problem if you are a person with a disability.

### Education

**Can you help me with my child’s ARD meeting?**

After investigation, DRTx may be able to assist in advocating for a child to receive appropriate education and related services in the least restrictive environment. For example, DRTx may be able to assist you in accessing appropriate behavior supports, transition services and related services.

**Can you help me get the school to provide special education services for my child?**

DRTx may be able to assist your child in securing timely and individualized testing and evaluation in all areas of suspected disability, which would be discussed at an initial Admission, Review, and Dismissal (“ARD”) meeting.

**Can you tell me what my child’s rights are under the law?**

Your child has the right to a Free Appropriate Public Education “FAPE”) and to be educated with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Special education eligible students should have their disability considered in disciplinary matters and are entitle to an Individualized Education Program (“IEP) that is based of current data and created in an ARD committee meeting that includes parental participation.

**Can you help me report abuse and neglect of my child that happened while at school?**

DRTx is a mandatory reporter and as such, if a parent reports neglect and abuse to DRTx, it must be reported. Further, the parent should make a report to Texas Department of Child and Family Services and school administration.

**Can you help me get Medicaid services for my child in school?**

After investigation, DRTx may be able to assist in helping your child to receive School Health and Related Services or “SHARS” which is where schools are reimbursed when they provide health and related services, such as nursing services, occupational therapy, or personal care services they provide to students who are eligible for Medicaid. Schools may be reimbursed for some of your child’s related services that are medically necessary and reasonable. Schools may not discontinue or decrease those services based on available funding and not a student’s individualized need.

If your child has a disability that requires them to receive certain health-related services at school, such as nursing services, occupational therapy, or personal care services, DRTx may be able to assist in advocating for the provision of those services at Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) meetings.

**Can you help my child who is getting bullied at school?**

DRTx may be able to assist in seeking remedies or assist in making reports to the appropriate parties, depending on the circumstances of the child’s school environment.

**Can you help get my child out of alternative school?**

DRTx may be able to assist in seeking remedies or assist in making reports to the appropriate parties, depending on the circumstances of the child’s school environment, e.g., the chlid’s placement in the school and the circumstances surrounding the decision to place the child in an alternative educational setting.

**Can you help my child who was expelled from school?**

DRTx may be able to provide assistance to families seeking to access special education services for their student during an expulsion and their return to campus. Depending on timeframes, DRTx may be able to review or assist with removal hearings and Manifestation Determination Reviews.

Can DRTx assist me if my student is facing criminal charges as a result of school based behavior?

DRTx does not provide criminal representation, however we may be able to offer technical assistance to the court appointed or family-hired defense attorney.

Can DRTx assist me in getting the district to pay for a private placement, like an RTC or Day School?

DRTx does not advocate for restrictive placements like residential facilities.

### Community Integration

**Can you help me with my Medicaid appeal?**

DRTx can investigate the issue of your appeal and the reasons for the denials presented to you. In some cases, DRTx can provide direct assistance with handling your appeal or provide technical assistance on how to handle your appeal.

**Can you help me with Medicare?**

DRTx does not handle Medicare issues.

**Can you help me find a new provider?**

DRTx may be able to help you with technical assistance to work with your Local LIDDA on finding a provider, but DRTx to not search or find providers.

**Can you help me find long term care for my parent/child/sibling?**

DRTx does not provide assistance in securing long term care. DRTx would refer an individual to the Long Term Care ombudsman for Long Term Care questions.

**Can you help me get my medications?**

DRTx may be able to provide assistance if the medication prescriptions have been denied by Medicaid, but does not assist in matters involving a Doctor’s decision to decline providing particular Medicines.

**Can you help me find a Group home for my child/sibling?**

DRTx can assist you with making referrals to your LIDDA or HCS.

**Can you help me get services in the Group home where my child/sibling resides?**

After investigation, DRTx may be able to provide assistance in securing specific supports and services that a child/sibling should be getting.

**Can you help keep my parent/sibling from being evicted from the nursing home?**

If the eviction is for non-payment, DRTx generally does not provide assistance. If the eviction is based on another reason, DRTx may be able to provide assistance in defending against the eviction, depending on the results of an investigation of the circumstances.

**Can you help me apply for Medicaid?**

DRTx does not provide direct assistance in filling out an application for Medicaid benefits. However, DRTx may be able to provide technical advice on how to apply for Medicaid.

**Can you help me with getting durable medical equipment?**

After investigation, if appropriate, DRTx may be able to provide direct representation and advocate for either the replacement of or for new necessary durable medical equipment.

**Can you help me apply for a Medicaid waiver program?**

DRTx does not assist with initial application process for Medicaid Waivers; however, DRTx may be able to assist if the application has been denied or if an individual has lost their Medicaid Waiver. DRTx may also be able to provide assistance with securing access to diversion programs, if appropriate.

### Disaster Resilience

**Can you help me with my FEMA denial/appeal for disaster survivors?**

DRTx may be able to assist with matters involving denial of Federal Disaster Benefits, when appropriate. In the event that your request for assistance or benefits is denied, DRTx may be able to assist with providing technical assistance or direct assistance in perfecting an appeal for the denied benefits.

**Can you help me apply for disaster SNAP/food stamp benefits for disaster survivors?**

**Can you help me apply for FEMA disaster survivor benefits?**

**Can you help me find emergency housing for disaster survivors?**

**Can you help me find a shelter that will allow me to have my service animal?**

**Can you help me apply for unemployment benefits for disaster survivors?**

**Can you help me with not being able to pay my rent after a disaster?**

**Can you help me find new durable medical equipment (DME) to replace the DME that I lost in the disaster?**

**Can you explain to me how to apply for state and federal benefits for disaster survivors?**

**Who do I contact to find missing relatives in a time of disaster?**

### Employment/Accommodations

**Can you help me with discrimination that I am experiencing on my job because of my disability?**

**Can you assist me in getting my employer to allow my service animal at work?**

**Can you help me get an accommodation at my place of employment because of my disability?**

DRTx may be able to assist if you believe that you are in need of an accommodation in the workplace if you are a person with a disability and your employer is not engaging with you on your request.

DRTx recommends that you go to https://disabilityrightstx.org/en/handout/asking-for-an-accommodation-at-work/#About\_Workplace\_Accommodations.

**Can you help me with a work place violence/abuse claim that was because I am a person with a disability?**

**Can you help me file an EEOC complaint?**

**Can you help me file a complaint with the EEO?**

**What are my rights as a person with a disability in the workplace under the American with Disabilities Act?**

**What are my rights as a person with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act at my college/university?**

**Can you help me apply for services from the Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation office?**

**Can you help me with my appeal for services denied by the Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation office?**

**Can you help me appeal a denial of my VRC’s denial of my self-employment plan?**

**Can you help me file a complaint against my Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for denying me services?**

**Can you help me file a complaint against a doctor who is refusing to provide me with an ASL interpreter?**

**Can you help me file a complaint against a Judge that is refusing to provide me with an ASL interpreter in Court?**

**Can you help me file a complaint against a Sheriff who is refusing to provide me with an ASL interpreter while I am in jail?**

**Can you help me with a Social Security overpayment matter?**

**Can you help me with a problem I have with a Employment Network Provider?**

**Can you help me find a job?**

**What is “Ticket to Work”?**

**Can you help me with a problem with my Rep Payee?**

### Institutional Rights and Civil Liberties

**Can you help me file a complaint against the Texas State Hospital/State School for abusing/neglecting my parent/child/sibling?**

**Can you help me file a complaint because the state hospital/county jail is not providing me with my correct medicines?**

**Can you help me move into the community and out of the State School?**

**What are my rights when I am at a State Hospital?**

**What are my rights when I am in a State School?**

**What are my rights as a person with a disability that is in jail?**

**What are my rights as a person with a disability who does not want to take medicines prescribed to me?**

**Can you help me get out of the Hospital that is saying I have mental issues?**

**Can you help me file a complaint against an Emergency Room at the hospital because they refused to treat me?**

**Can you help me find mental health services?**

**Can you help me file a complaint against a LIDDA/Mental Health Authority?**

**Can you help me file a complaint against the clinic for refusing to treat me?**

### Transportation

**Can you help me apply for a person with disabilities discount bus pass?**

**Can you help me apply for transportation to my doctor?**

**Can you help me get permission to use public transportation again?**

**Can you help me get the city to provide a shelter to wait for the bus?**

**Can you help me with making the city bus company allow my service dog to ride with me?**

**Can you help me with getting the city to make cuts in the sidewalks?**

### Voting

**Can you help me with early voting?**

DRTx may be able to assist with matters involving early voting when there are questions about accommodations needed to vote, or where polling locations are located, or general voting questions.

**What do I do when the Election Clerks will not allow me to bring a person to help me to vote?**

DRTx will take your information and will contact the Election officials to intervene on your problem. Further, a person may call 888-796-8683 Voting Hotline.

**Can you help me with voting at the sidewalk on Elections Day because of my disabilities?**

A person is able to access sidewalk voting by contacting the Poll Worker at the voting site where you vote. A person with a disability can go to the designated sidewalk voting site and call the number or alert the Poll Workers by using the designated “button” at the Poll site. If a problem persists, the DRTx recommend you call the DRTx Voting Hotline 888-796-8683.

**Can you help me file a complaint against the polling place that is not accessible to a person with disabilities?**

In Texas, there is a specific form that an individual can use to register a complaint against the Poll Workers, the County, or the entire voting process at the polls. DRTx can assist in the filing of the complaint and where to file the complaint if needed.

**Who do I call if I have a problem voting because I am a person with a disability?**

The Secretary of State has a poll number at TX SOS Election Line   **Toll free:** 800.252.VOTE(8683) .

Or, Voting Hotline at DRTx Voting Hotline 888-796-8683.

### Client Assistance Program (CAP)

The Client Assistance Program assists people who want to receive services or are receiving services from the State Vocational Rehabilitation agency (Texas Workforce Commission-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWC-VRS)), Older Individuals who are Blind program also under TWC-VR known as OIB program, and Independent Living Centers (ILC) and the Independent Living Programs contracted from TWC to HHSC and to the ILC’s.

**Find out if they are currently receiving services?**

1. Is the client currently receiving rehabilitative services from TWS-VRS/OIB/ILC? If so, for how long?
2. Or, did client encounter problems trying to apply for services with TWC-VRS, OIB or IL Center services?
3. Who is the client communicating with at TWS-VRS/OIB/ILC? What is their contact information and where are they located/address?
4. When did the client last talk with this person?
5. Was the client’s case with TWS-VR/OIB/IL closed? If so, does the client know the date the case was closed?

**What is the issue/problem?**

1. What is the client requesting from TWS/VRS/OIB or the ILC to do for them?
2. Describe problem client is having with the VR/OIB/ILC agency. What is the issue/who is the issue with/how long has this been a problem?
3. Has the client discussed the problem with his/her VR/OIB/IL counselor? Or supervisor? If so, what was the response?
4. Was the client denied a service from TWS/OIB/ILC? Were they told that TWS-VRS/OIB/ILC cannot or will not be able to do a service for them? When did that denial occur?

**Resolution/outcome discussion**

1. What does the client want CAP to do for him/her?
2. What does the client want TWS-VRS/OIB/ILC to do for them?

**Accessibility**

1. If person is blind or visually impaired, does the person request information (letters and handouts) to be sent to them in large print, Braille, electronically or on tape?
2. If the person is deaf or hard of hearing, what is their preferred method of communication? Do they need sign language interpreters or CART services?
3. Are there any other accessibility or accommodation requests needed by the client?

### Protection & Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)

1. Are you receiving Social Security Benefits either Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI)?

* If “Yes”,
* OVERPAYMENT? If yes, …………
* If “NO”, ask the client if they are currently receiving either Medicare or Medicaid benefits? If the client doesn’t receive any benefits currently, they are not PABSS eligible. Also, former recipients of SSA benefits are not PABSS eligible.

1. DO YOU HAVE JOB AT THIS TIME? IF “YES”…..

IF “NO”……. ARE YOU INTERESTED IN WORKING OR GETTING A JOB?

(DEAF CULTURE…, FOR CONSIDERATION…)….

1. DO YOU KNOW HOW HAVING A JOB AFFECTS YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS?
2. ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ACCESSING IN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES?
3. Lastly, PABSS has an age requirement. Clients who are PABSSable must be between the ages of 14 and 64. Recipients of SSA retirement benefits are not PABSS eligible. If the client is 65 years old, they are not PABSS-eligible.

PROVIDE COPY OF SSA VERIFICATION….………………..IMMEDIATELY……