

# Information and Advocacy

## For Persons with Disabilities and Their Families



*We are here to listen to your story and  
help you find answers and solutions.*

**ADRC of Brown County**  
300 S. Adams St. Green Bay, WI 54301  
(920) 448-4300  
[www.adrcofbrowncounty.org](http://www.adrcofbrowncounty.org)  
ADRC is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization

Find us online:



# Getting Started

## Expertise and Experience

The organizations in this booklet have the expertise and experience to answer your questions. They understand your challenges and the descriptions are meant to give you a short overview of what each organization does. We encourage you to contact them directly for more information.

## What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is simply trying to influence others who provide services or make policies that affect our lives. By participating in advocacy, you move from a powerless bystander to a person empowered and in control of the quality of your life and/or the people you care about.

## Organizations Active in Advocacy

The organizations listed serve people with disabilities and are active in personal, public, and legislative advocacy. Many teach individuals how to advocate for themselves.

## Types of Advocacy

**Personal Advocacy** - Helping yourself or other understand their choices and/or get services. Sharing ideas at a support group, accompanying someone to an appointment or meeting with a service provider, or helping others represent their needs.

**Public Advocacy** - Activities that educate the general public to gain understanding. Speaking to a club, church, or other organization, writing a letter to the editor or submitting an article, blogging.

**Legislative Advocacy** - Working to influence legislation on a local, state, or national level.

## Our Mission

“Empower and enrich the lives of older adults, adults with disabilities and their caregivers.”

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# Disabilities- General

## Disability Rights Wisconsin

131 W. Wilson St. Suite 700, Madison, WI 53703

(608) 267-0214 | Toll Free: (800) 928-8778

Email: [info@drw.org](mailto:info@drw.org) | Website: [disabilityrightswi.org](http://disabilityrightswi.org)

*Language translation provided by phone for non-English speakers*

Disability Rights Wisconsin is a statewide resource for individuals, families, service professionals, and others concerned with disability issues. Designated by the governor to ensure the rights of all state citizens with disabilities through individual advocacy and system change, this private, nonprofit group is part of a national system of federally mandated independent disability agencies.

Disability Rights helps people across Wisconsin gain access to services and opportunities through information and referral, trainings, advocacy, and legal expertise. Disability Rights challenges systems and society to create positive change and improve the lives of people with disabilities.

## Ombudsman Program

State of Wisconsin Board on Aging & Long Term Care - Ombudsman Program

1402 Pankratz St. Suite 111, Madison, WI 53704

Brown County: (920) 662-5454 | Toll Free: (800) 815-0015

Email: [boaltc@wisconsin.gov](mailto:boaltc@wisconsin.gov) | Website: [longtermcare.wi.gov](http://longtermcare.wi.gov)

The Ombudsman Program is a free advocacy program for anyone over 60 years of age that is living at a facility or a community agency providing long-term care. Any residents, tenants, families and friends, or staff members can access this service. Ombudsman staff are direct advocates for people needing long-term care. The program is required by law, with the Board on Aging & Long Term Care being the direct provider of these services in the state of Wisconsin.

Recognizing the importance of quality of life and quality of care, an Ombudsman works with individuals and their families/caregivers to protect and promote the rights of long-term care consumers, while also working with facilities to define and achieve the highest standards possible. Ombudsman can answer questions about the different care options available, investigate complaints against care agencies, help residents and tenants resolve problems or concerns, and protect the rights of consumers guaranteed by state and federal laws. Ombudsman can be contacted by phone or give face-to-face assistance in a facility.

# Disabilities- General Continued

## Options for Independent Living

555 Country Club Rd., P.O. Box 11967, Green Bay, WI 54307  
(920) 490-0500 | Toll Free: (888) 465-1515 | TTY: (920) 490-0600  
Website: [optionsil.org](http://optionsil.org)

Options for Independent Living empowers people with disabilities to lead independent and productive lives in their community through advocacy, provision of information and referral, education, and technology.

Options for Independent Living assist people with disabilities and aging persons to be more independent in their home or work environment. Their one-of-a-kind facility showcases adaptive equipment and technology for both residential and business environments.

## WI FACETS

Main Office: 600 West Virginia St. Suite 501, Milwaukee, WI 53204  
Toll Free: (877) 374-0511 | TTY: (414) 374-4635  
Brown County: Toll Free: (877) 374-4677  
Email: [mzellmer@wifacets.org](mailto:mzellmer@wifacets.org) (Matthew Zellmer)  
Assistance available in Spanish: (877) 374-0511

Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training, and Support (WI FACETS) is a nonprofit organization that serves Wisconsin children and adults with disabilities and their families. It has become a leading source of information and support in Wisconsin for children and youth who have special needs, their families, and others who support them.

WI FACETS offers a variety of services including: information and referral, building a partnership between parents and those who provide services to their children, educating parents on their rights and how to use those rights to become involved in their child's education, developing leadership and self-advocacy skills, parent support and assistance with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and parent leadership development.

# Disabilities- General Continued

## WI Department of Health Services Client Rights Office

P.O. Box 7851, Madison, WI 53707  
(608) 266-5525 (Client Rights Office Supervisor)

The Client Rights Office ensures patient rights for people receiving services for developmental disabilities, mental illness, or substance abuse in the state of Wisconsin.

This office employs a Client Rights Specialist who can provide information and advocacy on issues related to guardianship and individual rights. Services are provided free of charge.

## Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Education Initiative (WSPEI)

Local Office: CESA 7  
595 Baeten Rd., Green Bay, WI 54304  
(920) 606-7791 (Sara Nerenhausen)  
Email: [snerenhausen@cesa7.org](mailto:snerenhausen@cesa7.org) | Website: [wspei.org](http://wspei.org)

WSPEI is designed to support parents of children with disabilities in their understanding of, and participation in, the special education process. It is a service for parents, educators, and others interested in parent-educator partnerships for children with disabilities. The program is funded through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

WSPEI provides information and assistance in understanding special education services in Wisconsin. Services include advocacy for parents, help in contacting a parent liaison in your school district, and assistance with developing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

## WI State Legislators

To find out who your legislators are, go to [legis.wisconsin.gov](http://legis.wisconsin.gov). Use the “Who Are My Legislators?” feature to help you find out. Enter your address in the fields provided. You can email your representatives from the website. Telephone numbers are also provided.

# Developmental Disabilities

## The ARC- Wisconsin

P.O. Box 201, Stoughton, WI 53589

(608) 422-4250

Email: [info@arcwi.org](mailto:info@arcwi.org) | Website: [arcwi.org](http://arcwi.org)

The ARC-Wisconsin is an organization made up of people with disabilities, family members, caregivers, and concerned citizens that work to ensure services are available for people with disabilities. ARC-Wisconsin is a member of The ARC of the United States, with 27 local chapters.

The ARC-Wisconsin advocates to make sure proposed laws and public policies benefit people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They also train people with disabilities to be self-advocates. They are involved with a variety of issues, including: education, human service programs, housing development, and transportation. The ARC-Wisconsin works with other community agencies and local government to offer training on how services and programs should be designed to assist people with disabilities.

## Waisman Center

1500 Highland Ave., Madison, WI 53705

(608) 263-3301

Website: [waisman.wisc.edu](http://waisman.wisc.edu)

The Waisman Center is a collaborative partnership with the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinic systems. There are 12 specialty clinics across the state that focus on helping children with developmental disabilities.

The center provides full, detailed assessments and evaluations of children with developmental disabilities, conducts research, and offers other services and outreach to individuals, families, and the surrounding community.

# Developmental Disabilities Continued

## The Waisman Resource Center

1500 Highland Ave. Room 102, Madison, WI 53705

Toll Free: (800) 532-3321

Email: [wrc@waisman.wisc.edu](mailto:wrc@waisman.wisc.edu) | Website: [waisman.wisc.edu/wrc](http://waisman.wisc.edu/wrc)

The Wiasman Resource Center is a resource for more information on developmental disabilities.

The resource center will connect individuals and families to the range of community services and support available for children with developmental disabilities.

## *WI Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (WBPDD)*

101 East Wilson St. Room 219, Madison, WI 53703

Toll Free: (888) 332-1677 | TTY: (608) 266-7826

Email: [jeremy.gundlach@wisconsin.gov](mailto:jeremy.gundlach@wisconsin.gov) | Website: [wi-bpdd.org](http://wi-bpdd.org)

The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities was established to advocate on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities, foster welcoming and inclusive communities, encourage independence, and improve the disability service system.

Every five years, the Council develops a State Plan for system changes that guides all Council activities and provides publications that are useful to families of people with disabilities and offers grants and contracts to implement State Plan activities.

# Mental Health

## *National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Wisconsin*

NAMI of Brown County

923 Cherry St., Green Bay, WI 54301

(920) 430-7460

Website: [namiwisconsin.org](http://namiwisconsin.org) or [namibrowncounty.org](http://namibrowncounty.org)

NAMI Wisconsin is the state branch of a national organization committed to providing education, advocacy, and support to people affected by mental illness and their families. There is a Brown County affiliate of NAMI located in Green Bay.

NAMI provides crucial information to people affected by mental illness, and their families, and serves as their advocate on a state and national level. The NAMI Brown County affiliate offers monthly peer and family support groups. The NAMI Wisconsin website features an online directory of community services related to mental illness, a library of books and videos, and information about current legislative issues.



# Physical Disabilities

## The Brain Injury Association of WI, Inc. (BIAW)

P.O. Box 46285, Madison, WI 53744

(262) 790-9660 | Mobile: (608) 206-6426 | Toll Free Helpline: (800) 882-9285

Email: [admin@biaw.org](mailto:admin@biaw.org) | Website: [biaw.org](http://biaw.org)

BIAW is a nonprofit organization committed to serving individuals with an acquired brain injury and their families and caregivers. The Wisconsin chapter is part of the national Brain Injury Association of America.

This organization provides a resource center with a toll free family helpline, website, loan library, and resource for families and professionals. BIAW will also provide education, prevention services, support group networks, and advocacy with individuals' personal goals, as well as the goals of community programs and public policies.

## Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities

1 W. Wilson St. Room 551, Madison, WI 53703

(608) 266-9354 (Lisa Sobczyk) | TTY: WI Relay 711

Email: [lisa.sobczyk@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:lisa.sobczyk@dhs.wisconsin.gov) | Website: [cpd.wisconsin.gov](http://cpd.wisconsin.gov)

The Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities is a state council created to make recommendations to state agencies on legislation relevant to physical disabilities, promote public awareness about the abilities of and barriers to people with disabilities, and encourage development of programs and policies to prevent physical disabilities.

The council's website provides links to resources related to: citizen advocacy, civil rights, disability-specific resources, and service providers.

### For more information:

Visit our website: [www.adrcofbrowncounty.org](http://www.adrcofbrowncounty.org)

211 Community Services database: [www.get211.org](http://www.get211.org)

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