

The NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs is committed to supporting and protecting the health, safety, and dignity of all people with special needs and disabilities through advocacy of their civil rights, prevention of mistreatment, and investigation of all allegations of abuse and neglect so that appropriate actions are taken.



The Justice Center is a law enforcement agency which operates a toll-free hotline that receives reports of allegations of abuse, neglect, and significant incidents 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It also helps people with disabilities and their families find information and services.

REPORTING

Who should report allegations of abuse, neglect, or significant incidents?

The Justice Center encourages anyone who has witnessed or has reasonable cause to suspect that a person with special needs has been abused or neglected or is in danger of abuse or neglect to make a report.

Who is a mandated reporter and what are their responsibilities?

Individuals who are employed by, or volunteer at, covered facilities and programs and certain human service professionals are designated as “mandated reporters.” They have a legal duty to report suspected incidents of abuse, neglect, or other significant incidents to the Justice Center.

How do I make a report?

Reports should be made immediately — at any time of the day or night and on any day of the year — by telephone to the Vulnerable Persons’ Central Register (VPCR) Hotline. The Justice Center is not a first responder, so if a person receiving services is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1 and then dial the hotline to make a report.

Toll-Free Hotline: 1-855-373-2122

Will I have to give my name when I make a report?

Reports may be made anonymously. However, the Justice Center recommends that you give your name so that an investigator can contact you if more information is needed and to enable a thorough investigation. An employer or agency is prohibited from taking any retaliatory action against an employee who has, in good faith, made a report to the Justice Center.

Are calls to the hotline recorded?

Yes, all calls made to the hotline are recorded for quality assurance.



What happens when the Justice Center receives a report?

A VPCR Hotline representative will record all details of the incident and classify reports as either abuse and neglect or significant incident. All reported incidents are assigned a case number and entered into an automated case management system. Reports are routed to the appropriate entity for investigation.

What happens after I make a report?

The Justice Center is authorized to investigate all reports of abuse and neglect, pursue administrative sanctions against staff found responsible for misconduct, and prosecute criminal offense allegations.

Cases of less severity may be delegated to the appropriate state agency for investigation. At the conclusion of an investigation, each allegation of abuse or neglect is either substantiated or unsubstantiated by the Justice Center.

Those found responsible for serious or repeated acts of abuse or neglect are placed on a statewide register and prohibited from providing care to people with special needs.

Facilities and provider agencies also must implement a plan of prevention and remediation of any deficient conditions found.

WHAT TYPES OF INCIDENTS SHOULD BE REPORTED TO THE JUSTICE CENTER?

Reports should be made regarding any situation in which a person with special needs who is receiving services or supports is experiencing abuse or neglect or may be at risk of harm.

Types of incidents to be reported include:

Physical Abuse:

intentional contact by staff such as hitting, kicking, shoving, corporal punishment, or an injury that cannot be explained and is suspicious due to extent or location

Sexual Abuse:

inappropriate touching, sexual assault, taking or distributing sexually explicit photos, or other sexual exploitation by staff

Psychological or emotional abuse:

taunting, name calling, using threatening words, or gestures by staff

Deliberate misuse of restraints:

use of a restraint with excessive force, or in a situation where it is not warranted

Neglect:

a breach of duty by staff such as improper supervision or inadequate medical care that results in harm or is likely to cause harm

Aversive conditioning:

unpleasant physical stimulus used to modify behavior without person-specific legal authorization

Obstruction:

interfering with the discovery, reporting, or investigation of abuse/neglect, falsifying records, or intentionally making false statements

Significant Incidents

incidents that have the potential to result in harm



WHO CAN I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED INFORMATION ABOUT DISABILITY RELATED ISSUES?

The Justice Center has created the Disability Resource Clearinghouse where people with disabilities, their families, caregivers, and advocates can go for important and helpful information. Links to disability-related programs, services, laws, and regulations are available any time of day online at www.justicecenter.ny.gov.

Information, technical assistance, and referrals are offered on topics such as accessibility, assistive technology, disability rights, education, employment, housing, recreation, transportation, and vocational rehabilitation.

Additional Information

Toll-Free: **1-800-624-4143** (Voice/Multi-language/TTY)
Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Email: supportcoordinator@justicecenter.ny.gov

Visit www.justicecenter.ny.gov for more information about the Justice Center and its resources.

WHO IS PROTECTED BY THE JUSTICE CENTER?

The Justice Center is responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals who, due to physical or cognitive disabilities or the need for services or placement, are receiving care from a facility or provider that is operated, licensed, or certified by the following state agencies:

- Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)
- Office of Mental Health (OMH)
- Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS)
- Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)
 - State operated programs/facilities
 - Certified residential programs
- Department of Health (DOH)
 - Certain adult homes and summer camps
- State Education Department (SED)
 - Residential schools and programs certified by SED



REPORT: Abuse, Neglect, and Significant Incidents.

Vulnerable Persons' Central Registry (VPCR) Hotline
Toll-Free

1-855-373-2122

Reports Accepted 24/7

What assistance is available for victims and families?

The Justice Center provides assistance to victims and families including:

- guidance and information about the reporting and investigative process
- support during criminal cases and proceedings
- victim interview accompaniment
- case status updates

Individual and Family Support

Toll-Free: **1-800-624-4143**

Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Email: supportcoordinator@justicecenter.ny.gov

Free translation and language assistance services available in 200+ languages.



Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs

PARTNERING TO PROTECT PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



A GUIDE FOR REPORTING ABUSE AND NEGLECT



Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs

www.justicecenter.ny.gov