Pathways to Justice® for All

Improving access to justice for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities
The Challenge: Access to Justice

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) do not have access to justice, because many criminal justice professionals lack the knowledge and experience to interact effectively with this population. Without access to justice, people with I/DD will continue to be overrepresented in the criminal justice system as victims, suspects, defendants, and incarcerated persons.

The Solution: Pathways to Justice®

To advance access to justice for all, The Arc’s National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability® (NCCJD®) created Pathways to Justice, a comprehensive, community-based program that creates and builds relationships between the criminal justice and disability communities.
First, NCCJD provides support in creating a local, multidisciplinary team that brings together key stakeholders from both the disability and criminal justice communities. These stakeholders work together to identify barriers to justice and serve as the go-to resource on criminal justice and disability.
By participating in a DRT, criminal justice professionals and disability advocates can:

- Develop trusting and mutually beneficial relationships
- Identify and remove community-specific barriers to justice
- Feel empowered to effect criminal justice reform in their communities, both on an individual and systemic level
- Raise awareness of these issues on an ongoing basis

Building a DRT: How to Get Started

Relationships are key when it comes to criminal justice reform, and it starts with just one connection! If you are from the disability community, try reaching out to a local law enforcement agency, prosecutor’s office, public defenders’ office, or jail. Tell them why you care about this issue and how Pathways to Justice can help not only people with disabilities, but the professionals who work with them too.

If you are from the criminal justice community, try reaching out to a state or local disability organization. Chapters of The Arc are a great place to start this conversation. Find yours at thearc.org/find-a-chapter! You can also try reaching out to your state Protection & Advocacy organization, federally-funded advocates that work to advance the rights of all people with disabilities, at ndrn.org/en/ndrn-member-agencies.
STEP 2  HOST A PATHWAYS TO JUSTICE EVENT

Once the DRT is formed, NCCJD experts work with the DRT to provide a full-day, in-person training covering key topics, such as how to identify, interact with, and accommodate persons with I/DD and other disabilities.

TARGET TRAINING AUDIENCES

- Law Enforcement
- Victim Services Professionals
- Legal Professionals

After the training, criminal justice professionals can:

- Better understand disability and their legal obligations toward the disability community
- Provide appropriate accommodations and supports in their respective roles
- Help the DRT identify and address ongoing needs in the community
- More effectively identify and communicate with people with I/DD
- Know more about the resources available to people with I/DD in their communities
Since 2015, Pathways has reached over a dozen states and over 1,500 stakeholders across the country.

*train-the-trainer version of Pathways
GET INVOLVED!
Working together, we are creating Pathways to Justice for all!
If you are interested in learning more about Pathways to Justice, creating a Disability Response Team, or requesting training in your community, join us at NCCJDPathwaystoJustice.org.

Support Pathways to Justice thearc.org/donate/criminaljustice