

§ 1386.21

Federal advocacy program's legislation or regulations.

[49 FR 11779, Mar. 27, 1984, as amended at 52 FR 44846, Nov. 20, 1987; 61 FR 51156, Sept. 30, 1996]

§ 1386.21 Requirements and authority of the Protection and Advocacy System.

(a) In order for a State to receive Federal financial participation for Protection and Advocacy activities under this subpart, as well as the State Developmental Disabilities Council activities (subpart C of this part), the Protection and Advocacy System must meet the requirements of section 142 of the Act (42 U.S.C. 6042) and that system must be operational.

(b) Allotments must be used to supplement and not to supplant the level of non-federal funds available in the State for activities under the Act, which shall include activities on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities to remedy abuse, neglect and violations of rights as well and information and referral activities.

(c) A Protection and Advocacy System shall not implement a policy or practice restricting the remedies which may be sought on the behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities or compromising the authority of the Protection and Advocacy System (P&A) to pursue such remedies through litigation, legal action or other forms of advocacy. However, the above requirement does not prevent the P&A from developing case or client acceptance criteria as part of the annual priorities identified by the P&A system as described in §1386.23(c) of this part. Clients must be informed at the time they apply for services of such criteria.

(d) A P&A system shall be free from hiring freezes, reductions in force, prohibitions on staff travel, or other policies, imposed by the State, to the extent that such policies would impact system program staff or functions funded with Federal funds and would prevent the system from carrying out its mandates under the Act.

(e) A Protection and Advocacy System shall have sufficient staff, qualified by training and experience, to carry out the responsibilities of the system in accordance with the prior-

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ities of the system and requirements of the Act, including the investigation of allegations of abuse, neglect and representations of individuals with developmental disabilities regarding rights violations.

(f) A Protection and Advocacy System may exercise its authority under State law where the authority exceeds the authority required by the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, as amended. However, State law must not diminish the required authority of the Protection and Advocacy System.

(g) Each P&A system that is a public system without a multimember governing or advisory board must establish an advisory council in order to provide a voice for individuals with developmental disabilities. The Advisory Council shall advise the P&A on program policies and priorities and shall be comprised of a majority of individuals with developmental disabilities who are eligible for services, or have received or are receiving services or parents or family members, (including those representing individuals with developmental disabilities who live in institutions and home and community based settings), guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of such individuals.

(h) Prior to any Federal review of the State program, a 30 day notice and an opportunity for public comment must be provided. Reasonable effort shall be made by the appropriate Regional Office to seek comments through notification to major disability advocacy groups, the State Bar, other disability law resources, the State Developmental Disabilities Council and the University Affiliated Program, for example, through newsletters and publications of those organizations. The findings of public comments may be consolidated if sufficiently similar issues are raised and they shall be included in the report of the onsite visit.

(i) Before the P&A system releases information to individuals not otherwise authorized to receive it, the P&A must obtain written consent from the client requesting assistance, if competent, or his or her guardian.

[61 FR 51157, Sept. 30, 1996]