

# RIGHT TO LEARN

Indiana nonprofit helps children with disabilities get access to education

## Advocacy with results

Congress has found that individuals with disabilities constitute one of the most disadvantaged groups in society. Individuals with disabilities continually encounter various forms of discrimination in such critical areas as employment and education. DLSI uses its resources to remove barriers and ensure that Hoosiers with disabilities have full access to educational opportunities so they can receive an appropriate education, pursue meaningful careers and contribute to society.



## Opening doors to education: Disability Legal Services of Indiana

DLSI assisted client families across the Hoosier state during 2018. These success stories exemplify the impact of DLSI and the importance of its mission.

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DLSI attorneys assisted a single woman in the Indianapolis area who was given custody of her nephew after he was removed from his home following several years of trauma and instability. Her nephew, an elementary student with a reading disability, was struggling educationally and behaviorally and had been removed to a restrictive educational setting outside of his school district. His aunt tried unsuccessfully for over a year to have her nephew



**Disability Legal Services**  
of Indiana



**5954 North College Ave.  
Indianapolis, IN 46220**

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For more information  
about DLSI or to learn  
how you can advance  
our mission to help  
provide advocacy for  
Indiana's most  
vulnerable young  
people, email us at

**dlsiboard  
@gmail.com**

transferred to his local public school so that he could attend his neighborhood school with his non-disabled peers. DLSI worked collaboratively with the local school staff and their legal counsel and the client's nephew was successfully transferred to his local public school within a month with an appropriate education plan in place to meet his educational and behavioral needs. He is thriving in his new environment.

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DLSI attorneys assisted a family who recently moved to Indiana from New York. The single mother was overwhelmed with her son's chronic medical conditions that required close monitoring. His conditions required medical treatment and often affected his ability to attend school. The student had missed approximately 75 school days due to his disabilities/medical conditions. His mother tried unsuccessfully to have her son identified as a student with special education needs. DLSI successfully advocated for the family, the student was properly identified as a student with a disability, and the school developed an individualized education plan that included homebound services allowing the student to receive educational services during his illnesses when he was unable to attend school.

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DLSI attorneys assisted a mother in northwest Indiana who had tried unsuccessfully to have her son with a disability receive appropriate services and accommodations at school. Again, DLSI attorneys worked collaboratively with the local school staff to ensure that the client's son obtained an individualized education plan that met his academic needs with appropriate accommodations for his disability.

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DLSI also assisted a family in rural Indiana. Their son had significant educational and behavioral challenges and had been placed in a restrictive educational setting. The student's public school abruptly changed the student's

educational placement. The family filed legal proceedings, but quickly became overwhelmed with the legal process and requested DLSI's assistance. DLSI attorneys stepped in and successfully advocated for a new educational plan for the student, ensuring a smooth transition from a more restrictive setting to a less restrictive educational setting over the period of several months. DLSI's involvement allowed the family and school to resolve their differences and work together to ensure a good result for everyone involved.

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## DLSI: More than a decade of service and advocacy for Hoosiers with special needs

### OUR BOARD

**Margaret Jones**, Executive Director  
mjones@disabilitylegalservicesindiana.org

**Abbey Parker**, Board President  
dlsiboard@gmail.com

**Melissa Keyes**, Board Vice President

**Brian Clay**, Board Treasurer

**Mary Jo Wedding**, Board Secretary

**Nicole Goodson**

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### OUR HISTORY

*October 2008*

DLSI is incorporated as an Indiana nonprofit organization.

*April 2009*

DLSI receives 501(c)(3) status and begins fundraising,

*February 2010*

DLSI begins serving its first clients, fulfilling the vision of the attorneys and others who saw the need to help Indiana's disabled citizens.

*June 2010*

DLSI moves into its current location at 5954 North College Ave., in the Broad Ripple neighborhood of Indianapolis.

## A message from our DLSI Board President

Disability Legal Services of Indiana is opening doors for persons with disabilities, and we are proud to share our success stories with you. DLSI not only empowers the individual, but also the support system that surrounds each unique person. Whether the support system be a parent, a guardian, a teacher, a school system, or a community service provider, DLSI collaborates with stakeholders to ensure each client receives appropriate educational services pursuant to federal and state education laws.

In the same way we get to see our clients positively transition, a metamorphosis is occurring within DLSI. Margaret Jones, founding member, dedicated Board President and compassionate Attorney for DLSI is now serving as Executive Director. Margaret looks forward to continuing her enthusiastic work on behalf of DLSI's clients and supporting other attorneys in advocating for those with disabilities. Margaret is a leader of integrity and compassion that breathes life into DLSI's mission. The DLSI Board is honored to have her champion the organization and looks forward to reinforcing the values and services she has instilled in DLSI.

A highlight of DLSI's services is that we support individuals and families that experience financial hardship and would not otherwise be able to access legal guidance. We are thankful for the partnerships that fund DLSI's free and reduced fee advocacy services and we are grateful for the caring, empathetic services our attorneys deliver to improve the lives of our clients with disabilities.

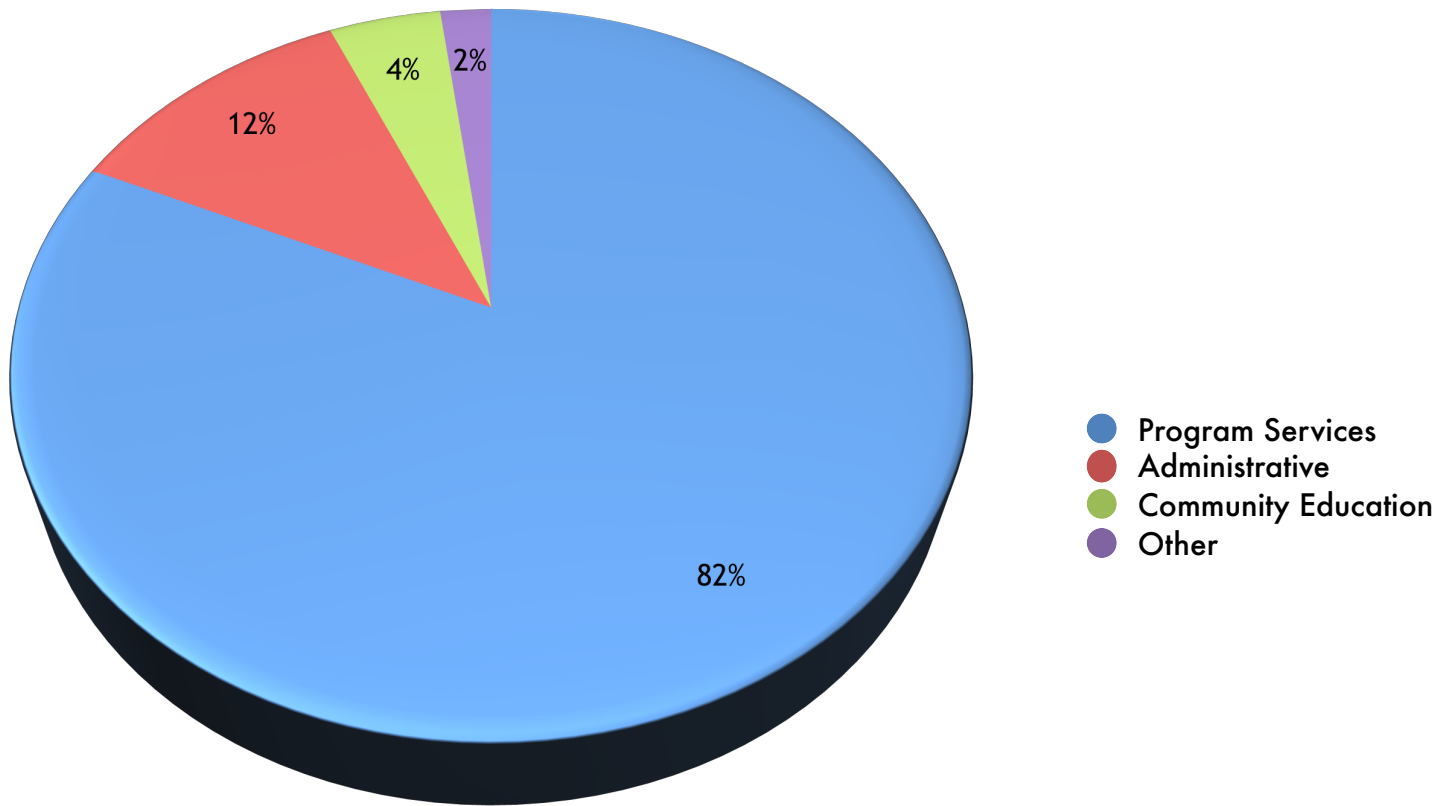
The DLSI Board has been diligently building, adding three new board members and spearheading strategic planning efforts. The board is filled with determined and thoughtful members whose lives have been touched by those with disabilities. We know the necessity of supporting persons with disabilities so their voice will be heard, their support system will have a path, and their decisions will be supported.

You have an opportunity to empower these unique individuals and their families by sharing DLSI's story. By sharing DLSI's purpose you have become part of DLSI's success and empowering persons with disabilities. If you would like to participate further by partnering with DLSI or serving on the DLSI Board please contact Abbey at [dlsiboard@gmail.com](mailto:dlsiboard@gmail.com).



Sincerely, *Abbey Parker*  
DLSI Board President

# DLSI 2018 — Hours by Category



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**Special thanks to generous underwriters  
of 2017-2018 strategic planning project**

**JD Byrider — Langham Logistics — Scott Potter MD —  
Southwest Surgical — Gordon Homes — Anastasia Demo Mills**