

# ANNUAL REPORT



2021



# OUR POSITION STATEMENTS

**Position 1:** Promoting individual autonomy for Persons with Disabilities including the freedom to make one's own choices.

**Position 2:** Breaking down attitudinal barriers and promoting greater social awareness and acceptance towards Persons with Disabilities.

**Position 3:** Ensuring the opportunity for Persons with Disabilities to choose their place of residence within the community on an equal basis with others with access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services.

**Position 4:** Providing equal information access for Persons with Disabilities in accessible formats and technologies appropriate to different kinds of disabilities.

**Position 5:** Ensuring the right to work and education, on an equal basis with others that is inclusive and accessible to Persons with Disabilities.

**Position 6:** Advocating for justice in Domestic and International forum for the legal rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**Position 7:** Supporting Families and Care Givers of Persons with Disabilities.

**Position 8:** Committing to equality and social justice together with all who fight against racism.



# ABOUT DIG

DIG is a nonprofit legal advocacy center for disability rights. At DIG, we look at disability from every angle and perspective. Our litigation department ensures that the laws are being enforced and interpreted correctly so that people with disabilities have choices in all aspects of their lives. Our programs bring exciting trainings to families, professionals, and the community at large. DIG is at the forefront of the disability movement and continues to look at cutting edge disability issues.

## Our Mission

Expanding opportunities for participation, education, employment, and acceptance of persons with disabilities through advocacy, litigation, education, and training.

## Our Vision

Every person is entitled to equal treatment and dignity.



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STATEMENT

2021 was another big year for DIG. We continued to help people navigate the pandemic and enter back into the world. As business and schools opened, we were there to help people safely return with the accommodations they needed.

We also expanded our Wallet Card Project by adding a new version of the wallet card for caregivers. We are so proud to release the new version of the card and we hope it helps families feel safer and more comfortable when they are out in the community.

Thank you for your support this year,

*Debbie*



# MEET OUR TEAM

## Executive Director

Deborah Dietz

## Litigation Director

Matthew W. Dietz, Esq.

## Development Director

Sharon L. Langer, Esq.

## Staff Attorney

Stephanie L. Langer, Esq.

## Administrative Assistant

Yarelys Mirabal

## Wallet Card Project

Carolina Rossel

## Interns

Razan Alramahi

Christopher Cano

Marygrace Longoria

Bailey Beauchamp

Maxwell Dietz

Dorysped Mancebo Ortega

## Board of Directors

Matthew Dietz

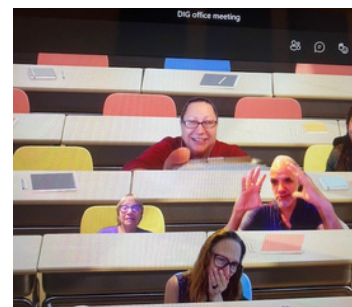
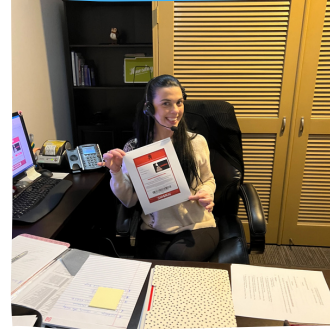
Larry Forman

Adrienne Gang

Sharon Langer

Scott Leffler

Lucy the Dog

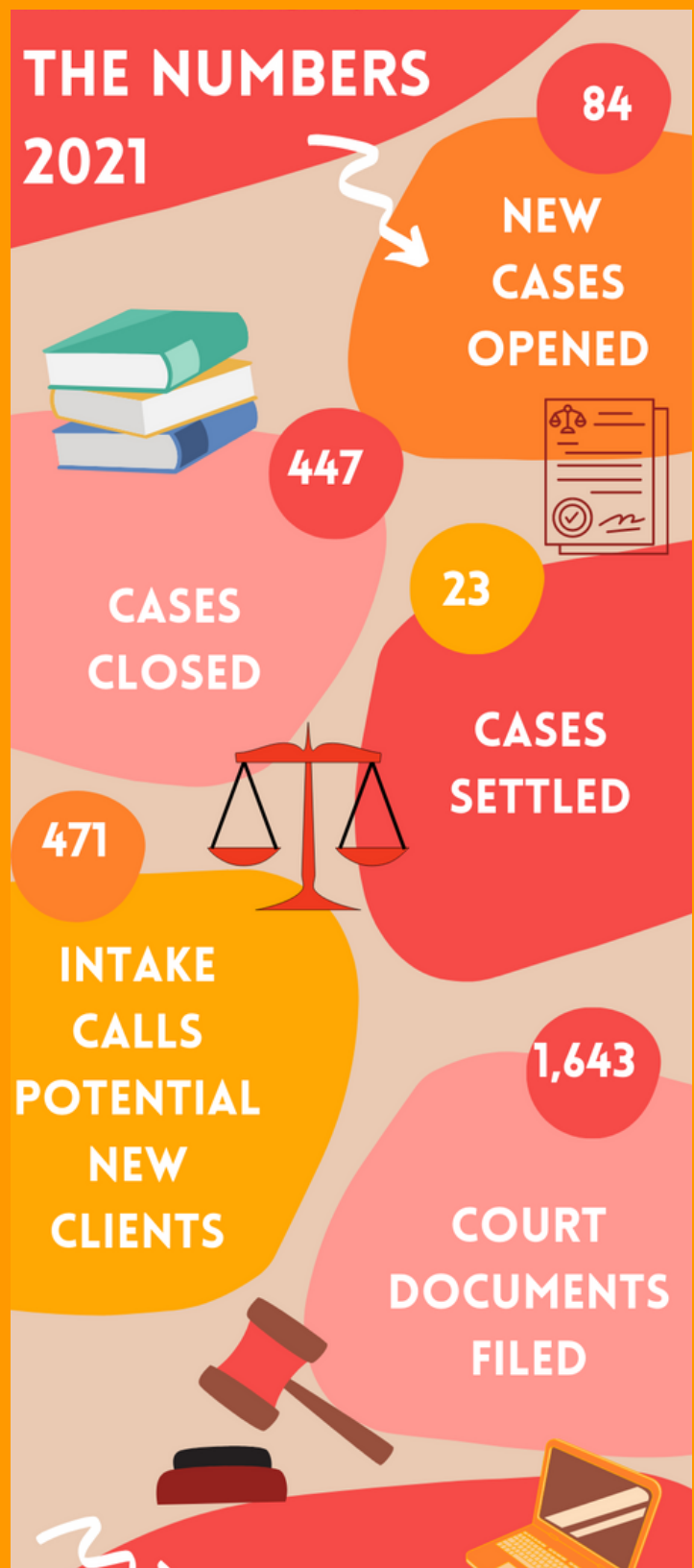


# LITIGATION UPDATE

In 2021, the COVID-19 Pandemic continued to direct much of the advocacy that was required over the year.

Unfortunately, Florida was and continues to be focused on returning to normalcy rather than protecting the interests of persons with disabilities who require accommodations to be fully integrated in the community.

In that regard, Disability Independence Group has represented parents of immunocompromised children who required protections in their schools so they would not be at increased risk of injury from the virus.



# LITIGATION UPDATE

On behalf of the Florida Counsel of the Blind, we ensured that the State of Florida would provide accessible vote by mail for persons who were blind and print impaired, and in 2022 we are continuing to ensure that persons with vision and print disabilities have the options of accessible absentee voting.



However, pandemic issues did not predominate the time of the litigation section. It continues to be a priority for DIG to ensure that persons that are Deaf receive effective communications in employment, health care settings and throughout society.

Denial of Fair Housing reasonable accommodations and modifications continue to be a frequent issue, as over 50 percent of all Fair Housing Complaints across the United States are disability related. The representation of persons with autism, developmental disabilities and mental illness, and accommodations needed to remain living independently has become a large part of practice of DIG.



# LITIGATION UPDATE



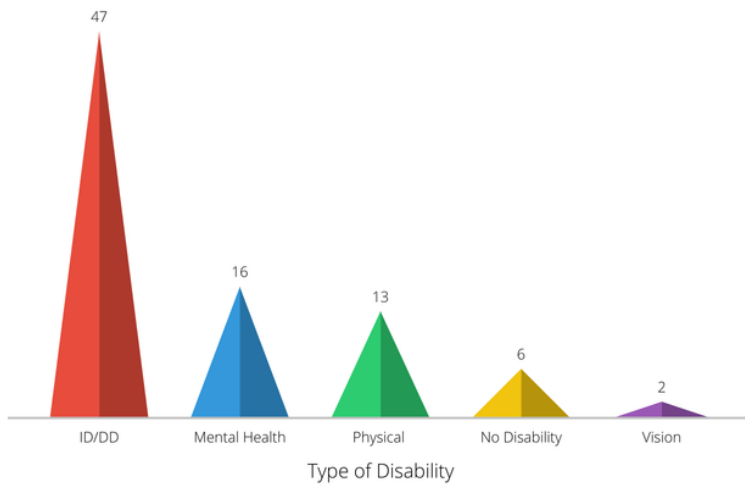
Unfortunately, the rights of persons with disabilities, and civil rights in general, have been slowly eroding. We are currently on appeal on many cases that serve a bellwether for this trend. This includes issues such as whether local municipalities have the authority to establish broader civil rights protection than the state of Florida; whether adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities have a property interest in their room in a group home or whether they can be ejected without legal process; and whether Florida regulations and guidance supersede the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.



# STATISTICS

84 CASES IN 2021

2021 Number of Cases by Disability



ID/DD = 47

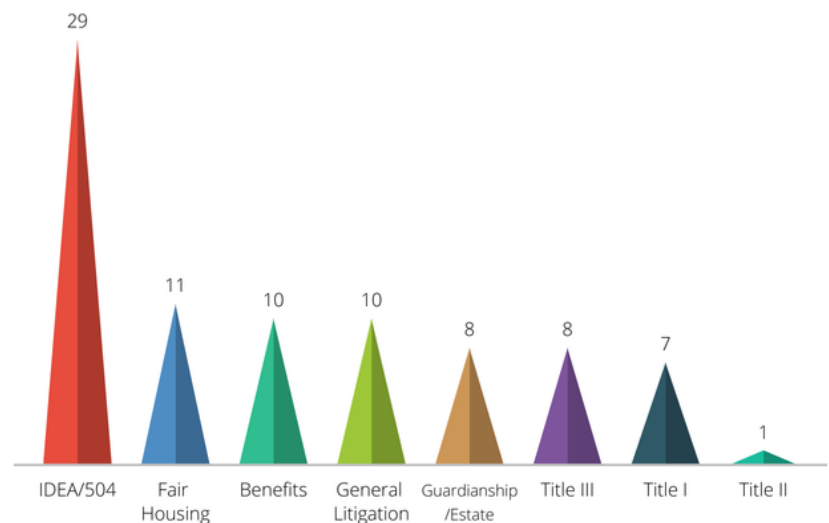
Mental Health = 16

Physical = 13

No Disability = 6

Vision = 2

2021 Number of cases by Cause of Action



IDEA/504 = 29

Fair Housing = 11

Benefits = 10

General Litigation = 10

Guardianship/Estate = 8

Title III = 8

Title I = 7

Title II = 1

# THE WALLET CARD PROJECT



Total Number of Requests = 1,038

ASD = 866

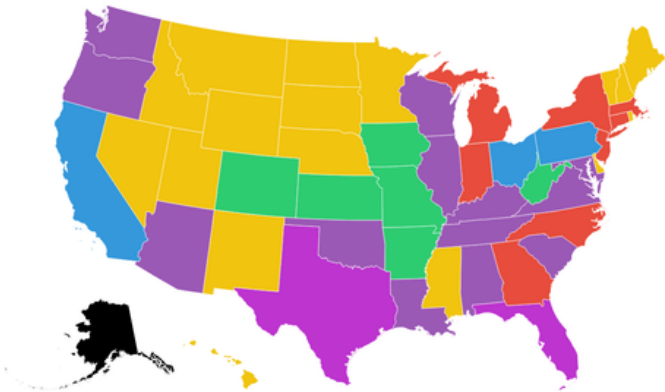
ID/DD = 170

Other = 2



# THE WALLET CARD PROJECT

2021 Wallet Cards by State



Black = 0 cards  
Yellow = 1-5 cards  
Green = 6-10 cards  
Purple = 11-20 cards  
Red = 21-50 cards  
Blue = 51-100 cards  
Magenta = >100 cards

## Wallet Cards by Country



South Africa = 1 card  
United Kingdom = 1 card  
Puerto Rico = 4 cards  
United States = 1,031 cards





# TRAINING & OUTREACH

DIG continued to work on the Miami Inclusion Alliance, Access the Vote Florida, Unite Miami, and the Enable Project.



Lucy continued to make Bar(k) Cards for all her friends



We gave 38 trainings

We had 21 interns work at DIG

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## Revenue

Litigation - \$585,697

Grants - \$486,935

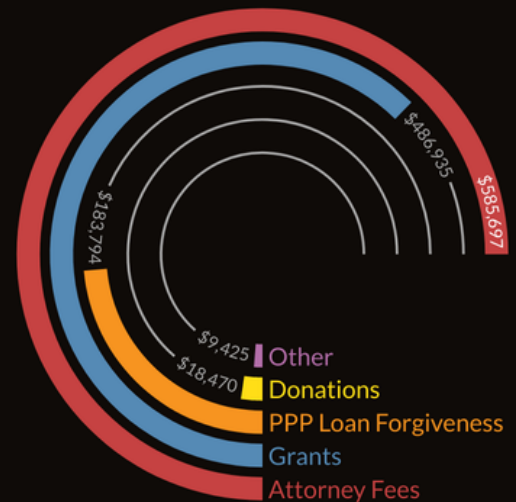
PPP Loan Forgiveness - \$183,794

Donations - \$18,470

Other - \$9,425

### 2021 Revenue

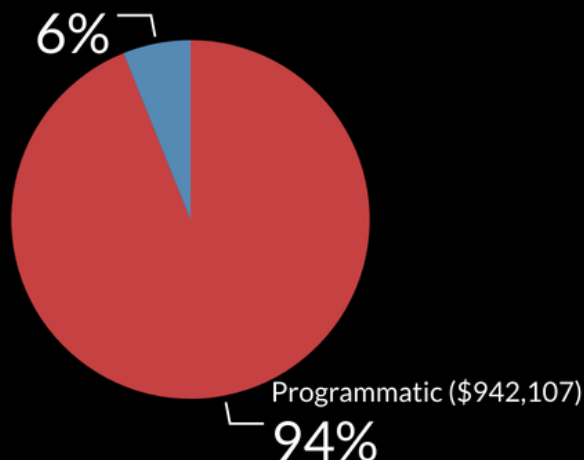
Total Revenue = \$1,284,321



### 2021 Functional Expenses

Total Expenses \$1,003,170

Management (\$61,063)



## Functional Expenses

Programmatic - \$942,107

Management - \$61,063

**DONATE**



**Thank you!**

