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See <https://justiceawards.com/>
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Disability Rights Washington recognized with national award for criminal justice reform

SEATTLE - Local advocates for prison and jail reform at the [Amplifying Voices of Inmates with Disabilities](#) (AVID) program of Disability Rights Washington have been selected for the national 2019 **Paul H. Chapman Award** from the [Foundation for Improvement of Justice](#). AVID is recognized for their innovative approach in reforming how county jails and state prisons address the needs of inmates with disabilities.

AVID is the only entity in Washington State with broad federal authority to access both prisons and jails. It uses this access authority to regularly monitor the most secluded areas of these facilities throughout the state, which include mental health and medical units and solitary confinement. AVID also investigates allegations of abuse, neglect, and rights violations and reaches a broad range of people by taking collect calls and letters from every prison and jail in the state.

Since its founding in 2014, AVID has secured significant changes in the state's criminal justice system. During the program's first year, the program stopped state prisons from continuing the practice of punishing inmates for self-harm and suicide attempts. Over the next few years, AVID proceeded to review policies and monitor conditions of all 38 county jails in the state, issued seven reports with recommendations, and produced a documentary about reentry that encouraged reform.

During the past two years, AVID successfully utilized the technique of "structured negotiations" in a large county jail that was violating the constitutional rights of inmates with disabilities by denying them psychiatric medication and therapy and placing them in segregation solely because of their disabilities. Rather than going through the process of litigation, AVID identified problems and advocated for changes with the jail, which resulted in the jail quickly beginning to initiate reforms.



Disability Rights
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The Foundation awarded six individuals and organizations across the nation, including AVID, the Alaska Native Justice Center, John Bair, the Florida Justice Technology Center, Vicki Sokolik, and the Violence Intervention Program. All of these recipients have created innovative programs and their work has made improvements on various systems of justice. AVID is recognized for its innovative approach that has stopped jails and prisons from denying psychiatric medication and therapy, segregating inmates with disabilities and punishing people for self-harm, all without litigation.