



Diocese of Buffalo

Parish Advocate for Persons with Disabilities Roles and Responsibilities

“We call upon the people of good will to reexamine their attitudes toward their brothers and sisters with disabilities and promote their well-being acting with a sense of justice and the compassion that the Lord clearly desires. Further realizing the unique gifts individuals with disabilities have to offer the Church, we wish to address the need for their integration into the Christian community and their fuller participation in its life.”

United States Catholic Bishops. Pastoral Statement on Persons with Disabilities. November 1978.

1. Discuss with your pastor how to announce your role as the Parish Advocate to the parish community. Consider a bulletin notice sharing what is calling you to this ministry. Offer your name and contact information in routine publications, such as the weekly bulletin, website or new parishioner information.
2. Identify parishioners with disabilities. Reach out to them and ask what the parish can do to best assist and serve them.
3. Invite other parishioners to assist you.
4. Determine what changes are needed. This would include, but is not limited to, accessibility, transportation, training, and accommodations.
5. Set goals and objectives prioritizing the needs.
6. Make recommendations to pastor and staff to ensure proper support and assistance are received by parishioners with disabilities.
7. Provide disability awareness education for the parish community.
8. Ensure families receive the proper supports for their family members.
9. Ultimately, work towards total inclusion and participation.

As an advocate, you are NOT alone in this role.
The Diocesan Disability Action Team is available to assist you by providing the tools and support to help you carry out this most important and needed task.

Visit our link: www.buffalodiocese.org/disabilities