

A dark blue arrow points to the right from the left edge of the slide. Below it, several thin, light blue lines curve upwards and to the right, creating a sense of movement and depth.

Accessing Justice: Using collaboration to deploy legal knowledge and resources to new communities

October 15, 2024

What is the Protection & Advocacy System?

- ❖ The Protection & Advocacy (P&A) System is a nationwide system of agencies mandated and empowered by federal law to protect and enforce the civil rights of people with disabilities.
- ❖ A P&A exists in every U.S. state and territory.
- ❖ The P&A System serves individuals with any kind of disability – including but not limited to intellectual, emotional, sensory and physical disabilities.
- ❖ P&As advocate for people's rights to live and receive services in the most integrated way. Since their inception, P&As have been at the forefront of the deinstitutionalization movement.

About the DLC

The Disability Law Center (DLC) is a private, non-profit organization designated by the governor as Utah's Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agency.

A legally based disability rights agency, the DLC has been designated to protect the rights of Utahns with disabilities since 1978.

The DLC provides services that are statewide and free of charge to eligible individuals.

DLC Mission & Vision

Mission: The Disability Law Center advances and enforces the legal rights, choices, and opportunities of Utahns with disabilities.

Vision: The Disability Law Center envisions a just society where Utahns with disabilities are free from stigma, discrimination, and abuse. They have the authority to make their own decisions and the same rights and opportunities as those without disabilities. Their voices are heard, which inspires discussion and motivates change. Utahns with disabilities have equitable access to supports and resources needed to be as independent as possible and full participants in their communities.



Advocating for the Rights of Utahns with Disabilities

Service Priorities:

Accessibility
Assistive Technology
Civil Rights
Community Living
Education
Employment
Health Care
Fair Housing
Transportation
Voting Rights

Teams:

Abuse and Neglect
Access and Rights
Community Integration
Education
Employment
Fair Housing
Public Policy
Representative Payee
Audits
Short Term Assistance

Utah Medical-Legal Partnership

The medical-legal partnership model

- ❖ What: A collaboration between community health centers and non-profit providers of civil legal assistance.
- ❖ Why: To disrupt the cycle of returning people to unhealthy conditions by addressing the social & environmental factors that negatively impact well-being.
- ❖ Who: Patients of Utah community health centers who are experiencing health-harming civil legal issues caused by social and environmental factors.
- ❖ How: By creating a relationship between health care providers and civil legal aid attorneys, the UMLP connects referred patient/clients with legal assistance, as well as opportunities for cross-training between health care and legal providers to identify health-harming civil legal needs.

Who we are: Utah's primary providers of nonprofit civil legal aid

- ❖ Our three “and Justice for all” agencies offer free civil legal representation and programs that help people in Utah receive justice, protect their well-being, and overcome poverty.
- ❖ Disability Law Center (DLC)
- ❖ Utah Legal Services (ULS)
- ❖ Legal Aid Society of Salt Lake (LAS)*

*providing legal services in Salt Lake County

Who we are:

Utah's primary providers of nonprofit civil legal aid

- ❖ Disability Law Center (DLC)
- ❖ Utah Legal Services (ULS) is a non-profit law office committed to making equal justice a reality by providing free legal services in non-criminal cases to low-income Utahns. ULS serves the entire state of Utah and is a Legal Services Corporation grantee. ULS case priorities include family problems, public benefits assistance, housing, consumer issues, and the special legal needs of senior citizens, farm workers, and American Indians.
- ❖ Legal Aid Society of Salt Lake (LAS) is a private, non-profit law firm that provides free legal representation to low-income families in family law cases (divorce, custody/parentage, guardianship of minors), and free representation for all victims of domestic violence regardless of income to obtain protective orders and civil stalking injunctions. They handle cases which are filed or can be filed in Salt Lake County.

Who we are:

community health centers

- ❖ Utah Partners for Health (UPFH) is a federally qualified health center providing primary health care services to all regardless of the ability to pay. UPFH provides compassionate, comprehensive, quality care to empower underserved individuals, families, and communities in a patient-centered medical home in Midvale, Utah.
- ❖ Family Healthcare (FHC) is a federally qualified health center providing primary medical care and supportive services to all regardless of the ability to pay. FHC provides primary care that is accessible, affordable, continuous, comprehensive, family centered, coordinated, compassionate, and culturally effective in a patient-centered medical home in Southwest Utah.

Who we are: community health centers

- ❖ People's Health Clinic (PHC) is a nonprofit clinic providing no-cost quality medical services to uninsured residents of Summit and Wasatch Counties regardless of nationality, race, sex, or immigration status. It is funded by local residents, patients, businesses, churches, and local government.
- ❖ Flourish Therapy, Inc. (Flourish) is a non-profit clinical care program that provides individual, couples, family and group counseling for all age groups, including short- and long-term counseling, crisis intervention, parent intervention, and support services with a focus on quality care for LGBTQIA+ clients and their families. Flourish is committed to expanding access to affordable, culturally competent, evidence-based behavioral and mental health services for LGBTQIA+ individuals, couples, and families.



Your rights matter.



UMLP: by the numbers (as of 9/19/24)

- ❖ UPFH MOU signed on December 23, 2019
- ❖ FHC MOU signed on November 23, 2021, kicked off February 22-23, 2022
- ❖ PHC MOU signed on January 15, 2022, kicked off March 21, 2022
- ❖ Flourish MOU signed in late March 2024, kicked off immediately
- ❖ 223 referrals to the UMLP in total since January 2020 /
116 referrals provided with external referrals, fact sheets, or other resources / 83 met case criteria for the DLC, ULS, or LAS
- ❖ 36% of total referrals are non-native English language speakers (primarily Spanish and Portuguese)

UMLP: increasing access to justice

- ❖ Patients of Utah community health centers include those who are low income or uninsured, whose first language is not English, and who are members of underserved ethnic and geographic communities. These patients experience health-harming civil legal issues caused by social and environmental factors, and often do not know where to turn to resolve these legal issues.
- ❖ For both healthcare providers and patients, it is often not initially clear that there is an underlying legal issue that is negatively impacting the well-being of the patient or their family.
- ❖ By establishing a collaborative partnership that provides vulnerable patient-clients with access to legal services intended to remove barriers to health by mitigating the legal risks that are driving health disparities, the UMLP creates a novel pipeline between healthcare providers and their patients and non-profit providers of civil legal aid, ultimately resulting in an increased access to justice and the legal system for those patients.

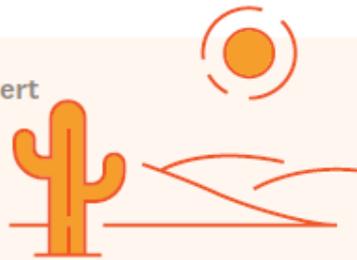
Defining the terms

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

are broadly defined by the World Health Organization as the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age. These circumstances are shaped by economic and social policies, political systems, and social norms, and they contribute significantly to health disparities.

FOR EXAMPLE

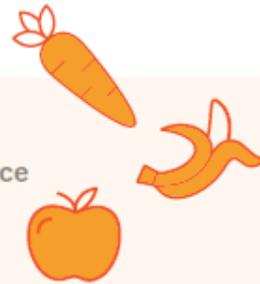
A food desert



SOCIAL NEEDS

are the more immediate, individual needs that patients enter the health center with every day as a result of social determinants of health.

A family's need for fresh produce today

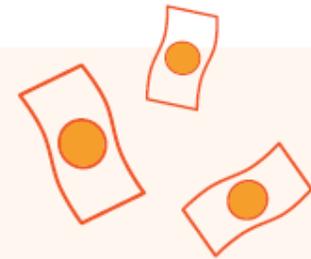


LEGAL NEEDS

are, simply put, the subset of social needs that have legal solutions. The distinction is made to help health care organizations understand where lawyers can be helpful*.

**This chart highlights a variety of legal needs that MLP lawyers can address for patients.*

A family's need to file an appeal after their SNAP benefits are incorrectly cut



How different team members address social needs

HERE'S HOW

A FAMILY OF 4

is struggling to make rent after one Mom is unable to work during her cancer treatment.



A Community Health Worker

can help the patient fill out applications, pull documents together, and may go to benefits office with her.

A Case Manager / Social Worker

may work with the patient to determine what housing, disability, insurance, and food benefits she is eligible for. They write support letters and gather medical documentation as needed.

A Lawyer

may advise the patient about the Family Medical Leave Act and job protections to help ensure her job is waiting for her after treatment. They can help CHWs and case managers understand benefit eligibility and problem-solve as needed. They may assist the patient with appeals if benefits are denied.

How civil legal aid helps address specific SDOH

I-HELP® Issue	Common Social Determinant of Health	Civil Legal Aid Interventions That Help	Impact of Civil Legal Aid Intervention on Health / Health Care
<p>Income</p> 	Availability of resources to meet daily basic needs	Benefits Unit: Appeal denials of food stamps, health insurance, cash benefits, and disability benefits	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing someone's income means s/he makes fewer trade-offs between affording food and health care, including medications.⁴ 2. Being able to afford enough healthy food helps people manage chronic diseases and helps children grow and develop.^{5,6}
<p>Housing & utilities</p> 	Healthy physical environments	Housing Unit: Secure housing subsidies; Improve substandard conditions; Prevent eviction; Protect against utility shut-off	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A stable, decent, affordable home helps a person avoid costly emergency room visits related to homelessness.^{7,8} 2. Consistent housing, heat and electricity helps people follow their medical treatment plans.⁹
<p>Education & Employment</p> 	Access to the opportunity to learn and work	Education & Employment Units: Secure specialized education services; Prevent and remedy employment discrimination and enforce workplace rights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A quality education is the single greatest predictor of a person's adult health.¹⁰ 2. Consistent employment helps provide money for food and safe housing, which also helps avoid costly emergency health care services.¹¹ 3. Access to health insurance is often linked to employment.¹²
<p>Legal Status</p> 	Access to the opportunity to work	Veterans & Immigration Units: Resolve veteran discharge status; Clear criminal / credit histories; Assist with asylum applications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clearing a person's criminal history or helping a veteran change their discharge status helps make consistent employment and access to public benefits possible.¹³ 2. Consistent employment provides money for food and safe housing, which helps people avoid costly emergency health care services.¹⁴
<p>Personal & family stability</p> 	Exposure to violence	Family Law Unit: Secure restraining orders for domestic violence; Secure adoption, custody and guardianship for children	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Less violence at home means less need for costly emergency health care services.¹⁵ 2. Stable family relationships significantly reduce stress and allow for better decision-making, including decisions related to health care.¹⁶

Case example 1 - Private Bar Collaboration

- ❖ As the result of a referral from one of our community health center partners, the DLC is collaborating with a firm from the private bar to litigate claims of employment discrimination and unsafe working conditions in the stone industry.
- ❖ The community health center has encountered many patients, the majority of whom are undocumented and/or non-native English speakers, who have developed or are in some stage of developing Silicosis (irreversible lung disease) and rheumatoid arthritis due to silica dust exposure. These individuals have worked in the stone industry for many years and developed symptomatic lung disease or debilitating arthritis while still at their jobs, ultimately manifesting in an inability to continue working in such physical positions or at all.

Case example 2 - Guardianship

- ❖ Through the UMLP, the DLC has been working to identify ways to engage in guardianship-related work that furthers our mission.
- ❖ Focus: the most egregious of cases in which a protected person is experiencing neglect at the hands of their guardian, where their wishes and desires are being completely ignored and/or controlled by their guardian, or where they are being forced or limited in ways that are disallowed under the law, such as re: sterilization or having their association with loved ones, partners, and family members limited.
- ❖ Individual case work: meeting with individuals under guardianship, taking referrals from DSPD, and providing technical assistance to service providers.
- ❖ Intervention at various levels: full representation, intervening with the court as an interested party, requesting a court visitor be assigned, and helping individuals to file documents on their own.

Case example 3 – Community Partners

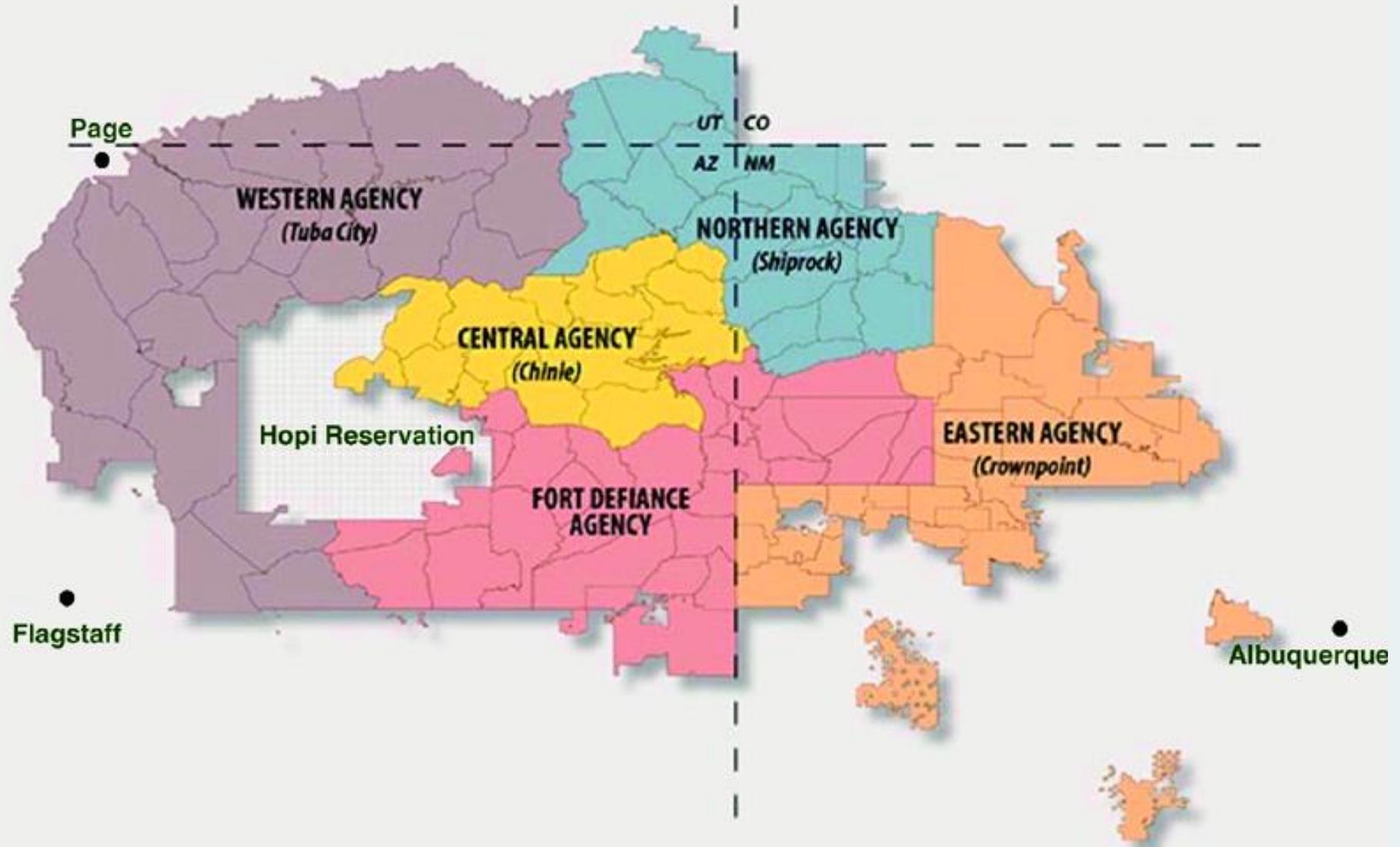
- ❖ Unite Us Platform - Utah referral network
- ❖ Innovation for Justice (legal innovation projects, regulatory Sandbox pilots, etc.)
- ❖ Roads to Independence
- ❖ Turn Community Services
- ❖ Moab Valley Multicultural Center
- ❖ Comunidades Unidas / Utah Immigration Collaborative
- ❖ Sacred Circle
- ❖ Latino Behavioral Health Services
- ❖ University Neighborhood Partners
- ❖ Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- ❖ Disability and Health Program, Utah DHHS/UTAH Disabilities Advisory Committee
- ❖ Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD)
- ❖ Utah Developmental Disabilities Council
- ❖ Office of Public Guardian (OPG)

Voting

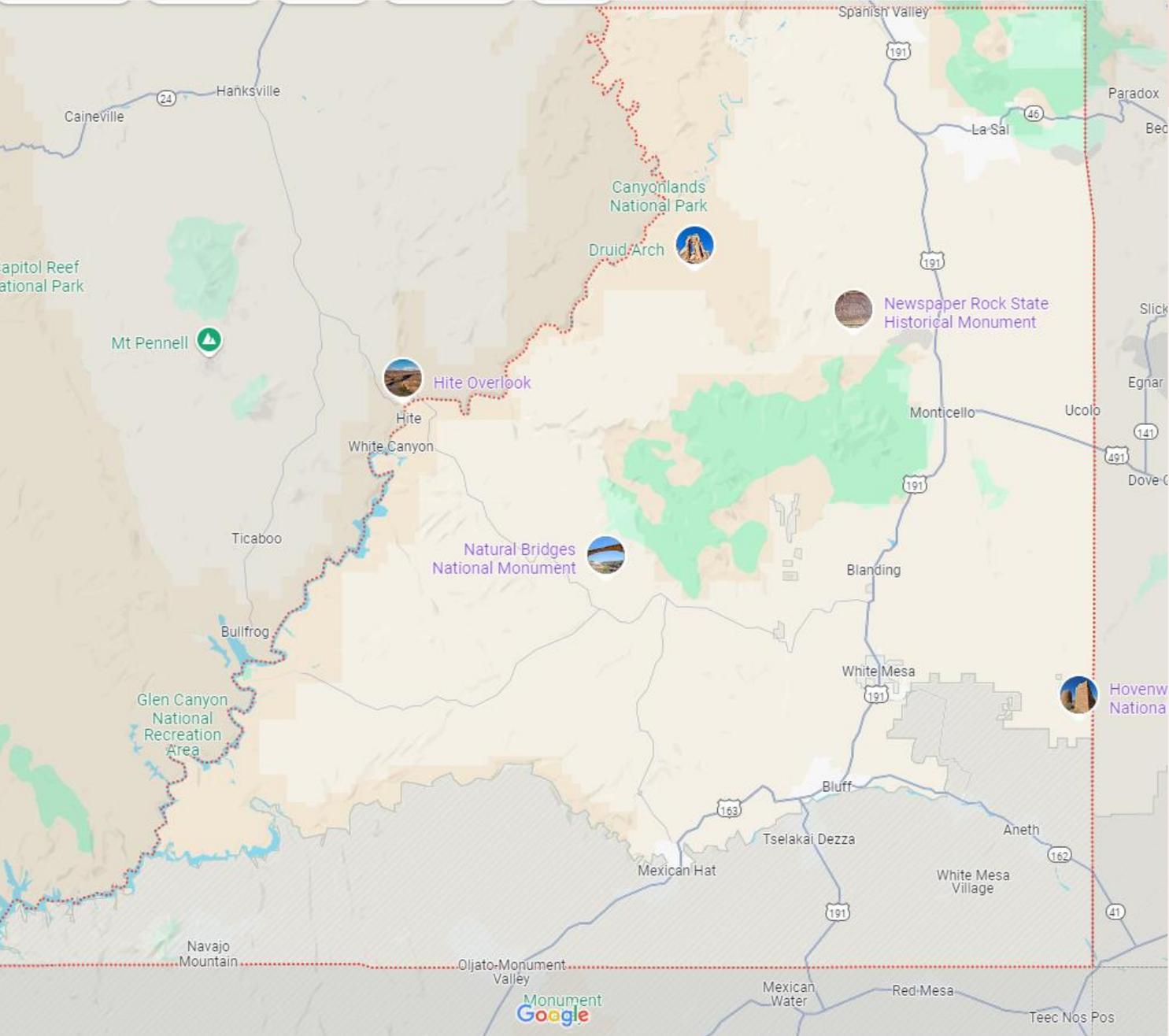
Navajo Nation / Accessibility



The Navajo Nation



San Juan County



Voting Challenges

- 1.Registration
- 2.Language
- 3.Distance
- 4.Accessibility



Registration



**RURAL UTAH
PROJECT**

Google Plus Codes, Door to Door: voter registration and insurance

“She has spent the last year helping residents assign [Google Plus](#) codes to their homes, which are based on latitude and longitude. There are few named streets on the reservation, and the Plus codes have allowed many households to have an address for the first time. The Rural Utah Project went door-to-door to talk to residents about using the new address for registering to vote.” (KUER, 2020)



Language Access



(Zak Podmore | The Salt Lake Tribune) Geri Hernandez, a certified Navajo interpreter working for San Juan County, holds out a bilingual "I voted" sticker at an early day at the Red Mesa Chapter House on the Navajo Nation in San Juan County on Oct. 8, 2020.



On February 21, 2018, The parties to the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission v. San Juan County reached a positive plaintiffs' claims that San Juan County did not provide effective language assistance to Navajo-speaking voters and that Navajo voters had unequal voting opportunities in the County.

Voter Engagement



“We’ve just been trying to put up food stands and do curbside, either Navajo tacos or fry bread. Just to attract people. I mean, just to kind of show people that there’s an early voting site in there, you know, where we were set up and stuff,” Redhorse said.
(UPR 11/2020)



Distance



Chapter House	County Voting	Miles Traveled RT
Aneth	Blanding	104
Red Mesa	Blanding	150
Navajo Mountain	Monument Valley	220



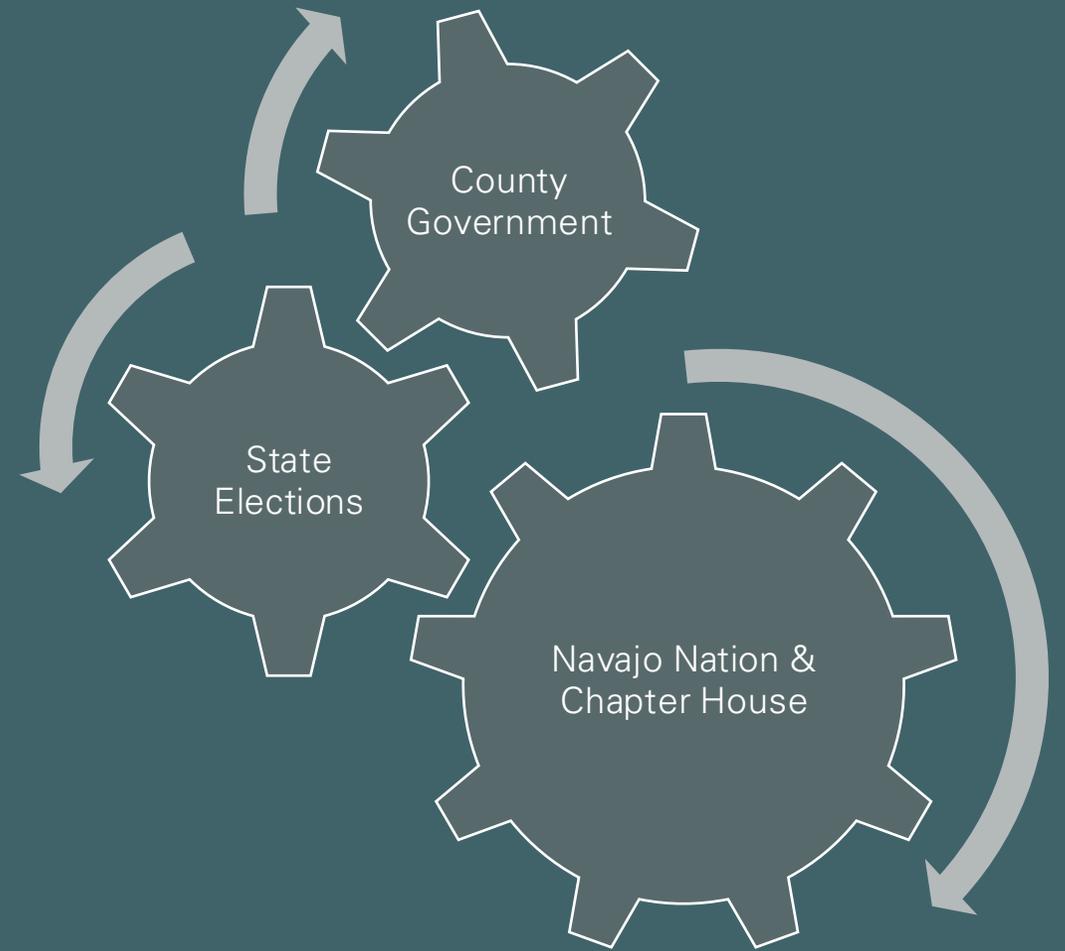
Our Expertise

Accessibility – Engaging Election Administrators - Funding

Site Evaluations & Reports



Connections



Tips and Take Aways

Find Partners to Help You Navigate

Educate Yourself

Embrace Opportunities to Experience a Different Business Culture

There May be Icebergs: Flexibility and Forgiveness

Keep Showing Up

Discussion & Questions

Contacting the DLC

Phone: (801) 363-1347

Toll free: 1-800-662-9080

VRS: sorenson.com/vrs

Website: disabilitylawcenter.org

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