

APSI  hio
2025 Annual Report

Our Mission

Advocacy and Protective Services, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization, which advocates for outcomes that promote dignity, respect, and enhanced quality of life for individual persons with developmental disabilities.

Serving critical needs,
one person at a time.

APSI Board of Directors 2025

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristen Henry".

Kristen Henry,
Executive Director



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bradley Eberhard".

Bradley Eberhard,
Board President

Letter from APSI Leadership

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on another year at APSI, we're reminded that our work is fundamentally about empowering people with developmental disabilities to live lives of dignity, autonomy, and purpose.

The stories in this year's report—DJ, Beth, Nwanya, Tabby, and Jesse—illustrate different paths to independence and different definitions of success. What connects them is APSI's commitment to meeting each person where they are and supporting them in achieving what matters most to them.

This year, we've made an impact beyond direct guardianship services. Through technical assistance and training, we're sharing expertise with families and professionals across Ohio. Our collaborative mural project is bringing client artwork to our Columbus office building, celebrating the creativity of people with developmental disabilities. And we're engaged in critical policy advocacy, advancing supported decision-making legislation that will benefit all Ohioans with disabilities.

These efforts reflect our belief that real change happens on multiple levels: through individual services that respect autonomy, through education that transforms how supporters approach decision-making, and through policy advocacy that improves systems for everyone.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to the principle that has guided APSI for over 40 years: serving critical needs, one person at a time.

Thank you for being part of our community and for believing that every person deserves the opportunity to build a life that reflects their own values, dreams, and choices.



Tabby

Tabby has been a client in APSI’s East Central region for over 20 years. According to Jacolyn, her APSI Protective Services Representative (PSR), Tabby’s personality can be described as loving, explosive, and caring, qualities that shine through in everything she does. Over the years, Tabby has shown growth in developing coping skills that work best for her: she walks away and takes a few minutes to herself, a skill that has made all the difference in her relationships and daily life.

Perhaps most importantly, Tabby feels heard. When asked how APSI has helped her achieve something meaningful, Tabby’s response was simple: she feels like her guardian listens to her. This sense of being valued and understood has been fundamental to her growth and increasing confidence.

One of Tabby’s proudest accomplishments is her journey to becoming smoke-free, a milestone she has now maintained for over five years. The path wasn’t easy. “When I quit, it was hard,” she recalls, “but I had help.” With support from her staff, she gradually reduced her cigarette intake until she reached just one cigarette a day. Then, in a moment of determination, she threw that last cigarette out and was done for good.

Her success inspired her roommate Jimmy, who also quit smoking cold turkey after seeing Tabby’s achievement. Her advice to others considering quitting smoking? “If I can do it, they can do it,” she says.

At the heart of Tabby’s story is her deep capacity for caring, perhaps best exemplified by her relationship with her four-year-old cat, Tabatha. Getting Tabatha was something Tabby really worked toward, demonstrating both the financial and personal responsibility needed to care for another living being. “Every day I take care of her. She’s my responsibility,” Tabby says with pride.

Tabby’s story demonstrates that change occurs through a combination of personal determination, supportive relationships, and the simple yet empowering experience of feeling heard and valued.

 ***There’s more to the story...***



Our Services

Guardianship

When county probate courts appoint APSI as guardian of the person, we provide essential decision-making support for individuals who cannot make choices on their own. APSI ensures that thousands of Ohioans receive safe housing, appropriate medical care, and reliable services. Our team is available 24/7 to provide informed consent, with multiple staff members able to respond at any time. In addition to full guardianship of the person, APSI may also serve as a limited, interim, or emergency guardian. APSI never serves as guardian of the estate, keeping our focus solely on the individual's well-being and wishes.

Alternatives to Guardianship

For people who need support but do not require a full guardian, APSI offers alternatives that promote independence and self-determination. Through supported decision-making plans, individuals remain in control while receiving help that aligns with their goals and values. We collaborate as trusted team members to honor each person's preferences. APSI also supports restoration of rights—helping individuals build skills, strengthen confidence, and regain independence when guardianship is no longer needed.

Technical Assistance

APSI serves as a statewide resource on guardianship, alternatives, and advocacy for individuals with developmental disabilities. We provide education, consultation, and training to families, professionals, and self-advocates. Our expertise includes guardianship law and best practices, person-centered planning, rights advocacy, and navigating complex care transitions. Whether through direct service or technical assistance, APSI ensures that no one has to face life's most important decisions alone.

There's more to the story...

The stories of five different APSI clients from across the state are featured in this report. Only so much can fit in this little booklet, so if you want to read the full article, **scan the QR code on the corresponding page** to see the entire piece including more quotes and photos!

What is Guardianship?

Guardianship is a legal arrangement where a probate court appoints a responsible person or organization to make decisions for someone unable to do so themselves due to a disability, illness, or condition affecting their ability to manage their affairs safely.

A guardian assists with key life decisions like healthcare and housing. For adults with developmental disabilities, organizations like APSI serve as a “guardian of last resort” when no family or advocates are available. Corporate guardianship offers professional expertise, continuous care, and knowledge of disability rights. Guardians act in the person's best interest, ensuring safety, well-being, and dignity while advocating for their needs.

Probate courts oversee guardianships to ensure they're necessary, and guardians are fulfilling their responsibilities. They must determine if a person is truly unable to make their own decisions before appointing a guardian, aiming to protect their rights while providing appropriate support.

Guardianship shows a community's promise to protect its vulnerable members, ensuring support when needed.

Nwanya

When Nwanya became an APSI client, he was ready for a fresh start. Coming from a home where his health and safety were at risk, APSI advocated for him to move to a new home, a decision that transformed his daily life and opened doors to the community involvement he'd been seeking.

At his new home, Nwanya has built genuine friendships with his roommates who share his love of wrestling, shopping, and staying active. The supportive environment has enabled him to pursue his interests without the barriers he previously faced.

“The past is past. Future is the future...focus on the present and future.”

One of Nwanya's proudest accomplishments is his weekly volunteer work at Matthew 25, a relief organization where he packs meals, clothing, and supplies for people affected by disasters and other emergencies. His previous provider wouldn't take him, but now he attends religiously every week.

“I pack boxes, food, clothes—whatever they need,” Nwanya explained. The volunteer work serves multiple purposes: it contributes to his community, builds valuable work experience, and moves him closer to his ultimate goal of securing paid employment.

“I want to get a job in the community,” Nwanya said. “Get paid, because money is very important.” Money matters to Nwanya because it represents independence and the ability to achieve his goals. He's a dedicated saver, carefully managing his funds and planning purchases strategically.

Nwanya also dreams of getting his driver's license, a goal his team is helping him work toward. “I'm ready for it now,” he said eagerly. His PSR Krista explained the process: study the book, get a permit, practice driving with supervision, then take the test. It's a step-by-step journey, and Nwanya wants to follow through.

One of Nwanya's most exciting ventures is his emerging tie-dye business. In his current home, he has a bedroom and adjacent “man cave” where he creates vibrant tie-dye shirts in custom color combinations. He's already making shirts and has tested custom shoes and hats for his staff and friends.

The tie-dye business represents more than just income—it's Nwanya expressing his creativity and entrepreneurial spirit, building skills that could lead to greater independence.

Recently, Nwanya ran into people from his past, people who don't represent the future he's building. When they approached him, he made a choice: he kept walking.

“I told them to leave me alone, stay away from me,” he explained. “I'm looking for the future, not the past.”

It's a boundary he's learned to maintain, recognizing that some relationships pull him backward rather than forward. After making a poor choice involving old friends, he reached out to his support network to discuss the incident and learn from it.

When asked what advice he'd give someone trying to make their life better, Nwanya didn't hesitate: “Just let it go. The past is past, the future is the future. Focus on the future, the positive. Focus on the present and future.”

With APSI's support, Nwanya continues moving forward. The future belongs to him, and he's building it deliberately, colorfully, and on his own terms.

 **There's more to the story...**







Jesse

When Jesse became an APSI client, he was ready to take control of his own life. Living independently in his apartment, Jesse has been steadily building the skills and confidence he needs to live with even less support, a goal he's actively working toward with his APSI PSR, Cassie, and his home manager, Christian.

Jesse's recent trip to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, exemplifies the progress he has made in advocating for himself. The vacation wasn't handed to him; Jesse had to speak up about wanting to go, plan it with his staff, and make it happen. What was supposed to be a few days turned into over a week when Jesse decided he wanted to stay longer.

Back home, Jesse is working toward another major goal: employment. He applied for a job at Burger King, completed his interview, and is now waiting to begin.

Jesse's growing independence is evident in his living situation. What began as a single weekly overnight on his own has been successful, and he plans to expand to two nights soon. "At first I was nervous, and then I just got used to it," Jesse said.

His PSR Cassie has noticed the dramatic change. "I have seen so much growth in you," she told him during the interview. "When I first [met] you, you wouldn't even speak up for yourself to me. Now you're just sitting here doing an interview. This is really impressive."

When a previous home manager was controlling, Jesse spoke up about it. It's the kind of self-advocacy that seemed impossible when he first became an APSI client.

Jesse is working toward eventual restoration, not needing a guardian anymore. His team is supporting him in building toward it step by step.

With APSI's support, Jesse has gone from someone who couldn't speak up for himself to someone planning vacations, applying for jobs, and managing overnight alone time.

 ***There's more to the story...***



DJ

In 2018, when APSI became DJ’s guardian, his life was at a crossroads. His parents could no longer serve that role, and DJ found himself in a home where he was over-medicated and struggling. During family visits, staff would rush them away after just ten minutes, eager to hide the reality of DJ’s situation. It took him half an hour to eat a single taco, his movements dulled by medications that masked rather than supported who he truly was.

According to DJ’s PSR Kayla, the turning point came when DJ moved to his current placement with Miss Vicky. “When he first got here, DJ was a challenge,” Miss Vicky shared. “But he’s made some big improvements.”

Living in his own home without roommates has been essential to DJ’s success. As a 33-year-old with autism who processes the world at his own pace, DJ needs space that accommodates his unique rhythm.

Music is DJ’s language. As a child listening to music on the car radio, DJ inherited an encyclopedic knowledge of songs from the 60s through the 90s. Country, metal, pop – it doesn’t matter. At The Exchange music store, employees have built a rapport with him

over time, as he often browses the CDs and records independently or with staff.

DJ’s progress extends beyond activities. He now gets regular haircuts and beard trims, a remarkable achievement considering he wouldn’t let anyone touch him when he first arrived. Most significantly, he’s speaking up for himself more.

“Without APSI, he might not be where he is today,” his team reflected. “Now, he’s in the best place he could be.”

Through APSI’s guardianship and his provider’s unwavering support, DJ has moved from over-medication and isolation to independence and purpose.

“DJ has come a long way,” Kayla said. And he’s still going: one song, one small victory, one day at a time.

! *There’s more to the story...*



In fiscal year 2025
(July 1, 2024 through
June 30 2025):

3,159

Ohioans with I/DD received APSI services.

APSI staff
visited clients

20,910

times.

One APSI staff
member had an
average of

49

clients on their
caseload.

APSI staff gave

19,408

informed consents, including:

APSI Medical
Specialists answered

8,880

after-hours calls.

11,408

medical consents

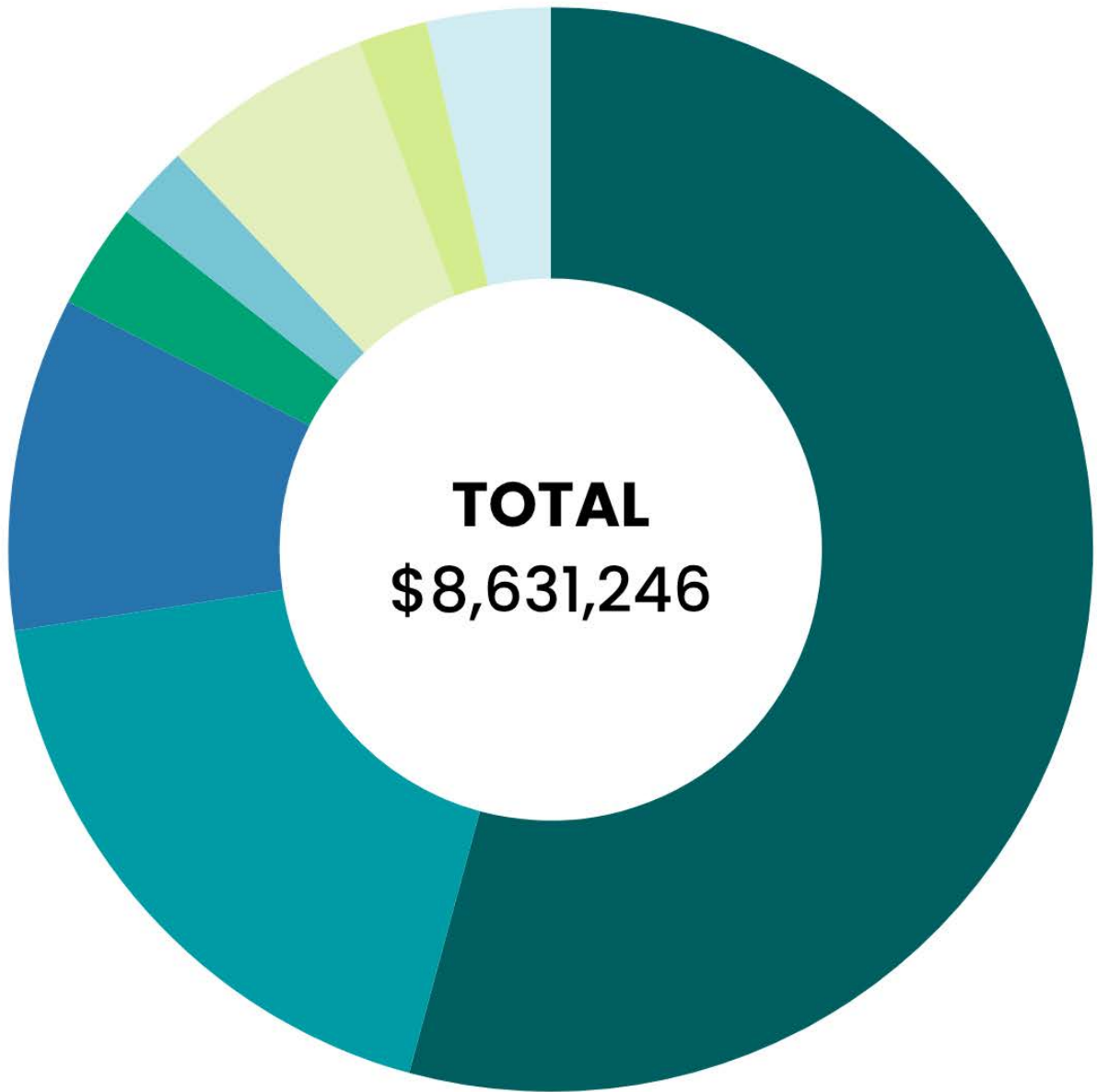
8,000

service consents

13

APSI clients were
restored, no longer
needing a legal
guardian.

Financial Impact



Program Staff \$4,678,487

Rent & Utilities \$191,902

Payroll Taxes/Benefits \$1,588,430

Other Program \$545,104

Administrative \$858,550

Rent (Donated Space) \$177,564

Mileage/Travel \$272,786

Professional Fees \$318,423



Beth

When Beth became an APSI client, she was navigating life with diabetes, a history of trauma, and a fierce desire for independence that sometimes clashed with the reality of what she needed to stay safe. Her journey with APSI has been one of learning to balance her determination to do things herself with accepting support when she needs it most.

According to her former PSR Brad, who has known Beth for nearly 15 years, Beth has come a long way. “Even a few months ago, you didn’t even want me coming to visit you,” Brad reminded her during a recent visit. The transformation speaks to Beth’s growing trust in her support system.

Beth’s life nearly ended four years ago when she stopped taking her insulin for three months. Her blood sugar soared to a number so high that the monitors couldn’t register it. She fell into a diabetic coma in her home, and it was her independent provider, Tammy, who found her and saved her life.

“I owe her my life,” Beth said. “I thank God for that.” The experience forced Beth to confront her own role in what happened. Since then, managing her diabetes has become a priority, though it remains a daily challenge. Her staff monitor her blood sugar regularly, and she’s learned to be more responsible about checking it herself.

Now living in a home with her roommate, Beth works at McDonald’s, a dream come true for someone who has long wanted a job in the community. She makes burritos, does dishes, and works breakfast, lunch, and dinner shifts.

 **There’s more to the story...**



Beth carries visible reminders of what matters to her: a tattoo honoring Terry, her fiancé who passed away last year. Every Monday, without fail, Beth visits Terry’s grave, placing items on it and keeping it maintained. “I’m the one that takes care of it,” she said.

Through APSI, Beth has learned to reach out when she needs help making decisions. Her support team includes Kati, Kristi, John, and Brad, people she knows she can call when she’s uncertain or when she’s made what she calls “a really dumb decision.” Recently, she made a mistake involving old friends that led to problems, and she systematically called everyone on her support team for guidance. The experience taught her something important. “I don’t make the same mistake twice,” she said firmly.

Beth has found stability she didn’t have before but still dreams of greater independence. “I want to live on my own,” she said. Until then, Beth is working toward smaller, more manageable goals. She wants to manage her own medications, a skill she already employs at her McDonald’s job, and she’s interested in attending Project STIR, a program that helps individuals with developmental disabilities develop their advocacy skills.

For Beth, APSI provides something essential: people to call when she’s not proud of a bad decision, support when she needs to think through choices, and the security of knowing she’s not alone. But with APSI’s help, Beth is learning. She’s building a life that includes meaningful work, creative expression, advocacy for others, and the courage to ask for support when she needs it. “Honestly, you have grown over the years,” Brad told her. “I can honestly say that.”

Beth’s journey isn’t finished. She wants to become a better reader despite her dyslexia. She wants that independence she’s been working toward. But she has learned something crucial: accepting help isn’t a weakness, and having people to call when things go wrong isn’t something to be ashamed of; it’s something to be grateful for.

Looking Forward

APSI is expanding its role as Ohio's leading resource for guardianship best practices and decision-making alternatives. Building on decades of specialized expertise, we are significantly broadening our educational initiatives to ensure that individuals, families, and professionals have access to the highest quality information and support.

Personalized Pathways to Fulfillment

APSI will expand our capacity to help clients achieve their unique life goals and aspirations. We provide more than basic support services, seeking to truly understand what brings meaning, joy, and purpose to each person's life, then building the pathways to make those dreams reality.

In the coming years, we will further develop our person-centered advocacy approaches to identify and pursue the individual goals that matter most to each client. Whether someone dreams of greater independence, meaningful employment, deeper community connections, creative pursuits, or new experiences, APSI will provide the tailored support needed to turn aspirations into achievements.

We will invest in innovative support strategies that recognize every client as the expert on their own life. Through enhanced goal-setting processes, expanded resource networks, and creative problem-solving, APSI will help clients overcome barriers and access opportunities that align with their personal vision of a fulfilling life.

Expanding Education and Technical Assistance

APSI is expanding its role as Ohio's leading resource for guardianship best practices and decision-making alternatives. Building on decades of specialized expertise, we are significantly broadening our educational initiatives to ensure that individuals, families, and professionals have access to the highest quality information and support.

Our enhanced technical assistance efforts will position APSI as the go-to authority on person-centered decision-making throughout Ohio. We are developing comprehensive training programs and practical materials on supported decision-making (SDM), empowering individuals who may not require guardianship-level services to maintain greater autonomy while still receiving the support they need. These resources will equip families and professionals with proven strategies and tools to implement SDM effectively.

Beyond direct client services, APSI is committed to elevating practice standards across Ohio's developmental disabilities network. Through expanded individual consultations and professional trainings, we are sharing approaches that help families navigate complex decisions, enable providers to develop more robust support systems, and guide professionals toward best practices in guardianship and alternatives.

This strategic expansion ensures that APSI's expertise reaches far beyond our current clients, creating lasting change by informing better decisions, strengthening support systems, and advancing person-centered care throughout our community. Every family facing difficult choices, every provider seeking to improve their approach, and every professional working in our field will benefit from APSI's leadership and knowledge.

Advancing Policy and Systems Change

APSI will continue leading the charge to transform Ohio's policy landscape for individuals with disabilities. Through coalition-building efforts with individuals, families, and professionals, and with the support of legislative champions, we will continue advocating for passage of supported decision-making legislation that recognizes SDM as an alternative to guardianship, empowering individualized approaches to decision-making support for generations to come.

Through strategic engagement in state committees, testimony before policymakers, and strengthened partnerships with DD system stakeholders throughout Ohio, APSI will actively drive change at the individual and systemic level. Our advocacy will ensure that best practices become standard practices statewide across the state of Ohio.

Amplifying Client Voices

APSI recently completed a collaborative mural project on our Columbus office building, featuring artwork created by clients from across the state in partnership with InsideOut Studio. This public art initiative celebrates the creativity and individuality of people with developmental disabilities while creating a vibrant landmark that reflects the diversity of voices APSI serves.

The mural represents APSI's ongoing commitment to ensuring clients are seen, heard, and valued as full members of their communities, not just as people receiving services, but as artists, contributors, and individuals with unique perspectives worth celebrating.





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