

## What is an External Youth Advocate?

An external youth advocate is an independent advocate – not employed by the state – who provides assistance and support to youth placed in the state run juvenile justice facilities and their families.

### The Youth Advocate Can:

- Ensure the youth's fundamental rights are protected while in the facility
- Assist youth and their families with questions, concerns, complaints regarding the facilities and services
- Assist youth in resolving issues
- Assist youth in filing grievances
- Work with youth and their families to ensure an individualized educational plan
- Work with youth, family members and others to facilitate return to their home communities

## Your Rights

The facility must give you and your family a detailed list of your rights when you come into the facility. The external advocate can help you understand your rights which include **your civil rights, your right to be treated with dignity and respect** and rights related to:

- Filing a grievance or complaint without fear of retaliation
- Protection from abuse, physical punishment and harassment
- Communication by telephone and mail
- Family visitation
- Private communication with clergy, attorney and advocate
- The practice of religion or faith of your choice
- Rehabilitation and treatment
- Education

The services provided by External Advocates are free of discrimination and supportive of all cultures, races, ethnic groups, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, and persons with disabilities.

If you have questions about the External Advocate Program, contact the Mental Health Association in Pennsylvania, 1-866-578-3659 (toll-free), [externaladvocacy@mhapa.org](mailto:externaladvocacy@mhapa.org).



# EXTERNAL YOUTH ADVOCATE PROGRAM

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