

AMIDA
Action for More Independence and
Dignity in Accommodation

Who can use AMIDA?

What do we offer?



Ross House, 1st Floor, 247 Flinders Lane
Melbourne 3000

Contacts for Housing advocacy:

Phone: 9650 2722 Email: amida@amida.org.au

Contacts for NDIA appeals advocacy:

Phone: 03 9654 2103 Email: appeals@amida.org.au

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**This policy is regularly reviewed and
people using the service can have a say in
improving the policy.**

WHAT DOES AMIDA DO?

AMIDA is an independent advocacy organisation. We receive funding under the National Disability Advocacy Program (**NDAP**) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme Appeals Advocacy Program (**NDIS Appeals**). Advocates speak, write or act on behalf of another person or group of people with no conflict of interest and in their best interests, to promote, protect and defend their welfare, interests and rights. We do this with the consent of and in partnership with, the people we work with.

Our focus in **NDAP** is to advocate for good housing for disabled people. Everyone deserves to have their voice heard, their rights upheld and the power to make their own choices and decisions over matters that affect their lives, including housing.

AMIDA's **NDAP** staff provide advocacy for housing issues to individuals, with priority given to disabled people with an intellectual disability. While many people can successfully advocate for themselves, some find it hard or are unable to speak up. AMIDA can support you to self advocate, or speak up for you.

AMIDA also advocates for change in systems which prevent people from achieving good housing. This means we don't just work with one person at a time, we work with groups of people or on problems that affect groups of people. AMIDA strongly supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability and works to assert these rights and community inclusion for disabled people. In line with the Convention, AMIDA acknowledges that disabled people have a right to a choice of who they live with and where they live, in good quality housing which is accessible, affordable and non-institutional. Disabled people have a right to live in the community with access to reasonable and necessary support to inclusion, choice and control of their lives.

Our focus in **NDIS Appeals** is advocating for anyone unhappy with a decision of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). **NDIS Appeals** accepts clients from across Victoria who have a disability, who are on the NDIS or want to be on the scheme. We have experience advocating for people with a vast range of disabilities. We support people with internal reviews, external reviews at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and NDIS access requests.

WHAT DOES AMIDA NOT DO?

AMIDA is not a housing service. We do not manage or provide housing. We do not seek housing for people. We can refer you to a housing service. **NDAP** can advocate for you if you are not able to access a housing service or your housing provider is not respecting your rights.

We are also not a crisis service. If you are in housing, family violence or any other crisis we can refer you to an appropriate crisis service.

While advocacy does intersect with legal tribunals, we are not a legal service and we do not provide legal advice. We can refer clients to legal services if required.

We have eligibility criteria for our housing and appeals advocacy.

WHO CAN USE AMIDA?

Any Victorian adult person who has a disability can use AMIDA and access to the service is decided on a non-discriminatory basis. AMIDA provides its services in a manner sensitive to the age, gender, sexuality, marital or employment status, cultural, linguistic and religious background of each disabled person. If a disabled person is under 18, we can provide family advocacy working with the parent/guardian of a disabled child.

INTAKE/REFERRAL PROCESS

National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) Intake

Disabled people or anyone concerned about the interests of a disabled person or people can contact us via phone, 03 96502722, email amida@amida.org.au or by appointment visiting the office 1st Floor Ross House 247 Flinders Lane Melbourne. You could also leave a message for AMIDA at Ross House reception.

In the **NDAP** program, our major area of experience is with disabled people with an intellectual disability and if we believe another advocacy group has more relevant experience to your case than

AMIDA, or can provide a better service, we may refer you to them. At the first contact we will find out about your issue and your capacity to self advocate. We will give you advice and information to self advocate if this is something you can do. When advocacy is needed, a person or group fills in, or we help them fill in, a "Referral form" including name, contact details and brief summary of the issue.

We assess advocacy requests considering whether the service needed is advocacy, if the issue is housing, if we have expertise and capacity and whether we have any conflicts of interest. We also consider the realistic prospects that advocacy will achieve the outcomes sought. Once we have decided to accept a case, we then give priority for service to people with an intellectual disability in the **NDAP** service. Next, we triage all cases we have accepted so that those cases which are the most urgent get priority for service.

AMIDA does keep a waiting list and refers cases to other advocacy services when our waitlist is not being cleared quickly. If we are unable to take on waitlisted cases within 6 weeks, we will make contact with you to assess whether you still need advocacy and whether you can continue to wait. We will also reassess your capacity to self advocate and give you advice and information to do this. If you still need advocacy and can't wait or self advocate and we can't start advocacy yet, we will try to refer you to another service. If our case load and waitlist reach our capacity, we may be unable to place new cases on the waitlist and will attempt to refer them to another advocacy service.

If you are already receiving advocacy from us regarding specific issues but you wish for AMIDA to address new issues, this will have to be considered via our intake process including our triage process.

During the process of working with you we may need to refer you to a service with different expertise such as a legal service.

NDIS Appeals Intake

If you are unhappy with a decision by the NDIA, you can contact us on appeals@amida.org.au , via phone on 9654 2103 or make an appointment for visiting the office 1st Floor Ross House 247 Flinders Lane Melbourne. You could also leave a message for AMIDA at Ross House reception.

At the first contact we will find out about the issue and your capacity to self-advocate. We can give you advice about your matter. We may need to request more information from you. We will have a discussion with you if we can support you now, or possibly into the future.

We have a demand management process. We triage cases as they come in. If we have capacity, expertise, can manage any conflicts of interest and the matter has prospects of success, we can accept the matter. Next, we triage all cases we have accepted so that those cases which are the most urgent get priority for service.

If we are at capacity, we can give you advice to self-advocate, refer you to another organisation, or add you to the waitlist. If demand is high for **NDIS Appeals** advocacy, we will discuss putting you on our waitlist. This does not guarantee we will be able to provide services. If you are on the waitlist and capacity becomes available, we will contact you.

During the process of working with you we may need to refer you to a service with different expertise such as a legal service.

HOW DOES AMIDA WORK?

If AMIDA agrees to work with you we will start a secure electronic file which will include: your consent to advocacy, your consent to talk to relevant people on your behalf and an Individual Advocacy Action Plan. This Plan will include what your issue is, the strategy we agree to, what action we both agree to take, when we will do it by and follow up dates at 3 months and 6 months. Any other documents or information we might need that will help carry out the plan will be stored in this file.

AMIDA will only do work that you, or your guardian, understand and agree that we can do. You are very welcome to have a support person with you when you meet with AMIDA.

You can ask AMIDA to change what they are doing for you at any time and we will review the advocacy.

You can choose to stop using AMIDA at any time or for any reason.

Any information, advice or support that AMIDA provides will be given to you in a way that is easiest for you to understand. For example, easy English, big print, audio, or with the help of interpreters.

HOW LONG DOES AMIDA WORK ON ADVOCACY CASES?

All cases have different challenges and some take longer than others but AMIDA will aim to resolve your case as quickly as possible. We will review the Individual Advocacy Action plan every 3 months and will review capacity to continue with any case that has continued for 6 months. At this time, we will discuss the goals set, the actions taken, obstacles and the results. We will consider whether advocacy is still needed, how much and what the prospects for success are if advocacy continues and the risks if it does not. We will consider whether self advocacy can be done by you from this point on. We will also consider what other demands for advocacy there are from AMIDA's waitlist. We will look at whether delays are due to awaiting responses from other organisations and whether cases can be on hold where these delays cannot be resolved.

We will decide whether the advocacy will continue or finish. If it is decided that advocacy will continue, we will redraft the Individual Action Plan with you, including new dates for review after a further 3 and 6 months and ask that you sign this and also renew and sign your Consent to Advocacy form. After a further 6 months we will again consider closure of the case.

HANDING OVER CASES

When a particular individual advocate needs to cease working with someone for whatever reason, for example they are leaving, work load changes or there are conflicts of interest, we will ensure this information is communicated to the client. Where possible the existing and new advocate will have a discussion with the client to explain the reasons for the handover and introduce the new advocate. The existing and new advocate will discuss the case to handover all relevant information including file notes on planning and progress, matters pertinent to good advocacy provision in the case and next steps in the advocacy plan.

CLOSING FILES

At any time, you or AMIDA may decide that AMIDA has done all they can for you and there is nothing more that can be done.

You may decide that you have got what you wanted and that you don't need us anymore. If you do decide to stop using AMIDA, for any reason, you can talk to us about this and let us know what you want to

do. Whenever possible, both AMIDA and the person using AMIDA will decide together how and when to end the service.

We will set a date 6 months from beginning your case, for reviewing the Closure of your case. As mentioned previously, we will take everything into account and consider very carefully whether to continue or close your case at this time. We will decide whether the advocacy will continue or finish.

If we are trying to get in contact with you and cannot get a response after a reasonable number of attempts, we can cease services. We will try multiple times and methods. We will use your preferred methods of communication, including talking to a support person if you have nominated one. We will let you know after 4 weeks that if you don't respond, we may close your case. After a period of 6 weeks of attempted contact and no response we may choose to close your case. We will inform you of this in writing via all available contract addresses and email.

If anyone verbally or physically threatens or hurts any AMIDA workers, volunteers, members or visitors, we may decide to stop working with that person. AMIDA can choose to close the advocacy if we don't believe we can offer you a service safely. Each situation will be treated individually, confidentially and decided by the management of AMIDA. The person may be told about another service they can use.

When it is decided a case will close, we will write this in the file and write to you telling you the file is closing and why. If at any time in the future, you may need our advocacy assistance again you can contact us.

We will give you the opportunity to tell us what you liked about our service and how we could improve. Your feedback is welcome as it helps us improve our service.

You are encouraged to make a complaint to us if you are not happy with AMIDA. Call 03 9650 2722 or email amida@amida.org.au. We will do our best to fix this and improve things. If you are still unhappy you can decide to go to another organisation for help like the Complaints Resolution and Referral Service

Call **1800 880 052** (toll free)

<https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/complaints/crrs>

AMIDA will keep copies of files for at least 7 years from the date on which the file is closed. After this time and if the file is no longer needed for the advocacy purposes for which it was created, we will take reasonable steps to destroy or permanently de-identify personal information.