**DISABILITY RIGHTS ADVOCATE**

**POSITION ANNOUNCMENT**

DRM seeks a passionate, civil rights-oriented, full-time Advocate to support our goal to advance the civil and human rights of people with disabilities in Maryland. The Advocate will conduct interviews and investigations, develop materials, engage in outreach and education, and provide support for team’s policy, legislative, and litigation.

This is a full-time, two-year position to work as part of our team on two distinct projects: (1) increasing the use and acceptance of supported decision-making as an alternative to guardianship and (2) assisting people with disabilities with accessing COVID-19 vaccines. The Advocate will be a member of our Developmental Disabilities/Health Care Team and will conduct interviews with people with disabilities in facilities and the community, perform outreach, provide advocacy services to people with disabilities, collaborate with partner organizations, develop educational materials, and provide additional support as needed to assist DRM in achieving its objectives under these projects.

**About Us:**

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM), a private, non-profit law firm, is a recognized leader in disability rights and the Congressionally-mandated Protection and Advocacy organization for individuals with disabilities in Maryland. We provide free legal services and advocacy to persons with disabilities in Maryland. We help people with disabilities pursue opportunities to participate fully in all aspects of community life, and champion their rights to self-determination, dignity, equality, opportunity, and freedom from discrimination and harm.

**Reports to:** Managing or Assistant Managing Attorney

**Responsibilities Include:**

* Conduct interviews of people with disabilities, as well as other stakeholders and investigations.
* Engage in outreach to people with disabilities and community partners.
* Develop education and advocacy materials.
* Identify local and national experts and monitoring emerging trends and issues in the disability rights field and integrated community services for people with disabilities.
* Advocate for changes to policies and practices.
* Support the work and advocacy with DRM’s teams. Coordinate meetings and special events; organize advocacy activities and attend quarterly meetings.
* In consultation with DRM’s teams, identify systemic issues for further investigation, draft reports and request intervention from state oversight agencies.
* Prepare and disseminate informational brochures for people with disabilities as well as families, advocates and professionals. Advocate for reasonable accommodations and modifications as necessary.
* Travel throughout the State of Maryland.

**Minimum Qualifications:**

* Ability to relate respectfully to people with disabilities. Experience working with and/or sensitivity to persons with disabilities and from diverse communities.
* Ability to conduct and execute a variety of advocacy strategies.
* Strong writing skills and demonstrated attention to detail in work product.
* Ability to work independently, successfully manage multiple work priorities and work under deadlines.
* Strong interpersonal skills. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships and collaborate with DRM staff and colleagues in a team environment.
* Ability to maintain confidentiality and exercise sound judgment in the handling of all advocacy activities.
* Computer literacy and proficiency with software utilized to carry out job functions.
* Access to reliable transportation for travel within State of Maryland.
* Strong commitment to DRM’s core mission of ensuring the rights of people with disabilities to self-determination, freedom from harm, due process protections, and to participate fully in community life with meaningful choices and opportunities.

**Preferred Qualifications:**

* Bachelor’s degree.
* Relevant experience is strongly preferred, particularly experience with people who have disabilities, conducting investigations and interviews, community-based services, experience with systemic public policy advocacy with state agencies and working in coalitions.
* Graduate students are encouraged to apply. Academic experience in a relevant field is preferable, including but not limited to social work, public health, and legal studies.
* Experience working directly with persons with disabilities;
* A demonstrated interest or background in public interest work, particularly related to disability rights issues;
* Life experience with a disability; and
* Fluency in American Sign Language or Spanish.

**Salary and Benefits:**

Competitive, depending on experience. The annual salary range for an advocate/paralegal is between $36,934 with 0 years’ experience to $44,032 with 5 years’ experience and a Master’s degree, depending on education level, experience, and special skills. DRM offers a generous benefits package that includes excellent medical insurance, employer-paid dental, prescription, vision, life, and disability insurance, as well as pre-tax savings plans, a retirement savings opportunity with generous employer contributions, and a telecommuting policy. DRM offers employee reimbursement for some or all of the cost of spouse or partner-paid health insurance premiums, up to an established maximum amount. DRM also offers generous paid time off, including vacation, holidays, sick time, and more.

This is a full time, time-limited position supported by grant funding through August 2023. While DRM can offer some flexibility in hours and days of work, generally the work hours will be Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm. Occasional evenings and weekend work are required.

Description of position can also be found at <https://disabilityrightsmd.org/careers/> .

The position is supported in part by federal funds under Award #90EJIG0027-01-00.”

**To Apply:**

E-MAIL resume, cover letter, a writing sample to jobs@DisabilityRightsMD.org with “Disability Rights Advocate” in the subject line. This position remains open until filled. Priority will be given to applications received prior to January 30, 2022. We are looking for thoughtful, personalized cover letters that demonstrate the applicant’s qualifications, work style and interest in being part of a team working to advance the civil rights of persons with disabilities in Maryland. Please include in your cover letter any specific work in alternatives to guardianship and supporting people with disabilities.

DRM is an equal opportunity employer. DRM values diversity. People of color, individuals with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ individuals are especially encouraged to apply.