

Barriers to Employment Legal Fellow

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) seeks a legal fellow to work with youth receiving SSI benefits and youth in transition ages 14 and older to identify and remove barriers to employment and independence and develop strategies to support successful transitions to adulthood and transition from school to work. The fellowship period is from August 2023-September 2024.

The attorney represents clients in judicial and administrative proceedings, engages in systemic advocacy and policy work, conducts outreach and education, and provides legal advice and technical assistance to youth receiving SSI benefits, their families, schools, vocational rehabilitation agencies, and other stakeholders with a focus on the benefits of employment, planning for employment and financial independence, building sound economic futures and using Social Security work incentives and related resources to achieve these objectives

Cases may involve representing youth receiving SSI benefits in school related matters, including Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, Section 504 meetings, school discipline hearings and appeals, administrative due process hearings, and administrative complaint proceedings. The attorney may also monitor, analyze and report on data related to educational and employment outcomes; participate in coalitions that address special education and employment; conduct rights trainings for families, students, and professionals on special education and employment; and support DRM's systemic and policy work.

Responsibilities Include:

- Maintain an active caseload representing youth receiving SSI benefits and youth in transition ages 14 and older in administrative and/or judicial proceedings;
- Support public policy and litigation efforts;
- Conduct and supervise outreach to identify clients in need of services;
- Under supervision of DRM's management and leadership teams, develop strategies to advance DRM's advocacy priorities;
- Work collaboratively with community stakeholders, co-counsel, and others;
- Participate in coalitions and task forces with clients, constituents, and community partners on matters relevant to the employment of persons with disabilities;
- Engage in administrative and legislative advocacy at the local and state level; and
- Travel throughout the State of Maryland.

Minimum Qualifications:

- J.D. degree from an accredited law school;
- Licensed to practice law in Maryland, or admitted after sitting for next available Bar exam;
- Ability to successfully obtain a U.S. Government level 5 / Tier 2 suitability clearance for positions of public trust.
- Strong commitment to DRM's core mission of ensuring the civil rights of people with disabilities to self-determination, freedom from harm, due process protections, to develop physically, emotionally and intellectually, and to participate in community life, with meaningful choices and opportunities;
- Strong interest in social justice and equity issues impacting the disability community;
- Excellent organizational and project management skills;
- Excellent interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills, ability to communicate ideas with enthusiasm to diverse audiences;
- Ability to research and analyze legal issues, develop and execute a variety of advocacy strategies, and conduct legal research;
- Ability to work independently and to establish and maintain effective working relationships and collaborate with colleagues in a team environment;
- Excellent analytical and writing skills;
- Ability to successfully manage multiple work priorities and work under deadlines.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Experience with one or more of the following: working with or representing children and young adults; special education, school discipline or education equity work; employment law, or civil rights law practice.
- Experience handling administrative appeals, representing clients in court, or working on systemic public policy issues such as commenting on proposed regulations, advocating for changes with state agencies, and working on coalitions with other legal and non-legal partners;
- Desire to empower clients to grow as advocates;
- Experience working directly with persons with disabilities;
- A demonstrated interest or background in public interest work, particularly related to disability rights issues;

- Experience with public policy advocacy and the legislative process;
- 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 Attorney with 0-5 years' experience is between \$64,419 - \$70,265 and depends on experience.

DRM offers a generous benefits package which 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 opportunities for 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.

While DRM can offer some flexibility in hours, days, and location of work, generally work hours are Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm. Occasional evenings and weekend work may be required. This announcement can also be found at <https://disabilityrightsmd.org/careers/>.

About Us:

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM), a private, non-profit law firm, is a 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. DRM envisions a world where people with disabilities are fully included in all aspects of community life.

Our staff are collaborative, collegial and committed to the well-being of the communities we serve and one another. Our workplace is flexible and we place a high value on diversity and inclusion, both as an organization and individually.

To Apply:

E-mail resume, cover letter, a writing sample to Jobs@DisabilityRightsMD.org with "Barriers to Employment Fellowship" in the subject line.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Positions remain open until filled with priority given to applications received before **July 30, 2023**.

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.

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