**SUMMER 2021 DISABILITY RIGHTS**

**LEGAL INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY**

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM), a 40 year-old nonprofit civil rights law firm, is Maryland’s designated Protection and Advocacy organization, charged with advancing the rights of people with all types of disabilities. DRM utilizes an array of strategies, including individual and class representation, outreach and education, information and referral, technical assistance and self-advocacy support, policy and coalition work, and abuse and neglect investigations, to ensure that people with disabilities are fully included in schools, the workplace, neighborhoods and all aspects of community life.

DRM is offering a Summer 2021 legal internship to focus on advancing the rights of people with disabilities in Maryland communities. The intern will work closely with DRM’s attorneys to provide comprehensive advocacy, which may include investigating complaints of rights violations; assisting with intake and client communication; conducting legal research and writing; assisting with individual casework; and supporting systemic advocacy around how proposed government policies will affect people with disabilities.

**Please note that the health and safety of DRM staff and interns is our top priority. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DRM’s physical office is currently closed and our staff are working remotely. While it is difficult to predict whether or not our office will be open during Summer 2021, our internship program will continue regardless – whether it be in a physical or virtual environment. Please know that, regardless of its form, DRM is committed to providing summer interns with a meaningful experience.**

This internship presents a unique experience for the right individual, including client representational skill development, opportunities for legal research and writing, close working relationships with DRM attorneys, and meaningful opportunities to work with national, state, and local stakeholders on issues impacting people with disabilities. A stipend may be available for this internship. DRM is also willing to work with students who would like to apply for externship credit or grant funding, such as the Maryland Public Interest Project (MPILP) or the University of Baltimore Students for Public Interest Law (UBSPI), for this internship.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

* **Research and legal writing:** Interns will have the opportunity to research and write memoranda on various issues as relevant to program priorities, such as: the civil rights of students with disabilities to make meaningful educational progress and remain in school; the rights of people with disabilities to accessible housing, community services, and health care; the rights of people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities to make decisions and receive supports as needed to achieve their goals in the community; and criminal justice reform and crisis response issues for people with behavioral health disabilities.
* **Conducting investigations and supporting case representation:** The intern may assist DRM attorneys in handling issues related to issues such as:
	+ Prison and criminal justice issues;
	+ Allegations of abuse, neglect, and other rights violations of people with disabilities in institutions and community based services;
	+ Access to affordable housing and reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities;
	+ Access to free appropriate public education and non-exclusionary and non-discriminatory discipline practices; and
	+ Reducing barriers to employment for people with disabilities.
* **Community Outreach:** The intern may work with DRM staff attorneys to support collaboration with partners and other stakeholders.
* **Client Intakes:** The intern may conduct client intake and follow-up under the supervision of DRM attorneys.
* **Administrative Support:** The intern may perform some administrative work, such as data collection and updating electronic and hardcopy case files.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

* College degree;
* Student currently enrolled in a Juris Doctor program; strong preference for second or third year law students;
* Demonstrated interest or background in public interest work, particularly related to issues of disability, race and socio-economic justice;
* Ability to work independently and collaboratively with internal and external partners;
* Excellent organizational and project management skills;
* Strong research and writing skills;
* Excellent interpersonal and cross cultural communication skills;
* Ability to communicate ideas with enthusiasm to diverse audiences (e.g., clients, family members, service providers, non-governmental advocates, and community leaders);
* Ability to exercise sound independent judgment and maintain confidentiality in a law firm environment; and
* Computer proficiency.

**OTHER DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS**

* Experience working directly with people with disabilities;
* Experience working on legal research projects;
* Life experience with a disability;
* Fluency in Spanish

Individuals with disabilities, people of color, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and others who contribute to staff diversity are especially encouraged to apply. DRM is an Equal Opportunity employer.

Send your (1) cover letter stating your interest, knowledge and experience; (2) current resume (3) at least one writing sample that reflects your own work (no longer than six pages); and (4) list of at least three references via email with “Disability Rights Internship” in the subject line to: CaseyS@DisabilityRightsMD.org. Additional writing sample(s) (no longer than six pages) and evaluations are welcome. Priority consideration will be given to applications received by March 26, 2021.