



Disability Rights Connecticut "Connecticut's protection and advocacy system"

**846 Wethersfield Avenue
Hartford, CT 06114**

Legal Director

Disability Rights Connecticut (DRCT), Connecticut's Protection and Advocacy System for individuals with disabilities, is hiring a Legal Director.

About DRCT:

Established in 2017, Disability Rights Connecticut (DRCT) is the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy (P&A) system for persons with disabilities in Connecticut authorized to protect the safety and enforce the civil, legal and human rights of our Connecticut residents. We are seeking a Legal Director to lead and support the legal and systemic advocacy of this independent nonprofit disability rights law office.

Position Overview:

The Legal Director provides leadership to help DRCT achieve its overall vision of a society in which persons with disabilities have equality of opportunity, full participation, and the ability to exercise meaningful choice. The Legal Director is responsible for the quality and delivery of DRCT's legal services. The Legal Director leads, manages, and supports attorneys and legal advocates who provide direct client representation and serves as lead counsel or co-counsel in major litigation including class action lawsuits. The Legal Director ensures attorneys and advocates have and maintain the necessary knowledge and competence to advise and represent clients with disabilities. The Legal Director also develops, maintains, and disseminates legal information (e.g., cases, statutes, and regulations) to ensure staff knowledge and competence. The Legal Director reports to and is supervised by the Executive Director.

Essential Functions/Principal Accountabilities:

- Oversee all DRCT legal services to ensure compliance with professional standards.
- Oversee the planning and organization of legal advocacy services and participate in the development and monitoring of the agency budget with a particular focus on the litigation budget in conjunction with Advocacy Team leaders and the Executive Director.
- Possess current knowledge of relevant statutes, regulations, and case law developments affecting clients and service delivery systems for individuals with disabilities in Connecticut.

- Oversee the coordination of legal training and professional development for DRCT staff attorneys and advocates, in collaboration with Advocacy Team leaders and the Executive Director.
- Review and approve all pleadings and legal correspondence in major casework and litigation.
- Maintain legal briefs and pleadings bank for DRCT.
- Provide consultation, technical assistance, and training to client groups, families, and other appropriate groups or individuals.
- Represent clients, as necessary, and in accordance with the Rules of Professional Responsibility and other ethical standards developed by DRCT, and within the scope of legal services offered by the program.
- Provide support to staff attorneys and advocates and serve as lead counsel or co-counsel on cases.
- Support analysis of, and response to, proposed rules, regulations, and legislation affecting the DRCT client community, through public testimony, reports, position papers, etc.
- Participate in identifying project leads and delegate tasks and deadlines as appropriate.
- Maintain and cultivate relationships with private and nonprofit law firms to serve as co-counsel on litigation and provide referral opportunities.
- Participate in appropriate training to enhance professional skills.
- Work collaboratively with the Executive Director and DRCT staff to develop annual goals and objectives for all programs and annual program performance reports.
- Oversee and facilitate case selection and a case review process with staff.
- Maintain effective working relations with clients, courts, professional groups, agencies and DRCT staff.
- Assist in development and production of DRCT publications as requested.
- Assure the maintenance of orderly and informative DRCT client files consistent with the Rules of Professional Responsibility.
- Provide timely reports to the DRCT Executive Director, Board of Directors and Advisory Council about DRCT's legal advocacy work and attend Board and Council meetings as directed by the Executive Director.
- Participate in DRCT decisions regarding staffing needs and hiring decisions.
- Participate in interviewing candidates for staff positions.
- Attend leadership meetings to participate in the development and monitoring of organizational policies and operations and ensure good intra-agency communication.
- Attend all full staff meetings.
- Directly supervise staff attorneys and the legal advocacy work of all DRCT attorneys and legal advocates.
- Perform other duties as required.

The Legal Director is expected to interact broadly both inside and outside of the organization and develop and maintain key external relationships including:

- Courts/ local and national attorneys;
- Clients and client organizations and DRCT constituents;

- Federal, state, and local agencies;
- Community partners;
- National and local legal support organizations;
- Law school clinical programs;
- Other non-profit, public service legal organizations; and
- Specialized bar associations

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Required:

- Law degree from an accredited law school;
- Licensed to practice law in Connecticut or have the ability to obtain licensure within 12 months of hire;
- Minimum five years of substantial public interest litigation experience.
- Managing attorney experience;
- Thorough knowledge of CT or comparable state and federal law affecting persons with disabilities;
- Broad knowledge of disability law and quality service delivery to persons with disabilities;
- Understanding how various systems and agencies provide services to persons with disabilities;
- Exemplary leadership skills;
- Strong interpersonal skills;
- Sensitivity to community and political concerns as well as public and media relations skills;
- Excellent supervisory skills, including ability to mentor attorneys and advocates;
- Excellent legal writing and editing skills;
- Excellent speaking, and negotiating skills, and ability to write simply to a non legal audience;
- Ability to analyze legal and systemic issues and employ associated communications, legal and legislative strategies to address them;
- Ability to develop and lead complex class action litigation;
- Demonstrated ability to listen to, and understand the lives and needs of, individuals with disabilities;
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively with and in diverse populations, which include race, nationality, gender, sexuality, disability and other identities; and
- Ability to work effectively and cooperatively within a team framework.

Compensation and Hours:

This is a full-time, exempt position (40 hours per week). Starting salary is competitive with other nonprofit, public interest law offices in Connecticut and will be based on number of years of relevant experience, in accordance with DRCT policies. The benefits package for this position includes employer-contributed health, dental and vision, employer-paid life and disability insurances, a retirement plan and generous paid time off.

How to Apply:

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. In order to receive full consideration, candidates are urged to submit their materials by **March 31, 2021**. Please include a letter expressing in detail your interest in the position; your qualifications and what you hope to contribute to the organization's future; a current resume; the names and contact information for three professional references; and a writing sample.

Candidates experiencing disability and candidates of color are encouraged to apply.

Materials should be submitted electronically to Mary Jane Keane, Office Manager at: maryjane.keane@disrightsct.org. Submissions should be in Microsoft Word or pdf format. Please direct all questions about the position to Deborah Dorfman, J.D., Executive Director at deborah.dorfman@disrightsct.org