

Legal Advocacy Director

Disability Rights Washington (DRW) seeks a full-time (35 hours/week; exempt) Legal Advocacy Director to lead our legal program's efforts, which range from power-building with communities to class action litigation. The Legal Advocacy Director reports to the Executive Director and serves on the executive leadership team.

DRW understands the importance and contribution of candidates with lived experience. People with disabilities, African American, Black, Indigenous, and people of color, and those from other oppressed groups and all protected classes are strongly encouraged to apply.

Candidates must be committed to participating in DRW's daily attempts to apply Disability Justice and race equity principles to our work. Information about Disability Justice can be found here: <https://www.sinsinvalid.org/blog/10-principles-of-disability-justice>. DRW is committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and expects employees to participate in DEI-related work and training. Information about that work is here: <https://www.disabilityrightswa.org/diversity-equity-inclusion/>.

This position will be based in either our Seattle or Spokane office. There is the option to work remotely at least part of each week. The Legal Advocacy Director must reside in Washington within six weeks of starting the position.

Reasonable Accommodation Availability

DRW is committed to providing reasonable disability accommodations at all steps of the hiring process. If you are unsure about what may be considered a disability or what accommodations may work for you, the [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#) provides information about potential accommodations that are searchable by disability, work-related function, and accommodation. Applicants for DRW employment seeking reasonable disability accommodations for the application and hiring processes can contact Jodi Rose, DRW's HR & IT Manager, by calling (800) 562-2702 or by emailing info@dr-wa.org.

Job Overview

The Legal Advocacy Director provides leadership and strategic direction for Disability Rights Washington's advocacy work including directing and coordinating legal and systemic advocacy, and supervising attorney team leaders and the Director of the Rights Investigation and Accountability Program (RIAP). The Legal Advocacy Director collaborates with any DRW policy staff and non-attorney program leads. The Legal Advocacy Director also assists the Executive Director with establishing, defining, and implementing DRW's goals and objectives. The Legal Advocacy Director is also responsible for maintaining and updating legal team policies and practices, leading legal team strategic planning, overseeing legal team budgeting including the management of federal funds, and maintaining the quality of legal team data and reporting to funders.

The Legal Advocacy Director is a senior leader in the organization and must have experience driving or supporting high impact litigation, from the initial concept through enforcement. The ideal candidate would have lived and/or professional experience relating to DRW's practice areas. All DRW attorneys must demonstrate dedication to DRW's values of inclusion, diversity, and equity as well as the values of individual autonomy, community integration, universal accessibility, freedom from restraint, and respectful language. The Legal Advocacy Director must foster a team environment and join us in our mission to "advance the dignity, equality, and self-determination of people with disabilities."

This job involves unsupervised contact with vulnerable adults.

Salary: \$125,000-\$140,000 annually

ESSENTIAL JOB DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Supervises attorney team leaders and the Director of RIAP.
- Provides strategic leadership for, coordinates, and oversees DRW's multi-faceted advocacy work including systemic advocacy, monitoring and investigation activities, representative payee reviews, and litigation.
- Oversees all legal advocacy activities, including planning, leading, and coordinating complex litigation, serving as lead counsel on significant impact litigation, leading teams and mentoring attorneys and advocates to ensure the highest quality legal representation for DRW's clients.
- Develops a strategic approach to identifying and pursuing impact litigation and systemic initiatives to further DRW's priorities in the most effective and efficient manner within limited resources and to ensure the sustainability and growth of DRW's legal team.
- Presents information at conferences and training events to further the mission of DRW and to build relationships with stakeholders ranging from potential clients to community organizations, pro bono attorneys to state leaders.
- Supports the relationship between DRW's protection and advocacy work and the Office of the Developmental Disabilities Ombuds program at DRW.
- Supports DRW's policy work by collaborating with policy staff and other leaders across the organization; coordinating legal support for any policy staff; reviewing comments on federal and state regulations; supporting the development of testimony for federal and state legislation; and attending meetings with high-ranking public officials.
- Assists with identification of advocacy needs and the development of DRW's programmatic priorities, including supporting the leadership team in developing and promoting strategic and collaborative advocacy to implement DRW's priorities.
- Supports the development of new projects, including identifying and supporting grant and funding opportunities in collaboration with the Director of Strategic Partnerships to enhance and support DRW's advocacy work.
- Leads the coordination and completion of federal reporting, including monitoring labor distribution.
- Assists the Executive Director with strategic planning and supports the Board of Directors by providing regular reports on legal advocacy activities.
- Promotes communication across teams and programs within DRW, including providing support to Disability Rights Washington's advisory councils.
- Ensures the quality of legal work by developing effective methods for case reviews and supervision of all legal work including advocacy by non-attorneys; providing legal training to promote the highest levels of client-directed advocacy; mentoring attorneys to develop expertise in disability law and legal procedures; and ensuring adequate legal support for all aspects of DRW's legal advocacy work.
- Supports DRW's fiscal operations by serving as a signatory on organization's bank accounts, constructing a financially sustainable litigation agenda, and working with Fiscal

to manage grant and attorneys' fees allocation and spending by the advocacy teams.

- Develops, recommends, implements, and evaluates policies, internal controls, and procedures for the legal team to ensure legal and ethical compliance.
- Remains current on changes within the legal, regulatory, economic, and technological environments, which may affect the financial and administrative operations of the organization.
- Contributes substantively to the pursuit of DRW's DEI goals and actively engages in agency and team work to practice anti-racist, anti-ableist advocacy.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

Work Conditions

- Works successfully in a hybrid environment, which includes extensive local and statewide work-related travel. Supervises successfully in this kind of environment.
- DRW's standard workweek is 35 hours, but someone in this leadership position must be willing to adapt their schedule as needed.
- Maintains clear background check status as required by our federal funders.
- All DRW staff are required to be up to date on their vaccinations against the COVID-19 virus. "Up to date" means a person has received all CDC-recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including any booster dose(s) when eligible. Staff must provide proof of vaccination. DRW considers all medical and religious or sincerely held belief exemption requests.

QUALIFICATIONS

Employee Commitment

All DRW employees are expected to have a commitment to the values expressed in [DRW's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Philosophy Statement](#)

Education

Juris Doctor degree from an accredited school of law and be a member in good standing of a state bar association. The Legal Advocacy Director must be or become a member in good standing with the Washington State Bar Association within six months of assuming the position.

Abilities Specific to the Position

- Has a strong commitment to the human, civil, and legal rights of Washingtonians with disabilities and can apply principles of disability justice to legal advocacy.
- Has at least 9 years of experience practicing as an attorney in disability and/or civil rights law or a closely related area.
- Has at least 2 years of supervisory experience.
- Has strong leadership skills, with an understanding of how teams work and relate internally to provide maximum results.

- Has experience with litigation strategy, including class actions and/or federal court litigation.
- Has the ability to learn complex legal and grant requirements.
- Has the ability to learn and manage a complex client data management system and report accurately and timely about DRW's work.
- Has the ability to ensure DRW complies with laws, policies, and professional ethics.
- Is committed to continuous improvement, including developing new policies and practices to ensure communication, collaboration, and responsiveness.
- Has clarity of communication, specifically with a range of audiences.
- Is committed to client- and community-directed advocacy and movement work.
- Has outstanding problem-solving and organizational skills.
- Has a deep understanding of the systems affecting people with disabilities, particularly those most marginalized.
- Has been admitted to, or is eligible for admission to, U.S. district courts and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.
- Has the ability to maintain confidentiality and the utmost of ethics, and to deal effectively with and negotiate through high-stakes conflict and stressful interactions.
- Has the ability to work flexible hours and travel for litigation, monitoring, outreach, and other tasks.

Desired (But Not Required) Abilities

DRW's work could also benefit from the following desired abilities and experiences for this position:

- Lived experience as a person with a disability.
- Deep roots in the disability community with knowledge and experience in the independent living and self-advocacy movements.
- Multilingual ability in a language(s) common to Washington State residents.

Background Check

- This position involves unsupervised contact with vulnerable adults.
- DRW conducts background checks of conviction and arrest records on final candidates prior to extending offers. The hiring process will be conducted in compliance with Seattle's Fair Chance Employment Ordinance, SMC 14.17 and Washington's Fair Chance Act, RCW 49.94. Applicants will be provided an opportunity to explain and correct background information. A criminal background does not automatically eliminate candidates from consideration. If a criminal background exists, the nature of the offense will be considered in the context of the essential functions of the position.

About Disability Rights Washington (DRW)

DRW is a private nonprofit organization that advances the dignity, equality, and self-determination of people with disabilities. We are designated by the governor of Washington as the independent federally mandated protection and advocacy system for Washington State. We work to pursue justice on matters related to human and legal rights. Our Board of Directors, which is majority Black, Indigenous, people of color, and/or disabled, sets the priorities of our work in consultation with two advisory councils and input from the community to ensure leadership by the most impacted and “nothing about us without us.” Information about our priorities can be found here: <https://www.disabilityrightswa.org/priorities/>.

DRW is an equal opportunity employer. We value a diverse workforce and an inclusive culture. DRW encourages applications from all qualified individuals, including individuals of all races, colors, religions, genders, sexual orientations, gender identities or expressions, ages, national origins, marital statuses, disabilities, and veteran status backgrounds.

For information about us, please visit: <http://www.disabilityrightswa.org/>.

To Apply

Please fill out the online application here: <https://www.disabilityrightswa.org/now-hiring-legal-advocacy-director/> and include a cover letter and resume. You may also mail your application to: Disability Rights Washington, Attn: Jodi Rose, 315 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 850, Seattle, WA 98104

DRW is committed to promoting universal accessibility and fairness in our interview process. At least three business days before an interview, DRW will tell applicants the names, pronouns, and titles of DRW interviewers and will provide the interview questions, which will be the same for all applicants. During interviews, DRW will provide a visual description of the interviewers and turn on captions for online interviews. We also know that other efforts to make our process more accessible may be needed based on individual needs and we will provide reasonable accommodations for any portion of the application or interview process. You can request accommodations by contacting Jodi Rose, DRW’s HR & IT Manager, using the information provided above. If you are not sure if you would benefit from an accommodation, you can review the Job Accommodations Network (JAN) website, which provides many ideas about possible accommodations that have worked for others, and you are more than welcome to call Jodi to discuss ideas you have or what we have done in the past. JAN is located here: <https://askjan.org/soar.cfm>.

Submissions will be reviewed on a rolling basis and will be accepted until the position is filled. The first review of applications will take place on **December 7, 2023**, with the hope of contacting selected applicants to schedule interviews in December and early January. Applicants will only be contacted if they are selected for an interview. The interview process will include at least two rounds of interviews and may include a virtual final meeting with all staff. Semi-finalists will be asked for an existing writing sample. If selected as a finalist, DRW may ask the applicant for contacts to verify previous employment and check references.

- Position Title: Legal Advocacy Director
- Company Name: Disability Rights Washington (DRW)
- Location: Some remote, but also in-person at our Seattle or Spokane office, and travel statewide, as needed, to perform the duties. The Legal Advocacy Director must reside in Washington within six weeks of starting the position.
- Posted: November 9, 2023
- Education and Experience required: Juris Doctorate, at least 9 years of practice experience as an attorney, at least 2 years of supervisory experience, and admission to practice in Washington within six months year of starting.
- Job Category: Legal/Leadership

- Job Type: Full-time, Exempt
- Salary: \$125,000 – \$140,000 annually.
- Generous benefits including 401k contribution, medical, dental, vision care, Health and Flex Spending account options, Costco Membership, Life Insurance, Long-Term Disability, vacation, sick, holiday, parental, and other types of leave, and a 35-hour work week.