Please apply online on our DRTx careers website.
DRTx is currently searching for a Policy Specialist for the IRCL (Institutional Rights and Civil Liberties) Team. This position will be based in Austin, Texas.

Who we (the IRCL team) are and what we do:
The IRCL team serves persons with mental illness living in institutions and the community, persons with intellectual disabilities living in State Supported Living Centers or other publicly funded large facilities, or who have recently transitioned to the community, and persons with mental illness and/or intellectual disabilities in jails, prisons, and juvenile justice facilities. Services include community integration and prevention of institutionalization, abuse and neglect investigations, advocacy around rights violations, and guardianship restoration.

The primary role of the Policy Specialist is to serve as the in-house policy expert on assigned issues and to lead the agency’s policy advocacy aimed at improving the lives of persons with disabilities.

To meet our team’s objectives, the Policy Specialist will be responsible for:

- Support case handlers with training and technical assistance and collaborate with team members to identify opportunities for policy advocacy.
- Conduct policy research, write policy reports, and provide internal and external briefings, updates and training on related issues.
- Monitor and report on legislative, administrative and regulatory actions that impact persons with disabilities.
- Respond to requests for information.
- Provide public testimony.
- Prepare and disseminate comprehensive communications to stakeholders.
We are looking for someone who is unafraid to be a public figure, who is ready, willing and able to present information to individuals and groups (large and small), serve actively on work advisory boards, task forces and committees, and be a vocal leader and communicator for the team and Disability Rights Texas in a variety of settings.
This is an opportunity to step into a very significant and big-shoes-to-fill type of role here at DRTx.
We are looking forward to seeing some fantastic candidates apply for this position! A copy of the full job description is available below.

**Essential functions:**

1. Masters technical information of applicable program areas and relevant statutes and policies. Should be considered a content expert on issue team area of expertise.
2. Responsible for identifying major issues and priorities and coordinating information for internal and external distribution.
3. Serves as Coordinator for the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) program, including working with the PAIMI Advisory Council and preparing quarterly updates and annual federal reports on the agency’s work for the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration.
4. Communicates, instructs, and educates fellow employees and coordinates information flow in order to impart knowledge.
5. Develops and updates a written plan within organization’s priorities which identifies major issues or problems, sets out objectives in dealing with issues and outlines an action plan to achieve objectives.
6. Provides information about major issues and, in coordination with organization resources, presents public statements of the organization’s positions to staff, board, advisory councils, and volunteers and responds to requests for expert opinion.
7. Maintains effective communications and develops cooperative working relationships with other state and national advocacy organizations,
individual advocates, agencies, and key policy makers to ensure such entities are properly informed of major organization activities.

8. Reviews publications, registers, and other information services received and circulates pertinent information to appropriate stakeholders.

9. Develops materials for and conducts selected education and training (E&T) presentations on organization services and on major problems, issues, and needs relating to persons with disabilities for advocates, organizations, public officials, and service providers.

10. Coordinates annual planning and reporting for the programs and priorities of the organization with the appropriate stakeholders.

11. Attends related legislative sessions to monitor and report on activity. Researches and reviews all related materials and incorporates information into various forms of communication and disseminates this information to the appropriate parties.

12. Tracks relevant legislation and educates policymakers on impact of proposed legislation.

13. Ensures that all training curriculums and public information distributed by the agency is aligned with state and federal laws.

14. Contributes, in area of specialty, information to be included in annual program reports of the organization.

15. Monitors the compliance with federal and state laws.

16. Participates in strategic planning and implementation of activities.

17. Works closely with staff and various stakeholders to coordinate training and policy activities.

18. Collaborates with other issue teams on issues.

19. Travel as needed to provide services and training.

20. Appropriately prioritize tasks as needed and to multi-task numerous responsibilities in a timely manner.

21. Establish personal credibility throughout the organization, in order to be an effective partner and advisor.

22. Contribute to the development and implementation of the organization’s outreach plan.
23. Effectively and regularly communicate with employees, clients, and the public at the individual, team and organizational levels.
24. Maintain thorough and complete records.
25. Develop and maintain collaborative, cooperative relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including clients, the community, the board of directors as well as employees at all levels of the organization.
26. Apply the principles of the organization’s vision and values in all work-related business and interactions.
27. Perform other duties as requested or required.

**Required Qualifications**

1. Bachelor’s degree required, preferably in Public Policy, Political Science, Government, Education, Disability Studies, Social Service or other related field of study.
2. A minimum of seven (7) years previous public policy focused experience with demonstrated success working with persons with disabilities. Post baccalaureate degrees in Public Policy, Political Science, Government, Disability Studies, Social Service or other related field of study may be substituted for up to five (5) years of experience, depending on degree and subject matter.
3. Strong and effective writing, verbal, and negotiating communications skills including the ability to do so in a concise manner, even when doing so regarding complex issues to a variety of people.
4. Demonstrated experience in public speaking and developing effective presentations for the public, as well as Boards, Councils, Conferences, and/or legislative testimony.
5. Excellent interpersonal, relationship-building and collaboration skills to be able to work effectively with others inside and outside of the organization; relationship builder with the flexibility and finesse to “manage by influence”.
6. Proven ability to lead, mentor and train others.
7. Experience working with governmental entities.
8. Demonstrated functional knowledge of complex state and federal laws, rights protection statutes and regulations.
9. Knowledge of state and national election and voting laws, programs, initiatives and awareness of other issues that affect people with disabilities.
10. The ability to take direction and independently follow through on all instructions.
11. The ability to create collaboration among stakeholders and other disability groups.
12. Excellent detail-orientation, follow-up skills and organizational skills plus the ability to multi-task and work under challenging conditions while meeting deadlines.
13. Knowledge and skills to appropriately implement policy strategies.
14. Demonstrated ability to manage individual workload so services are delivered timely and appropriately.
15. Strong working knowledge of Microsoft Office suite (Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint).
16. High level of commitment to service excellence, plus high degrees of integrity, ethics and judgment are a must.

Preferred Qualifications
1. Lived experience and/or experience accessing services in the Texas mental health system for self or others, and/or peer advocate experience.
2. Bilingual in Spanish – both written and spoken word.
3. Proficiency with data analytics, R and GIS (preferred).