



Disability Law Center of Massachusetts

The Disability Law Center of Massachusetts (DLC) is seeking an Executive Director to lead this non-profit organization responsible for providing legally-based protection and advocacy services that advance the rights of individuals with disabilities in the state of Massachusetts. DLC's next Executive Director will facilitate and assist in the creation of a vision to bring DLC to its next stage of development in advocacy and connection with the disability, civil rights and social justice communities in the state.

Mission

DLC's mission is to provide legal advocacy on disability issues that promote the fundamental rights of all people with disabilities to participate fully and equally in the social and economic life of Massachusetts. In order to achieve this mission, DLC provides a range of services including information, referral, technical assistance, trainings as well as individual representation and systemic advocacy regarding legal rights and services for people with disabilities.

DLC Advocacy

DLC pursues legislative and administrative advocacy and impact litigation on a wide variety of issues relating to civil rights, special education, health and benefits and rights of people in facilities. DLC is currently plaintiff and co-counsel in major federal court litigation relating to rights of prisoners with serious mental illness in segregation. In 2009, DLC obtained a ground breaking administrative decision on the rights of special education students to receive transition services (life skills, independent living and vocational training) in secondary school settings. We are now defending this decision on appeal in federal court. We also concluded an employment discrimination case this year resulting in a six figure damages award. DLC, along with our collaborative partners in the community, has been in the forefront of a wide variety of issues related to mental health advocacy, public access, community integration, voting rights, and quality of public schools.

About the Position

DLC's next Executive Director comes at a time of great opportunity and challenges for the disability community in Massachusetts. The Executive Director will communicate DLC's understanding of the challenges faced by the community, and expand DLC's vision and ability to meet the challenges. More specifically, the Executive Director's duties include policy and advocacy leadership to the disability community and for the staff, oversight of administrative, human resources, and financial operations of the organization while building the public profile and funding base of the organization. The ideal

candidate for this position combines a commitment to the mission of advancing the rights of people with disabilities and a dynamic, entrepreneurial leader who has strong non-profit management and fundraising experience.

Summary of Executive Director Responsibilities:

Articulate and implement a strategic vision and leadership for DLC

- Develops vision and long-term strategic plan including identifying resources needed to accomplish the plan. Clearly communicates vision to internal and external stakeholders.
- Positions DLC to meet the challenges of the disability community.
- Motivates and inspires staff to work collaboratively toward vision and goals.
- Expands DLC's agenda for systemic change to advance the rights of persons with disabilities, leveraging policy opportunities and effectively understanding and working within the political landscape.
- Assumes a position of leadership for DLC within the disability, civil rights, social justice and other key stakeholder communities.
- Assists the Board of Directors in its development of knowledge and skills for its stewardship of the organization. Keeps Board of Directors apprised of programmatic, resource and employee relations matters and timely notifies of any issues.

Management of the enterprise

- Deploys resources efficiently and effectively toward organizational goals, working with staff to balance workload and effort.
- Affirms sustainability and growth of DLC.
- Builds the skill of key staff in the organization, so that they can mentor, encourage and motivate staff. Provides regular feedback so that key staff can continuously improve their supervision and mentoring skills. Provides advice to key staff on personnel and resource allocation issues. Oversees performance management and employee professional development for staff.

Maintain, increase and diversify funding resources and provide strong stewardship of financial resources

- Assures adequate resources are available now and in the future to accomplish the mission of DLC.
- Engages in long-term fiscal planning to provide for the fiscal stability of the organization.
- Develops annual budgets that reflect long-term fiscal goals.
- Creates fundraising plans in concert with the Board of Directors. Develops and cultivates relationships with individual, corporate and foundation donors. Conducts research on viable foundation opportunities and grant writing opportunities.
- Oversees that all reporting and compliance requirements are met for each funding source.
- Notifies Board of Directors of fiscal status and highlights fiscal issues that may require the Board's attention.
- Negotiates contracts on behalf of DLC, including external contracts as well as the collective bargaining agreement for unionized staff.

Raise the profile of DLC through external communications

- Serves as an active spokesperson for DLC through personal contact with media, finding opportunities to promote the policy agenda of DLC and increase public awareness of the DLC mission.
- Communicates the programs, policies and purpose of the agency to public constituencies, government bodies (executive, legislative, judicial) and staff in a way which will motivate them to support organizational operations, goals and objectives.
- Fosters effective working relationships with other agencies involved in service to citizens with disabilities, and civil rights and social justice organizations.

Qualifications:

- Passionate commitment to advancing the rights of persons with disabilities and to the mission of DLC.
- Demonstrated knowledge of disability and civil rights laws, issues and history.
- Experience in leading and managing a complex organization including setting strategic vision, implementing business plans, managing personnel, overseeing finances and internal control systems, fostering good relationships with external stakeholders.
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills, including the ability to motivate and inspire staff and funders.
- Demonstrated experience working with organizations and individuals with diverse perspectives, including staff, the public, elected and appointed officials, and consumers of service.
- Keen understanding of public policy issues and processes involving the rights of individuals with disabilities.
- Demonstrated ability and a desire to develop and expand the resources of DLC.
- Juris Doctor, Master of Business Administration, Master of Public Administration, Master of Public Health, or similar credential. If academic credential is other than a Juris Doctor degree, a solid understanding of the role of litigation in advancing public policy is required.

Desired Attributes:

- Interest in and commitment to working in Massachusetts.
- Energy and enthusiasm for policy and advocacy work.
- Creativity in devising new strategies for managing the organization and growing the funding base.
- Integrity and fairness in working in a complex environment, particularly with respect to collective bargaining employees.
- Flexibility in dealing with staff issues, balancing the needs of the individual and the needs of the organization.
- Ability to listen well to a variety of perspectives, including board, staff and outside stakeholders such as funders.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. In order to receive full consideration, however, candidates are urged to submit their materials before February 5, 2010. Interested candidates should submit a letter expressing in detail your interest in the position of Executive Director of the Disability Law Center, and what you believe you can contribute to the future of DLC and its client community. The letter should be accompanied by a current resume and names and contact information for three references.

Electronic submissions are preferred. Materials should be emailed to mhenrikson@dlc-ma.org in Microsoft Word format. Mailed and faxed submissions will be accepted.

DLC is being assisted in the search by Nachama Wilker, Deputy Executive Director for Training and Technical Assistance, National Disability Rights Network, 202-408-9514 x 106, nachama.wilker@ndrn.org; and Patricia Pap, Executive Director, Management Information Exchange, 617-556-0288, ppap@m-i-e.org. Candidates with questions about the position or process are encouraged to contact them.

DLC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. DLC is an equal opportunity employer and encourages candidates with disabilities, women, persons of color and others who represent distinct linguistic or cultural communities to apply.

About the Disability Law Center

The Disability Law Center (DLC) is the Protection and Advocacy agency for Massachusetts. DLC is a private, non-profit organization responsible for providing protection and advocacy for the rights of Massachusetts residents with disabilities. DLC receives federal, state and private funding but is not part of the state or federal government.

DLC has a current staff of 22 in two offices, and an annual budget of \$2.7 million, 70% of which comes from federal grants.

The mission of DLC is to provide legal advocacy on disability issues that promote the fundamental rights of all people with disabilities to participate fully and equally in the social and economic life of Massachusetts. Toward this end, DLC provides information, referral, technical assistance and representation regarding legal rights and services for people with disabilities; and legal services to eligible people and groups whose cases meet DLC's priorities. DLC seeks to strike a balance between systemic advocacy and individual representation. In addition, it conducts trainings for community groups and other advocacy organizations.

Please view the DLC website, www.dlc-ma.org, for additional information about the organization, its priorities, and a list of employment benefits.