



DC JAIL AND PRISON ADVOCACY PROJECT
STAFF ATTORNEY JOB ANNOUNCEMENT – MITIGATION AND MONITORING

Disability Rights DC is a nonprofit legal services agency that protects and advances the rights of people with disabilities through direct advocacy and systemic change. Part of our work includes preventing and redressing the abuse and neglect of incarcerated individuals with mental illness through the DC Jail and Prison Advocacy Project (JPAP). Our goal is to reduce unnecessary periods of incarceration for DC residents with psychiatric and intellectual disabilities and remove barriers to their self-directed, successful integration into the community.

The Staff Attorney for Mitigation and Monitoring will join our interdisciplinary team to advocate for community-based alternatives to incarceration in sentencing and parole matters and redress instances of abuse and neglect experienced by people with psychiatric and intellectual disabilities in DC's criminal legal system and in community-based services. The Staff Attorney's responsibilities are outlined below and will be performed under the supervision of the Housing Pilot Program Manager if a pilot participant is involved or under the supervision of the DC Jail and Prison Advocacy Project Director if the matter does not involve a Housing Pilot participant.

- ❑ Investigate complaints of abuse, neglect, or discrimination in a range of correctional and community settings including jails, prisons, halfway houses and contracted treatment facilities; prepare monitoring reports, file individual complaints and marshal evidence and legal research to inform potential litigation.
- ❑ Partner with defense attorneys at US Parole Commission (USPC) parole revocation hearings for clients' release from prison through testimony, pleadings, and other documentation of treatment alternatives. If interested, staff attorney may represent clients before the US Parole Commission in revocation proceedings if there are no new charges.
- ❑ Partner with defense attorneys and argue for sentencing mitigation before DC Superior Court and US District Court judges using clients' self-directed plans for treatment (developed with the Staff Attorney with assistance from other team members) as an alternative to incarceration. Advocacy can also occur pre-trial.
- ❑ Contribute to policy reform efforts through research, investigations, drafting policy recommendations and engaging legislators and other government officials, usually testifying at a public hearing. Current policy reform priorities include bringing back local control of DC's parole system, currently supported by federal legislation sunseting the USPC's role; advocating for public input and a holistic approach to DC's plan to build a new jail and recommendations of the Jails and Justice Task Force; improving DC's behavioral health system's response to justice-involved individuals generally and with a

special focus on justice-involved people with both mental illness and substance use disorders; and ensuring that the jail's programming supports recovery and reentry for individuals with mental illness.

- ❑ Prepare and update advocacy training materials with particular focus on representation of individuals with co-occurring mental health, intellectual disabilities, and substance use disorders. Present at workshops for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals with psychiatric and intellectual disabilities and professionals who work with them.
- ❑ Represent clients denied access to services and entitlements in administrative hearings, such as the Department of Behavioral Health's grievance process or the Office of Human Rights.

Compensation: The Staff Attorney will work full-time for a competitive non-profit salary, based on experience, plus benefits, which include full medical insurance, vacation, sick leave and other benefits.

Qualifications:

- ❑ Required: Member of the DC Bar or member of another state bar eligible to waive into DC.
- ❑ Required: Ability to communicate and work effectively as a proactive member of interdisciplinary team. Demonstrated competence in verbal, written, organizational and prioritization skills. Strong problem-solving skills and ability to troubleshoot challenging situations and creatively advance civil rights protections.
- ❑ Preferred: Experience working with people with psychiatric or intellectual disabilities and experience working within the community supervision/parole system.
- ❑ Preferred: Experience working within a social justice or civil rights organization, or for a criminal defense law office, particularly one that serves homeless or incarcerated individuals.
- ❑ Preferred: Driver's License and access to a car for frequent trips to the DC Jail complex and community-based providers; alternatively, access to a bike and/or willingness to use public transportation. We reimburse travel expenses.

HOW TO APPLY

All applicants must *briefly* respond to the following three questions within a cover letter or in a separate essay (maximum 2 pages total):

- 1) What are your personal or professional motivations behind working in the criminal legal/disability rights field?
- 2) What do you believe is one problem in the criminal legal system that could benefit from more advocacy reform?
- 3) What do you believe is one problem in the behavioral health system which could benefit from more advocacy reform?

Please send your responses together with a resume and list of references electronically **no later than January 18, 2021** to:

Tammy Seltzer, Director
DC Jail & Prison Advocacy Project
University Legal Services
tseltzer@uls-dc.org
No calls please

Applications will be considered as soon as they are received.

Uls values diversity of culture, disability and other life experiences, and is an equal opportunity employer by choice. People with personal experience in the criminal legal system and/or behavioral health system are welcome and encouraged to apply.