



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rhode Island Disability Law Center (RIDLC), a member of the National Disability Rights Network, promotes the independence and autonomy of individuals with disabilities, is directed by their choices, respects their right to take risks, and pursues their inclusion and integration into all aspects of the community.

RIDLC seeks nominations and applications for its next Executive Director (ED), who will be charged with leading the organization into a new era of strategic service, advocacy, and litigation on behalf of individuals with disabilities across the state. The Board seeks a transformative leader to propel the organization forward with greater compassion, responsiveness, leverage, efficiency, and effectiveness than ever before.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the ED will lead the organization in its delivery of individual services and statewide advocacy and litigation priorities, and will provide thoughtful leadership to position the RIDLC for continued success through this time of change. S/he/they will be an inspiring and skilled leader, establishing strong relationships both internally and externally, and work collaboratively to articulate and implement the next phase of strategic growth. The ED will be responsible for mentoring and growing a staff based in Providence, RI.

The ideal candidate will have significant nonprofit leadership experience, preferably within the field of disability rights and legal services, and a demonstrated commitment to advocating for the rights of people with disabilities. S/he/they will pursue opportunities to expand RIDLC's impact within the state, and elevate its profile nationally. Managing and growing a \$1.5M budget, the new ED will ensure compliance with legal and funder requirements, safeguarding the short- and long-term fiscal and programmatic health of the organization. S/he/they will bolster internal capacity and infrastructure, while cultivating meaningful relationships with Board members, key legislators, current funders, prospective new supporters, key social service partners, and advocates across the media, law, and public interest sectors.

The ED will have an immovable moral core, exhibit humble servant leadership, have a strong ability to leverage staff effectively, collaborate effectively with the Board, and pursue new fundraising opportunities in both the public and private sector. S/he/they will represent RIDLC publicly, and will continue to elevate the organization's image as a critical, impactful agency within the community. S/he/they will have an underlying commitment to ensuring persons with disabilities can meet their fundamental needs, and be assured equal access to opportunities and justice, bringing to the work a sensitive appreciation for the barriers persons with disabilities encounter.

The RIDLC Search Committee is being supported by Tamar Datan and Nureen Das of the Nonprofit Professionals Advisory Group. Please see application instructions at the end of this document.

MISSION AND HISTORY

RIDLC's mission is to assist Rhode Islanders with differing abilities in their efforts to achieve full inclusion in society, and to exercise their civil and human rights through the provision of legal advocacy.

RIDLC is part of the nationwide, federally mandated and funded network of disability rights organizations, known as the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) System. The P&A System provides legal representation and advocacy to people with disabilities on disability related issues. The first P&A program was created by Congress in the mid-1970's in response to deplorable conditions in institutions for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. Over the years the P&A System's programs have expanded, allowing it to protect and advocate for the rights of all people with disabilities on a broad range of legal issues.

Established in 1977, RIDLC provides free legal assistance to persons with disabilities. Services include individual representation to protect rights or secure benefits and services, self-help information, education on priority legal issues, and systems change advocacy.

To support this work, revenues are provided from eight federally funded advocacy programs, each of which has its own eligibility criteria, including:

- Protection And Advocacy For Individuals With Developmental Disabilities
- Protection And Advocacy For Individuals With Mental Illness
- Protection And Advocacy For Individual Rights
- Client Assistance Program
- Protection And Advocacy For Assistive Technology
- Protection And Advocacy For Beneficiaries Of Social Security
- Protection And Advocacy For Individuals With Traumatic Brain Injury
- Protection And Advocacy For Voting Accessibility

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Working with a 12 person Board of Directors, and 6 person Advisory Council, RIDLC's next Executive Director will have the tremendous privilege and great responsibility of leading a prominent institution that has worked to protect the dignity of countless lives for over 40 years. The next leader will help set a new course, guiding the future of the organization.

The new ED will join a team of 12 seasoned and dedicated staff, who share an enduring commitment to creating impactful change in the lives of those they are serving.

Specifically, the Executive Director will:

- Prioritize areas in which RIDLC can uniquely optimize its value and impact, in light of the broader statewide disability rights landscape.
- Create a compelling vision that moves the organization toward more system-changing work, in addition to leveraging its efforts toward the prevention of discrimination rather than its remedy.
- Translate the vision into an aspirational yet attainable strategic plan to guide the organization forward.
- Find and maintain a healthy balance between individual representation and impact litigation.
- Expand sources of revenue in both the public and private sector, including through court fees, to enable progress toward systems change, while continuing to secure funding for ongoing individual representation.
- Guide the growth in staff for new and underutilized grants.
- Review the organizational structure and talent management strategy to ensure staff continue to grow and flourish.
- Find ways to celebrate and inspire staff working hard for people in crisis over unmet critical needs.
- Promote the agency to diverse audiences, including the general public, through media strategies.
- Establish, maintain, and deepen relationships with legislators and other key public officials.
- Provide strategic leadership and effective management of the agency including program planning, compliance, development, budget and financial oversight.
- Cultivate a strong working relationship with the Board of Directors through effective and responsive engagement with all members, both at and between Board meetings.
- Explore new donor cultivation and stewardship opportunities, identifying and pursuing the potential to broaden and diversify the funding base beyond the current federal support.
- Enhance the capacity of the agency to address and evaluate client needs, service priorities, and emerging issues impacting client needs.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional and personal abilities, attributes, and experiences:

- A Law Degree, and significant nonprofit management experience in the legal services, social services, disability rights advocacy, or closely related fields.
- Minimum of ten years' experience in planning and supervising the delivery of legal and social services, ideally in the disability rights or closely related field.
- A breadth and depth of knowledge and experience in service provision and advocacy; an understanding of the importance of advocacy in broader policy and public relations contexts; and a facility for advancing justice, equity and inclusion through such channels.
- An inclusive, visionary and transparent leader with demonstrated experience effectively inspiring and leveraging staff, Board members, and partners toward greater impact.
- Demonstrated leadership in a dynamic organization including fiscal oversight and budget development experience, revenue stewardship, and familiarity with fundraising.
- Experience developing or improving organizational capacity, with an eye toward opportunities for process improvement.
- Demonstrated success, internally and externally, as a change agent who is not afraid to take risks.
- Excellent writing, analytical, and oral communication skills.
- An underlying commitment to equity and an understanding of the culture and specific challenges faced by persons living with disabilities.
- Ability to represent RIDLC to a variety of stakeholders and intermediaries in a credible and influential way.
- An optimistic outlook, and the humor, integrity, patience, and perseverance necessary to support mission-driven staff, and to advance efforts to ensure persons living with disabilities have greater access to services.
- A licensed Rhode Island attorney, or eligible to become so.

APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Due to the pace of this search, candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Applications including a cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, your resume, and where you learned of the position should be sent to: RIDLC-ED@nonprofitprofessionals.com. In order to expedite the sorting and reviewing process, please type your name (Last, First) as the only contents in the subject line of your e-mail.

More information about RIDLC can be found here: <https://www.ridlc.org/>

Rhode Island Disability Law Center is an equal opportunity employer.