



# Disability Rights Iowa

LEGAL PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY

## Disability Rights Iowa Staff Attorney

**Company Name:** Disability Rights Iowa ([www.disabilityrightsiowa.org](http://www.disabilityrightsiowa.org))

**Job Title:** Staff Attorney

**Office Location:** 666 Walnut Street, Suite 1440, Des Moines, Iowa 50309

**Opening Date:** September 9, 2024

**Closing Date:** For earliest consideration apply by: September 30, 2024

**Available;** November 2024 – November, 2026

**Job Type:** Limited Term, Full-Time position through November 2026

**Supervision:** Legal Director

**Agency Description:** Disability Rights Iowa (DRI) is a well-established innovative non-profit legally based organization dedicated to advancing the rights of Iowans with disabilities. DRI is the federally mandated protection and advocacy agency for individuals with disabilities in Iowa. Disability Rights Iowa works to achieve fairness and justice for people with disabilities through quality representation, advocacy, investigations of abuse and neglect, peer/self-advocacy services, community partnerships, legislative and regulatory advocacy work, education, and outreach. DRI strives to pursue litigation and advocacy that addresses current pressing needs of the Disability Community, proactively identifies future needs, and constructs innovative solutions that continue to expand the human and legal rights of individuals with disabilities. DRI's legal work includes individual and impact litigation. Disability Rights Iowa envisions a changed world where people with disabilities are valued and fully included in their communities, their workplaces, and their schools, where they have equitable access to all opportunities and make their own decisions. As DRI works toward a future of full inclusion, DRI will actively seek input and will learn from members of historically under-represented communities. DRI will value their lived experiences and expertise as we shape our disability rights advocacy. DRI will ensure that our diverse community is reflected in our board of directors and staff in a manner that upholds equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging. For more information on Disability Rights Iowa please review [www.disabilityrightsiowa.org](http://www.disabilityrightsiowa.org).

**Salary:** Current entry level salary is \$58, 656. Non-entry level salaries depend on experience.

**Benefits:** DRI offers a comprehensive benefit plan for eligible employees. Benefits include health insurance, dental insurance, basic life, short-term and long-term disability insurance, a 403(b)-retirement plan, and flexible spending accounts. Flexible spending accounts feature reimbursement for both medical and dependent care.

**Time-off:** DRI offers a generous holiday time off, paid sick time and vacation accrual package to full-time employees.

**Staff Attorney Job Description:** Disability Rights Iowa is seeking a passionate and civil rights experienced attorney to protect and advance the rights of lowans with disabilities. The Disability Rights Iowa Staff Attorney will be responsible for providing legal service to clients with disabilities, including advice, negotiation, representation in administrative hearings, litigation in state and federal court, and administrative and policy advocacy in accordance with program priorities and case handling policies. The Disability Rights Staff Attorney will handle multiple cases and advocacy projects with appropriate supervision depending on experience including leading individual client litigation, administrative practice, appellate advocacy, technical assistance, systemic advocacy, outreach, training, and policy advocacy.

**Job Responsibilities:**

1. Provides legal service to clients with disabilities including advice, negotiation, representation in administrative hearings, litigation in state and federal court, administrative and policy advocacy.
2. Participates in litigation with support from the Legal Director, on statewide impact activity including institutional and group litigation and policy advocacy beneficial to people with disabilities.
3. Conduct investigations and monitoring in conjunction with other attorneys and advocate(s), as needed.
4. Engages and conducts outreach activities that increase the capacity of individuals with disabilities to be self-advocates.
5. Educate policy makers on disability-related issues.

6. Write organized and concise public reports, reports to other oversight and enforcement agencies, and internal reports regarding findings, conclusions and recommendations resulting from investigations or monitoring activities.
7. Conduct and prepare training on the rights of individuals with disabilities and on the protection and advocacy services available from DRI.
8. Participate on teams of attorneys and advocates with respect to any advocacy, monitoring or litigation conducted by DRI.
9. Represent DRI on councils, commissions, work groups and stakeholder groups, as assigned by supervisor.
10. Work in conjunction with other DRI staff on planning and developing agency priorities, goals, and objectives.
11. Work in conjunction with other DRI staff in preparing annual program and performance reports, as assigned.
12. Travel throughout the state of Iowa as needed to conduct investigations, monitoring and provide advocacy.
13. maintain thorough and complete records, including DAD and client files.
14. Use Microsoft Office software suite.
15. Other duties as assigned.

**Minimum Qualifications:**

1. J.D. degree from an accredited law school.
2. Admitted to, or eligible for admission to, the Iowa State Bar, the United States District Courts for District of Iowa, and U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit.
3. 1-3 years of experience as a legal intern, law clerk or licensed attorney
4. Strong and effective writing, verbal and negotiating communication skills, including the ability to do so in a concise manner, even when doing so regarding complex issues.
5. Strong organizational skills.
6. Experience in public speaking and developing effective presentations.
7. Excellent interpersonal, relationship-building and collaboration skills to be able to work with others inside and outside of the organization.

8. Ability to analyze complex problems and develop creative solutions.
9. Ability to conceptualize and develop initial and ongoing case strategies.
10. Ability to remain impartial when conducting investigations.
11. Ability to stay calm and relaxed when working with individuals who may be in a crisis.
12. Ability to be flexible to changing work assignments and processes.
13. Ability to maintain confidentiality.
14. Ability to conduct self in a professional manner.
15. Ability to maintain thorough and complete records, including DAD and client files.
16. Ability to work independently with appropriate supervision.

**Desirable Qualifications:**

1. Passion for advocacy and utilizing litigation to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.
2. Experience in disability law, including but not limited to Medicaid, special education, The Americans with Disabilities Act and/or other federal or state laws impacting people with disabilities.
3. Experience as a person with a disability or as a member of a nondominant cultural group, or experience working with or living with persons with disabilities or within a nondominant cultural community.
4. Demonstrate understanding of disability rights values in daily work (self-determination, person-centered services, informed consent, equal opportunity, independence, and inclusion.)

**Equal Opportunity Employer.**

Disability Rights Iowa is an Equal Opportunities Employer. It is the policy of Disability Rights Iowa to prohibit discrimination and harassment of any type and to afford equal employment opportunities to employees and applicants, without regard to race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, pregnancy, medical condition or genetic information, veteran status, national origin, disability, marital or other protected status.

Disability Rights Iowa values diversity. Individuals with disabilities, people of color, LGBTQIA+ individuals and others who contribute to staff diversity are especially encouraged to apply.

DRI is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities who are applicants or employees. Applicants interested in seeking reasonable accommodations for the application process please contact Katie Vande Vorde, Operations Manager, Disability Rights Iowa [kvandevorde@driowa.org](mailto:kvandevorde@driowa.org).

**Applications Process:** Please send cover letter, resume, writing sample and three professional references to DRI Operations Manager, Katie VandeVorde at [kvandevorde@driowa.org](mailto:kvandevorde@driowa.org). No telephone calls please.