



Executive Director
Tallahassee, FL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Disability Rights Florida (DRF), a Florida-based member of the National Disability Rights Network, and the third largest Protection & Advocacy agency in the country, works to protect and advance the rights of individuals with disabilities across the state through advocacy and litigation. A fierce and committed advocate for all Floridians across the disability spectrum, DRF seeks nominations and applications for its next Executive Director (ED). The new ED will lead a dedicated team set to grow to about 85 staff members spread across four offices, while providing vision and strategic direction to the agency in its steadfast goal of being Florida's leading disability rights advocate.

Founded in 1977, DRF serves as the designated protection and advocacy system for individuals with disabilities in the State of Florida. Through their administration of nine federal grants, DRF provides no cost services to all Floridians with a disability-related issue, and leads statewide initiatives on disability rights advocacy. Some of the issues and initiatives include, but not limited to: self-advocacy support; investigations into complaints of abuse, neglect and rights violations; educating policy makers about the needs of people with disabilities; systemic and legal advocacy; monitoring of public programs and facilities; and, where appropriate, litigation.

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 agency for continued success through this time of change and growth. S/he will be an inspiring and skilled leader, establishing strong relationships both internally and externally, and working collaboratively to articulate and implement the next phase of strategic growth for the agency. The ED will be responsible for overseeing staff based in Tallahassee, Gainesville, Tampa, and Hollywood.

The ideal candidate will have significant nonprofit leadership experience, preferably within the field disability rights advocacy, as well as a demonstrated commitment to advocating for the rights of people with disabilities. S/he will pursue opportunities to expand DRF's impact within Florida and elevate its profile nationally. S/he will manage all internal finances and growth of a \$8.9 million budget, and will ensure compliance with legal and funder requirements, safeguarding the short- and long-term fiscal and programmatic health of the organization. S/he will also bolster internal capacity and organizational infrastructure, while cultivating meaningful relationships and collaborations with Board members, key legislators, current funders, new prospective philanthropic supporters, and other key social service and public interest partners.

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 the private sector. S/he will represent DRF publicly, and will continue to elevate



the organization's image as a critical, impactful agency within the community. S/he 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 DRF Search Committee is being supported by Tamar Datan, Nureen Das, and Javier Garcia of the Nonprofit Professionals Advisory Group. Please see application instructions at the end of this document.

HISTORY AND MISSION

DRF was originally founded as the Governor's Commission on Advocacy for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (GCAPDD) in 1977 to serve as Florida's statewide designated protection and advocacy system for individuals with disabilities. In 1987, Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities, Inc. became incorporated as a private not-for-profit, and took over policy and advocacy from GCAPDD. The Advocacy Center rebranded itself as Disability Rights Florida in 2011.

Over its 40-year history, and regardless of its name, DRF has remained committed to its responsibility as Florida's Protection and Advocacy (P&A) organization, and has grown to being one of the largest P&As in the country. DRF delivers services to all Floridians across the entire disability spectrum. This commitment to serving all Floridians was reinforced in DRF's 2017 federal lawsuit against the Florida Department of Corrections (FDC). In this historic settlement, it was determined that FDC failed to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act by not providing reasonable accommodations for inmates with visual, hearing, and mobility disabilities. The FDC has up to four years to remedy the issues, and Disability Rights Florida will be monitoring compliance.

Disability Rights Florida seeks to advance the quality of life, dignity, equality, self-determination, and freedom of choice for persons with disabilities through collaboration, education, and advocacy, as well as legal and legislative strategies. Its services include: investigations into complaints of abuse or neglect; advocacy on behalf of individuals; educating policy makers about the needs of people with disabilities; and systemic and legal advocacy. DRF continues to be Florida's leader in protection and advocacy for persons with disabilities.

DRF is challenged with a growing demand for services and advocacy. The organization is committed to continually enhancing and evolving to address unmet needs, to maximize its impact in addressing vital issues facing its clients.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The next Executive Director at Disability Rights Florida will have the tremendous privilege and great responsibility of leading a prominent institution that has worked to protect the dignity of countless lives over four decades. The new leader will help set the course for the future of the organization.

The new ED will join a team of approximately 85 staff deployed in its four service offices including Tallahassee, Tampa, Gainesville, and Hollywood, FL. The staff share an enduring commitment to creating impactful change in the lives of those they are serving.

Specifically, the Executive Director will:



- *Provide strategic leadership and effective management of the agency including program planning, compliance, development, budget and financial oversight.*
- *Prioritize areas in which DRF can optimize impact for clients and the communities served.*
- *Cultivate a strong working relationship with the Board of Directors through effective and responsive engagement with all members, both at and between quarterly 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.*
- *In partnership with the Board of Directors and staff, develop, implement, and communicate DRF's strategic vision among legislators, key partners, and stakeholders.*
- *Enhance the capacity of the agency to address and evaluate client needs, service priorities, and emerging issues impacting client needs.*
- *Raise the visibility of DRF by identifying and cultivating strategic and robust relationships with cross-sector partners, key decision makers, and other relevant local, statewide, and national organizations.*
- *Guide and support community organizing and advocacy initiatives.*
- *Serve as an ambassador for DRF internally and externally, inspiring others to take bold action to address systemic issues facing the disability community.*
- *Directly supervise and mentor the Leadership Team, comprised of 8 individuals servicing the four offices.*

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

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

- An advanced degree, and significant nonprofit management experience in the social services, disability rights advocacy, or closely related fields.
- Minimum of ten years' experience in social services, disability rights advocacy, 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.
- Deep appreciation of, and success in, community organizing and mobilizing at the local, state, and national levels.



- Demonstrated leadership in a large, 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 consensus builder and collaborator.
- Excellent writing, analytical, and oral communication skills.
- Self-starter and change agent with strong ability to manage staff who are geographically dispersed.
- An underlying commitment to equity and an understanding of the culture and specific challenges faced by persons living with disabilities.
- Ability to represent Disability Rights Florida 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.
- Facility with the Microsoft Office suite (Word, Outlook, Excel, and PowerPoint).
- Willingness and ability to travel regularly throughout Florida, and occasionally to attend national conferences and meetings.

APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

More information about Disability Rights Florida may be found at:
<http://www.disabilityrightsflorida.org/>

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, salary expectations, and where you learned of the position should be sent to: DRF-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.

Disability Rights Florida is an equal opportunity employer, committed to inclusive hiring and dedicated to diversity in our work and staff. We strongly encourage candidates of all identities, experiences, and communities to apply.