

The National Leadership Program Fellowships on Inclusion of Jews with Disabilities and Their Families

Jewish Inclusion Fellows will work to increase inclusion and access for Jews with disabilities and their families. When the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed, it exempted faith-based organizations. Thus, many such organizations do not yet have the attitudes, physical facilities, or training they need to appropriately welcome people of all abilities. Given the very important role that faith and faith-based organizations play in America, RespectAbility is working for full inclusion in all faith groups. However, it has started its faith-based inclusion work with a focus on the Jewish community and institutions. As model practices are established, we are working broadly across faiths to share best practices.

RespectAbility understands that the Jewish community, like all communities, is stronger when it lives up to its values – when it is welcoming, diverse, moral, and respects each other. We want children, parents, grandparents, friends, and other family members with disabilities to be able to fully participate in their communities. A “Slingshot-recognized” organization, RespectAbility is on the front lines – working to ensure that everyone knows that his or her presence and participation is welcomed and meaningful.

2015 is the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), yet three recent polls show that Jews with disabilities are frequently denied access to Jewish institutions, programs, and practice. The Jewish Inclusion Fellowship focuses on our campaign to include people with disabilities in Jewish groups. In December 2014, RespectAbility was awarded a contract by the UJA-Federation of New York to direct a Synagogue Inclusion Project. This is a two-year project to develop inclusive synagogue infrastructures with an emphasis on educational experiences for children with disabilities that can be replicated in synagogues across the country. Incorporating public opinion research, program development, training, evaluation, and refinement, RespectAbility works closely with the synagogues involved, as well as with the UJA-Federation and other disability and Jewish organizations.

Who We Want

The National Leadership Program is ideal for people who want to gain skills and contacts while making a positive difference for people with disabilities in faith based communities. We are looking for creative, results-driven individuals who want to achieve breakthrough results while getting hands-on experience. The fellowship is for college and graduate students, as well as for people transitioning into the workforce for the first time or back into the workforce after a break.

Fellowship Duties

Fellows will help RespectAbility assist Jewish institutions in accessibility and equality issues. The fellows will work closely in Washington with our Fellowship/Leadership Director and Development and Operations Associate, and with a New York City-based RespectAbility board member. Inclusion fellows will join supervisors at workshops and webinars that pertain to inclusion.

Each fellow will receive as many opportunities as possible to learn new skills, network, and gain direct experiences. In addition to hands-on work experiences, all fellows will participate in

special presentations by guest speakers and intensive strategic communications workshops. A career plan will be developed by each fellow that will enable him or her to gain appropriate workplace experience while contributing directly and measurably to RespectAbility's impact. Individual projects will be assigned based on an individual's unique skill set and their own ability to "bring something to the table." Upon the completion of the fellowship program, applicants can expect to come away with excellent experience in the field of strategic communications and policy, fair knowledge of issues for people with disabilities, and leadership skills to help them grow into confident advocates.

Important Details for Applicants

- Excellent communication and organizational skills are strongly preferred, and fellows should exhibit leadership skills to complete their own projects
- Strong preference for people who have completed at least their junior year in college
- Commit for a minimum of nine weeks
- Hours are 9-5, and fellows must be able to work at least 20 hours a week, though 40 hours per week is preferred
- There is no tuition cost to do the fellowship, and fellows will be awarded \$250 a month as a transportation reimbursement
- The fellowship takes place in Rockville, MD (office is a short distance from the White Flint Metro Station)
- Your cover letter must explain why this fellowship in particular is of interest to you and what you "bring to the table." You must discuss in your cover letter why you believe that you have the skills, focus, and independent drive to make a positive difference in your time with us at RespectAbility. It should also say what you hope to learn/gain from the fellowship.

About Us: RespectAbility is a non-profit organization whose mission is to reshape the attitudes of American society so that people with disabilities can more fully participate in and contribute to society; and to empower people with disabilities to achieve as much of the American dream as their abilities and efforts permit.

RespectAbility provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or genetics. In addition to federal law requirements, RespectAbility complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation and training. RespectAbility expressly prohibits any form of workplace harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status.

To apply: send your cover letter and resume to jenniferm@respectabilityusa.org and tonyak@respectabilityusa.org