

## **The National Leadership Program Fellows/Interns for Stigma Busting/Communications**

RespectAbility's stigma-busting Communications Fellows are on the front line of fighting prejudice, misinformation and low expectations. Fellows work on a team to create and deliver positive images, stories, and best practices. We identify, test, shape, and deliver materials that are leveraged in our proactive outreach to employers, the media, thought leaders, Hollywood, elite schools, policy makers, and political candidates. We are nonpartisan in our approach, do not lobby, and follow guidelines for nonprofit organizations. We focus in particular on the promotion of best practices and will assign fellows who are hoping to enter PR, media relations, or communications to work in this area. Much of our stigma reduction work is associated with outreach to presidential candidates, Hollywood, and employers. Communications Fellows are assigned to one of two areas of outreach based on interest.

**Presidential Candidates Outreach:** Voters with disabilities are systematically ignored and only 27 percent of polling locations are fully accessible. Our new blog, [www.TheRespectAbilityReport.org](http://www.TheRespectAbilityReport.org), covers the candidates' progress in addressing disability employment issues. Fellows cover events, create news stories, and are a part of the team for nonpartisan and educational candidate and grassroots outreach.

**Employer Outreach:** Our social media campaign in this area is called **#RespectTheAbility**, which highlights the benefits of inclusive employment, including the better bottom line that results from recognizing the talent of people with a variety of abilities.

### **Who We Want**

The National Leadership Program is ideal for people who want to gain media and communications skills and contacts while making a positive difference for people with disabilities. 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**

Our current fellows spend a great deal of time working on this issue through social media outreach and analytics, materials development, media pitching, database development and maintenance, and event planning. As a result, fellows gain direct experience of working with the media, political campaigns, and PR companies, including leaders in these fields.

The fellows will work closely with our National Leadership Program Director and Communications Director. Individual projects will be assigned based on an individual's unique skill set and their own ability to "bring something to the table." Tasks might include writing blog posts, utilizing social media, designing graphics, editing photos and videos, attending presidential campaign events, and visiting inclusive employers. Stigma reduction fellows will join supervisors at workshops and webinars that pertain to stigma, national politics, and communications.

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. 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 college juniors and above
- 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.

**About Us:** RespectAbility is a nonprofit 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, resume and a 1-2 page writing sample to [jenniferm@respectabilityusa.org](mailto:jenniferm@respectabilityusa.org) and [tonyak@respectabilityusa.org](mailto:tonyak@respectabilityusa.org)**