

The National Leadership Program Fellowship in Public Policy/Employment

Our nation was founded on the principle that anyone who works hard should be able to get ahead in life. People with disabilities deserve the opportunity to earn an income and achieve independence, just like anyone else. However, over 1 in 3 working age Americans with disabilities have jobs. RespectAbility collaborates with leaders in the private, public and nonprofit sector to advance economic opportunities for people with disabilities. Our role is to educate key leaders at the national, state and local level and advocate for best practices and proven policies that will empower more people with disabilities to have jobs. We achieve these goals by developing resources, researching programs and presenting webinars that showcase replicable practices and providing our partners the tools they need to succeed. We will continue working with Governors and state leaders to implement policies that will be a win-win-win for taxpayers, businesses and Americans with disabilities. Beginning in 2017, we will be convening new geographically focused partnerships that will develop strategic plans to move the needle on disability employment. These Communities of Practices will bring together committed stakeholders to ending stigmas against people with disabilities and advance economic opportunities in a variety of job sectors.

Public Policy and Employment Fellows will be closely involved with this critical work. As part of the Program, Fellows will have the opportunity to meet Governors, work with state leaders and prepare policy materials that will be distributed nationally.

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. We are looking for thoughtful and results-driven individuals who want to achieve breakthrough results while getting hands-on experience. The fellowship is for college and graduate students (with an interest in pursuing a career in government or public policy) as well as for people transitioning into the workforce for the first time, or back into the workforce after a break.

Fellowship Duties

We are focusing in particular on the promotion of best practices and we are looking for people with a strong background who are interested in public policy and/or employment issues. Fellows will gain experience working with state officials, private sector employers and other disability organizations.

The fellows will work closely with our National Leadership Program Director and Policy and Practices Director. Individual projects will be assigned based on an individual's unique skill set and their own ability to "bring something to the table." Projects might include writing op-eds, researching issues for press releases, collaborating with the Policy Director on public testimony related to employment issues, visiting inclusive employers, and attending meetings with key state or local leaders in the fields of business, disability, and government. Employment advocacy fellows will join supervisors at workshops and webinars that pertain to state politics and employment.

Each fellow will receive many opportunities 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 measurably contributing to RespectAbility's mission. Upon the completion of the fellowship program, applicants can expect to come away with excellent experience in the field of public policy, professional networking connections in Washington D.C. and leadership skills to help them grow into confident advocates.

Important Details for Applicants

- Excellent communication, research, and organizational skills are strongly preferred, and fellows should exhibit leadership skills to complete their own projects
- Basic familiarity with the features and functions of Microsoft Office strongly preferred. However, software training will be available for some fellows in collaboration with the Fellowship/Leadership Director as part of the career path planning process
- 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 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