



Fellowship Announcement: Equal Justice Works Housing Justice Program Staff Attorney

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) seeks passionate, civil rights-oriented applicants for a two-year, full-time attorney position as an Equal Justice Works Fellow in the Housing Justice Program. The Fellowship ideally begins in August 2022.

DRM, a private, non-profit law firm, is a recognized leader in disability rights and the Congressionally-mandated Protection and Advocacy organization for individuals with disabilities in Maryland. We provide free legal services and advocacy to persons with disabilities in Maryland. DRM envisions a world where people with disabilities are fully included in their neighborhoods, schools, workplaces and community activities. We help people with all types of disabilities (developmental, intellectual, psychiatric, physical, sensory, learning, traumatic brain injury, etc.), including those who live in facilities, in the community or who are homeless, pursue opportunities to participate fully in all aspects of community life, and champion their rights to self-determination, dignity, equality, opportunity, and freedom from discrimination and harm.

DRM has been selected by Equal Justice Works as an implementing partner of Equal Justice Works' Housing Justice Program. Equal Justice Works is the nation's largest facilitator of opportunities in public interest law. They facilitate Fellowships at legal services organizations to help fulfill our nation's promise of equal justice for all.

The Housing Justice Program is the only Equal Justice Works program that employs both lawyers and organizers to work together as Fellows at legal aid and grassroots organizations in areas where evictions and housing instability have reached epidemic proportions.

Fellowship Benefits:

Equal Justice Works Fellows are part of a network of over 2,500 current and former Fellows dedicated to improving access to equal justice for all. As a member of the network, each Fellow has access to:

- A kick-off training event to foster learning and networking among the Housing Justice Program Fellows;
- Equal Justice Works' annual Leadership Development Training, which is attended by ~300 current Fellows each year. The conference will be virtual in 2022 and in-person in 2023;

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- Responsive training and technical assistance from local and national partners, including the National Housing Law Project, the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel, and Voices for Civil Justice;
- Regular substantive and skills-based webinars throughout the Fellowship.

An Equal Justice Works Fellowship is an opportunity to transform your passion for equal justice into a career. As a Housing Justice Program Fellow, you will be part of a prestigious program that, since its inception in 2019 in Virginia, has successfully improved housing stability in served communities by preventing more than 4,000 tenants from being evicted and conducting education and outreach efforts for more than 40,000 people. Most critically, former Fellows of the Housing Justice Program helped generate momentum for tenants to have the right to be represented by counsel in housing cases – a legal right to counsel – something that seemed inconceivable in Virginia just two years ago. Building on the success of Fellows in Virginia, Equal Justice Works is expanding the Housing Justice Program to Maryland.

As a Fellow, you will develop experience and skills to be a leader in social justice while promoting tenant protections and directly representing households experiencing housing instability. As a cohort, Fellows are expected to actively participate in peer-to-peer learning and required trainings delivered by Equal Justice Works and training partners throughout the year. In addition, Fellows will attend Equal Justice Works' Leadership Development Training in October 2022 and 2023.

Fellowship responsibilities include:

- Providing direct legal services addressing civil legal issues that arise from housing instability for low-income households, especially in eviction/unlawful detainer cases – legal screening, advice, brief service, full-scope representation in district and circuit court, and pro bono assistance through legal clinics and referrals;
- Building key stakeholder relationships in furtherance of the Fellowship objectives; creating, fostering, and cultivating partnerships among legal services providers, tenants' associations, community social services providers, and other community-based entities.
- Strategizing, planning and conducting training and outreach to communities and community organizations in furtherance of housing stability and affordability for low-income community members; engaging in peer-to-peer learning with other Equal Justice Works Housing Justice Program Fellows;
- Actively contributing to and participating in Housing Justice Program cohort activities (resource exchanges; mandatory webinars and conference calls; and training events, including Equal Justice Works Leadership Development Training in fall 2022 and 2023);
- Exercising leadership competencies as an Equal Justice Works Fellow;
- Contributing to required programmatic reporting and overall program evaluation.

Minimum Qualifications:

- J.D. from an accredited law school and licensed to practice law in Maryland or willing to sit for next available Bar exam;
- Law school clinic, externship, summer, or other relevant practice experience;
- Knowledge of housing law and/or experience with housing and benefits agencies;

- Strong commitment to DRM’s core mission of ensuring the civil rights of people with disabilities to self-determination, freedom from harm, due process protections, to develop physically, emotionally and intellectually, and to participate in community life, with meaningful choices and opportunities;
- Excellent organizational and project management skills;
- Excellent interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills, ability to communicate ideas with enthusiasm to diverse audiences;
- Ability to research and analyze complex legal issues, write well, develop and execute a variety of advocacy strategies, and conduct legal research;
- Ability to work independently and to establish and maintain effective working relationships and collaborate with colleagues in a team environment;
- Ability to successfully manage multiple work priorities and work under deadlines.

Please note: all Fellows are expected to fulfill the complete duration of the Fellowship and will be required to sign a Fellowship Agreement with Equal Justice Works.

Preferred Qualifications:

- 0-5 years’ legal experience;
- Prior experience in managing independent projects or assignments in a professional setting;
- Experience with delivering training and presentations to diverse audiences in a professional setting;
- Experience with community lawyering models and a desire to empower DRM clients to grow as advocates for the civil rights of persons with disabilities;
- Experience working directly with persons with disabilities;
- A demonstrated interest or background in public interest work, particularly related to disability rights issues;
- Diverse economic, social and cultural experiences and a second language are preferred;
- Life experience with a disability.

Salary and Benefits:

Competitive, depending on experience. The salary range for an attorney with 0-5 years’ experience is \$62,543 to \$68,219. DRM offers a generous benefits package that includes excellent medical insurance, employer-paid dental, prescription, vision, life, and disability insurance, as well as pre-tax savings plans, a retirement savings opportunity with generous employer contributions, and a telecommuting policy. DRM offers employee reimbursement for the some or all of the cost of spouse or partner-paid health insurance premiums, up to an established maximum amount. DRM also offers generous paid time off, including vacation, holidays, sick time, parental leave, and more.

Flex work schedules and telework arrangements are available.

This description can also be found at www.DisabilityRightsMD.org/careers/

To Apply:

E-MAIL resume, cover letter, a writing sample to jobs@DisabilityRightsMD.org with “Equal Justice Works Housing Justice Program Staff Attorney” in the subject line. This position remains open

until filled. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis with priority given to those received **by July 22, 2022**, but candidates are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. We are looking for thoughtful, personalized cover letters that demonstrate the applicant's qualifications, work style and interest in being part of a team working to advance the civil rights of persons with disabilities in Maryland. Candidates should specifically and fully describe any experience in any of DRM's Advocacy Priorities, including housing law.

DRM is an equal opportunity employer. DRM values diversity. People of color, individuals with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ individuals are especially encouraged to apply.