

JOB DESCRIPTION

New Job
 Revised Job

Exempt
 Nonexempt

Job Title: Disability Rights Advocate

Reports To: Deputy Director - Legal Division

Date: December 1, 2017

Department: Legal Division

PRIMARY PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this job is to work with people with disabilities who request services from the Disability Rights Center of Kansas, Inc. (DRC).

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS

1. Work under the supervision of the legal staff.

The Deputy Director of the Legal Division (Legal Director) and his/her supervising attorney designee will primarily supervise the Advocate on all matters within the legal division, including intakes, reviewing intakes prior to case review and providing advocacy for a client. Other attorneys will supervise the advocate on a case-by-case basis.

- a. As part of the legal division, the Advocate is subject to the Kansas Rules of Professional Conduct including the rules relating to confidentiality, diligence, conflict of interest, and unauthorized practice of law.
- b. The Advocate must know and follow the rules of conduct as prescribed by DRC, follow direction and supervision of attorneys, and not engage in the unauthorized practice of law.

2. Client intake and assessment.

The Advocate will respond to intake calls, using independent judgment to decide how to handle the call (e.g. whether the caller is a person with a qualified disability, which funding sources the caller is eligible to be served under, or whether the call fits within agency priorities).

- a. The Advocate will meet periodically with the Deputy Director – Legal Division or his/her designated licensed attorney to review the intakes to determine which intakes should be targeted for presentation to the legal staff at the weekly Case Review meeting, which need further development and which may be resolved without further discussion with the legal staff.

b. The Advocate will present at the Case Review meeting the targeted intakes.

3. Individual advocacy for the DRC consumer.

The Advocate will work directly with the consumer on service requests which the supervising Attorney or Legal Team decides do not require representation by an attorney, including:

- a. Technical assistance to help the client self-advocate;
- b. Advocacy on behalf of the client with a third party; and
- c. Appearing on behalf of the client at meetings with a third party.
- d. Other DRC service request options for the consumer

- In performing this individual advocacy, the Advocate will use the direction of the attorney, along with their best judgment, knowledge, skills and abilities to get the consumers service request addressed.

4. Team based advocacy.

An Advocate will carry an aggressive and active caseload of service request cases, however, the Advocate will work at times with an attorney on a matter for the client. The Advocate's role will depend on the nature of the case and whether it involves litigation. A few examples include:

- a. An Attorney with expertise in the matter is assigned to supervise the Advocate in working on behalf of the client with a third party;
- b. Accumulation of records and investigation into the merits of a request for representation by a client; and
- c. Litigation in which the Advocate is assigned to provide support to the Attorney.

5. Institutional monitoring.

The Advocate will monitor institutions that serve Kansans with disabilities, such as psychiatric hospitals, ICFMR's, and other institutional settings. The Advocate will develop skills to identify violations of federal or state rules/regulations and violations of the civil and legal rights of persons with disabilities.

6. Abuse/neglect/exploitation investigations.

Within DRC's priorities, the Advocate will investigate allegations that a person with a disability has been a victim of abuse, neglect or exploitation. The work will involve using judgment and discretion in interviewing the persons involved, reviewing client records, and using other investigatory techniques to ascertain any potential violations of the person's rights.

7. Public Policy advocacy.

The Executive Director may assign tasks to advance the ability of DRC to conduct effective public policy advocacy, including but not limited to having the Advocate attend meetings, provide input for policy initiatives of importance to DRC or represent DRC's positions, concerns or opinions in different forums and formats.

8. Presentations to client groups and other advocacy groups.

The Advocate may prepare materials and present information on various agency issues.

9. Individualized Self-Advocacy Plans and Technical Assistance –To the greatest extent possible, a DRC Advocate will add value to every service request provided. Advocates will, whenever possible, provide at a minimum technical assistance/self-advocacy in the form of a Self-Advocacy Plan that is individualized to the needs of the consumer.

10. Travel – Advocates must travel throughout the state as needed.

11. Effective Customer Service – Advocates must provide effective customer service and constantly strive to exceed the expectations of DRC's customers/clients.

12. Ensuring Effective Advocacy and Other Work –

Ensures that the advocacy and all other work of DRC meets and conforms to all agency policies/procedures, DRC's adopted priorities, and the requirements of our federal programs. The Advocate will quickly and proactively work with DRC management to notify and correct any potential instances where questions arise regarding adherence to this requirement.

13. Other duties as assigned – The Executive Director, the Executive Director's designee or the Deputy Director – Legal Division may assign the Advocate to perform other job duties or tasks. Such assignments will be performed effectively and in a timely manner.

14. Effectively manages the billing targets assigned by the Deputy Director – Administrative Division. Works proactively to ensure maximization of grant resources through active management of their targets.

15. VOCA Clients and Cases – When an Advocate is approved to serve clients with Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding, such Advocate will coordinate and report to the VOCA Attorney/Coordinator. To ensure effective services and adherence to the VOCA grant rules, the VOCA Attorney/Coordinator will provide day-to-day oversight and supervision of the VOCA cases and the employees serving those cases. The direct supervisor for the VOCA Attorney/Coordinator is the Deputy Director of the Legal Division. For VOCA cases, the Disability Rights Advocate will serve under and take direction from the VOCA Attorney/Coordinator and will be responsible to follow all the requirements of the VOCA grant and provide effective VOCA services to VOCA eligible clients, including but not limited to:

- a. educating clients about their rights as crime victims, their right to participate in the criminal justice system, and their right to crime victims compensation;

- b. educating clients about their disability concerns, issues and rights in order to assist victims to stabilize their lives after victimization and restore a measure of security and safety for the victim;
- c. identify and develop the client's individualized post-victimization goals and objectives;
- d. provide services such as information, referral, case management, advocacy or legally-based advocacy assistance (working at the direction of an attorney);
- e. and, as needed, engage in outreach and education to inform crime victims of their rights.

QUALIFICATIONS.

1. A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university or four years work experience in the field of advocacy.
2. Ability to exercise independent judgment and discretion.
3. Effective oral and written communication skills.
4. Ability to maintain confidentiality and be discreet with highly-sensitive and confidential information.
5. Protection and advocacy or other related disability rights experience is preferred.
6. Knowledge of disability rights law/issues is preferred but if not, interest in and willingness to learn about disability rights law/issues is required.
7. Strong organizational and time management skills.
8. Strong initiative, work ethic, and motivation.
9. Strong commitment to DRC's mission and the needs of individuals with disabilities.
10. Willingness to be open-minded and accept constructive comments and feedback.
11. Appropriate computer skills and knowledge
12. Reliability, ability to work as needed, and ability to maintain an acceptable attendance record.
13. Ability to multitask, perform effective casework and fulfill the essential job functions of this position while concurrently carrying an active caseload and performing intakes.

Employee Acknowledgement

A review of this job description has excluded the marginal functions of the position. All duties and requirements are essential job functions. This job description in no way states or implies that these are the only duties to be performed by the employee occupying this position. This document does not create an employment contract, implied or otherwise.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this job description and an explanation of the duties and requirements of the position. I have read or will read this job description. I understand that this is a job “at will”.

Employee Signature

Date