

2019–2021 FELLOWSHIP SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

For Applications to Skadden, Equal Justice Works and/or Others

The Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund, located in Berkeley, California seeks fellowship candidates for collaboration on Skadden, Equal Justice Works (EJW), and/or other public interest fellowship applications for the two year period beginning fall 2019. Such fellowships offer recent law graduates an invaluable opportunity for entry-level training in various aspects of public interest law practice.

DREDF is a national, non-profit law and policy organization dedicated to advancing and protecting the civil rights of individuals with disabilities. Founded in 1979 by persons with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities, we work through legislation, litigation, informal and formal advocacy, and education and training of lawyers, advocates, and clients with respect to disability issues. Since 1988, DREDF has taught disability rights courses at Bay Area law schools. We work regularly with law student interns. Our office is uniquely comprised of not only attorneys, but also special education advocates and policy analysts, which provides for truly interdisciplinary and multifaceted perspectives on disability rights issues.

DREDF is particularly interested in fellowship candidates who want to collaborate on simultaneous applications to more than one funder, and in disability civil rights projects in one of the following four areas:

- 1. Intersectionality (Disability & Other Diversity Characteristics):** The interplay of disability with other diversity characteristics creates nuances and challenges that need unique attention. People with disabilities often have overlapping and intersecting social identities implicating social or economic class, race, ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, and other characteristics. Discrimination and access barriers based on two or more of these characteristics may combine to create distinctive forms of injustice and inequality. DREDF is interested in projects that address intersectionality concerns. This includes projects involving adverse Trump-era initiatives, and projects in any of the other three potential project contexts identified below.

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2. **Housing Access:** The San Francisco Bay Area is experiencing an unprecedented lack of affordable accessible housing. People with disabilities face disproportionate barriers in housing, both because they are over-represented in low-income communities, and because they have unique access needs. This includes need for built-in physical and sensory access features (e.g., wheelchair access, and visual fire alarms for those with hearing impairments); locations on accessible transit routes; and need for modifications of policies (e.g., exceptions to “no pets” policies for service animals; rental notices in alternative-to-print formats for those with visual impairments; and adjustments to maintenance and cleaning practices to avoid exacerbating medical conditions that involve chemical sensitivities). Such barriers put people with disabilities at greater risk for homelessness. The same barriers affect access to a range of temporary and transitional housing, including disaster and other emergency shelters. DREDF is interested in projects that examine such barriers and pioneer “best practices” to address them as part of ensuring compliance with disability rights laws.
3. **Education Access:** Public education provides the primary preparation for economic and social participation in society. Yet today many students with disabilities are still denied equal educational opportunity. For over three decades, DREDF has worked to preserve, strengthen and enforce the rights of children with disabilities through legal advocacy and training. We have worked to ensure that schools support students in meeting basic health maintenance needs (e.g., as to diabetes care, epi-pens, nebulizers, etc.). DREDF is also dedicated to ensuring that students with disabilities receive meaningful and appropriate special education services in the least restrictive environment. This includes work to end inappropriate restraint and seclusion of students with disabilities, and to end disproportionate discipline of students of color with disabilities. We welcome projects ideas addressing any aspect of education access.
4. **Access to Government Benefits & Services (including Health Care):** People with disabilities are disproportionately entitled to, and reliant on, various critical income supports such as SSDI, SSI and TANF. Yet they experience architectural, communications and policy barriers in submitting threshold applications and meeting eligibility requirements.

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Such government programs often fail to provide needed reasonable accommodations. People with disabilities are also disproportionately entitled to Medicare and Medicaid, which are undergoing profound changes in the wake of federal health care reform developments. DREDF is interested in projects that examine such barriers, and pioneer “best practices” to address them as part of ensuring compliance with disability rights laws. We are particularly interested in applying general disability rights principles to government programs that are structured in ways that inherently create access barriers. This may include technology access issues, as cash-strapped government entities are increasingly migrating services to digital platforms.

Other Proposals Also Invited: While the above four are our current preferred focus areas, DREDF is also open to other project ideas proposed by candidates who have a particularly strong background or interest in other areas of disability rights advocacy.

DREDF is an equal opportunity employer. Individuals with disabilities, minorities, and women candidates are especially encouraged to apply. DREDF routinely accommodates people with disabilities, and we invite discussion of any candidate’s accommodation needs.

DREDF works collaboratively and intensively with prospective fellows to develop projects that address disability civil rights law issues. We have been successful in obtaining past fellowship awards. DREDF is committed to fully supporting and advising the applicant during the application process to ensure that a high quality and well-informed application is ultimately compiled and submitted.

Qualifications:

Demonstrated commitment to public interest law

Established knowledge of and interest in civil rights laws

Ability to work independently and cordially with others

Strong academic performance

Excellent legal research and writing skills

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Application Deadlines:

Applications for fellowship sponsorship by DREDF must be submitted to **DREDF by Monday, June 25, 2018** (before close-of-business Pacific Time).

In addition, the collaborative applications are due directly to the fellowship organization by their designated deadlines. Their applications are due to **Skadden by Monday, September 17, 2018**; and to **EJW by Wednesday, September 19, 2018**.

Application Instructions:

Your DREDF application should include:

Detailed cover letter describing your interest in DREDF; the fellowship(s) in which you are interested; and a brief project proposal (to be developed more fully in collaboration with DREDF)

Resume

Transcript

Writing Sample

List of three references (including nature of supervision, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers)

Submit your DREDF applications by email to Hongyu Min at: hmin@dredf.org; and include the following language on your email “subject” line:

“Attn: 2019-2021 Fellowship Application (*YOUR LAST NAME*)”

Contact Information:

Hongyu Min, Resource Associate

Phone: (510) 644-2555

Email: hmin@dredf.org

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