Disability Rights Are Civil Rights

ARE YOU READY TO LEAD?

Become the next Executive Director of the Disability Law Center, the Massachusetts Protection & Advocacy Organization.

The Opportunity   
The Board of Directors of the Disability Law Center (DLC) is seeking a candidate with exceptional leadership, management, and relationship building skills to lead a statewide cross disability non-profit, unionized public interest legal center. The mission of the Disability Law Center (DLC) is needed now more than ever. People with disabilities are up against unending challenges – increased economic inequity, ineffective communication access despite advances in technology, unnecessary institutionalization, lack of accessible housing options, incarceration due to lack of mental health services - in short, discrimination against people already pushed to the margins.

The new leader will inherit a financially stable, mission-driven organization with a strong culture that is living its disability rights values and actively working to improve its diversity, equity and inclusion practices. The work of DLC’s 29 attorneys and advocates, many of whom have disabilities, span multiple practice areas including education, abuse & neglect investigations, monitoring of access to appropriate services in public and private facilities, advocacy for beneficiaries of social security benefits, employment, emergency planning, health care, , and access to services, technology, telecommunications, transportation, and housing. Tied together by a deep passion for human rights and social justice, DLC’s staff place a high value on a leader who is self-aware, committed to disability and racial justice, open to shared learning and is genuinely kind.

This is an exceptional opportunity for a strategic, compassionate, and visionary leader to build on almost four decades of innovative disability rights advocacy to realize a world where all people with disabilities are treated equally.

## Organization

For more than 40 years, DLC has served as Massachusetts’s officially designated protection and advocacy agency, working to promote and defend the rights of Massachusetts residents with disabilities. DLC’s mission is to protect, advocate for and advance the human, civil and legal rights of persons with disabilities in pursuit of a society in which persons with disabilities exercise self-determination and choice, and are treated with dignity and respect. DLC’s activities are grounded in its belief in the inherent value and worth of all individuals and their right to equality and equitable opportunities to fully participate in their communities.

DLC receives most of its funding from the US Department of Health and Human Services, the US Department of Education, and the Social Security Administration. With an annual budget of roughly $3.9M, DLC consists of 29 staff members, including attorneys, advocates, intake specialists, administrators, and support personnel. DLC is a member of the National Disability Rights Network, the nonprofit membership organization for the Protection & Advocacy agencies. Collectively, the Network is the largest provider of legally based advocacy services to people with disabilities in the U.S. DLC is governed by a Board of Directors, a majority of whom are persons with disabilities or family members of persons with disabilities. DLC also has a legally mandated advisory council: CAIPA Advisory. For more information, see  [[Disability Law Center – Massachusetts Protection and Advocacy (dlc-ma.org)](https://www.dlc-ma.org/).](https://www.drnj.org/)

# Position Summary

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director is a visionary, highly motivational and proactive leader who publicly embraces and represents the mission and goals of DLC. This leader fosters program innovation; broadens external relationships; seeks continual funding and supervises an engaged, productive, dedicated unionized team. The Executive Director is responsible for all aspects of the administration and operation of the organization. The ideal candidate is a leader with strong business and leadership acumen who can build upon and expand the organization’s reach and visibility externally while increasing internal infrastructure and people-related strategies to support these goals.

Leveraging strong speaking and interpersonal skills, the Executive Director drives procurement of funding from various stakeholders by illustrating the impact of – and need for – DLC’s services in the community. This role powerfully advocates for systemic changes, regularly engaging with advocacy groups, legislators, private and public attorneys, social agencies, other legal services programs and more. Additionally, the Executive Director inspires and coalesces staff around its mission, empowering each to engage with its clients based on their individual needs.

Key focuses of this role will be:

* Powerfully advocate for systemic changes needed on behalf of people with disabilities.
* Provide inspirational leadership that maintains and/or increases impact and ensures the mission of DLC is fully realized.
* Lead expansion of funding on behalf of the organization to support greater service provision to clients.
* Energize, mentor, and engage internal unionized staff around the central mission of the organization, understanding the varying needs of diverse clients across the Commonwealth.

## Location

Currently, in response to public health guidelines concerning COVID-19, DLC’s staff is working remotely. It is expected that they will continue working remotely for the present time. DLC has two offices: Boston and Northampton. Ideally, when restrictions are lifted and congregant workplaces are deemed safe, the new Executive Director will work on-site in the Boston office.

## Position Responsibilities:

**Leadership**

Plans, organizes, directs, supervises, and evaluates all agency activities, including planning and priority setting, supervising managerial and unionized staff, supervising, and evaluating programs.

Reviews policies for alignment with DLC’s mission and executes DLC’s priorities as adopted by the Board to advance the Mission and Vision of the organization.

Meets regularly with the management team and agency staff to assess progress toward goals and objectives, identify needs, set priorities, and develop strategies.

Ensures that DLC embraces diversity by its actions in its selection of Board members, hiring of staff and delivery of services.

Oversees human and financial resources of the organization and assures that proper records are maintained, and reports are filed.

**Board Development**

Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with the Board of Directors.

Serves as chief liaison to the Board, including facilitating agenda setting, Board member orientation and proactive communication.

Meets regularly with the Board of Directors to set strategic direction for the agency.

**External Relations**

Serves as spokesperson and represents DLC to local, state and national advocacy groups.

Communicates the programs, policies, and purpose of the agency to public constituencies and staff in a way which will motivate them to support organizational operations, goals, and objectives.

Promotes and maintains effective working relationships with government officials, public and private agency officials, and other such persons involved in direct or indirect service to people with disabilities.

Works with the media and advocacy groups to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are part of every civil rights discussion.

**Financial Management**

Identifies and sets appropriate funding levels for operations and directs resource development activities to ensure budgeted funding levels are achieved.

Directs the development of proposals for funding of specific projects, new programs and ongoing organizational priorities.

Identifies, cultivates, builds, and solidifies relationships with new and established contributing organizations and individuals and implements innovative strategies to attract additional funding.

**Organizational and Strategic Development**

Assures an ongoing public information program to apprise the public of the services provided by DLC and the rights of people with disabilities.

Leads the organization’s public policy activities to ensure that the interests of people with disabilities in Massachusetts are well represented at the executive, legislative, and administrative branches of local, state and federal government.

Develops organizational capability to address constituent needs.

Establishes, monitors, and manages performance metrics for strategic policy adherence.

## Experience and Attributes:

Ideal candidates for this position will share our commitment to DLC’s mission and will bring a variety of experiences and attributes to DLC, including:

* Juris Doctor degree from accredited law school is **strongly preferred.** Other candidates with strong nonprofit or legal services experience and a master’s degree from an accredited college in Public Administration, Business Management, Education, Psychology, Social Work, or a related field may be considered.
* Ten years’ experience in non-profit legal services, civil rights, or advocacy organizations, specifically addressing the rights of people with disabilities or the rights of historically excluded communities.
* Demonstrated well-rounded leadership and management experience in an organization with comparable budget and staffing.
* A fair and equitable leader, who engenders trust, is willing to empower staff and understands the relationship within and among departments in the organization.
* An outcome driven and visionary leader who is willing to delegate responsibility, set guidelines and hold staff accountable
* Demonstrated experience in budgeting, compliance, finance, and fiscal controls.
* Demonstrated ability to communicate with and advocate for persons with disabilities.
* Experience supporting a Board in its governance role, foster its ongoing development, engaging its members in strategy development and keeping members informed.
* Knowledge of public policy issues and experience advocating with state government and the legislature; testifying in front of the state legislature.
* Excellent written and spoken communication skills.
* A strong collaborator with the ability to build authentic relationships across lived experiences (race, gender, age, socioeconomic background, LGBTQIA+ status, disability, etc.) through self-reflection, empathy, and a clear personal identity.
* Ability to work effectively and cooperatively within a team framework that includes transparency, willingness to communicate with staff and promotes an open environment.
* Experience managing a unionized workforce is a plus.
* Demonstrated experience working with and in diverse populations.
* Skills to effectively negotiate through confrontational situations and stressful interactions.
* Willingness to travel and to work evenings and weekends when necessary.

## Personal Characteristics

The new Executive Director must be a fierce disability leader with an uncompromising commitment to advancing the rights of all people with disabilities. The successful candidate must demonstrate that they are an innovative, transparent, adaptive leader with a commitment to building strong and effective teams, employee development and a drive to mentor, coach, and support all DLC staff. The ideal candidate will have lived experience and deep roots in the disability community. The successful individual should have the emotional intelligence to engage in honest self-reflection and receive constructive feedback, as well as the humility to share power and make thoughtful decisions. Proven success creating cultures defined by accountability, trust and respect are critical.

## Diversity And Inclusion Mission Statement

DLC is committed to protecting the fundamental human rights of its clients by providing zealous advocacy and excellent representation. In fulfilling our mission, DLC is committed to fostering diversity at all levels of the agency. We are dedicated to understanding our clients’ diverse circumstances and meeting their needs. We are also committed to maintaining an inclusive environment that supports success and the well-being of all of our staff. DLC’s leadership is responsible for ensuring diversity, equity and inclusion.

# Compensation & Benefits

Commensurate with the experience and qualifications of the selected candidate, the salary range for the position is commensurate with experience. In addition to generous paid time off, DLC provides an excellent benefits package including medical, dental, flex spending account, and a 403(b) savings plan with employer match.   
  
Reimbursement of basic relocation expenses will be considered for the exceptional candidate.

# Application Process

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Applications should contain a resume and thoughtful cover letter, outlining how your skills and experience meet the qualifications of the position. Email to Christine Griffin, [cgriffin@benderconsult.com](mailto:cgriffin@benderconsult.com) with **DLC Executive Director Search** in the subject line. Please include how you heard about the search.

DLC has retained the executive search firm and certified disability-owned business enterprise, Bender Consulting Services, Inc. to conduct this search, [www.benderconsult.com](http://www.benderconsult.com).

*DLC is an equal opportunity employer and values a diverse workforce and inclusive culture. DLC encourages applications from all qualified individuals and does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital or familial status, veteran status, disability, AIDS/HIV status, medical condition, or any other characteristic protected by law.*

*DLC is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities. Please let us know if you need an accommodation at anytime during the search and hiring process by emailing your request to* [*cgriffin@benderconsult.com*](mailto:cgriffin@benderconsult.com)