EMPLOYMENT ADVOCATE/BENEFITS PLANNER

**Company Name:** Disability Rights Iowa (“DRI”) ([www.driowa.org](http://www.driowa.org))

**Job Title:** Advocate/ Community Work Incentives Coordinator

**Location:** Disability Rights Iowa, 400 East Court Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50309

**Opening Date:** July 7, 2017

**Closing Date:** July 7, 2017 (This position is open until filled, but applications submitted by 5:00 p.m. CT on August 4, 2017 will be considered for the first round)

**Job Type:** Non-Exempt Full Time Employee (40 hours/week)

**Pay:** $38,000- $43,000 depending on experience

**Benefits:** DRI offers a comprehensive benefit plan for eligible employees. Benefits include health insurance, dental insurance, basic life, short-term and long-term disability insurance, a 403(b) retirement plan, and flexible spending accounts. Flexible spending accounts feature reimbursement for both medical and dependent care.

**Time-off:** DRI offers a generous holiday time off, paid sick time and vacation accrual package to full-time employees.

**Agency Description:** Disability Rights Iowa (DRI) is a well-established innovative, non-profit, legally-based organization dedicated to advancing the rights of Iowans with disabilities, including individuals with mental illness. DRI is the federally-mandated protection and advocacy agency for individuals with disabilities in Iowa. Disability Rights Iowa works to achieve fairness and justice for people with disabilities through quality legal representation, advocacy, investigations of abuse and neglect, peer/self-advocacy services, community partnerships, legislative and regulatory advocacy work, education and outreach. DRI’s legal work includes individual and impact litigation. For more information, go to [www.driowa.org](http://www.driowa.org).

**Program Description:** DRI receives funds from the Social Security Administration (SSA) to operate the Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) project and the Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) Program. Below is a brief description of each program:

a) The WIPA program helps beneficiaries take advantage of SSA’s work incentives programs, which may delay or reduce the effect of work on monetary benefits and health insurance. Additionally, WIPA projects act as repositories for information about other work incentives, benefits counseling services and other resources that
may help beneficiaries succeed in their work attempts, or may assist beneficiaries to improve financial stability as they return to work.

b) The PABSS program provides legally-based advocacy to beneficiaries who are trying to secure, maintain or regain gainful employment. Among other things, PABSS advocates advocate, identify and correct deficiencies in entities providing vocational rehabilitation and return-to-work services to beneficiaries. PABSS advocates also provide consultation to beneficiaries, under the direction of attorneys, to protect their rights, including their rights to reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Job Responsibilities:

1. Through the WIPA program,
   a. Provide targeted, comprehensive and intensive benefits planning services to beneficiaries who are working or actively seeking employment or self-employment.
   b. Prepare benefits summaries and analyses using SSA technologies.
2. Through the PABSS Program, provide legally-based advocacy to beneficiaries who are trying to secure, maintain or regains gainful employment;
3. Work in DRI’s Des Moines office.
4. Participate in staff meetings;
5. Provide information and referral assistance to callers when issue and/or caller are not eligible for full intake.
6. Must obtain a favorable level five security determination from SSA prior to working directly with beneficiaries. DRI will assist in obtaining this clearance.
7. Use Microsoft Office software on a personal computer.
8. Other duties, as assigned.

Minimum Qualifications: (Applicants must meet each of the qualifications to be considered for an interview)

1. Bachelor’s degree required, preferably in Social Work, Education, Psychology, Rehabilitation Counseling, Disability Studies or another related field of study;
2. A minimum of one-year previous experience working with people with disabilities and/or mental illness;
3. Ability to obtain Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) SSA recognized training within 6 months of hire;
4. Strong and effective writing and verbal communication skills, including the ability to do so in a concise manner, even when doing so regarding complex issues;
5. Strong organizational skills;
6. Experience in public speaking and developing effective presentations;
7. Excellent interpersonal, relationship-building and collaboration skills to be able to work with others inside and outside of the organization
8. Ability to analyze complex problems and develop creative solutions;
9. Ability to conceptualize and develop initial and ongoing case strategies;
10. Ability to maintain thorough and complete electronic records; and
11. Ability to work independently with appropriate supervision.

Desirable Qualifications:

1. Certification by SSA or its agents to provide benefit planning services to beneficiaries;
2. Experience with or sensitivity to individuals with disabilities and/or mental illness;
3. Experience with or sensitivity to individuals from ethnic or language-distinct communities; and
4. Knowledge of laws, rights and services as they pertain to individuals with disabilities and/or mental illness.

Equal Opportunity Employer.

Disability Rights Iowa is an Equal Opportunities Employer. It is the policy of Disability Rights Iowa to prohibit discrimination and harassment of any type and to afford equal employment opportunities to employees and applicants, without regard to race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, pregnancy, medical condition or genetic information, veteran status, national origin, disability, marital or other protected status.

E-mail cover letter and, resume to:

Katie VandeVorde, Operations Manager, Disability Rights Iowa
kvandevorde@disabilityrightsiowa.org

No phone calls please.