



DRTx is currently searching for a **Mental Health Policy Fellow** for our **Education** Team.

Join Disability Rights Texas and Ignite Your Passion for Disability Rights Advocacy!

At DRTx we believe in supporting our employees by offering generous leave allocations including personal leave days, vacation hours, and sick leave, ensuring your well-being and work-life balance from day one. We also offer a paid winter break – because everyone deserves time to recharge and reconnect.

DRTx also offers flexible schedules, a generous 401k plan, which, currently, is 7% of our annual income (whether you contribute to your plan or not), and health care plans with little to no cost (if choosing employee only coverage). By working at DRTx, you will have the stage to amplify your advocacy for individuals with disabilities.

Join an organization that allows you the opportunity to work alongside people who share your passion. We're proud of our employees, clients, partners, and communities, and we welcome you to be part of our journey towards positive change.

Are you ready to make a difference? Apply now and let's shape a brighter future together! Please apply online on our [DRTx careers website](#).

Position Summary

The primary role of the **Policy Fellow** is to engage in intersectional child, youth, and family mental health and disability policy and advocacy. Identified areas of concern are:

1. Ensuring adequate counseling services and mental health support in public schools;
2. In the state's juvenile justice facilities, helping to ensure adequate mental health treatment and support for all youth in the system. Additionally, advocating for the least restrictive setting for youth involved in the juvenile justice system;
3. In the justice system, helping to ensure that juveniles are treated in age-appropriate, rehabilitative, and less restrictive settings; and
4. Promoting safe, decent, affordable housing in an effort to ensure family wellness.

The policy fellow will study and advance public policy related to multiple issue areas affecting individuals with mental illness and/or disabilities, such as school-based mental health, mental health rights and services within institutions and carceral system. In

partnership with a designated mentor, the fellow will identify a specific focus within the scope of DRTx's priorities related to expanding child and family mental health policy. The policy fellow will become familiar with mental health policy and develop policy expertise related to school-based mental health, the school to prison pipeline, mental health rights and services within institutions and carceral systems, housing for youth and families with mental illness, and other policy issues affecting individuals with co-occurring mental health concerns and identified disabilities. The fellow will have opportunities to collaborate with state and national disability rights, educational advocacy and juvenile justice organizations. The fellow will prepare and assist in preparing communications to report findings and recommendations to a variety of stakeholders. The fellow will have the opportunity to provide written and verbal testimony on relevant legislation and lead meetings with legislative offices, where appropriate. The fellow will also develop relationships with local, state and national organizations, stakeholders, legislators and other public officials. The fellow will participate in any evaluation efforts of the fellowship program.

This position is a full-time, time limited position that offers a generous benefits package including health and dental insurance, employer 401K contributions, and more. Applicants must live in the greater Austin metropolitan area to be considered for this position. The position will end on June 30, 2026.

Physical/Mental Requirements

1. Uses personal computer approximately 6-7 hours per day.
2. Uses telephone and email to communicate with clients and other professionals, approximately 3-5 hours per day.
3. Spends approximately 1-3 hours per day in meetings.
4. Sits approximately 6-7 hours per day.
5. Requires working under a moderate degree of stress (time constraints; deadlines; multi-tasking high-level projects and issues; complex issues; and conflict resolution).
6. Moderate travel, generally local, is required (20-40%).

Essential Functions

1. Collaborate to identify intersectional policy issues related to child, youth, and family mental health and disability policy and advocacy.
2. Analyze proposed laws and policies related to the issues and develop position statements and recommendations with stakeholders and other interested organizations.
3. Engage in collaborative work with multiple teams within DRTx to most effectively impact mental health and disability policy.
4. Develop cooperative working relationships with other state and national advocacy organizations, individual advocates, agencies and key policymakers.

5. Participate in on-site facility monitoring visits with advocates and attorneys to state hospitals, jails, prisons, schools, SSLCs, and other facilities as available.
6. Attend relevant agency meetings and submit comments on proposed agency rules and policies, as appropriate.
7. Develops materials for and conducts selected education and training (E&T) presentations on organization services and on major problems, issues, and needs relating to persons with disabilities for advocates, organizations, public officials, and service providers.
8. Attends related legislative sessions to monitor and report on activity. Researches and reviews all related materials and incorporates information into various forms of communication and disperses this information to the appropriate parties.
9. Provide written or oral testimony in interim hearings and during legislative session.
10. Tracks and analyzes relevant legislation and educates policymakers on impact of proposed legislation.
11. Contributes, in area of specialty, information to be included in annual program reports of the organization.
12. Works closely with staff and various stakeholders to coordinate training and policy activities.
13. Engage with DRTx's Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness ("PAIMI") Advisory Council through participation in meetings and legislative recap sessions.
14. Collaborates with others on issues as assigned.
15. Travel as needed to participate in fellowship activities or to provide services/training.
16. Appropriately prioritize tasks as needed and to multi-task numerous responsibilities in a timely manner.
17. Establish personal credibility throughout the organization, in order to be an effective partner and advisor.
18. Effectively and regularly communicate with employees, clients, and the public at the individual, team and organizational levels.
19. Maintain thorough and complete records.
20. Develop and maintain collaborative, cooperative relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including clients, the community, PAIMI Advisory Council, the board of directors as well as employees at all levels of the organization.
21. Apply the principles of the organization's vision and values in all work-related business and interactions.
22. Perform other duties as requested or required.

Required Qualifications

1. A master's degree in law, social work, public policy or related programs received within the past 24 months – OR - be a parent, self-advocate, or sibling of a

- person with a disability *and* have demonstrated post-graduate level skills and knowledge in public policy.
2. Ability to develop knowledge of or working knowledge of systems in Texas that provide services to children and youth with mental illness or other disabilities, including the special education system, institutionalized settings, community-based mental health services system, and juvenile probation departments.
 3. Ability to develop working knowledge of the regulatory and legislative processes in Texas and ability to inform policymakers about the impact of lack of appropriate educational assessments to identify with mental illness and other disabilities.
 4. Ability to develop functional knowledge of complex state and federal rights protection statutes and regulations relevant to the subject matter of the fellowship project.
 5. Ability to develop and apply knowledge of current best practices concerning the provision of mental health services to children, youth, and their families in various settings.
 6. Strong and effective writing, verbal, and negotiating communications skills including the ability to do so in a concise manner, regarding complex issues to a variety of people.
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1. Experience in public speaking and developing effective presentations for the public, as well as Boards, Councils, Conferences, and/or public testimony.
 2. Ability to develop and present persuasive and informative documents that can be adapted for a variety of audiences.
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9. Excellent interpersonal, relationship-building and collaboration skills to be able to work effectively with others inside and outside of the organization; relationship builder with the flexibility and finesse to “manage by influence”.
 10. Functional knowledge of complex state and federal laws, rights protection statutes and regulations.
 11. The ability to take direction and independently follow through on all instructions.
 12. The ability to create collaboration among stakeholders and other disability groups.
 13. Excellent detail-orientation, follow-up skills and organizational skills plus the ability to multi-task and work under challenging conditions while meeting deadlines.
 14. Knowledge and skills to appropriately implement policy strategies.
 15. Ability to manage individual workload so services are delivered timely and appropriately.
 16. Strong working knowledge of Microsoft Office suite (Outlook, Word, PowerPoint).
 17. High level of commitment to service excellence, plus high degrees of integrity, ethics and judgment are a must.

Preferred Qualifications

1. Bilingual in Spanish – both written and spoken word.