



Disability Rights Education  
& Defense Fund



## **Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund**

**Berkeley, CA**

### **Executive Director Search Profile**

#### **Organization Overview**

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF), founded in 1979, is one of the nation's preeminent civil rights law and policy centers. Directed by individuals with disabilities and parents who have children with disabilities, DREDF's mission is to advance the civil and human rights of people with disabilities through training, education, litigation and other legal advocacy, public policy, and legislation.

In addition, DREDF serves more than 30 counties in California as a Parent Training and Information Center (PTI), providing information and technical assistance to parents and families with children with disabilities who need help with access to education. DREDF is also funded by the State Bar of California to provide technical and advocacy support to legal services providers throughout the State. DREDF has an operating budget of \$4 million and 22 staff.

There are more than 40 million people with disabilities in the United States. As a group, people with disabilities disproportionately live in poverty and experience significant barriers to education, employment, housing, transportation, and health care. Such economic and social disenfranchisement is the result of the lack of accessibility in the built and virtual environment, negative attitudes and implicit biases towards disabled people, and policies that encourage or even require unnecessary exclusion, segregation, and institutionalization. The result is a legacy of prejudice and paternalism that is deeply embedded in the social consciousness.

DREDF works with the core principles of equality of opportunity, disability accommodation, accessibility, and inclusion by employing the following strategies:

#### **Training & Education**

- We train and educate adults (including young adults) with disabilities, and parents of children with disabilities, about their rights under state and federal disability rights laws. Our goal is to enable them to use the laws as tools to challenge exclusion and discrimination and advocate effectively for full participation in their communities.

- We educate lawyers, service providers, corporations, government officials, and many others about disability civil rights laws and policies.
- For more than two decades, we have taught disability rights law at Berkeley Law and other San Francisco Bay Area law schools and have hosted law students as legal interns.
- We educate, partner with, and support parents of children with disabilities to ensure that students with disabilities get their needs met as intended by laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

### **Litigation and Legal Advocacy**

- We represent clients in leading-edge disability rights litigation.
- We serve as co-counsel and prepare *amicus curiae* briefs in cases heard by state and federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court.
- We advocate for the legal rights of individuals and families.

### **Public Policy and Legislation**

- We design and carry out strategies to enact, strengthen, and enforce state and federal laws and public policies to advance the rights of people with disabilities and to improve their lives.
- We advocate with Congress, the California Legislature, federal and state agencies, and key stakeholders in education, employment, transportation, healthcare, housing, and other sectors to ensure that disabled people equally benefit from, fully participate in, and are included and respected in, all services, programs, and activities.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement**

Disability is part of being human. There are disabled people of all races, ethnicities, national origins, ages, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, languages, religions, and incomes. Disability barriers and ableism hurt all people with disabilities. People with disabilities who face more than one type of oppression experience worse discrimination, segregation, and exclusion, however.

DREDF cares about diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are committed to making a work culture of inclusion and belonging so that we can better help all people in the disability community. We support a workplace that shows the diversity of our community, and that respects and cares about all people. We are committed to doing disability rights work that focuses on disabled people who live at the intersection of disability and other identities that have been marginalized.

## **Key Responsibilities**

### **Strategy and Planning**

- Collaborate with the Board of Directors to develop, plan, and implement a new strategic plan. The ED will ensure that the plan's execution will be measured by quantifiable and calendared milestones.
- Report progress on key performance indicators to ensure priorities and resources align.
- Enhance DREDF's strong reputation and relationships with other national and local organizations in the disability and aligned progressive movements.

### **Management**

- Recruit, retain, supervise, and evaluate direct reports.
- Serve as a member of DREDF's Leadership Team and manage the organization collaboratively with the Leadership Team.
- Establish productive working relationships with stakeholders, such as donors and other funders, agency leaders, legislators, families, and staff.
- Enhance policies and procedures and ensure they are implemented and equitably applied.
- In consultation with staff directors, develop and propose a comprehensive annual budget for Board approval.
- Prudently manage the organization's resources within Board budget guidelines and communicate with the Board about any significant projected annual budget variances.

### **Board Partnership and Stewardship**

- Support good governance by advising, educating, and informing Board members about progress on the strategic and operational plans as well as any other major developments that would impact the organization.
- Present recommendations to the Board of Directors on policy and business changes desirable to improve day-to-day operations and organizational well-being.

### **Communications, Fundraising, Programming**

- Support the Legal Director in advancing DREDF's work to further the civil rights of people with disabilities.
- Support the Director of the Parent Training and Information Center.
- Work with the Communications Director to ensure that DREDF is consistently presented in a strong, positive way to the community, stakeholders, government, and the media.
- Make compelling public presentations to current and potential funders, stakeholders, disability groups, and government bodies to advance awareness of DREDF and the community it serves.

- Partner with the Director of Development to actively expand DREDF's donor and funder base and financial support through a comprehensive Development Plan with metrics and outcomes presented quarterly to the Board of Directors.
- Collaborate with the Board of Directors on its annual fundraising goals.

### **Desired Qualifications**

- A minimum of 10 years of progressive leadership and management experience within the disability rights movement. Alternatively, demonstrated ties to the disability rights movement **and** 10 years of leadership and management experience within a progressive movement aligned with disability rights.
- Demonstrated experience partnering with a Board of Directors to advance the mission, vision, and strategy of an organization.
- Demonstrated experience successfully facilitating growth within an organization.
- Track record of success in developing and maintaining community partnerships.
- Experience with and a commitment to growing and leading a highly diverse and progressive organization that reflects the communities it serves.
- Experience with partnering with a development director in advancing fundraising and grant development.
- A leadership and management style that is supportive and collaborative, transparent, and communicative.
- Demonstrated experience in developing budgets and managing finances.
- Lived experience with disability or the disability community.

### **Measures of Success**

The specifics regarding measures of success, including metrics, will ultimately be agreed upon by the new ED and the DREDF Board, but at the end of the executive's first year, the Board would expect the ED to:

- Sustain an appropriately engaged governance structure, including the development of future leaders.
- Assist in recruiting and retaining diverse board members to support the mission of the organization.
- Produce a strategic plan that has been developed by Board and staff and approved by the Board.
- Determine the optimal staffing structure to support the new strategic plan.
- Ensure that DREDF maintains and increases its visibility and engagement within the community.

This position is based in Berkeley, California with telecommuting one or two days a week a possibility. The incumbent must reside or relocate within commuting distance to the Bay Area.

## Compensation and Benefits

The salary range for this position is \$180,000 to \$210,000.

DREDF pays 80% of medical and 100% of dental and vision insurance for employees and their dependents, as well as life and long-term disability insurance. Other benefits include paid vacation (full-time employees accrue 21 days a year), sick leave (full-time employees accrue 15 days), paid holidays (17 days). We offer a 403(b) retirement plan with savings matched at 7% after one year, a Flexible Spending Account, and a pretax commuter benefit.

## Web Presence

Web: <https://dredf.org/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/disability-rights-education-and-defense-fund/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DREDF.org>

TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@disabilityrights>

X: <https://twitter.com/DREDF>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/DREDFvideo>

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/dredf>

## To Apply

Vetted Solutions is an executive search firm specializing in association and nonprofit recruiting and consulting. We focus on Board, CEO, and senior staff positions.

If you are interested in applying, we encourage you to think broadly about your background and skill set for the role. We encourage you to apply even if you do not meet all of the requirements that are listed within this position profile.

DREDF and Vetted Solutions are committed to providing access and reasonable accommodation to candidates interested in applying for the position. To request an accommodation please contact Ari Benjamin at +1.703.220.7242 or [ari@vettedolutions.com](mailto:ari@vettedolutions.com).

For confidential consideration, please send a cover letter and resume to [DREDFEDSearch@vettedolutions.com](mailto:DREDFEDSearch@vettedolutions.com) or call +1.202.544.4749.