



Position Announcement

Director Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program Tuscaloosa, AL

The Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP) in Tuscaloosa, AL seeks a dynamic Director. This individual will be at the forefront of championing disability rights, steering the organization toward impactful advocacy, and ensuring the enforcement and protection of these rights across the state. ADAP invites candidates who are strategic thinkers, passionate about the rights of people with disabilities, and possess a proven track record in leadership and organizational excellence.

The Organization

The Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP) is the statewide federally funded protection and advocacy (P&A) system for the state of Alabama. Part of the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), ADAP envisions a society where persons with disabilities are valued, exercise self-determination through meaningful choices, and have equality of opportunity. ADAP's mission is to provide quality, legally based advocacy services to Alabamians with disabilities to protect, promote, and expand their rights.

ADAP is Alabama's only statewide, cross-disability, comprehensive legal advocacy organization. For more than forty years, ADAP's legal advocacy has advanced the rights of Alabamians with disabilities in areas such as community integration, education, employment, self-determination, voting rights, and access to mental and physical health care. Our work takes many forms: individual legal representation, systemic litigation, self-advocacy support, investigation and monitoring, community outreach, and educating policymakers.

Core Values

- Persons with disabilities should have the same opportunity to participate in community as persons without disabilities.
- Persons with disabilities have the right to reasonable accommodations that are needed for full participation.
- Persons with disabilities have the right to be afforded meaningful choices to make informed decisions.

Recent Accomplishments

ADAP has a long history of tackling seemingly intransigent civil rights issues for Alabamians with disabilities. The agency is well known for its groundbreaking class action litigation which lasted more than thirty years and led to the recognition, for the first time, that persons with mental illness or an intellectual disability who are involuntarily committed to state custody have a

constitutional right to treatment. The agency confronted deficiencies in the state’s foster care system leading to the adoption of practice standards that dramatically changed how Alabama children with disabilities and their families would be treated when involved with child welfare authorities.

ADAP’s resolve to engage in system changing work continues to this day. Currently, ADAP is focusing its litigation and systemic advocacy work on issues such as mental health care provided in Alabama’s prisons (which was determined by the federal court to be “horrendously inadequate”); the over-institutionalization of children in the foster care system in lieu of community placements and supports; deficiencies in the administration of the state’s Medicaid waiver system which supports community integration for thousands of Alabamians with disabilities; services to persons committed to the state for forensic care; election access for disabled voters; and Medicaid-funded services for children with mental health, behavioral health, and complex medical conditions.

ADAP impacts the lives of Alabamians beyond these systems change efforts, using other advocacy strategies in its toolkit. The agency maintains a powerful monitoring presence in state-run and private congregate settings, ensuring the safety and welfare of individuals who are out of the public eye and may not know where to turn when their rights are being violated. ADAP investigates allegations of abuse and neglect of persons with disabilities in residential and treatment programs. The agency fields more than a thousand calls annually from Alabamians seeking help with disability justice matters and responds to those callers by providing direct advocacy services or self-advocacy strategies. In collaboration with the Children’s Rights Clinic at The University of Alabama School of Law, ADAP provides advocacy services to justice-engaged youth with disabilities. Committed to rights education, ADAP annually conducts dozens of trainings for individuals with disabilities, their families, and other stakeholders, empowering them in their own self-advocacy.

FY2024 Priorities

For FY2024 the following strategic priorities emerged as most important to serving the community while advancing the mission and complying with federal law and funders’ requirements:

- **Abuse & Neglect:** Individuals with disabilities will be free from abuse and neglect and live in healthier, safer, or otherwise improved facility or community settings.
- **Community Access:** Individuals with disabilities will have access to appropriate and individualized community-based services, including assistive technology, which will enhance their ability to live independently.
- **Employment:** Persons with disabilities will have meaningful access to integrated employment and be paid at least minimum wage.
- **Alternative Decision-Making:** With needed supports, individuals with disabilities will be able to make everyday decisions about their lives, including matters related to where they live, how their money is managed, and their health care.

- **Education:** Youth with disabilities will be provided a free appropriate public education in their least restrictive environment to move them toward independent living and, depending on their individual goals, secondary schooling or employment upon graduation.
- **Voting:** Individuals with disabilities will be given equal opportunity to register to vote and to vote privately and independently.

Agency Structure

Headquartered in Tuscaloosa, ADAP has an estimated annual budget of \$2.5M and twenty-eight employees, including attorney, advocate, and support staff. The organization is advised by two advisory councils – its Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (PADD) Council and Protection & Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) Council. These councils inform ADAP regarding the needs of Alabamians with disabilities and provide guidance and feedback regarding program priorities. Both councils are comprised primarily of individuals with disabilities. ADAP is housed within The University of Alabama School of Law. For more information, please visit ADAP’s website at <https://adap.ua.edu/>

The Position

The Director provides leadership both inside and outside the organization, managing the day-to-day operations and continually increasing ADAP’s mission impact. The Director will have knowledge of disability law and regulations, history and issues, and measures of service quality for persons with various disabilities. The Director will communicate ADAP’s understanding of the challenges faced by our community and expand ADAP’s vision and ability to meet those challenges. Specifically, the Director’s duties include legal, policy and advocacy leadership for our community and staff; oversight of the organization’s administrative, human resources, and financial operations; and building the organization’s public profile and funding base.

Leadership Outlook and Near-Term Priorities

As the internal and external leader, the Director will focus on the near- and longer-term priorities which include:

- Developing an understanding of the organization’s business model.
- Understanding the needs of the populations ADAP serves and Alabama’s disability service systems.
- Building and stewarding relationships with staff, community partners, and stakeholders.
- Maximizing effectiveness in a post-pandemic hybrid work environment.
- Becoming the face and voice of ADAP.

Key Responsibilities

Reporting to the Academic Dean of The University of Alabama School of Law, the Director will provide sound management and professional judgment skills and work with staff, advisory councils, state agencies, and community groups. Key responsibilities include:

External Leadership

- Serve as spokesperson and represent ADAP to local, state, and national advocacy groups promoting quality services for people with disabilities.
- Be responsive to the state's disability community.
- Represent ADAP and the needs of the disability community on local and statewide committees and work groups.
- Promote and maintain effective working relationships with government officials, public and private agency officials, and other such persons involved in direct or indirect service to Alabamians with disabilities.
- Assure an ongoing public information program to apprise citizens of the services of the agency and the rights of Alabamians with disabilities.
- Communicate the programs, policies, and purpose of the agency to public constituencies, government bodies (executive, legislative, judicial), and staff in a way that will motivate them to support organizational operations, goals, and objectives.
- Consult with the staff and consumer groups throughout the state as appropriate on financial, program, and policy planning.

Organization Management

- Plan, organize, direct, supervise and evaluate all agency activities, including planning and priority setting, supervising staff, and supervising and evaluating programs.
- Supervise complex fiscal management including management of multiple grants and other funding sources.
- Supervise the completion of applications, budgets, and reports as required by federal funding agencies and the University. Organize, prepare, and respond to required federal site visits and monitoring activities.
- Develop mechanisms and supervise administrative functions, including selection of personnel, human resources issues, purchasing, accounting, marketing, and documentation of individual and systemic advocacy work performed by staff.
- Supervise professional staff in setting priorities, leading strategic planning, and engaging in clear, decisive decision-making.
- Oversee the policy-oriented and litigation efforts of the program.
- Explore opportunities to diversify funding.
- Meet regularly with the management team and agency staff to assess progress toward goals and objectives, identify needs, set priorities, and develop strategies.

Skills and Attributes

Successful candidates for this position will share a commitment to ADAP's mission and will bring a variety of experiences and attributes to ADAP, including:

- Seven (7) years practicing law with a specialty in civil rights law, disability law, or other relevant area and six (6) years of supervisory or management experience is preferred. Trial and appellate litigation experience in state and federal courts, including complex litigation actions, with a strong interest and experience in civil rights.

- Experience working with individuals with disabilities and with the agencies and systems that support individuals with disabilities.
- Financial acumen with experience developing and managing a budget of at least \$2M.
- Knowledge of disability law and regulations, history and issues, and measures of service quality for persons with various disabilities.
- Leadership experience.
- Sound management and professional judgment skills.
- Excellent interpersonal, organizational, verbal, and written communication skills.
- Experienced in grant writing and grant reporting oversight.
- Ability to work with advocacy and community groups.
- Must be admitted to practice before all federal courts whose jurisdictions encompass Alabama or eligible for admission within one (1) year of the date of hire.
- This position requires extensive in-state travel, some of which will be overnight.
- Must receive a favorable suitability clearance from the Social Security Administration.

Work Environment & Benefits

Salary will be commensurate with education and experience. ADAP offers a comprehensive [benefits package](#) through The University of Alabama that includes health, dental, life, and disability insurance; a state pension plan retirement program (defined benefit); voluntary supplemental retirement plans (403(b) and 457(b)); extensive leave and paid holiday policies; employee assistance program; educational benefits; and compensation for additional degrees and certifications/licensures.

Application Process

To apply, please submit your resume and a cover letter which conveys your interest in this leadership opportunity through The University of Alabama job portal by clicking [here](#). If you experience technical difficulties submitting your materials or if you are a qualified candidate with a disability and require an accommodation, please contact Andrea Tovar at andrea.tovar@marcumllp.com.

For other inquiries about this leadership opportunity, contact Catrese Brown at catrese.brown@marcumllp.com. Resume reviews begin immediately.

The University of Alabama is an equal-opportunity employer (EOE), including an EOE of protected veterans and individuals with disabilities.

About Marcum's Nonprofit & Social Sector Group

On behalf of the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program, Marcum's Nonprofit & Social Sector Group is working with ADAP to advance the search. Founded in 1984, we are, and always have been, a mission-driven professional services firm seeking to do more for nonprofits and socially conscious companies. We exist to do meaningful work for organizations like ADAP who are making a difference in our communities and our world. Learn more about our work at <http://marcumllp.com/industries/nonprofit-social-sector>.