

# Brain Injury & Developmental Disabilities Advocacy Program (BDAP)

## Pilot

### Job Description for Paralegal

Vermont Legal Aid seeks to create a new Advocacy Program for persons with traumatic brain injury and developmental disabilities (DD). During the first year, the Director of the Disability Law Project (DLP) will work with a paralegal to develop and test a statewide program to work with recipients and applicants of Vermont's Brain Injury Program and Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) system, both of which are Medicaid Home and Community Based Services. After the initial year, and assuming continued funding, the paralegal would continue to work in the program identifying and helping resolve problems or concerns raised by their clients, visiting recipients, and working to improve the quality of life of all recipients of the Brain Injury Program and DD services and supports.

**Duties and Responsibilities for the Pilot Project will be developed in partnership with DLP Director and staff, and Vermont Long-term Care Ombudsman Project Director and staff, which does similar work in nursing and residential care homes:**

- Gather information on geographic spread of beneficiaries,
- Identify benchmarks for evaluation of pilot,
- Develop promotional materials,
- Draft operational policies and procedures and revise following pilot analysis,
- Attend planning meetings with DAIL staff, DS & TBI providers, self-advocates, and other stakeholders,
- Establish and maintain complaint phone line, website, and web intake,
- Develop, execute monitoring visit plan to talk with recipients and monitor conditions and amend monitoring visit plan as necessary,
- Write pilot program interim and final reports.
- After initial six months,
  - a. Conduct at least 24 monitoring visits per quarter,
  - b. Respond to up to 20 complaints per quarter,
  - c. Develop and provide training through quarterly Know Your Rights workshops to recipients,

- d. Identify problems, opportunities for improvement, and strategies to address outcomes,
- e. Solicit feedback from monitored home sites and residents, and complainants through CSQ,
- f. Debrief and assess data and results from services provided,
- g. Develop a proposal for enabling legislation for a permanent program, support advocacy for legislation and budget,
- h. If funded, participate in hiring and training of new advocates and self-advocate educator.

### **On-going Essential Functions**

- Develop competency in Medicaid law and the federal and state rules, regulations, and guidance applicable to the DDS and BI programs.
- After the first six months,
  - Manage intake, provide screening, intake, and information and referral services.
  - Use multiple strategies to communicate with clients and service providers, consistent with applicable rules.
  - Follow policies and procedures established for program operation.
- Travel in assigned catchment areas to meet with clients, service providers, and others, and to provide Know Your Rights training.
- Carry out administrative responsibilities as a VLA employee in a prompt and thorough manner (including following payroll and reimbursement request procedures), as well as grant-related data and document requirements.

*This is a non-exempt position that reports to the Disability Law Project Director. In-state travel in a personal car is required, with mileage reimbursement provided. Salary is set based on the VLA Lay Advocate Salary Scale with credit for prior work experience approved by the Executive Director.*

## Qualifications

Four years' professional work experience in Developmental Disabilities Services, TBI services, long-term care or related field, or bachelor's degree, or a comparable mix of education and relevant work experience

- Ability to work effectively with individuals with developmental disabilities and traumatic brain injuries,
- Strong verbal and written communication skills,
- Commitment to social justice and person-centered advocacy,
- Willingness to support and encourage self-advocacy for individuals receiving developmental disabilities and BI services and supports,
- Excellent problem-solving abilities,
- Ability to listen effectively and communicate complicated information in a clear way,
- Ability to assist with recognizing concerns, identifying outcome goals, and developing and implementing a plan for achieving desired goal(s),
- Capacity to work independently, as well as collaboratively on a team; flexibility within a fast-paced and changing environment,
- Ability to develop and give presentations to large and small groups.

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