

OVERVIEW OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Disability Rights Montana, Inc. (DRM), is a private non-profit organization that advocates for the civil, human, and legal rights of persons with disabilities. Each state is required to have a protection and advocacy system in order for the State to receive certain federal dollars for services that support persons with disabilities.

As a private, non-profit organization, DRM is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors (Board).

The following is a summary of information that is intended to answer frequently asked questions:

1. How many people serve on the Board of Directors?

Pursuant to the bylaws, at least seven volunteer members serve on the Board plus the Chair of the PAIMI Advisory Council for a minimum of eight Directors. There may be as many as 15 members on the Board. The Board traditionally maintains nine members. Pursuant to federal law, the majority of the members are required to be people with disabilities or family members of people with disabilities.

2. Who appoints members of the Board?

The current Board of Directors appoints new members.

3. How long are the terms of each appointment?

Members of the Board are appointed for a two-year term beginning in January. The term expires in December of the following year. Directors are limited to 12 consecutive years of service. Terms are staggered.

4. What are the eligibility requirements of Board positions?

In general, members of the Board of Directors reflect the diverse constituency served by DRM. We are mandated by federal law to serve individuals with developmental, mental, and physical disabilities. Persons with disabilities, family members, and professionals are represented on the Board. DRM is also committed to appointing members representative of Native American communities and makes an effort to ensure that the Board reflects all geographic areas of the state.

5. What are Board members' responsibilities?

The primary responsibilities of the Board are to ensure that DRM operates for its intended purpose as stated in its bylaws, is financially solvent and properly manages the assets of the organization, establish the policies of the organization, approve the annual priorities of the organization, and hires and evaluates the Executive Director.

6. Do Board members have to participate in fundraising for the organization?

Yes. The Board is committed to raising unrestricted money to support the policy work of the organization. The Board has a fund development plan, which all Board members are participate.

7. What characteristics does DRM consider in appointing members to the Board?

DRM is a civil rights organization. Its purpose is to protect the legal rights of people with disabilities. Protecting legal rights is not the same as acting in a person's best interest. One of DRM's fundamental values is that people with disabilities can make their own decisions even when we do not agree or the decision is contrary to their best interest. As a member of the Board, you need to be comfortable with the work DRM is mandated to do and willing to defend that work, as it is not always popular.

8. How many Board meetings are held each year and where are they held?

The Board meets in person quarterly. The regular full board meetings are generally on Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and are normally held in Helena, although on occasion are held in different parts of the state. The Board also has a monthly conference call the second Friday of each month during the noon hour.

9. Are there other meetings or obligations?

Yes. The Board has several committees: Legislative/Bylaws, Fundraising/Long-Range Planning, Finance/Audit, and Governance. Each member of the Board serves on at least one committee. The committees meet by conference call between regular quarterly meetings.

10. What about expenses for Board members?

All travel, room and board, and other expenses connected with DRM and Board meetings are paid for by DRM. DRM also provides reasonable accommodations for Board members with disabilities.

11. Are there any prohibitions regarding appointments?

Generally, if you work for the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (including contract agencies) or other organizations that provide direct services to people disabilities, you are not eligible to be appointed to the Board because of the potential economic or loyalty conflicts. Occasionally, however, service providers have been appointed. They must abstain from voting or deliberating in any action that causes a conflict.

12. How do I apply for a position on the Board?

You must complete an Application and a Board of Directors Values Inquiry. You may fill out an Application and submit it at any time. If you need an accommodation in filling out the Application, contact DRM and staff will assist you. Notices of vacancies are placed in our newsletter and sent to numerous agencies on a regular basis. After completing the Application and the Board of Director's Values Inquiry, send it to:

Disability Rights Montana
1022 Chestnut Street
Helena, MT 59601

Once your Application and Values Inquiry are received, you will be contacted for an interview with a committee of the Board.

13. Where can I get more information?

Please feel free to visit us at our website: www.disabilityrightsmt.org or call us at 1-406-449-2344 (Voice/TTY) or toll-free at 1-800-245-4743 (Voice/TTY).