



RESPECTABILITY

The National Leadership Program

Made Possible by

The Stanford and Joan Alexander Foundation

www.RespectAbilityUSA.org

Empowering People with Disabilities to Achieve the American Dream!

Donn Weinberg, Chair

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, President

The National Leadership Program

The National Leadership Program is ideal for people who want to gain skills and contacts while making a positive difference for people with disabilities. We are looking for thoughtful and results-driven individuals who want to achieve breakthrough results while getting hands-on experience. The fellowship is for college and graduate students, as well as for people transitioning into the workforce for the first time, or back into the workforce after a break.

Four impactful and measurable outcomes:

1. Provide intensive job-training in public policy and strategic communications for at least 24 college students and graduates each year, as well as online training for thousands of others;
2. Advance RespectAbility's mission and objectives by fellows' direct participation in inclusive employment, stigma reduction, faith-based inclusion for people with disabilities (PwDs) and development;
3. Develop a successful and replicable model to enable college graduates with disabilities to successfully enter the career ladder; and
4. Develop confident leaders and self-advocates trained to solve disability issues in the future.

The Opportunity

1. **Today there are 1.2 million young Americans with disabilities between the ages of 16-20.** They have high expectations to go into the workforce, but only 7% complete college and only 53% of college graduates with disabilities are currently employed as opposed to 84% of graduates with no disability.
2. **The National Leadership Program is for talented college students and graduates with and without disabilities who are looking for high level professional careers in public policy, media, leadership, advocacy and strategic communications.** Participants will develop leadership skills to become effective role models and leaders while working to enable people with disabilities to achieve the American dream.
3. The National Leadership Program will also **enable fellows to strengthen their skills in writing, computers, time management, organization, and other areas.** With formal and informal training opportunities, fellows will gain skills so that over time they will be ready to advance to the top of the career ladder.

What is RespectAbility?

RespectabilityUSA is a national, non-profit, non-partisan organization whose mission is to: (1) Reshape the attitudes of American society so that people with disabilities can more fully participate in and contribute to society, and (2) Empower people with disabilities to achieve as much of the American Dream as their abilities and efforts permit.

Our major issue areas are increasing job opportunities for people with disabilities, reducing the stigmas faced by people with disabilities, and faith-based inclusion. Our leaders are proven change agents and non-profit leaders with deep experience in public policy, media and communications training.



"Empowering People with Disabilities to Achieve the American Dream"

“Nothing About Us, Without Us”

“Nothing About Us, Without Us” is used to communicate the idea that no policy should be decided by any policy-maker without the full and direct participation of members the group affected by that policy. The slogan also relates to the work environment. At RespectAbility, there are various people with disabilities both on staff and our board. This leads to an inclusive, welcoming environment with strong bonds among everyone, allowing great work to be accomplished. People with AND without disabilities may participate in this fellowship program.

RespectAbility provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or genetics. In addition to federal law requirements, RespectAbility complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation and training. RespectAbility expressly prohibits any form of workplace harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status.

Core Areas of Work

- 1. Inclusive Employment Advocacy:** Fellows will assume responsibility for assisting our policy team with our employment work, as well as our outreach to **presidential candidates** to put disability employment issues on the national campaign agenda. As a result, fellows will gain direct experience of working with the media, political campaigns, and PR companies. They will be able to work closely with leaders in these fields and have the opportunity to learn directly from them.
- 1. Stigma Reduction/Empowerment and Equality:** All of RespectAbility's work is supported by our core efforts to reduce stigmas and misinformation, both of which are huge barriers to the inclusion of PwDs in many sectors of society. The positive images, stories, and best practices that we identify, test, and shape through public opinion research will be leveraged by Fellows in our proactive outreach to employers, the media, thought leaders, and decision-makers. This will include mental health issues.
- 2. Faith/Jewish Inclusion:** RespectAbility will introduce fellows to Jewish communal professional life and practices. Fellows will work in Washington, New York City and around the country with RespectAbility board member, Shelley Cohen, President Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, VP Meagan Buren and others.

Public Policy/Employment

- We are focusing in particular on the promotion of best practices and are looking for people with a strong background and interest in public policy and/or employment issues. Fellows will gain direct experience of working with state officials, private sector employers and disability organizations.
- The fellows will work closely with our Fellowship/Leadership Director and Policy and Practices Director.
- Projects might include writing op-eds, researching employment and disability issues, visiting inclusive employers, and attending meetings with employment and disability leaders. Employment advocacy fellows will join supervisors at workshops and webinars that pertain to state and national politics and employment.



Staff & Fellows with Gov.
Jack Markell

Stigma Busting/Communications

- We are focusing in particular on the promotion of best practices. This is for fellows who are hoping to enter PR, media relations, or communications. Much of our stigma reduction work is associated with outreach to presidential candidates, Hollywood and employers. Communications Fellows are assigned to one of two areas of outreach based on interest.

- **Presidential Candidates Outreach**: Voters with disabilities are systematically ignored and only 27 percent of polling locations are fully accessible. Our new blog, www.TheRespectAbilityReport.org, covers the candidates' progress in addressing disability employment issues. Fellows cover events, create news stories and are a part of the team for nonpartisan and educational candidate and grassroots outreach.

- **Employer Outreach**: Our social media campaign in this area is called #RespectTheAbility, which highlights the benefits of inclusive employment, including the better bottom line that results from recognizing the talent of people with a variety of abilities.

The fellows will work closely with our Fellowship/Leadership Director and Communications Director. Individual projects will be assigned based on an individual's unique skill set and their own ability to "bring something to the table." Tasks might include writing blog posts, utilizing social media, designing graphics, editing photos and videos, attending presidential campaign events, and visiting inclusive employers. Stigma reduction fellows will join supervisors at workshops and webinars that pertain to stigma, national politics, and communications.

Presidential Campaign Outreach

- ❖ The 56 million Americans with disabilities are the largest minority group in America. Yet voters with disabilities are systematically ignored and only 27% of polling locations are fully accessible. RespectAbility is reaching out to all of the presidential candidates with educational materials on disability issues. We are nonpartisan in our approach, do not lobby, and follow strict guidelines for non-profit organizations.
- ❖ We created a new blog, www.TheRespectAbilityReport.org to cover the candidates' progress in addressing disability employment issues. We already have spoken with many of the candidates and are continuing to reach out across the board. We will host online Town Halls for Presidential candidates on disability issues.
- ❖ Enable PwDs to vote and participate just like everyone else!



RespectAbility CEO and Jeb Bush



RespectAbility CEO & Hillary Clinton

Past RespectAbility Fellowship Program

Since launch in June 2013, **dozens of talented fellows** with differentiated abilities:

- CP, Spina Bifida, mental health issues, ADHD, amputees, hearing loss, blindness, immediate family members or people with disabilities
- College students and recent graduates

Fellows work in all areas of organization; very high level of responsibility

- Social media outreach, research, outreach to staffers' offices, event management, webinars, op-ed writing, blog posting, representing RespectAbility at meetings with Hill staffers and philanthropists, prepare meetings with governors, provide testimony, etc.

Ultimate goal: prepare fellows for policy and communications careers as a part of the “rising tide that lifts all ships” for people with disabilities.

However, without a Job Coach/Training Director /standardized program, we did not maximize the potential. Now we will be able to do this!



TJ Lavin, Rep. Pete Sessions, Matt Cowdrey with fellows

National Leadership Program: How It Will Work

- Minimum of nine weeks, at least 20 hours a week, 24 fellows per year
- The fellows will work closely with our Fellowship/Leadership Director and other staff. Individual projects will be assigned based on an individual's unique skill set and their own ability to "bring something to the table."
- Each fellow will receive as many opportunities as possible to learn new skills, network, and gain direct experiences. In addition to hands-on work experiences, all fellows will participate in special presentations by guest speakers and intensive strategic communications workshops. A career plan will be developed by each fellow that will enable him or her to gain appropriate workplace experience while contributing directly and measurably to RespectAbility's impact.
- Upon the completion of the fellowship program, applicants can expect to come away with excellent experience in the field of policy, employment for people with disabilities and leadership skills to help them grow into confident advocates.



Summer 2015 Fellows

Working with Candidates, Fighting Stigmas & Low Expectations

- One of our current fellows, James Trout, asked Presidential Candidate Senator Bernie Sanders about jobs for people with disabilities: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8uPxXHC8Gk&feature=share>
- A previous fellow, Elizabeth Seffrin, also asks Sanders about disability employment: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFaREDOYffM>



**Fellows reporting the first
Republican Debate live**



Fellows visiting the White House

Faith-Based Inclusion

- When the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed, it exempted faith-based organizations. Thus, many such organizations do not yet have the attitudes, physical facilities, or training they need to appropriately welcome people of all abilities. Given the very important role that faith and faith-based organizations play in America, RespectAbility is working for full inclusion in all faith groups. However, it has started its faith-based inclusion work with a focus on the Jewish community and institutions. As model practices are established, we are working broadly across faiths share best practices.
- Fellows will help RespectAbility assist Jewish institutions in accessibility and equality issues. The fellows will work closely in Washington with our Fellowship/Leadership Director and Development and Operations Associate, and with a New York City-based RespectAbility board member. Inclusion fellows will join supervisors at workshops and webinars that pertain to inclusion.

Check out our clip about the importance of Jewish inclusion:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQbv5bOahYc>

Fellowship/Leadership Director Sought

Fellowship/Leadership Director Sought:

- Responsible for intensively supporting and mentoring fellows to teach them basic skills and expectations. More specifically, the director will teach or organize trainings in writing skills and business language, Microsoft Office, workplace etiquette, resume building, networking, project and time management skills, and basic social media. Plus, they will schedule events and meetings, and arrange guest speakers, tours, and other special events that have been a very successful element of RespectAbility's Fellow Program to date. Much more detail about the position can be found in the position description at <http://respectabilityusa.com/about-us/career-opportunities>.

Big Impact on Big Issues

RespectAbility uses scientific best messages from focus groups and polls to move the needle on key issues.



RespectAbility Fellows and Staff on Capitol Hill



MTV's TJ Lavin and Rep. Pete Sessions with Evelyn Kelley, a former fellow and current board member who is hearing impaired.

Using Poll-Driven Messages

Now I am going to read you statements people who want to make increasing levels of employment among people with disabilities more of a national priority have made. After each statement I read, please tell me if you find it to be a very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing or not at all convincing reason to make increasing levels of employment among people with disabilities more of a national priority.

Total
(Very Convincing)

Disability Community
(Very Convincing)

Our nation was founded on the principle that anyone who works hard should be able to get ahead in life. People with disabilities deserve to be able to work to achieve the American dream, just like anyone else

58

62

Companies like Walgreens, E.Y. which was formally known as Ernst and Young, AMC and others have shown that employees with disabilities are loyal, successful and help them make more money. If we find the right jobs for the right people it can and does increase the bottom line of companies

47

48

People with disabilities bring unique characteristics and talents to workplaces that benefit employers and organizations. Stephen Hawking is a genius who happens to use a wheelchair. People with disabilities can work in restaurants, tend our parks, and be super talents in developing computer software.

41

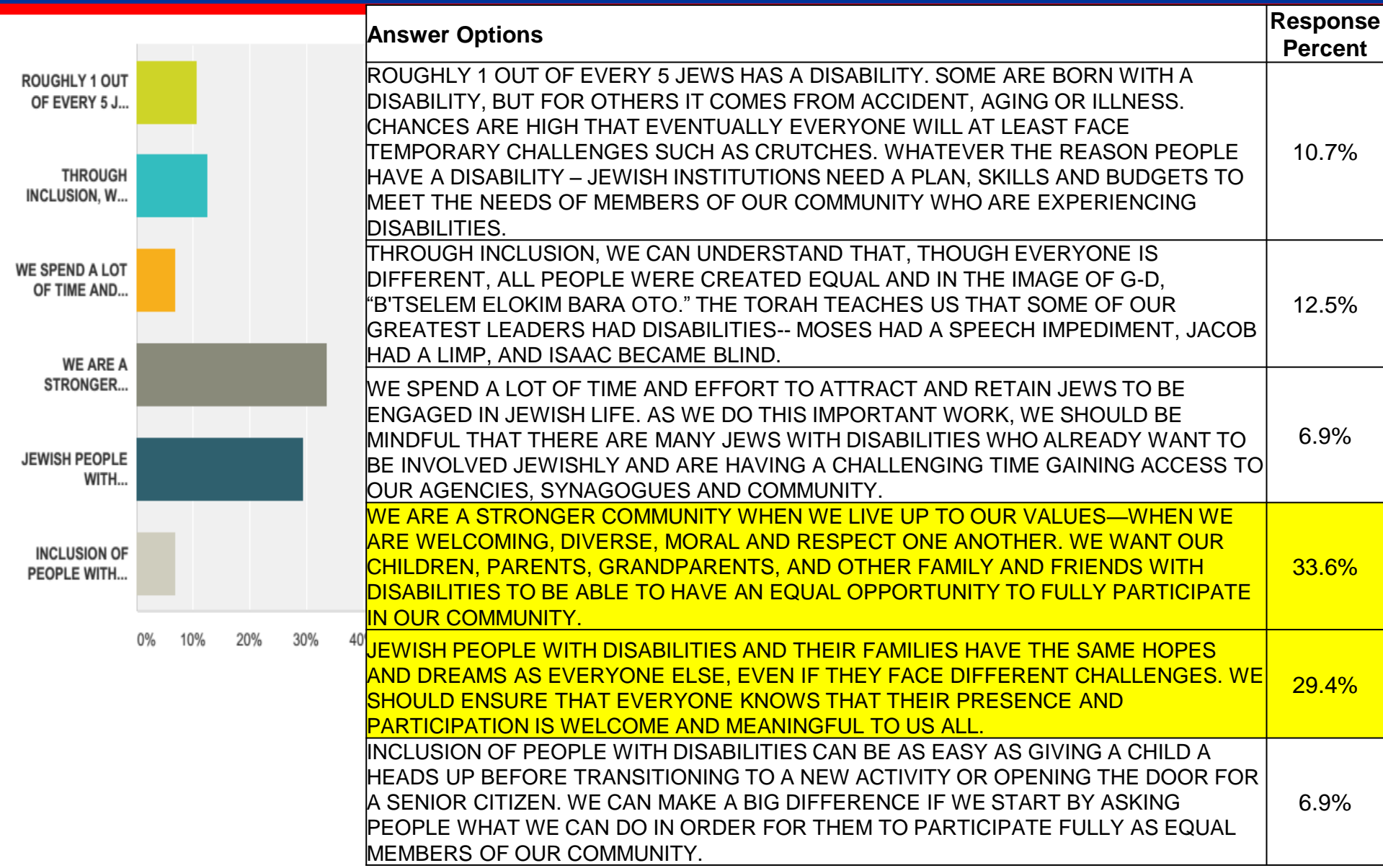
40

People with disabilities should be able to work, Total, 58 percent; Disability Community, 62 percent. Successful companies like Walgreens, EY and AMC already hire employees with disabilities, Total 47 percent; Disability Community, 48 percent. People with disabilities bring unique characteristics and talents to the workplace, Total 41 percent; Disabilities Community 42 percent.

American Dream Strongest Message

<p><i>Now I am going to read you statements people who want to make increasing levels of employment among people with disabilities more of a national priority have made. After each statement I read, please tell me if you find it to be a very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing or not at all convincing reason to make increasing levels of employment among people with disabilities more of a national priority.</i></p>	<p>Total (Very Convincing)</p>	<p>Disability Community (Very Convincing)</p>
<p>Government policies that help people with disabilities get and keep jobs are a win-win because they allow people with disabilities the dignity and financial benefits of work and also grow our economy and save taxpayer money.</p>	<p>41</p>	<p>42</p>
<p>We cannot afford to have more than 10 million Americans who are able to work sit at home and collect benefits when they could help make America stronger. Our current system costs 350 billion dollars a year and actually discourages people from working. It is not sustainable.</p>	<p>38</p>	<p>38</p>
<p>Progress in science, healthcare, innovation and better access to education has made Americans with disabilities more qualified than ever before. Americans with disabilities also have real abilities and want to work. Times have moved ahead - it's time for our workforce to do the same.</p>	<p>32</p>	<p>34</p>
<p>Government policies that help people with disabilities help grow the economy and save taxpayer money, Total, 41 percent; Disability Community, 40 percent. We can not afford to exclude people with disabilities from the workforce, Total 38 percent; Disability Community, 38 percent. Technology, progress and better access to education have made Americans with disabilities more qualified to work and the workforce should adapt, Total 32 percent; Disabilities Community 34 percent.</p>		

Which of the following is the most convincing statement on why inclusion of Jews with disabilities should be a more important priority for the Jewish community?



Fellows

Fellows will receive a transportation stipend of \$250 a month.

Lunch is provided for everyone as each day we speak together as a team, and many of our guest speakers present during that time period as well.



Rep. Brad Sherman with fellows



Fellows Testimonials

Daniel Shaffer

“The standards at Respectability are very high. The work is substantive and demanding in a good way. You immediately feel that you are part of the team and contribute directly to meeting the goals of RespectAbility. A Respectability fellow gets to make a difference while learning valuable and marketable skills.

Fellows meet actual policy makers and are able to interact with excellent mentors who inspire you to achieve success. Being a Respectability fellow is a great way to boost your resume with examples of practical work experience in a top professional environment.

Being a RespectAbility fellow significantly helped me on my path to what I hope will be a successful career.”



Rep. Wasserman Schultz
with fellows

Fellows Testimonials (cont.)

William Fowler

“I study Integrated Marketing Communications at the University of Mississippi. I am set to graduate this May. I'm proud to have been a fellow with the RespectAbility team last winter (2013-14). I mostly handled press relations calling and emailing media editors and journalist to cover issues pertaining to people with disabilities and employment.

During this time there was a breaking story about disabilities insurance fraud which we used to gain entry to the news cycle to publish an op-ed in the largest newspaper in Mississippi, the Clarion-Ledger.

Working with Jennifer Mizrahi helped me gain unique skills in strategic communications to advocate for a non-partisan campaign. These skills have transferred well into my class work, other internships, and future employment.”



Previous fellows holding a meeting in our office

Fellows Testimonials (cont.)

Nathan Bernstein

“At RespectAbility, I was mainly tasked with Jewish Community Inclusion work and assisted with policy work. During my Fellowship, I had a really well rounded experience.

My fellowship helped prepare me for my current role more than I could have anticipated. My previous exposure to the field of disability advocacy and direct service focused solely on education for people with disabilities. RespectAbility really crystalized for me the amount of vocational opportunities there are for people with disabilities, both after they finish school and while they are still in school.

This is especially important in my current job at a school that focuses on the whole child--not only building up their academic skills, but their social and life skills as well. RespectAbility illustrated that having these skills is just as essential as academic skills for future success.”

“Now I am currently working at the Diener School (a small private school for grades K-5 that practices holistic education for students with disabilities) as a 1 on 1 for a student with autism.”



Gov. Sarah Palin and
Kenny Kalman

Fellows Testimonials (cont.)

Deepna Anand

“I think the work I do will help me in the future especially because I want to continue working in the non-profit/social work field. A big part of working in non-profit is fundraising and so by me gaining experience in that it will open a lot of doors for my career.

Even working with excel sheets and word documents will help me, because when looking at job qualifications they want people who have strong experience with these tools because it is used in all work fields.”



Deepna and others working at a conference reaching out to workforce boards

Fellows Testimonials (cont.)

Jay Kolodne

“My tasks [at RespectAbility] are: keeping up w/ social media, helping you with the database(s), as well as assisting anybody else with whatever random tasks they may need, be it making phone calls or working on a PowerPoint, etc.

I've gained a lot of valuable experience and varied my skill set (and strengthened skills I already had). I've learned a lot about a business I knew next to nothing about, as well as just simply the different tasks in a typical office setting, and how to do them, and how all the different aspects work together to make an organization function properly.”



Jay Kolodne, a fellow, volunteering at a conference

Fellows Testimonials (cont.)

Hannah Pincus

“I am currently an advance associate at the White House. At RespectAbility I managed a team of fellows, built and maintained communication with governors, and organized meetings between the CEO and governors across the country. [I also] Provided organizational assistance to Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi and wrote and edited grants for funding.”

Lauren Gilbert

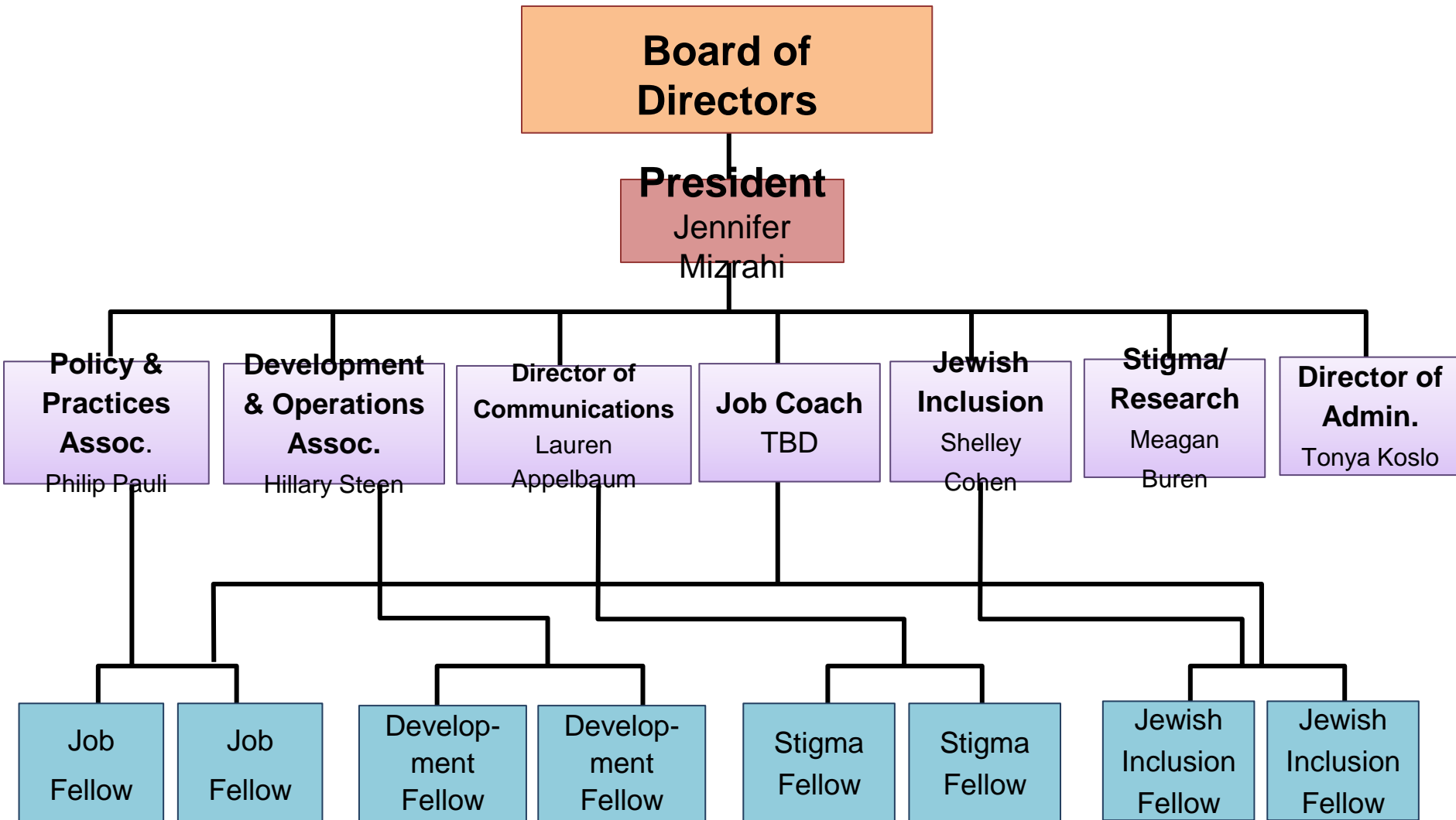
“I managed social media and running background research for focus groups, as well as calling people for the focus groups and serving as a point of contact regarding directions, etc. My fellowship helped me to come up with an idea for what I hope will be my thesis.”

Where are previous fellows now?

- ❖ **Current Employment:** WilmerHale, the White House, Worldwatch Institute, World Bank, EEOC, the Diener School, RespectAbility (as staff!), and more
- ❖ **Current Graduate school:** McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown, University of Mississippi, American, George Washington, Loyola University New Orleans College of Law, and more
- ❖ To date, 75% left to attend (or continued to attend) college or graduate school, 20% obtained inclusive employment, and the others took internships



Organizational Chart



Thanks to the Stanford and Joan Alexander Foundation!

Thanks to the Stanford and Joan Alexander Foundation, through **The National Leadership Program**, young leaders will enhance and deliver on RespectAbility's goals and will also be prepared to solve the problems of tomorrow. They will be a part of a team that also helps thousands of disability leaders around the world have access via the internet to best practices. They will also be better prepared for careers in the future as well. We expect that this program, with your support, will make a significant impact in how our country views, respects, and welcomes the participation of PwDs. Indeed, it will be a "rising tide that lifts all ships."

RespectAbility

11333 Woodglen Drive, Rockville, Maryland

www.RespectAbilityUSA.org

Cell: (202) 365 -0787

JenniferM@RespectAbilityUSA.org