Contact

www.linkedin.com/in/meghanwhittaker (LinkedIn)

Top Skills

Education Law

Policy Analysis

Project Management

Certifications

Licensed Attorney - State of Maryland

Licensed Graduate Social Worker

Publications

Forward Together: Helping Educators Unlock the Power of Students Who Learn Differently

The State of Learning Disabilities: Understanding the 1 in 5

In Whose Hands are We Placing Children's Health? An Examination of "Medical Necessity" for Medicaid's EPSDT Provision

Meghan Whittaker

Special Assistant, OSERS, U.S. Department of Education

Washington, District of Columbia, United States

Summary

Advocate and public policy professional with expertise in federal education policy, special education law, civil and disability rights, learning disabilities, and juvenile justice issues. Experience includes strategy development, legal and policy research and analysis, government relations, coalition leadership, coalition building, project management, grant writing and grant management, financial planning and budget management, stakeholder engagement, and developing content for a wide range of audiences, including policy makers and advocates.

Experience

U.S. Department of Education

Special Assistant

September 2021 - Present (2 years)

Washington, District of Columbia, United States

National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)

7 years 11 months

Director of Policy & Advocacy

December 2018 - September 2021 (2 years 10 months)

Washington, District Of Columbia

As the Director of NCLD's Policy & Advocacy team, I develop and execute strategies for addressing federal issues related to education, disability, equity, and civil rights. I oversee the team's legal, legislative, and regulatory analysis, develop organizational positions, and lead all government relations activities. I regularly provide project management expertise and oversee the development of reports, articles, advocacy materials and other resources to drive policy change and support effective implementation.

I serve as the NCLD liaison with media and press on all policy and advocacy issues, including conducting interviews with reporters, drafting and publishing

op-eds, hosting briefings and offering presentations to Congressional offices, partners, and the public on issues related to special education and disability.

As a subject matter expert, I interface with the U.S. and State Departments of Education, non-profit partners, and other stakeholders to consult and provide technical assistance on education issues.

I seek to build partnerships and coalitions, including setting agendas and facilitating meetings to strengthen relationships and identify areas of shared interest and agreement. I work to build consensus among partners and develop content and tools to support joint advocacy efforts. Elected to serve as a co-chair for the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities' Education Taskforce, I represent a coalition of 50+ disability rights organizations. In this role, I secure meetings with Congressional staff and government officials, represent the coalition in official meetings, develop the strategic direction of the coalition, and facilitate discussions about coalition positions and strategies.

I've been integrally involved in securing millions of dollars in grants from private foundations to advance policy priorities, including writing proposals, developing project plans, developing and managing budgets, and completing grant reports.

Policy & Advocacy Manager
January 2017 - November 2018 (1 year 11 months)
Washington D.C. Metro Area

Policy Research & Advocacy Associate
November 2013 - December 2016 (3 years 2 months)
Washington D.C. Metro Area

DHHS, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration
Social Work Intern
August 2012 - April 2013 (9 months)
Rockville, MD

Hosted a federal roundtable event around the issue of disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system; organized an internal planning committee, facilitated meetings, and authored a concept paper; recruited federal and state decision-makers and service providers to participate; moderated discussion and exchange of information; prepared young people to share their ideas with federal-level policy makers

Discovered best-practices relating to jail diversion; co-wrote a Request for Applications for the new grant program; improved current grant programs and aligned grant programs with the agency’s strategic initiatives

Public Defender Service
Law Clerk
May 2012 - August 2012 (4 months)
Washington, DC

Represented incarcerated youth at disciplinary hearings and monitored conditions of confinement in accordance with Jerry M. class action litigation; participated in collaborative team meetings on behalf of clients to ensure successful re-entry upon release

Performed community outreach to register ex-offenders for annual Re-Entry and Expungement Summit and advised individuals as to their eligibility for expungement of their criminal records

Columbus Community Legal Services
Student Attorney
January 2012 - May 2012 (5 months)
Washington, DC

Certified by the D.C. Bar Council as a student practitioner in the pro bono clinic; managed a team caseload; interviewed clients, investigated facts, conducted research, drafted correspondence, negotiated with agency officials, and resolved two cases

Developed a manual and training guide to assist attorneys in representing students and parents at school disciplinary cases and hearings before the Office of Administrative Hearings

Children's Law Center
Law Clerk
May 2011 - August 2011 (4 months)
Washington, DC

Assisted in trial preparation for abuse/neglect cases and termination of parental rights hearings; conducted case-specific legal research; drafted motions, pleadings, and court documents

Attended home visits and participated in professional team meetings on behalf of clients

DC Superior Court
Judicial Intern
June 2010 - August 2010 (3 months)
Washington, DC

Supported the full-time law clerk and administrative assistant in daily responsibilities including preparing files, fielding phone calls from the public, and assisting in judge in the court room

Drafted court orders, correspondence, agreements, and briefs; completed research tasks and drafted legal memoranda

Education

The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law
Doctor of Law (J.D.) · (2009 - 2013)

National Catholic School of Social Service
MSW, Social Work · (2010 - 2013)

Stonehill College
Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Criminology & Psychology · (2005 - 2009)