

Amber Smock

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RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director of Advocacy and External Affairs
Access Living (AL) — Chicago, IL

April 2010-ongoing

- Responsible for coordinating and implementing Access Living's disability advocacy vision through policy and organizing, as well as senior manager oversight of the Home and Community Ombudsman Program. Guide strategic partnerships and significant networking efforts at the local, state and national levels to further the Access Living mission of empowering people with disabilities to advocates for themselves and live in community-based settings.
- Direct program development and evaluation of annual goals and objectives, budgeting and planning, staff supervision and personnel management for the department.
- Oversee approximately twenty policy, community organizing and Ombudsman staff working in the following issue areas: education, employment, health care, community integration, women, youth, housing, immigration, Latinos. Until the formation of our Legal Department in March 2011, supervised three attorneys and a fair housing testing coordinator.
- Organize community's advocacy on annual State budget negotiations. Network with local, state and national elected officials on behalf of Access Living's advocacy agenda. Organize community engagement and response to city, state and national elections. Registered with Illinois Secretary of State as in-house lobbyist for Access Living.
- Represented Access Living in U.S. Department of State Professional Fellows international mentoring exchange to Bulgaria and Hungary from August 2015-March 2016. Hosted two fellows from those countries in a one month work internship at Access Living; in exchange, visited each country for one week to examine disability issues and community organizing.

Acting Youth and Education Team Leader
Access Living (AL) — Chicago, IL

April 2008-March 2010

- Supervised team of seven whose activities included peer support, mentoring, leadership development, independent living (IL) skills training, community organizing, outreach, organizational inclusion trainings, youth website maintenance and local/state education policy recommendations pertaining to Chicagoans with disabilities ages 16-24. Consumer needs spanned the IL spectrum from education advocacy counseling to economic self-reliance training.
- Oversaw the development and implementation of new programs including Reaching Our Dreams, AL's first IL skills group focused on young people; the AL LGBTQ peer support group; and the Disability Justice Mentoring Collective, a peer mentoring program.
- Developed and maintained the Youth Team's community network citywide, statewide, and nationally, building cross-disability alliances as well as alliances outside the disability community.

Recent new partners include Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU), Prudential Insurance, the Chicago Youth Workers Collective and the Transformative Justice Law Project.

- Responsible for team grant and quarterly reporting, as well as staff hiring, professional development, performance reviews, team meetings and internal advocacy. Coordinated supervision of interns and VR110 Staff Associates. Ensured quality team data entry into in-house database.
- Coordinated the AL Youth Advisory Board, which awarded the first Access Living Annie Hopkins Disability Youth Advocacy Award in 2009.

Youth Leadership Coordinator
Access Living (AL) — Chicago, IL

January 2005 – September 2009

- Provided leadership, community organizing, self- and systems advocacy training to Chicago youth with disabilities through the program YIELDD the Power!. Created curriculum, ensured training accessibility and coordinated all workshop logistics including arrangement of transportation services.
- Worked one on one with youth clients to create individual leadership opportunities.
- Advised, trained and supported Advance Youth Leadership Power (AYLP), a grassroots advocacy group led by and for young people with disabilities.
- Networked with the Chicago Public Schools, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, local community organizations and AL staff to recruit prospective applicants through group and individual presentations.
- Together with youth leaders, established the AL support group for young men with disabilities, Disabilities United in Determination, Education and Strength (DUDES), in July 2005.
- Supervised four youth interns, who assisted with groups and logistics.

Web Editor
F Newsmagazine at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago — Chicago, IL

January 2004 - October 2004

- As F's first web editor, edited print content for monthly online publication of the SAIC student newsmagazine. Solicited, edited and wrote art community stories.
- Managed startup content development of Fzine, F's new online division for high school artists. Recruited art education news stories. Conducted outreach to schools and community groups.
- Established an Fzine Advisory Board, including members of SAIC administration, the Art Institute of Chicago and developed plans to integrate student and teacher members.

Arts Administration Intern
Beyondmedia Education — Chicago, IL

August 2003 - December 2003

- Researched potential donors on the Web. Created database for future funding efforts.
- Assisted in writing and editing grant proposals, sponsor letters, and website copy.

Personal/Executive Assistant
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), United States Department of Education — Washington, D.C

October 2001 - July 2002

- Supported Director of Communications on non-critical executive and personal attendant tasks involved in coordinating national outreach programs.

- Partnered with director to respond to press requests, as well as research and editorial assistance.
- Planned accessible travel accommodations and accompanied director to out-of-office functions.

Assistant Archivist

October 1997-May 1999

Disability Rights Movement Archive, the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

- Sorted and catalogued papers belonging to major figures in the disability rights movement, including Ed Roberts, Patrisha Wright, and Judy Heumann. In addition, reviewed material on site at Berkeley Center for Independent Living and the World Institute on Disability.

EDUCATION

Master of Fine Arts in Writing

May 2004

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Bachelor of Arts in English and Art Practice

May 2000

University of California at Berkeley

SIGNIFICANT COMMUNITY NON-PAID EXPERIENCE

ADAPT: Member since 2005. Have served as a Co-Coordinator of the Chicago chapter and responsible for five years for the National ADAPT Media Committee, which included our social media platform including Facebook and Twitter. Worked with a team of ten to 15 national advocates twice yearly to manage publicity for National Actions. See www.adapt.org and www.twitter.com/nationaladapt. Trainer for the National ADAPT Youth Summit from 2006-2012.

Feminist Response In Disability Activism (FRIDA): Founding member since 2005, group lasted till 2010. FRIDA was a Chicago-based women with disabilities direct action group. Coordinated its best-known campaign, a direct action against the American Medical Association on the issue of the “Ashley Treatment.” Also coordinated logistics for the FRIDA response to the Dorothy Dixon torture-death in Alton, Illinois. Responsible for FRIDA’s public relations coordination until mid-2010, which included a website, blog and Facebook pages.

OTHER COMMUNITY NON-PAID EXPERIENCE:

- Commissioner, Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission, 2012-2016
- Board member, Disability Pride Parade, July 2011-2013
- Member, Regional Transit Authority ADA Advisory Board, Fall 2010-Fall 2014
- Board Member, Illinois Caucus on Adolescent Health, January 2010-August 2011
- Member, White Allies Collective, February-October 2009 (anti-racism group)
- Chicago Deaf and Hard of Hearing Cultural Center, 2006-2007
- Peer Mentor, the Empowered Fe Fes, February-September 2005
- Bodies of Work Disability Arts Festival, 2006
- Disability Pride Parade 2005-ongoing

RECOGNITION

- Leadership Greater Chicago Fellow Class of 2014
- Justin Dart Lead On! Award from the Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities in Illinois, 2012
- Paul G. Hearne Leadership Award, American Association of People with Disabilities, 2012 (see video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYnDvPzSJWM>)
- Best Deaf Activist in Illinois, Deaf Illinois Awards 2011
- Grand Marshal, Sixth Annual Chicago Disability Pride Parade, 2009
- Community Renewal Society 35 Under 35 Leadership Award, 2009
- Progress Center for Independent Living Advocate of the Year, 2008
- Chicago Foundation for Women Founder's Award, 2008. This grant enabled a tour to four countries and 11 cities for dialogue with women with disabilities
- FRIDA won the 2007 National Council on Independent Living Region V Regional Advocacy Award
- Nominated for Best Deaf Activist in Illinois by Deaf Illinois News, 2007
- Nominated for School of the Art Institute of Chicago Community Contribution Award, 2004
- Haas Scholar, UC Berkeley, 1999-2000

RECENT ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- Maintained blog on U.S. State Department exchange trip to Bulgaria and Hungary through the Professional Fellows Program at www.ambersmock2016.blogspot.com
- Facilitate Access Living's Capwiz advocacy alert system, currently with over 1700 members
- Co-administrator for Access Living's Facebook page
- Defending Our Freedom blog for ADAPT, <http://defendingourfreedom2010.blogspot.com>
- ADAPT Twitter moderator, 2008-2013
- Ambertracker <http://ambertracker.blogspot.com>
- Founded FRIDA Wordpress blog <http://fridanow.blogspot.com>, FRIDA website www.ourfrida.org and FRIDA Facebook Cause page
- Access Living's Youth Center, www.alyouthinfo.org

SKILLS SUMMARY

Languages: American Sign Language and some Spanish.

General Skills: Grassroots organizing and direct action, coalition building, disability history and anti-oppression education, curriculum development, project management, marketing and outreach, media advocacy, copywriting, correspondence, proofreading, grant writing and research

Computer Skills: MS Office, blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Blogger/Wordpress, excellent Internet research skills, comfortable with Macs and PCs