

City of Madison: Welcomes new Disability Rights and Services Specialist

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Rebecca Hoyt joins the City of Madison as the Disability Rights and Services Specialist. As a person with a disability, and the parent of a child with a disability, she brings with her deep roots and passion for advocacy. She is committed to celebrating diversity and representing the disability community with pride.

Rebecca joins the Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Division, within the Department of Civil Rights. While not a new position in the department, last year the position was moved into the new Equity and Social Justice Division. The Division's portfolio includes Disability Rights and Services, the Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative, Neighborhood Resource Teams, Language Access, and Environmental Justice.

"We are very pleased to have Rebecca joining our team—we will surely all benefit from her experience and passion. I'm excited to see even greater positive impacts for people with disabilities as she brings her expertise to our community," said Norm Davis, Director of the Department.

Rebecca will oversee City programs, services, and facilities and their adherence to City policies, Madison General Ordinance 39.05, and applicable Federal and State Laws. She will work closely with the Disability Rights Commission and support coordination of the Language Access Program. As the Disability Rights Specialist she'll also provide education, training, outreach, and referrals.

"A lot of my work has centered around employment. I had been working to make California a leader in employment of people with disabilities, but in many ways Madison is better numbers wise. So I want to learn from the people around me and

capitalize on the work being done to make Madison a national leader in disability issues,” Rebecca said.

Rebecca brings with her a wide and deep background in disability rights, through both employment and volunteer work.

She led a state-wide cross-disability movement, the Coalition for the Employment of Californians with Disabilities, which focuses on lifting up intersectional communities most impacted by COVID-19 and transforming California’s workforce.

Rebecca worked as an education advocate at Public Counsel Law Center, representing students and families in special education and school discipline matters. For the last 14 years she worked at Disability Rights California (DRC), the largest disability rights legal services program in the country. As a Senior Advocate at DRC, she strove to preserve and advance educational and employment opportunities through research, policy analysis, advocacy, and coalition building. Some of Rebecca’s accomplishments include: coordinating a state-wide Competitive Integrated Employment Clinic, working with DRC’s Legislative Unit on SB 639 (eliminating the use of sub-minimum wage certificates in California), and publishing *Evaluation of Limitations on Sub Minimum Wage Employment Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*.

Additionally, she led the Re-Entry Collaborative where Disability Rights California, along with over 30 partners, worked to remove barriers to employment and housing for formerly incarcerated and justice-involved people with disabilities. She currently volunteers with the National Lawyers Guild and is the Chair of the Board of Directors for Littlejohn Produce Box Project, a nonprofit that makes fresh produce available to low-income people in Denver.

Rebecca holds a Bachelor’s degree with a double concentration in sociology and psychology from Antioch University Los Angeles.

As a student, she volunteered at the Braille Institute of Los Angeles where her mother worked for 24 years. She completed an internship with [CRI Help](#), serving people with substance abuse and mental health disabilities, and worked with Unusual Suspects, bringing theater arts programs to incarcerated youth.

Rebecca is currently learning sign language. She looks forward to living in Madison and exploring the area once she relocates here.