

Organization Overview:

The Down Syndrome Association of Minnesota (DSAMn) is a statewide nonprofit organization with the mission to empower individuals and families, create community, and celebrate people with Down syndrome. We provide support, resources, and advocacy to individuals with Down syndrome and their families across the lifespan. Our vision is that all people with Down syndrome are given equitable access, opportunity, and support to live their fullest lives in an accepting and inclusive society.

Supervised By:

President & CEO/ DSAMn Managers

Purpose:

The Career Navigator supports individuals with Down syndrome and their families as they explore career interests, build employment skills, navigate services, gain meaningful work experience, and pursue competitive integrated employment.

Working alongside individuals and families, the Career Navigator maintains an active caseload and provides individualized support to identify strengths and career goals, develop actionable plans, address barriers, and determine next steps.

The Career Navigator also serves as a bridge to Minnesota's broader disability employment system. They help individuals and families understand and access resources through Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), county and waiver services, community rehabilitation providers (CRPs), schools and transition programs, employers, and other community partners. Rather than duplicating job coaching or other provider services, the Career Navigator helps connect the pieces, coordinate resources, and maintain momentum toward employment goals.

The role also includes developing relationships with employers, expanding opportunities for employment and work-based learning, and facilitating career education for individuals with Down syndrome.

This is a community-based, relationship-driven position with a high level of autonomy. The Career Navigator manages their caseload and schedule, communicates proactively with their supervisor and team, and may occasionally work outside typical business hours for participant meetings, classes, employer engagement, or community activities.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Individual & Family Career Navigation

- Maintain an active caseload of individuals with Down syndrome at varying stages of career exploration, service connection, job seeking, and employment.
- Meet with participants and families to identify interests, strengths, goals, support needs, barriers, and next steps and develop individualized career plans.
- Provide practical support with career exploration, resumes, applications, interview preparation, workplace expectations, and other employment-related activities as appropriate.
- Help individuals and families navigate VRS, county and waiver services, CRPs, benefits planning, and other employment resources.
- Connect participants with appropriate providers and collaborate with professionals involved in their employment journey.

Career Navigator Job Description

- Develop and connect participants with career exploration, work experiences, internships, and other opportunities that build skills, experience, and confidence.
- Remain engaged as participants move between services and stages of employment, helping identify next steps and address gaps or barriers.
- Maintain timely documentation of participant goals, contacts, progress, referrals, services, and employment outcomes.

Employer & Community Engagement

- Build relationships with businesses, employers, and community partners to expand employment and career exploration opportunities.
- Conduct employer outreach to identify jobs, work experiences, internships, job-shadowing, and other opportunities aligned with participants' interests, strengths, skills, and goals.
- Learn about employer workforce needs and identify opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Provide employers with education and resources related to Down syndrome, workplace accommodations, disability inclusion, and inclusive employment practices.
- Partner with VRS, CRPs, and other providers when specialized job development, job coaching, or ongoing workplace support is needed.

Career Education & Skill Development

- Facilitate three to four approximately eight-week employment-focused class series annually using established DSAMn curriculum, with flexibility to adapt activities and instruction to the facilitator's style and participants' needs.
- Provide accessible and engaging instruction in career exploration, job seeking, interviewing, workplace expectations, communication, professionalism, self-advocacy, and related employment skills.
- Incorporate hands-on learning, employer engagement, and community experiences that connect classroom learning with participants' individual career goals.
- Adapt instruction and materials to support a variety of learning and communication needs.

Systems Navigation & Partnerships

- Maintain working knowledge of Minnesota's disability employment system and relevant community resources.
- Help individuals and families understand how agencies, providers, and available services can work together to support employment goals.
- Participate in relevant community meetings, employment events, resource fairs, and outreach activities.
- Identify recurring barriers, service gaps, and emerging needs and share insights with DSAMn leadership to strengthen programming and partnerships.

Required Qualifications:

- At least two years of relevant professional or lived experience (as a person with a disability) in employment services, workforce development, vocational rehabilitation or related areas. A college degree is not required.
- Demonstrated skill in building trusting, collaborative relationships with individuals with disabilities and their families.
- Strong communication, organization, documentation, and relationship-building skills.
- Ability to manage an active caseload and organize work effectively around participant goals and program priorities.
- Self-directed and dependable, with the initiative and professional judgment to move work forward while recognizing when consultation or additional support is appropriate.
- Thoughtful and adaptable approach to problem-solving, with the ability to recognize needs, identify next steps, and follow through.
- Ability to navigate differing perspectives while keeping each participant's goals, preferences, and self-determination at the center of planning.
- Ability to collaborate effectively with employers, families, service providers, community partners, and team members.
- Ability to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and confidentiality.
- Comfort using technology for communication, scheduling, documentation, data tracking, and virtual meetings.
- Commitment to person-centered practices, self-determination, inclusion, competitive integrated employment, and the belief that individuals with disabilities can meaningfully contribute in the workplace.
- Willingness and ability to travel within the community to meet with participants, families, employers, and partners.
- Knowledge of competitive integrated employment, workplace accommodations, and disability-inclusive employment practices.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including individuals with Down syndrome.
- Familiarity with Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services, county and waiver services, CRPs, and other disability employment resources.
- Bachelor's degree in human services, disability services, rehabilitation counseling, social work, or a closely related field.
- Experience in vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, workforce development, career navigation, transition services, case management, or employment services.
- Experience with employer outreach, business engagement, or job development.
- Experience facilitating educational, career-readiness, or skill-building programs.

What Success Looks Like

A successful Career Navigator builds strong relationships with individuals and families and helps turn employment goals into actionable next steps. They recognize that each person's pathway will look different and know when to provide direct support, make a connection, or bring other partners to the table.

Success means helping participants clarify career goals, build skills and experience, access appropriate services and resources, develop connections with employers and community partners, and make meaningful progress toward competitive integrated employment.

Above all, the Career Navigator approaches this work with the belief that individuals with Down syndrome have valuable skills and contributions to bring to workplaces and communities and deserve opportunities to pursue employment that reflects their interests, strengths, and goals.

Job Details:

- Hours: Part-time, approximately 20 hours per week, plus an additional 4 hours per week during 3 - 4 eight week class sessions annually. The schedule will be determined in coordination with your supervisors.
- Location: Hybrid. In-person for events, meetings, and classes as needed; virtual otherwise.
- Evening and weekend availability required for some events and meetings.
- Salary: \$21.00 - \$24.00 per hour

Benefits:

- Two weeks paid time off (PTO) earned on an accrual basis.
- Any paid holidays that fall over your regular work schedule. DSAMn paid holidays include New Year's, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, MEA Break Thursday, MEA Break Friday, Thanksgiving Thursday, Thanksgiving Friday, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.
- Paid Family Medical Leave

DSAMn is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace. We believe in the value of different experiences, skills, and voices in strengthening our work and achieving our mission. We also strive to have our team reflect the rich ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic diversity of our state. Because of this, we acknowledge this position shall be held by a person of color.

DSAMn is an Equal Opportunity Employer that does not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, alienage or national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, age, disability or handicap, sex, marital status, familial status, veteran status, sexual orientation, genetic information, public assistance, local human rights commission activity, gender identity or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local laws. Our management team is dedicated to this policy with respect to recruitment, hiring, placement, promotion, transfer, training, compensation, benefits, employee activities and general treatment during employment.