

Finn M. Gardiner

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POLICY & ADVOCACY EXPERIENCE

Autistic People of Color Fund

Director of Policy and Advocacy · July 2022–present

- Lead research and write policy briefs about the intersections between disability and race according to our 2022 Public Policy Priorities, including housing, healthcare, employment, mental health, physical health, and education
- Supervise up to two staff members to maintain bill trackers, attend committee meetings, and research salient policy topics
- Conduct trainings and presentations about disability policy, race, and community inclusion to audiences of at least 30 participants
- Participate in national strategy initiatives with other disability advocacy organizations and committees to develop plans to improve outcomes among people with disabilities, especially those who experience multiple forms of marginalization, including submitting commentary to federal agencies' Notices of Proposed Rulemaking

University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School

Lecturer · September 2021–present

- Teach highly rated classes on disability advocacy, identity, and support for up to twenty graduate students and disability professionals in a variety of fields, including medicine, social work, public policy, teaching, and research

Lurie Institute for Disability Policy, Brandeis University

Research Assistant → Research Associate → Communications Specialist (multiple positions) · January 2017 to May 2022

- Combined public policy and communications by writing, cowriting, editing, designing, and illustrating over 30 policy briefs about disability and health for federally funded research projects, including plain-language and Easy Read documents intended for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as summaries, annual reports, white papers, and reports about laws affecting people with disabilities
- Wrote and edited the Institute's public output—policy briefs, statements, social media posts, reports, and other documents—so that it reflected our values and standards
- Supervised up to three undergraduate students who worked with the communications team on accessibility testing, website maintenance, social media, and document processing
- Conducted professional workshops on accessible writing, disability policy, sensitivity in quantitative research, and inclusive language in disability and health research

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Boston Community Coordinator → Policy Fellow (multiple positions) · January 2015 to September 2019

- Conducted and aggregated secondary policy research to create policy briefs, legislative testimonies, infographics, and white papers on topics relevant to disability advocates and researchers, including higher education, school discipline, housing, transportation, community living, state and federal telehealth policy, and transition services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Collaborated with researchers from the University of Massachusetts Medical School and the Human Services Research Institute on a Participatory Action Research project that gauged attitudes toward the creation of an integrated autism database in Massachusetts, including survey design, event planning, and project management
- Revitalized the Boston chapter of a national nonprofit by increasing participant involvement, public-policy strategy, and advocacy by focusing on intersectional disability activism

Institute for Community Inclusion & Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Network

Barbara Wilensky Gopen Fellow · July 2015 to July 2016

- Created and managed a mentoring program from the ground up for seven adults on the autism spectrum, including a multipronged recruitment strategy involving in-person outreach and networking with service providers and other nonprofits, a training curriculum, a resource guide, a comprehensive set of guidelines, employment workshops, and one-on-one support with education, employment, and government services, including help with resume writing and interview preparation
- Conducted extensive research about mentoring programs, including general-purpose programs, youth mentoring, and mentoring geared toward autistic people, as well as employment supports for autistic people

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Wheelock College of Education & Human Development, Boston University

Digital Communications Specialist · August 2022 – present

- Write multiple forms of content for the college’s website, including news releases and features that include interviews with faculty, students, and staff to highlight research, college-sponsored programs, publications, and community initiatives

JohnLeonard Employment Services

Web Designer/Technical Support Representative for Odin, Inc., September 2014 to January 2015

- Revamped, maintained, and quality-tested over over 120 webpages, including account, processing, purchase summary, and informational pages, making them easier to use for customers and reducing the number of support calls about the user interface

EDUCATION

University of Massachusetts Medical School

Leadership and Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) Fellowship, 2018–2019

Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University

Master of Public Policy, 2018 · Concentration in Children, Youth, and Families

Tufts University

Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, 2014

SELECTED PANELS, PRESENTATIONS, AND LECTURES

- Panelist, Autism in the Workplace, Neurodiversity Rising Conference (remote), September 2020
- Panelist, World Autism Awareness Day, United Nations, New York, NY, April 2019
- “Designing for a Neurodiverse World,” Panelist, MIT Communications Forum, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, March 2018
- Co-presenter, “A Citizen’s Jury to Develop Priorities in Autism Data Collection,” Early-Career Professionals Session, American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Conference, Hartford, CT, June 2017
- Panelist, LGBTQ Disability Day, The White House, Washington, DC, June 2016
- Panelist, “Healthcare Experiences of Autistic Adults,” Autistic Adults and the CRPD, United Nations, New York, NY, June 2016