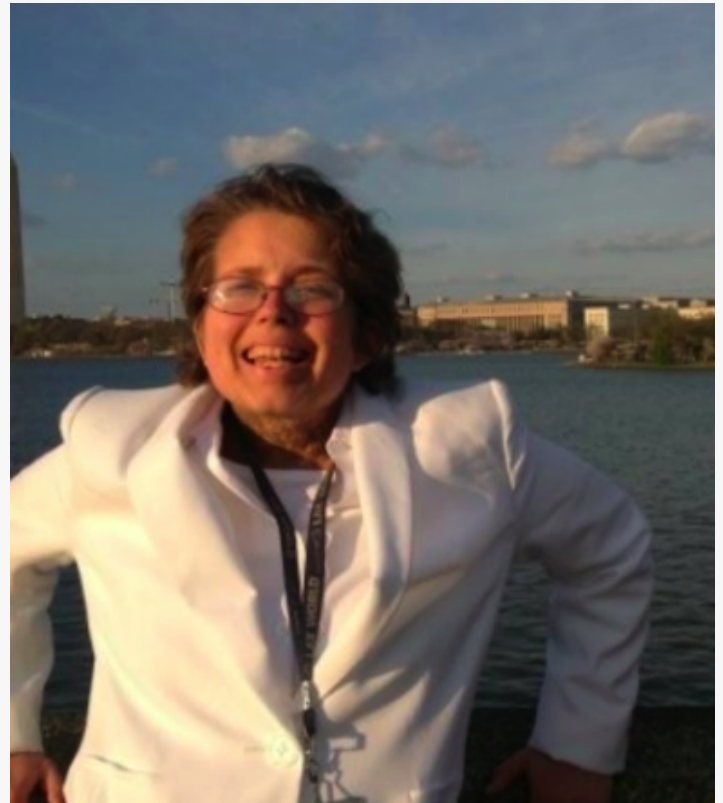


Influential Women Features Nicole LeBlanc: Disability Policy Advocate, National Consultant, And HSRI Policy Assistant

SILVER SPRING, MD, UNITED STATES, June 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Advancing Equity, Inclusion, and Systems Change for People with Disabilities Through National Policy Leadership and Community Advocacy

Nicole LeBlanc is a dedicated disability policy advocate and Self Advocate Advisor at TASH: Equity, Opportunity, and Inclusion for People with Disabilities Since 1975, & HSRI. She is based in Silver Spring, Maryland. With nearly two decades of experience in public policy and advocacy, she has built a career centered on advancing the rights, inclusion, and economic security of people with disabilities and other marginalized communities. Her work spans Medicaid and Medicare policy, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), disability employment, housing, education, and health equity. Nicole is widely recognized for her commitment to systems change, collaborating with national organizations to promote sustainable, inclusive support structures for individuals and families.



Nicole's advocacy journey began in 2007 when she became Advocacy Director for Green Mountain Self-Advocates. In this role, she worked directly with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, helping them build self-advocacy skills and influence policy decisions that impacted their lives. Over the next eight years, she expanded her expertise and leadership in grassroots advocacy, focusing on empowerment, accessibility, and policy engagement at both state and national levels.

Her career trajectory continued to grow through competitive national fellowships and leadership programs, including opportunities with The Arc of the United States, the Autism Society of

America, and a SARTEC Fellowship with the National Disability Rights Network. During this time, Nicole authored Disability Employment Policy 101, a resource advocating for competitive integrated employment and “real jobs for real pay.” Her work has consistently challenged systemic barriers in employment and promoted inclusive workforce practices.

Nicole’s policy influence has also extended into federal-level conversations. She has participated in national advocacy discussions and public forums, including speaking at a press conference led by Senator Bernie Sanders, where she emphasized the importance of strengthening home- and community-based services in healthcare reform. Her contributions reflect a sustained effort to ensure disability perspectives are included in high-level policy decision-making.

In addition to her policy work, Nicole is also a writer, public speaker, and artist. As a fellow with Women’s eNews, she publishes articles focused on disability justice, equity, and inclusion. Through her freelance art practice, she creates socially conscious artwork that highlights disability rights and broader social justice themes. Her advocacy approach is grounded in core principles such as dignity of risk, self-determination, trauma-informed care, and full community inclusion.

Nicole attributes her success to her long-standing commitment to disability advocacy, shaped through lived experience, education, and leadership development. She emphasizes that her early work at Green Mountain Self-Advocates laid the foundation for her understanding of grassroots organizing and systems-level change. From there, her involvement in national fellowships deepened her expertise in policy analysis, disability rights law, and program development.

Nicole has received recognition for her leadership, including the 2019 David Joyce Advocate of the Year Award from the Autism Society of America and the Steve Bartlett Award from RespectAbility. These honors reflect her sustained impact on disability rights advocacy and her dedication to advancing inclusive policies at both community and national levels. In June 2026, she was awarded the SESQUI AWARD IN ADVOCACY @ AAIDD annual meeting in WINDY CITY.

A central piece of Nicole’s professional philosophy is persistence. The best career advice she has received is to be persistent and not be afraid to be a “broken record.” She applies this principle by consistently reinforcing key messages in her advocacy work, recognizing that meaningful policy change often requires long-term effort, repetition, and unwavering commitment.

Nicole identifies equitable access to home and community-based services as one of the most pressing challenges in her field. Despite policy advancements, many individuals with disabilities continue to face barriers in accessing essential services and supports. She notes that these gaps reflect broader systemic inequities that require sustained advocacy and reform.

At the same time, Nicole sees significant opportunities for progress. She is actively engaged in public speaking and media advocacy efforts aimed at challenging ableism and shifting public

narratives about disability. A major focus of her work is moving society away from “low expectation syndrome” toward presuming competence and recognizing the full potential of individuals with disabilities.

She also highlights the importance of addressing healthcare disparities, reducing rates of abuse and bullying, and eliminating segregated systems in favor of inclusive, trauma-informed communities. In employment, Nicole advocates for a shift toward skills-based hiring practices that prioritize individual strengths rather than traditional credential requirements, helping to create more equitable workforce opportunities.

Outside of her professional work, Nicole values connection, balance, and positivity. She maintains an active lifestyle that includes speed walking, hiking, horseback riding, and ice skating. She also prioritizes time with family and friends, finding joy in shared experiences such as watching NFL games and maintaining a strong bond with her sister.

Mentorship plays a significant role in Nicole’s life and career. She draws inspiration from leaders such as Kim Musheno, whose grounded and thoughtful approach to policy work has influenced her own advocacy style. Through these relationships, she continues to refine her leadership approach, remaining focused, resilient, and authentic in her work.

Through her continued efforts at TASH and beyond, Nicole LeBlanc remains committed to advancing equity, inclusion, and opportunity for people with disabilities. Her work continues to shape policies and practices that support individuals in living, working, and fully participating in their communities. Her Motto is Control Your Own Destiny or Someone Else. Her keynote rate is 1000-1500 for conferences, and her consulting rate is \$50-100 hr

Learn More about Nicole LeBlanc:

Through her Influential Women profile, <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/Nicole-LeBlanc>

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