

**Alice T. Aguehonde**

Customer Relations Specialist  
DC Department on Disability Services

Alice left a stable position as an executive assistant with a bank in Ivory Coast, West Africa to help her husband who was severely injured while in the U.S. pursuing advanced studies. She arrived in D.C. with her young son and was get a job as a bi-lingual executive assistant at the African Embassy; she also gained U.S. citizenship. Later, several rounds of chemotherapy helped Alice beat breast cancer, but the treatment affected her health in other ways. As a result, she wasn't able to maintain a job. She found the support she needed to regain her confidence and prepare for a successful return to the workforce when she came to DDS.

Alice was paired with a VR Specialist, who assisted her in reassessing her skills, strengths, and job interests. In 2017, she was selected for a six-month paid internship conducted by DC Government designed to give people with disabilities opportunities to work in professional positions in District agencies. Of 21 people selected through a competitive process, Alice is one of 19 interns who completed the Aspiring Professionals program. She is now a full-time Customer Relations Specialist for DDS.

“Having a good job is very empowering for people with disabilities,” said Alice. “Having a disability doesn't make a person deficient, it only means we use our skills and talents differently to make a positive impact for our employers and the organizations we serve.”