



Disability Law Center of Alaska Seeks New Executive Director

About the Disability Law Center of Alaska

The Disability Law Center of Alaska (DLC) has been providing legally-based advocacy to people with disabilities since 1975 when the U.S. Congress mandated the creation of “Protection and Advocacy” (P&A) agencies in every state and territory to protect and advocate for the rights of people with disabilities. As Alaska’s P&A agency, DLC exists as an independent 501c3 law firm that goes wherever people with disabilities in Alaska are served – schools, hospitals, prisons and jails – to listen to concerns and monitor conditions.

DLC puts significant resources toward ensuring full access to inclusive educational programs, healthcare, financial entitlements, and employment opportunities and is funded to work on a range of issues, including Social Security applications, disability-related employment discrimination, Medicaid appeals, access to Special Education programs, access to voting, and complaints about applying for or receiving vocational rehabilitation or independent living services. In addressing these issues, DLC

- Investigates abuse and neglect in institutions, community settings, or programs that serve people with disabilities;
- Monitors, investigates, and attempts to remedy adverse conditions in facilities that care for people with disabilities; and
- Provides legal representation and advocacy services to people with disabilities.

DLC is known for going beyond the mandates of its government grants to meet the many needs of people with disabilities across Alaska. Based on resources and annual priorities, it also responds to complaints of abuse and neglect or denial of rights outside of institutional care, provides training and education for professionals, family members, and constituency groups, and assists individuals to advocate for their own rights.

The Disability Law Center has offices in both Anchorage and Juneau and serves people in all parts of Alaska, including remote rural communities. Its activities are carried out by a highly skilled, mission-driven staff of sixteen that includes lawyers with deep expertise in disabilities litigation and a competent team of advocates. It is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors who bring skills in law, mental and behavioral health, Medicaid, Traumatic Brain Injury, and lived experience, and it is guided by the Advisory Council on Mental Health Rights. DLC has a \$2.4M operating budget and is financially sound. Revenues come primarily from federal and state grants.

Opportunity Going Forward

The Disability Law Center's new Executive Director will step in at a time of both opportunity and challenge. The organization is fortunate to have secure and ongoing federal funding as Alaska's P&A agency. The funding, however, is inadequate to meet the current and increasing need. DLC's funding has been flat for years and it receives the "minimum allotment" as determined by a population-based formula, which fails to account for Alaska's unique geographic and rural challenges. Reduced funding for services across all agencies has increased the number of people no longer served by government programs which thus puts pressure on DLC to pick up the slack. In the face of this, the Alaska agencies and nonprofits that serve people with disabilities and their families have formed a strong and collaborative network: partners meet regularly to develop strategies, collaborate on grants, and provide mutual support.

The new Executive Director will leverage DLC's many strengths – a highly skilled and committed staff, a strong financial position with the security of stable funding through noncompetitive federal grants, a critical mission and track record of moving the needle on systems change, and its strong partnerships in Alaska's network of agencies that advocate for, serve, and protect people with disabilities – to continue providing critical services on Social Services, Medicaid, and special education while focusing legal and advocacy work on systems-wide issues through ongoing collaboration in Alaska's strong network of disability agencies.

As the new Executive Director assumes leadership, key priorities in the first 12-18 months will be to:

- Cultivate strong relationships with staff and foster a climate of trust and community;
- Assess operations, staffing, and structure; with input from staff, make changes that strengthen communications, build team cohesion, and improve morale;
- Maintain continuity of programs and operations through strong financial and grants management and by securing additional funding sources that increase unrestricted funding;
- Maintain DLC's strong partnerships and build new community relationships; and
- Work with DLC staff and board to develop clear strategic direction and priorities.

Position Duties and Responsibilities

Under the general direction of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director is responsible for the oversight, management, and implementation of statewide protection and advocacy services for people with disabilities.

This position is based at the Anchorage office and involves travel throughout the state of Alaska, including rural travel and occasional out-of-state travel for meetings and conferences. Essential functions, as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act, are the basic job duties that an employee in this position must be able to perform, with or without reasonable accommodation.

Responsibilities (either directly or in collaboration with applicable staff members):

Systems Advocacy and Liaison

- Ensure that DLC is effective in pursuing Board-approved goals and objectives to achieve improvements in service systems, protect the legal rights of, and monitor, investigate and respond to abuse and neglect of Alaskans with disabilities.

- Establish and maintain working relationships with consumers, family members, providers, policy-makers, and other relevant groups or agencies as necessary to achieve these goals and objectives.
- Maintain strong partnerships with coalitions and organizational partners.
- Enable DLC to take full advantage of the authorities provided to a P&A to advocate for and protect the rights of Alaskans with disabilities.
- Serve as the primary spokesperson for DLC. Act as speaker, facilitator and/or trainer to outside groups or community partners.
- Establish and maintain relationships with the National Disability Rights Network and with funders and potential funders.

Program Planning, Development, and Operation

- Develop annual goals and objectives for Board approval; preserve and expand the capacity of DLC to meet its overall mission and ensure the quality of legal and advocacy services.
- Focus resources on implementation of program objectives.
- Monitor program performance and ensure agency services are effective and accountable.
- Ensure management information systems capture all data needed for quarterly and annual reporting; ensure the completion and submission of all required reports.

Employment and Personnel Management

- Direct staff operations, including personnel recruitment, hiring, evaluation, promotion, disciplinary action, and dismissal.
- Assure that staff are trained, directed, coordinated, and supervised.
- Ensure a supportive and productive hybrid work environment across offices throughout the state.
- The Executive Director directly supervises the Legal Director, Business Manager, Database & Grant Specialist, and Office Assistant.

Financial Management

- Oversee and/or develop a proposed annual budget and monitor financial transactions and status throughout the year.
- Write grants and negotiate contracts to obtain funding. Monitor agency activities to ensure compliance with state and federal mandates and agency policy.
- Supervise the completion of applications, budgets, and reports as required by federal funding agencies and other grantors.
- Explore opportunities to diversify funding.

Support to the Board of Directors and the Advisory Council on Mental Health Rights

- Maintain regular and timely communications with the Board and respond to Board and member requests.
- Support the Board and Council in carrying out its responsibilities of oversight of the agency, including an internal evaluation of the program and the development of policies.

Profile of the Ideal Candidate

The ideal candidate will demonstrate the following capacities:

Passion for and Understanding of Disabilities Advocacy

- Passion for DLC's mission to provide for the protection of and advocacy for the legal, civil, and human rights of people with disabilities.
- Experience working and leading in the field of disability advocacy and/or lived experience a plus. Minimum – experience in a related field in human services or behavioral/mental health.
- Experience working with and fighting for vulnerable populations and a deep understanding of equity, inclusion, and diversity principles and dynamics.
- Strong understanding of the legal and legislative issues surrounding disabilities; experience as a lawyer is a strong plus.
- Experience working in and leading a designated Protection & Advocacy organization is a plus.

A Seasoned and Collaborative Organizational Leader

- Significant background in nonprofit organizational management and in strategically managing an organization through growth and change.
- A strategic and visionary leader who sees and leverages opportunities in a complex environment.
- A bridge-builder with conflict resolution skills who fosters collaborative relationships with and among staff and has a track record in fostering a trusting work environment.
- A collaborative approach to managing staff, who can delegate appropriately, set clear standards, and be a decisive leader when needed.
- Solid understanding of nonprofit finances with complex budgets and multiple funding streams, able to strategically align and maximize resources.
- Experience increasing revenues through donor and grant development; experience securing and managing government grants.

A Relationship Builder, Networker, and Collaborator

- An eager networker with a track record in building strategic, strong, and lasting relationships and partnerships.
- An outgoing, compassionate, and charismatic individual with emotional intelligence and strong social skills.
- An exceptional and authentic communicator who can pivot quickly between different groups and styles of communication – legislators, community leaders, local citizens, media.
- Excellent writing skills.

Compensation and Benefits

This is a full-time, salaried, exempt position with a salary of up to \$145,000, determined by relevant experience and qualifications. In addition to the base salary, DLC provides a benefits package that pays 100% cost of coverage for the individual employee, Workers Compensation, and generous personal and family leave plan, and offers a 403(b) tax deferred plan with 4% employer match. The Executive Director may work remotely or in the office at their own discretion so long as the responsibilities of the position are fully met.

Application Process and Additional Information

DLC is an Equal Opportunity Employer and strongly encourages applications from candidates whose identities have been historically underrepresented in the environmental movement, including people who identify as Black, Indigenous, Hispanic or Latino, Asian or Pacific Islander, or people of color; people from marginalized economic backgrounds; and people living with disabilities.

A candidate must include a resume and a cover letter that describes how their qualifications and experience match the needs and mission of DLC. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Upload required documents to: <https://eostransitions.applicantpool.com/jobs/>.

This executive search is being conducted by Eos Transition Partners consultant Catherine Bradshaw. All submissions will be acknowledged and are confidential, and any questions can be submitted to Catherine at: cbradshaw@eostransitions.com.

