JOB DESCRIPTION - Executive Director

Southwest Center for Independence (SWCI)
Position Type: Full-Time, Exempt
Reports To: Board of Directors

About Southwest Center for Independence — Our Mission

Southwest Center for Independence (SWCI) exists because people with disabilities deserve the opportunity, resources, and support to live the lives they choose in their own communities. We believe that disability does not diminish a person's right to independence, dignity, self-determination, or full participation in community life. Guided by the Independent Living Philosophy, we partner with people across the disability and aging communities of Southwest Colorado to identify their goals, overcome barriers, build skills, and access the resources they need to thrive.

Our work is grounded in the belief that people with disabilities are the experts in their own lives. We work *with* people, not *for* them, promoting choice, self-advocacy, accessibility, and equal opportunity. Through independent living services, community partnerships, education, and advocacy, SWCI works to create communities where people can live with greater independence, connection, and control over their futures.

We are seeking a visionary, collaborative, and mission-driven Executive Director who shares these values and can lead SWCI into its next chapter of organizational stability, growth, and community impact.

Employment Eligibility

Job Title: **Executive Director**

Special License/ Certification / Degree Required: ☒ Yes ☐No

Driver Status: ☒ Essential ☐ Marginal ☐ None

Department: Administration/BOD

Reports To: Board of Directors

Job Location: Durango Office

Start Date: _____

Status: ☒ EXEMPT ☐ NON-EXEMPT

Job Type: ☒ Full Time ☐ Part Time ☐ Independent Contractor ☐ Intern – Paid Work Experience (PWE)

# of Hours __40+__ hours per week

COMPENSATION/BENEFITS:
Salary Range:
Paid time off: Paid vacation and sick leave in accordance with SWCI policies.
Health insurance: Health insurance is available after 60 days of employment.
Paid Holidays: SWCI offers 13 paid holidays per year.
Retirement: Access to Colorado SecureSavings, a state-facilitated Roth IRA retirement savings program with payroll deductions.
Professional Development: Opportunities for job-related training and professional development, subject to organizational approval and available funding.

Must be able to pass the Federal background check for access to confidential records.

Position Summary

The Executive Director (ED) is the executive administrator for Southwest Center for Independence (SWCI), one of 9 certified Centers for Independent Living (CIL's) in Colorado. The ED leads the agency, providing strategic leadership, organizational direction, and operational oversight for SWCI. The ED is responsible for achieving the organization's programmatic, financial, and strategic objectives while ensuring that its programs, services, and operations remain aligned with the mission, the Independent Living Philosophy, applicable laws and regulations, and the priorities established by the Board of Directors.

The ED ensures proper administration of contracts, budgets, finances, personnel, operations, agency and contract goals, resource development, and marketing. They carry out the policies and direction established by the Board of Directors (BOD) and ensure that SWCI complies with all the laws and requirements that govern CILs in Colorado. The ED will be expected to apply appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviors in the following performance areas:

Essential Functions:

- Lead SWCI with a deep understanding and commitment to the values and principles of Independent Living Philosophy.
- Manage the immediate and long-term programmatic and financial health of the organization.

- Communicate effectively for the organization and its mission, vision, and values.
- Manage the immediate and long-term programmatic and financial health of the organization
- Perform other related duties as required/requested.

Performance Areas:

1. Strategic Planning and Implementation

- Provide vision, leadership, and direction to advance SWCI's mission, vision, values, and long-term organizational sustainability.
- Work collaboratively with the Board of Directors to develop, implement, and evaluate strategic plans, annual goals, and organizational priorities.
- Lead the development, implementation, assessment, and continuous improvement of programs, services, and operational systems.
- Ensure programs reflect the Independent Living Philosophy, consumer choice, self-determination, accessibility, and meaningful participation by people with disabilities.
- Oversee the quality, effectiveness, and responsiveness of services, using consumer feedback, program data, community needs, and outcome measures to guide decisions.
- Identify emerging community needs and develop innovative approaches, partnerships, and services that strengthen independent living opportunities.
- Advance initiatives that improve access to affordable and accessible housing, transportation, assistive equipment, community-based services, and other resources that support independent living.
- Ensure appropriate systems are in place for program monitoring, documentation, quality assurance, risk management, and organizational accountability.
- Maintain compliance with applicable federal and state laws, regulations, contractual obligations, grant requirements, and Board-approved policies.
- Lead the Management Team in setting priorities, coordinating activities, addressing challenges, and achieving organizational goals.

2. Operations Management

- Oversee SWCI's overall financial health, resource allocation, and long-term financial sustainability.
- Lead the development of the annual operating budget in collaboration with the Management Team and finance Board committee, and present the budget to the Board for review and approval.
- Monitor financial performance, cash flow, expenditures, revenue projections, and budget variances, taking timely corrective action when needed.
- Ensure accurate and timely financial reporting to the Board, funders, government agencies, and other stakeholders.
- Establish and maintain sound financial controls, internal procedures, and risk-management practices.
- Ensure responsible stewardship of public and private funds, including compliance with applicable grant conditions, cost principles, reporting requirements, and financial management standards.

- Manage grants and contracts, financial reporting, and coordination between programmatic and fiscal requirements.
- Approve expenditures and allocate organizational resources within Board-approved budgets, policies, and delegated authority.
- Work with the Board and financial professionals to evaluate organizational risks, strengthen financial stability, and plan for long-term sustainability.

3. Resource Development

- Lead the development and implementation of a comprehensive fundraising and resource-development strategy in partnership with the Development Manager and the Board's Fundraising Committee.
- Identify and pursue opportunities to diversify revenue through federal and state grants, foundations, individual donors, corporate partnerships, contracts, fee-for-service activities, events, and other appropriate funding sources.
- Monitor funding opportunities and develop relationships with potential funders, community leaders, government agencies, and philanthropic organizations.
- Oversee the development, review, and submission of grant applications, proposals, contracts, and other funding requests.
- Ensure funded programs have appropriate staffing, budgets, implementation plans, performance measures, and reporting systems.
- Strengthen donor engagement, stewardship, and recognition practices while ensuring fundraising activities are ethical, mission-aligned, and cost-effective.
- Collaborate with staff and Board members to communicate SWCI's impact and build community support.
- Evaluate new revenue opportunities for mission alignment, operational feasibility, financial sustainability, and long-term organizational benefit.

4. Board Relations

- Maintain a productive, transparent, and collaborative working relationship with the Board President and Board Members.
- Work with the Board regarding organizational performance, financial conditions, program outcomes, staffing matters, compliance obligations, risks, and significant developments affecting SWCI.
- Attend all meetings of the BOD; advise the Board regarding matters relating to SWCI operations and report on successes, challenges, and issues pertaining to SWCI programs and activities. Report on trends and changes throughout the field of independent living.
- Support the Board in fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities, strategic oversight, policy development, and evaluation of organizational performance.
- Assist the BOD with Board recruitment, orientation, development, succession planning, and ongoing education in partnership with the appropriate Board committees.
- Help ensure that Board composition, governance practices, and organizational policies remain consistent with applicable Colorado nonprofit law and federal requirements for Centers for Independent Living.
- Support meaningful participation by people with disabilities in organizational leadership and decision-making.

- Implement Board-approved policies and decisions while maintaining clear distinctions between the Board's governance responsibilities and the ED's operational authority.
- Coordinate the preparation of Board agendas, reports, strategic discussions, and other materials in partnership with the Board President.

5. Community Relations

- Work in coordination with the Colorado State Independent Living Council (CO-SILC) and other members of the Association of Colorado Centers for Independent Living (ACCIL)
- Serve as the principal public representative of SWCI, communicating its mission, services, values, and impact to the community.
- Build and maintain strong working relationships with consumers, families, disability organizations, aging-service providers, government agencies, healthcare organizations, businesses, funders, and community leaders.
- Represent SWCI in local, regional, state, and national meetings, coalitions, conferences, and other relevant forums.
- Develop partnerships that expand access to services, improve community inclusion, address unmet needs, and advance independent living.
- Oversee organizational communications, public information, outreach, and the development of agency publications and promotional materials.
- Actively promote disability rights and independent living philosophy through all activities conducted within and on behalf of SWCI.

6. Advocacy and Advancement of Independent Living

- Champion the Independent Living Philosophy, self-determination, and community inclusion of people with disabilities.
- Represent the agency as a active member of the ACCIL.
- Work with staff, consumers, community partners, and the Board to identify and respond to public policy issues affecting the disability community.
- Promote consumer-directed services and meaningful involvement of people with disabilities in decisions affecting their lives.
- Support advocacy initiatives addressing barriers to accessible housing, transportation, employment, healthcare, public services, and community participation.
- Ensure that advocacy activities remain consistent with SWCI's mission, legal responsibilities, funding conditions, and applicable restrictions.

7. Human Resources

- Lead, mentor, and support the Management Team and foster a collaborative, accountable, and mission-focused work environment.
- Establish clear positive expectations, performance goals, communication practices, and accountability measures for organizational leadership and staff.
- Ensure appropriate systems are in place for recruitment, onboarding, supervision, performance evaluation, professional development, and succession planning.

- Oversee the development, implementation, and periodic review of personnel policies and procedures in accordance with applicable employment laws and Board-approved policies.
- Promote a workplace culture grounded in respect, accessibility, inclusion, transparency, and professional integrity.
- Ensure reasonable accommodations are appropriately considered and implemented for qualified employees and applicants in accordance with applicable law.
- Promote equitable hiring, advancement, and professional-development opportunities and support the participation of people with disabilities throughout the organization.
- Address personnel concerns in a timely, fair, confidential, and consistent manner.
- Support staff development and retention by encouraging professional growth, collaboration, innovation, and continuous learning.
- Ensure staffing structures and personnel resources align with program needs, funding requirements, organizational priorities, and the approved budget.

Qualifications

- A master's degree in nonprofit management, public administration, business administration, social work, rehabilitation, human services, or a related field, with at least three years of significant management experience in a nonprofit or comparable organization; **or**
- A bachelor's degree in a related field, with at least four years of significant management experience in a nonprofit or comparable organization; **or**
- An equivalent combination of education and directly related professional experience demonstrating the knowledge and abilities necessary to perform the position successfully.
- Demonstrated leadership experience in organizational management, strategic planning, financial oversight, personnel supervision, and program administration.
- Experience developing and managing budgets, securing resources, overseeing grants or contracts, and maintaining organizational accountability.
- Demonstrated commitment to the Independent Living Philosophy and the rights, self-determination, and community inclusion of people with disabilities.
- Ability to build effective relationships with a Board of Directors, staff, consumers, funders, government agencies, and community partners.
- Strong written, verbal, interpersonal, organizational, and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to interpret policies, regulations, funding requirements, and organizational priorities and translate them into effective operational practices.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience working within a Center for Independent Living, disability-services organization, advocacy organization, or related nonprofit environment.
- Knowledge of the history and current priorities of the independent living and disability rights movements.
- Experience with federal or state grants, government contracts, grant compliance, program monitoring, or nonprofit financial management.
- Familiarity with federal and Colorado laws and regulations affecting people with disabilities and organizations serving the disability community.

- Experience in fundraising, grant development, donor relations, community engagement, or revenue diversification.
- Experience working with a nonprofit Board of Directors and supporting effective governance.
- Demonstrated ability to lead organizational change, develop new partnerships, strengthen programs, and improve long-term sustainability.
- Strong computer skills and the ability to use common office, financial, communication, and data-management systems.
- Ability to manage competing priorities, work independently, exercise sound judgment, and follow through on commitments.
- A collaborative leadership style that values staff expertise, consumer voice, accountability, and continuous improvement.
- Bilingual or second language (American Sign Language, Spanish) a plus.
- **Firsthand experience with disability, whether through personal lived experience or close involvement in the disability community, is valued and welcomed.**

Leadership Attributes

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- **Mission-driven leadership:** A genuine commitment to independent living, disability rights, and community inclusion.
- **Strategic thinking:** The ability to identify opportunities, anticipate challenges, and translate long-term goals into measurable results.
- **Financial stewardship:** A commitment to responsible resource management, transparency, and organizational sustainability.
- **Relationship building:** The ability to establish trust, develop partnerships, and communicate effectively with diverse stakeholders.
- **People-centered management:** A commitment to supporting staff, developing leadership capacity, and fostering an accessible and respectful workplace.
- **Integrity and accountability:** The ability to make ethically sound decisions, communicate honestly, and take responsibility for outcomes.
- **Adaptability and innovation:** A willingness to evaluate existing practices, respond to changing community needs, and pursue effective new approaches.
- **Consumer-centered leadership:** A consistent commitment to listening to people with disabilities and ensuring their voices and choices inform organizational priorities.

Work Environment and Position Expectations

The Executive Director works in a nonprofit leadership environment that requires collaboration with the Board, staff, consumers, funders, and community partners. The position involves office-based work, meetings, community engagement, public speaking, and travel as necessary to represent SWCI and support its services throughout Southwest Colorado.

The position requires the ability to manage multiple responsibilities, respond to organizational needs, and occasionally adjust work schedules to accommodate meetings, deadlines, and community activities. Reasonable accommodations will be considered in accordance with applicable law.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Southwest Center for Independence is an equal opportunity employer committed to an accessible, inclusive, and respectful workplace. Employment decisions are made in accordance with applicable federal and Colorado law. SWCI welcomes qualified applicants who share its commitment to disability rights, independent living, and meaningful community participation.

How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter describing their leadership experience, relevant qualifications, and commitment to the Independent Living Philosophy**.** Application instructions will be provided in the official job posting.