



DISABILITY LAW COLORADO

Protecting the rights of Coloradans of all ages since 1976

Executive Director

Denver, Colorado

(Salary range: \$135,000 - \$150,000 annually)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Led by a mission to protect and promote the rights of people with disabilities and older people in Colorado through direct legal representation, advocacy, education, and legislative analysis, **Disability Law Colorado** (DLC) has represented more than 35,000 people with disabilities, provided technical assistance to more than 130,000 people, and reached over 100,000 Coloradans through their education programs and publications over its 50-year history. Building upon this track record of success and following the departure of a longstanding leader, DLC now seeks nominations and applications for its next **Executive Director** (ED).

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the next ED will lead a highly qualified team of 27 dedicated staff delivering individual services, fostering statewide self-advocacy, and pursuing strategic litigation. The ED will oversee all internal finances and the management of a roughly \$3 million annual budget. They will also ensure compliance with legal and funder requirements, safeguarding the short- and long-term fiscal and programmatic health of the organization.

DLC seeks an inspiring and skilled leader who will establish strong collaborative relationships, both internally and externally, and work to articulate and implement a strategic vision for the next phase of the organization.

The ideal candidate will have significant nonprofit leadership and management experience within disability rights, legal advocacy, or a closely related field. Strong candidates will demonstrate commitment to advocating for the rights of people with disabilities and older people and the ability to mobilize support both internally and externally for strengthening systems and community supports on behalf of the populations DLC serves.

The ED will exhibit humble servant leadership and will have a strong ability to effectively empower staff and collaborate with the Board. The ED will represent DLC publicly and will continue to elevate the organization's profile as a critical, impactful agency, both across the state and nationwide.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Established in 1976 by attorneys Steve Zimmerman and Joe Epstein, Disability Law Colorado (DLC) protects and promotes the rights of people with disabilities and older people in Colorado through direct legal representation, advocacy, education, and legislative analysis. Originally organized as The Legal Center for People with Disabilities, DLC was formally recognized as the state's Protection and Advocacy (P&A) System in 1977 at the direction of Governor Lamm and in response to pressure from the disability community. Since

that early inception and following nearly 50 years of service, DLC has represented more than 35,000 people with disabilities, provided technical assistance to more than 130,000 people, and reached over 100,000 Coloradans through their education programs and publications.

Since 1988, DLC has also served as the statewide coordinator of aging services for older adults and works to protect and promote their rights through two programs aimed at improving the quality of life for seniors. The [Colorado Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program](#) protects the rights of people living in nursing homes or assisted living residences to ensure they are treated fairly, and their wishes are respected. In addition, DLC helps seniors prepare legal documents, avoid scams and financial exploitation, and receive the benefits they are entitled to through the Legal Assistance Developer Program.

Working across a wide array of issues, including education, housing, employment, assistive technology, and seniors' legal rights, DLC provides the following services:

Direct Legal Representation

DLC offers free or low-cost legal services to people with disabilities whose civil or human rights have been violated. Based on set criteria and internal resources, DLC supports Coloradans through full case service, short term assistance and legal counsel, self-advocacy resources and guidance, and referrals to other resources or counsel if applicable.

Investigation

DLC has the authority under federal law to gain access to facilities and records to investigate allegations of abuse and/or neglect of people with mental illness or developmental disabilities, as well as older people or people in the corrections system. DLC also investigates the unlawful use of seclusion and restraint in schools, including trainings for school districts on the lawful use of seclusion and restraint.

Training & Education

DLC provides training to housing and service providers, schools and school districts, parents, attorneys, policy makers, advocates, employers, ombudsmen, and any agency interested in educating their team about the law. These trainings include general overviews of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Employment Law as well as highly customized topics related to the rights of people with disabilities and older people on a special request basis.

Information & Referrals

Believing that an informed public is the best way to ensure the dignity and rights of people with disabilities are widely respected, DLC is committed to their role as a source of information and referrals for all Coloradans.

Legislative Analysis & Advocacy

With a track record of educating policy makers and legislators about the rights of people with disabilities and older people, DLC has played an instrumental role in getting groundbreaking laws passed in the state. DLC also creates an annual Legislative Scorecard tracking bills and legislations that has the potential to impact the disability community. [Click here](#) to review the 2021 scorecard.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The next Executive Director will have the tremendous privilege of building upon the agency's impressive history of success and impact. The ED will join a team of approximately 27 staff deployed across 2 offices,

all of whom share a deep commitment to creating impactful change in the lives of those they are serving. Specifically, the Executive Director will:

- Provide strategic leadership and effective management of the agency including program planning, compliance, development, budget, and financial oversight.
- Build a robust, collaborative culture of transparency, active communication, and shared inclusive leadership, working to envision and implement a cohesive organization driven to provide excellent services and one that more fully represents the diversity of Colorado.
- Prioritize areas in which DLC can optimize operations by reviewing existing internal IT and Human Resource systems in particular, as well as information management practices, and identifying opportunities for advancement.
- Cultivate a strong working relationship with the Board of Directors through effective and responsive engagement with all members, both at and between Board meetings.
- Explore cultivation of new donors and stewardship opportunities, identifying and pursuing the potential to broaden and diversify the funding base beyond the current revenue streams.
- In partnership with the Board of Directors and staff, develop, implement, and communicate DLC's strategic vision among legislators, key partners, and stakeholders.
- Enhance the capacity of the agency to address and evaluate client needs, service priorities, and emerging issues impacting client needs.
- Raise the visibility of DLC by identifying and cultivating strategic and robust relationships with cross-sector partners, key decision makers, and other relevant local, statewide, and national organizations.
- Guide and support community organizing and advocacy initiatives.
- Serve as an ambassador for DLC internally and externally, inspiring others to take bold action to address systemic issues facing the disability and aging communities.
- Directly supervise and mentor the Leadership Team, comprised of 6 individuals servicing from offices in Denver and Grand Junction, and strive to foster a culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional and personal abilities, attributes, and experiences:

- An inclusive, visionary, and transparent leader with demonstrated experience effectively inspiring and empowering staff, board members, and partners toward greater impact in addition to advancing representation through the cultivation of a diverse and inclusive staff.
- Deep appreciation of, and success in, advocacy, community organizing, and mobilizing at various levels.
- Demonstrated leadership in a complex and dynamic organization, including fiscal oversight and budget development experience, revenue stewardship, and familiarity with fundraising.
- Experience developing or improving organizational capacity, with an eye toward opportunities for process improvement and refinement.

- Demonstrated success, internally and externally, as a consensus builder and collaborator.
- Excellent writing, analytical, and communication skills.
- An underlying commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and an understanding of the culture and specific challenges faced by persons living with disabilities.
- Sensitivity and sophistication in stepping into an agency that has been run by a leader with an extensive breadth and depth of expertise, who is leaving a substantial and enduring legacy after decades at the helm.
- Ability to represent DLC to a variety of stakeholders and intermediaries in a credible and influential way.
- Self-starter with strong ability to manage a diverse, driven, and successful staff.
- An optimistic outlook, along with the humor, integrity, patience, and perseverance necessary to support mission-driven staff, and to advance efforts to ensure persons living with disabilities and older Coloradans have greater access to services.
- Work performance consistent with the [Colorado Rules of Professional Conduct](#).

TO APPLY

More information about **Disability Law Colorado** may be found at: [disabilitylawco.org](#). DLC provides reasonable disability accommodations to enable qualified individuals with disabilities to perform essential functions. The salary range for this role is between **\$135,000 - \$150,000**, plus a benefits package that supports employees' overall well-being.

This search is being led by [Katherine Jacobs](#), [Tamar Datan](#), and [Chris Cannon](#) of [NPAG](#). Due to the pace of this search, candidates are strongly encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Candidates may submit their cover letter, outlining their interest and qualifications, along with their resume via NPAG's [website](#).

Cultivating a diverse and inclusive team of board members, staff members, and partners is an essential component of DLC's work to advance equity. Candidates of all backgrounds and abilities are strongly encouraged to apply.