

Position Description



For the Position of President and Chief Executive Officer

June 2017

Confidential Position Description

Title: President and Chief Executive Officer
Company: Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Reports to: Board of Directors
Location: Washington, DC
Website: <http://www.bazelon.org/>

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Since 1972, the Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law has advocated for the civil rights, full inclusion and equality of adults and children with mental disabilities. It has been pivotal in expanding the civil rights movement to include fighting discrimination against, and segregation of, people with mental disabilities. Today, the Bazelon Center accomplishes its goals through a unique combination of litigation, public policy advocacy, coalition building and leadership, public education, media outreach and technical assistance—a comprehensive approach that ensures we achieve the greatest impact.

The Bazelon Center employs cutting-edge litigation to effect progressive systemic change and impact public policy. It secured early legal precedents creating basic civil rights for people with mental disabilities—including the rights to a public education, receive services in community-based settings instead of institutions, and make decisions about one’s own care. The Center was instrumental in the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and played a key role in the historic case of *Olmstead v. L.C.* (1999), in which the Supreme Court found that needless segregation of people with psychiatric disabilities violates the ADA. Over the last decade, it has worked to expand the reach of *Olmstead* to address not only unnecessary institutionalization in public facilities, but also to remedy segregation in nursing homes, board and care homes, schools and classrooms, sheltered workshops, and other day services. The Center’s *Olmstead* settlement agreements have provided thousands of individuals with opportunities to move out of segregated, dead-end facilities and to live full lives in their communities. The Bazelon Center has set legal precedents defining a national model of comprehensive community-based disability systems.

Impact Litigation

The Bazelon Center engages in cutting-edge litigation to effect progressive systemic change and impact public policy. Its cases seek to protect and expand legal rights, consumer choice, access to services, and autonomy for people with mental disabilities. The Center frequently works on cases with private lawyers, legal services programs, ACLU chapters, and state protection and advocacy systems.

Legislative Policy/Advocacy

The Bazelon Center pursues a progressive mental health policy agenda, particularly at the federal level, to reform systems and programs to protect the rights of children and adults with mental disabilities to lead lives with dignity in the community. Policy staff promote these goals in federal legislation and regulation, policy analysis and research, and technical assistance to state and local advocates.

Technical Assistance/Individual Representation

The Bazelon Center provides technical assistance to attorneys and others working to protect and expand the legal rights of people with mental disabilities. In limited cases, it also provides representation to individuals facing discrimination or a denial of needed services.

ROLE SUMMARY

The Bazelon Center is seeking an energetic leader with the knowledge and insight to lead a new strategic growth plan. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer will be a visible role model of leadership, managerial excellence and integrity. The CEO is responsible for overall leadership and management of the organization and execution of its mission. Specific responsibilities include the following:

Fiscal Management

The CEO will ensure the financial viability of the organization through ongoing fundraising and the control of operational expenses. S/he will oversee planning, preparation and implementation of the annual agency budget. The CEO will assure that the budget and supporting rationale are presented to the Finance Committee for comment and to the full Board of Directors for approval prior to the beginning of each fiscal year. S/he will assure that a monthly statement of the Agency's financial position is provided to the Finance Committee, and a summary to the full Board. The CEO will discuss with the Board any significant threat to, or departure from this objective.

Management and Leadership

The President & CEO will provide the necessary inspiration and vision to this highly capable team. The successful candidate will ideally bring a strong entrepreneurial ethos and provide collaborative and motivational leadership. This will include transparency and ongoing communication to staff. S/he will work to retain, develop and mentor staff. The CEO will serve as a champion and role model for the culture and work of the organization.

Fundraising/Community Relations

The CEO will provide leadership and oversight to the External Relations office and provide support to the Board and staff in fund development. S/he will oversee the development and implementation of an organization Resource Development Plan, in cooperation with the Board. The CEO will oversee and participate in organizational fundraising activities which will ensure that the Bazelon Center presents a positive public image and is visible to the community it serves. The CEO will be the "face" of the organization and main spokesperson of the organization, as appropriate, with funders, stakeholders, and the media.

Legal and Advocacy Management

The CEO will ensure that the organization routinely provides professional, high quality services and is in compliance with all grant and foundation requirements. S/he will serve as the Liaison and coordinator between the legal staff, the support/external relations staff and the board on legal and advocacy issues. The CEO will also ensure the legal and advocacy staff are in-sync and are well versed on the significant issues impacting our mission and the staff's work.

Operations

The CEO will oversee the development and implementation of an organization strategic business plan. S/he will manage all administrative operations of the organization, and ensure that all applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations are followed. This will include ensuring that the organization's physical space is appropriate for the size and needs of staff and making sure staff are provided with adequate access to technology and equipment needed to effectively conduct their job responsibilities.

Board Operations

The CEO will provide leadership and support in the recruitment of candidates for the Board of Directors through a process approved by the Board of Directors. S/he will provide input and information to assist in the orientation and ongoing education of Board Members regarding their responsibilities, the needs of people with mental health conditions and the work of Bazelon Center. The CEO will communicate effectively and regularly with the Board regarding ongoing Bazelon operations, challenges and opportunities facing the organization and any other significant events pertaining to Bazelon Center.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

The Bazelon Center is seeking an experienced leader with the vision for, and commitment to, growth and excellence that the organization needs to build upon a strong history of exceptional work. To that end, the organization seeks an experienced and strategic leader with an enthusiastic commitment to the vision, mission and work of the organization. Specific Competencies the board will expect the successful candidate to possess include the following:

Knowledge and Experience - The successful candidate will be an accomplished and capable leader with experience in the nonprofit sector. The ideal candidate will bring a minimum 10 years of management, business, or comparable experience. Ideally, the candidate will bring exposure to an organization in change of growth as well, while leading through a compassionate business-approach. Experience in an advocacy/policy or similar organization is preferred but not required.

Fundraising and External Relations - The successful candidate must possess outstanding oral and written communication skills and experience representing an organization to a broad set of external audiences. The successful candidate will possess experience and be in tune with advanced and current approaches to fundraising, including foundation and major donor work. S/he will also have the ability to successfully engage the Board of Directors in marketing and fundraising activities on an ongoing basis. Personally, the ideal candidate will enjoy the fundraising aspects of his/her role and be highly comfortable working with high net worth individuals, family foundation offices, senior corporate and foundation executives, and government agencies.

Vision and Strategy - The successful candidate will be a strategic, visionary and out-of-the-box thinker who can both develop and execute what will be the future direction of the Bazelon Center. S/he will possess the ability to anticipate new opportunities for the organization and a demonstrated record of sound judgment, including having created a strategic plan and/or successfully having grown and developed an organization or substantial component of an organization.

Operations and Fiscal Management - The ideal candidate will have demonstrated successful management of an organization of comparable size, complexity, and culture, with clear strategic results. The successful candidate will bring strong business and financial acumen, as well as direct operational experience. The candidate should have experience working closely with board, staff, and external constituents to achieve ambitious goals.

Management and Leadership - The successful candidate will have experience managing and leading a business operation or organization. S/he will have a proven track record in recruiting and retaining exceptional talent and in strengthening and developing staff. The ideal candidate will bring a highly collaborative and consensus building management style to the organization. The successful candidate will be a visible and accessible manager and leader who is able to communicate the vision of the Bazelon Center effectively.

Interpersonal Style - The ideal candidate will be a charismatic, self-motivated, and highly collaborative leader with the interpersonal skills and intellect needed to lead the organization. S/he will be an active listener and demonstrate great respect for others. The successful candidate will have the ability to develop positive and productive relationships and to decisively build consensus. S/he will demonstrate the analytical and conceptual skills, as well as the tactical skills, needed to move the organization forward. Most importantly, the candidate must have energy and endurance, showing passion, focus, and commitment for the work of the Bazelon Center.

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SEARCH TEAM

Diversified Search, one of the Top 10 retained executive search firms in the country, has been retained by The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law to identify a Chief Executive Officer. For more information about this employment opportunity or to apply, please contact Nalini Perkins. To apply, send a résumé and cover letter to nalini.perkins@divsearch.com.

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