



DIRECTOR OF INDEPENDENT LIVING

ABOUT ACCESS LIVING

The independent living movement, with roots in the civil rights and social change movements, began taking shape in 1972 with the creation of the Berkeley Center for Independent Living – the first American institution of its kind. As other centers for independent living sprang up across the country, a new philosophy emerged – an "independent living philosophy" that asserts that people with disabilities are their own best advocates and able to make the necessary decisions in order to live, work, and socialize in the community. This was a significant shift away from the prevailing "medical model" which viewed people with disabilities as individuals who needed to be cared for. The community of people with disabilities entered the dawn of a new era.

In 1980, Access Living brought the independent living movement to Illinois when it was founded as part of the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago's (now Shirley Ryan Ability Lab) quest to address the growing need for affordable, accessible housing for its patients ready to leave the RIC.

By the mid-1980's Access Living was a thriving, independent non-profit organization that began to tackle many of Chicago's most pressing problems, the lack of housing, transportation options for people with disabilities, and the need for services to be provided in the community. Successfully linking powerful advocacy efforts around these and other crucial issues to specific client needs enabled Access Living to turn clients into activists, and activists into leaders.

Key Facts

- www.accessliving.org
- **67 staff**
- **\$7 million annual budget**

Mission

Access Living's mission, based on the philosophy of the Independent Living Movement, is to ignite the power and pride of people with disabilities, provide critical services, and break down systemic barriers to create a stronger, more inclusive society.

Visit



ACCESS LIVING | DIRECTOR OF INDEPENDENT LIVING

For four decades, Access Living has impacted the lives of thousands of individuals with disabilities through direct services, advocacy, and education. Access Living's mission, based on the philosophy of the Independent Living Movement, is to ignite the power and pride of people with disabilities, provide critical services, and break down systemic barriers to create a stronger, more inclusive society.

A vocal advocate on the forefront of local and national change, Access Living has played a key role in many of the improvements that took shape in Chicago and across the country. At home, Access Living has been a part of several campaigns to make mainline public transportation more accessible. Today, 100% of all CTA buses are lift-equipped. Also, Access Living successfully advocated for and won the allocation of \$30 million of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) budget to make schools more accessible. These are a few examples of the impact that Access Living has had and continues to have.

In 2003, Access Living launched Living the Vision: The Campaign to Build a Permanent Home for Access Living. The goal of securing a permanent office space was to ensure Access Living's financial stability, while allowing the organization to continue to expand and pioneer new programs and standards of service for people with disabilities, both nationally and internationally. On March 5, 2007, the dream became a reality when Access Living opened its doors to a new, state-of-the-art facility that stands as a national model of Universal Design and Green Design.

Confronting the issues posed by inaccessible housing, transportation, and public services is a crucial step in achieving independence. Further, a major component of breaking down physical barriers is changing attitudinal barriers. With an engaging array of cultural events, workshops, trainings, and support groups, Access Living focuses on instilling pride in the way people with disabilities view themselves and fosters dignity in the way others view the disability community. To support its mission, Access Living is seeking its next Director of Independent Living.

THE POSITION

Reporting to the Executive Vice President and serving as a member of the leadership team, the Director of Independent Living is responsible for upholding the mission of the organization to promote independent living for people with disabilities in Chicago. The position will manage all components of Access Living's Independent Living Department. Specifically, the position directs services for individuals, upholding all the core services of a center for independent living. The position guides the overall strategic direction of the Independent Living Department, including



program development and evaluation of annual goals and objectives, budgeting and planning, and staff management.

The Director of Independent Living manages a team of approximately 25 people in three teams: Community Supports, Community Reintegration, and the Youth Institute. Community Supports connects people with disabilities to services to increase their independence. Community Reintegration provides support to people as they transition from institutions, such as nursing homes, into the community. The Youth Institute provides learning and connection opportunities to youth with disabilities as they transition from high school to higher education and employment through a series of programs, mentoring, and workshops. The Director of Independent Living's peers include the Directors of Advocacy, Communications, Development, and Finance & Administration. With a passionate and engaged team, the Director of Independent Living is a leader who understands the challenges that disabled persons face and is committed to empowering that community.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director of Independent Living will have the following primary responsibilities:

GENERAL MANAGEMENT

- Conducts annual programming and budgeting and oversees the programming and budgeting related to service provision.
- Ensures compliance with Access Living policies in human resources, administration, finance, and programs, as well as local, state, and federal laws.
- Stays current on independent living and related disability trends and developments that pertain to Access Living's services locally and nationally.
- Develops and maintains good relationships with Chicago area service providers.
- Co-leads, with other department Directors, efforts to synergize work between departments.
- Assists, at Director of Development's request, with grant submissions and other fundraising activities.
- Creates and implements strategic plan initiatives related to Access Living's services.
- Ensures timely submission of department reports, including the relevant section of the PPR report.



SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION

- Assists the Executive Vice President and President/CEO in determining new service needs to benefit disabled people and their families.
- Ensures that clear policies, practices, and procedures that relate to Access Living's service delivery and information and referral programs are established and upheld.
- Works closely with the Director of Advocacy to ensure Access Living's systems change efforts are tied to service delivery barriers.
- Ensures services are reaching underserved populations.
- Works closely with the Communications Director to ensure accurate and compelling public representation of Access Living services.
- Develops, implements, and improves mechanisms that ensure proper client file management and maintenance of required databases.
- Implements strong interagency referral mechanisms and assists in providing technical assistance to other agencies to improve the effectiveness of service delivery to people with disabilities citywide.
- Monitors and evaluates outcomes and quality of program services and recommends and implements improvements.

MANAGEMENT

- Recommends to the Executive Vice President and President/CEO the type of workforce and staffing necessary to conduct the activities authorized by the Board.
- Communicates to the staff and Board how their work connects to Access Living's mission and strategic plan.
- Works to maintain high morale and low burnout for the Independent Living Department.
- Ensures Access Living hires qualified staff that are trained, directed, coordinated, and managed to effectively conduct and implement the organization's programs, including onboarding processes that set staff up for success.
- Ensures that an annual job performance appraisal is conducted for each staff member in the Independent Living Department by the immediate supervisor on a timely basis.

BOARD RELATIONS

- Provides staff leadership and coordination for four to five Program Committee meetings annually.



- Attends all meetings of the Board of Directors.
- Provides qualitative and quantitative information to the Board and Program Committee to measure department progress and performance-based outcomes.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES

In the first 12 to 18 months, the Director of Independent Living is expected to meet the following objectives:

- Ensure programs operate safely at maximum effectiveness given COVID restrictions.
- Streamline procedures, particularly as it pertains to compliance with government funding requirements.
- Create and implement plans to expand recruiting for programs such as the Youth Institute.
- Develop necessary relationships, both internally and externally, in order to further organizational and departmental initiatives.

QUALIFICATIONS

The Director of Independent Living will bring the following qualifications:

- 8 years of progressive nonprofit management experience, ideally with a comparably sized, human services organization with direct services
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience with disability communities and independent living is strongly preferred
- Management experience with inspirational leadership skills that develop individual, team, and organizational capacity
- Strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to gain trust and credibility from fellow staff members at all organizational levels
- Ability to respond to upset consumers diplomatically and effectively
- Demonstrated cultural competency and experience working with underrepresented and marginalized communities
- Experience in program planning, implementation, reporting, and evaluation
- Excellent organizational and operational skills, with experience managing budgets
- A highly collaborative approach to leadership



- Ability to travel, mostly within the City of Chicago
- A bachelor's degree in a related field is required; a master's degree would be an advantage

APPLICATION

Access Living has retained Campbell & Company to conduct this search on their behalf. Marian DeBerry and Joey Scheiber are leading this search. To be considered for this opportunity, please send a letter of interest and resume to:

JOEY SCHEIBER

Consultant, Executive Search

Joey.Scheiber@campbellcompany.com

(312) 896.8897

Affirmative Action is a management responsibility to take the necessary steps to eliminate the effects of past or present job discrimination, intended or unintended, which is evident from an analysis of employment practices and policies.

It is the policy of this agency that equal employment opportunity is afforded to all persons regardless of disability, race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, or source of income.



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