



## 2023 Search Criteria

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

# Dependency Advocacy Center

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# At A Glance



**Location**  
SAN JOSE, CA



**Reports to**  
DAC BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS



**Position Classification**  
FULL TIME / EXEMPT



**Desired Start Date**  
SPRING/SUMMER  
2023



**Number of Staff**  
40



**Operating Budget Size**  
\$4.5M

## The Opportunity

Dependency Advocacy Center (DAC) is seeking a strategic and collaborative leader to serve as its next Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO will inherit an organization engaged in powerful and impactful programmatic work, with a staff that is effective, closely bonded, and deeply dedicated to the cause. This is an incredible opportunity to lead DAC into its next phase.

DAC was founded on the belief that traditional legal advocacy is insufficient to adequately represent families in child welfare cases. DAC's goal is to promote timely reunification and preservation of these families in a safe, healthy environment.

DAC seeks a forward-thinking candidate who recognizes that dismantling systems that contribute to inequity and disparities requires transformative thought and action. The goal to work ourselves out of a job will require leadership that is committed to system change, leading to transformative support and counsel for families in greatest need. Our daily work is motivated by addressing systemic change even as we offer solutions for the current unjust system. DAC is a trauma-informed organization that seeks to be a national leader in these efforts to dismantle the harm of, and ultimately transform, the legal system.

The CEO leads the executive team and is responsible for the overall functioning and management of the organization, including program development, infrastructure, financial health, talent development, policy, media strategy/communications, and fulfillment of its contractual obligations of accountability to the court and various funders. The CEO both serves on, and reports to the board of directors and engages in strategic planning and risk management in collaboration with the board and other senior staff members.

The CEO also serves as a key organizational ambassador who develops and nurtures connections with service providers and agencies associated with the dependency court through multi-disciplinary meetings that address systemic issues and reform. The CEO fulfills an important motivational role in the organization and supports, mentors, and develops a highly experienced and passionate team. The CEO also leads by example to develop and enhance an organizational culture of transparency, respect, connection, and excellence.

Alongside these leadership skills, the CEO will bring an unwavering commitment to improving the lives and outcomes of families and communities that is explicitly rooted in racial and social justice. They will be a lifelong learner who prioritizes personal learning and growth alongside organizational evolution to drive continued success and excellence.



# About DAC

DAC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides interdisciplinary family defense legal services to indigent parents and children involved with Santa Clara County's child welfare system and the juvenile dependency court. Additionally, DAC has established innovative programs focused on preventing unnecessary entry into the dependency court and foster care systems by offering crucial early access to legal advice and resources designed to assist parents who are at risk of having their children removed. DAC is committed to addressing injustice and ensuring that families receive the support they need to thrive in our communities.

Our adult clients face the risk of permanent separation from their children due to allegations of abuse and neglect. Substance use disorder, intimate partner violence, and mental health concerns are commonly presenting issues, often rooted in the layered effects of poverty, marginalization, and intergenerational trauma. DAC's focus on legal advocacy work coupled with social services resources helps our parent and youth clients be fully supported in a system that would otherwise neglect them.

The holistic support offered by DAC's interdisciplinary team of attorneys, social workers, and peer mentors provides parents and children with a more comprehensive network of resources and pathways to success. DAC advocates for parents and children, who are often overlooked, judged, and not seen as worthy, during the most painful moments of their lives. With this pioneering approach to advocacy and a proven commitment to client-centered strategies, DAC is making a difference for thousands of underserved families in Santa Clara County.

The child welfare landscape in Santa Clara County is in a dynamic state where there is a significant decline in the number of families involved in the formal child welfare system. Far more families experience child welfare via informal services without the removal of their children. This vast shift in child welfare intervention will require DAC's new CEO to navigate and lead DAC's role and the interdisciplinary legal services it provides with an eye towards new and preventative initiatives.

DAC is increasingly focusing on early intervention and preventive approaches, alongside its deep expertise in legal advocacy. As DAC continues its growth and evolution, it is imperative that the next CEO work to cultivate and sustain the organization-wide sense of collective action, interdependence, and meaningful impact united by a clear, overarching mission and strategy.

**For more information, please visit the [DAC website](#).**



# What You'll Do

## ESSENTIAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

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Working in collaboration with the Board and Staff, the CEO will provide the strategic vision and organizational leadership necessary to ensure that DAC has a deep and lasting impact on its clients, partners, and local community. In addition to the executive oversight of operations, finances, HR, and programmatic priorities in partnership with a team of skilled executive-level colleagues and dedicated staff, the CEO will bring strong and relational management expertise of people and culture, a keen focus on expanding awareness of DAC's services, and a desire and track record to bring diverse financial resources to the organization

### Strategic Vision & Leadership

- ✔ Partner with Board and executive-level colleagues to develop and implement DAC's long-term strategy in alignment with vision and strategic direction.
- ✔ Achieve short-term program goals in interdisciplinary family defense legal services while maintaining a forward-thinking mindset toward innovation and expansion.
- ✔ Build DAC's capacity to enhance strategic contribution to the child welfare system.
- ✔ Center diversity, equity, and inclusion across all internal and external work.

### Program Oversight

- ✔ Oversee all program activities, goal-setting, evaluation, and deliverables.
- ✔ Oversee the development of impact reports to share stories and best practices.
- ✔ Oversee events, conferences, and convenings as needed.
- ✔ Develop and strengthen partnerships with partner agencies and organizations in Santa Clara County, around California, and at the national level.

### Fundraising

- ✔ Maintain and grow government program contracts.
- ✔ Design the resource development strategy to attract philanthropic support.
- ✔ Serve as lead fundraiser by cultivating new donor relationships and closing gifts.
- ✔ Steward and strengthen relationships with existing funders.

### External Relations

- ✔ Build strong relationships with the court system, partners, special constituencies, and press to expand impact.
- ✔ Serve as spokesperson and ambassador for DAC. Speak with the media about DAC.
- ✔ Oversee the organization's public-facing image, including website, communications, and social media strategy. Tell stories and share research in a compelling, creative, and eye-catching way.

### Finance & Operations

- ✔ Provide fiscal and administrative oversight to ensure compliance, organizational sustainability, and effective service delivery. Oversee accurate accounting, reporting, and forecasting.
- ✔ Guide annual budgeting, resource allocation, and goal-setting processes.
- ✔ Use systems and software for efficient operational infrastructure, program activities, and measurement of progress towards goals.

### HR & Administration

- ✔ Oversee improvements to internal systems, processes, workflow, and policies as needed.
- ✔ Develop and provide oversight to the HR/People function.
- ✔ Retain and build a strong team with a values-aligned culture.
- ✔ Set, design, and lead weekly team meetings, retreats, and other planning sessions.

### Board Engagement

- ✔ Support the Board's annual goals. Prepare board materials and attend board meetings.
- ✔ Sharpen governance frameworks to ensure that board meetings most efficiently utilize the time and talent of board members.
- ✔ Partner closely with the Board to oversee risk management.



# Who You Are

## IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE

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Successful candidates will have many of the following core competencies, personal qualities, and experience. We value deep connection to DAC mission/values over perfect alignment of all qualifications and considerations listed below.

### Visionary Organizational Leadership Experience

- ✔ Collaborative & Team Oriented - leads with a "power with" not "power over" approach, and has an open door policy.
- ✔ Recognizes that leadership happens at all levels in the organization, champions staff in their visionary endeavors, and understands the value in setting aside their own ego.
- ✔ Strong executive-level leader and efficient operator. Able to balance competing demands.
- ✔ Strong lens for operational leadership and fiscal oversight (HR/finance/administration). Does not shy away from practical issues and decisions.
- ✔ Leads with steadiness and continuity. Helps staff feel seen, safe, and secure.
- ✔ Focus on maintaining and growing culture, and staff wellness/work-life balance.

### Proximity and Connection to Community

- ✔ Commitment to equity and racial justice in all elements of strategy and organizational leadership.
- ✔ Acknowledgment and understanding of the systemic failures that result in unjust racial and economic discrepancies in the child welfare system.
- ✔ Lived experience in a marginalized community and/or fierce advocate for the populations that DAC serves.

### Dependency Expertise

- ✔ Experience in child welfare/juvenile law in the dependency court setting.
- ✔ Knowledge of preventive approaches and child welfare.
- ✔ Prior collaboration with community programs

### Strong Emotional Intelligence and Relational Abilities

- ✔ Engages with colleagues and network partners with integrity, empathy, kindness, humility, compassion, diplomacy, and loyalty.
- ✔ Passion for inclusion and relationship building with agency partners and fostering staff connection in formal and informal settings.
- ✔ Shares ideas and feedback with clarity and intention. Strong listening skills.

### Fundraising and Ambassadorial Skills

- ✔ Palpable passion and dedication to the DAC mission and vision.
- ✔ Creative, innovative, joyful, confident, and relatable partnership builder.
- ✔ Experience raising money from private and public sources, including maintaining and growing government program contracts.
- ✔ Strong public speaking, networking, and presentation skills.

### Results-driven

- ✔ Strong voice of authority and advocacy externally for DAC's staff, needs, and role.
- ✔ Has a clear point of view and entrepreneurial vision for growth (programmatic, impact, and financial).
- ✔ Cooperative and inspirational, with a firm/practical approach to identifying new opportunities.

# Other

## JOB REQUIREMENTS & QUALIFICATIONS

### Education and Experience

- ☑ JD Degree; Preferably licensed by the CA State Bar, but open to candidates licensed in another state with the goal of becoming licensed in California within 5 years.
- ☑ Experience overseeing fundraising and external relations, government contracts, finance, HR, administration, marketing/communications, policy, events, and board engagement.
- ☑ Experience building and maintaining organizational partnerships, guiding programs, and independently leading complex projects required.
- ☑ Demonstrated management experience including hiring and development of a team.
- ☑ At least 10 years of relevant leadership experience in juvenile dependency law or related social justice fields, including several years of executive-level leadership.

### Communication Skills

- ☑ Fluency in oral and written English is required; Bilingual skills are a plus.
- ☑ Demonstrated skill as an effective oral and written communicator who can customize an approach depending on the audience.
- ☑ Strong interpersonal and listening skills required, with sensitivity and appreciation for diverse viewpoints and various communication styles.

### Function-Specific Skills

- ☑ Demonstrated commitment to public interest issues.
- ☑ Confident, engaging, and inspiring public speaker that can represent the organization's work and elevate DAC's profile, expand the impact of its work, and increase fundraising ability.
- ☑ Fundraising and development skills and a high degree of sophistication in curating and executing a sustainable fundraising strategy with foundations, public sector contracts, and major donors.
- ☑ Ability to be solutions-oriented, balance the big picture with details, and plan ahead.
- ☑ Ability to manage competing priorities in a highly collaborative, multi-stakeholder environment.
- ☑ Demonstrates cooperation, empathy, and proactive, clear communication.

### Finance & Technical

- ☑ Experience with financial oversight, including budgeting, planning, and reporting.
- ☑ Strong knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint required.

## Compensation & Benefits

- This position offers a competitive salary range of \$165,000-\$175,000 per year, commensurate with experience. DAC has a compensation policy that prioritizes equity and transparency.
- DAC offers a benefits package that includes health, dental, vision, 4 weeks paid vacation, paid sick leave, 13 paid holidays annually + 4 additional days during the December holiday timeframe, parental leave, civic engagement paid time off, sabbatical leave, a 403(b) retirement plan, and professional development opportunities.

**More details can be provided upon request.**

## Geographical Location & Remote Work

- DAC serves clients in Santa Clara County, CA.
- The CEO must be able to attend internal and external meetings in person. Travel may be required for events and meetings within the Bay Area.
- Some remote work may be possible, depending on the schedule of meetings.





## How to Apply

- ☑ Please send a resume and thoughtful cover letter to [DACjobs@sccdac.org](mailto:DACjobs@sccdac.org) with the subject line: “**DAC CEO Search**”
- ☑ Your cover letter should answer the following questions:
  - ☑ How do your skills and experience align with the position description?
  - ☑ In order to best serve our clients and our community, DAC is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace in which differences are acknowledged and valued. How has your personal background or experiences, professional or otherwise, prepared you to contribute to social justice, racial equity, and diversity among our staff?

### NOTE

- All applications will be held in strict confidence.
- Applications without a cover letter will not be considered.
- Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis and earlier applicants may receive priority consideration. DAC encourages all interested candidates to submit their applications promptly.
- DAC requires that all employees be fully vaccinated and boosted (upon eligibility) against COVID-19 or qualify for a medical or religious exemption

## Equal Opportunity Employment

DAC thrives on our diversity and we are proud to be an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to cultivating a workplace in which diverse perspectives and experiences are welcomed, respected, and celebrated. Applicants who are Latine/Latinx, Black, Asian and Pacific Islander, Indigenous, and other people of color, individuals with lived experience within any of our program areas, and individuals who have been impacted by the criminal legal system are strongly encouraged to apply. We are committed to equal employment opportunity and providing reasonable accommodations to qualified candidates and employees pursuant to applicable law. It is the policy of DAC to provide equal employment opportunities to all applicants (including employees) inclusive of race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, breastfeeding, national origin, age, abilities/disabilities, neurotypicality, socioeconomic status, veteran status, marital status, prior convictions, or any other protected classifications under federal, state, or local law.