



ELEVATING THE SPECTRUM
FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM

Life Enrichment Program Director Job Description

Job Description for: LE Program Director	Start Date: August 2021
Reports to: Dan Richardson, COO	Section: Life Enrichment
Starting Wage Range: \$65,000 - \$80,000	Term/Classification: Full time, year-round, salaried, exempt

About Ascendigo: Ascendigo Autism Services is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization based in the Roaring Fork Valley near Aspen, Colorado. Founded in 2004 as a summer sports camp for children with autism, Ascendigo has expanded to offer year-round outdoor recreational options including summer and winter sports, a suite of community-based services for adults with autism, and behavior therapies for children with autism. Our goal is to integrate people with autism into community life, whether through outdoor recreation, assisting in basic life skills, finding compatible employment, or simply going out with friends to restaurants, museums, or concerts. Ascendigo takes full advantage of the unmatched natural facilities offered by Colorado's Rocky Mountains, as well as the area's charitable community spirit to open physical, experiential, and collaborative opportunities to individuals with autism. Currently, Ascendigo employs approximately 65 full- and part-time staff members with an additional 60-65 seasonal employees during the summer months.

Job Description:

As the Director, you will be responsible for the coordination, management, vision, and administration of all aspects of Life Enrichment (LE) including the planning, organizing, developing, staffing, leading, and controlling all related activities. You will be responsible for the delivery and overall success of each LE program (ACE, Residential, A2A, Vocational), supervising LE staff, and informing senior management on progress and performance. A successful Director should have a broad knowledge of program management principles. They must have a strategic mindset as well as the ability to lead and develop their staff. The goal is to ensure every program will be delivered successfully and add the highest possible value to Ascendigo.

Essential Job Functions:

- 1) Lead the strategic direction of the Life Enrichment program:
 - a. Plan and implement LE programs and services from start to finish involving calendars, deadlines and processes;
 - b. In collaboration with Director of Clinical Services, plan and set goals for the delivery of LE programs and services in accordance with the mission and the goals of Ascendigo;
 - c. Develop and implement long-term goals and objectives to achieve the successful outcomes which support the strategic direction of Ascendigo
 - d. Develop forms and records to document program activities, such as client contracts, client files, staff files (with HR), activity schedules and checklists, risk management;
 - e. Develop funding proposals (with Finance Team and Operations) for the program to ensure the continuous delivery of services;
 - f. Develop a program evaluation framework to assess the strengths of the program and to identify areas for improvement; and
 - g. Communicate with stakeholders to gain community support for LE programs and services.

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- 2) In Partnership with Operations, develop and oversee an annual budget, operating plan, and funding plan for Life Enrichment
 - a. Discover ways to enhance efficiency and productivity of procedures and people;
 - b. Ensure that LE operates within the approved budget;
 - c. Monitor and approve all budgeted LE expenditures;
 - d. Monitor the Profits & Losses;
 - e. Along with Business Services, ensure that financial records for the program are up to date; and
 - f. Provide required information to have invoices generated and submitted to Business Services according to the established timelines.
- 3) Supervise LE staff:
 - a. Assign duties, create job descriptions for clear department responsibilities, and ensure required trainings are conducted;
 - b. Recruit, interview and select well-qualified program staff in conjunction with HR and the Director of Clinical Services;
 - c. Ensure all staff members receive orientation and appropriate training in accordance with organizational standards and LE department needs;
 - d. Implement Ascendigo HR policies, procedures and practices;
 - e. Ensure that personnel files for the program are properly maintained and kept confidential;
 - f. In collaboration with Director of Clinical Services, implement the Ascendigo performance management process for LE staff, provide feedback and complete performance evaluations, work with HR on compensation for staff, set goals and career paths for LE employees; and
 - g. Foster a strong sense of teamwork and positive culture of praise, constructive feedback, direct communication, accountability, health, and collaboration.
- 4) Ensure program operations and activities adhere to legal guidelines, internal policies, professional standards, third party payee requirements, safety, and confidentiality requirements such as HIPPA.
 - a. Ensure compliance reports and supporting documentation for third party funders are prepared as outlined in funding agreements or regulatory statutes; and
 - b. Along with Business Services, identify and evaluate the risks associated with LE activities and take appropriate action to control the risks.
- 5) Communicate across key stakeholder groups:
 - a. Keep senior management informed with detailed and accurate reports or presentations and frequent communications;
 - b. Liaise with other Ascendigo directors and managers to ensure effective and efficient program delivery;
 - c. Maintain and increase positive relationships with community members such as employers and retailers which support our LE goals;
 - d. Maintain consistent, positive and informative communications with client families and their circles of support; and
 - e. Maintain communication with current and potential funders of LE activities, such as progress reports, thank you notes, phone calls and emails.

Specialized Job Requirements:

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Job requires basic computer skills (MS Office, xcel, email, social media) and certifications or successful training completion for CPR/First Aid, crisis management, and medication administration. A successful LE Director should have completion of RBT training or above, Direct Service Provider course training, DVR coaching and job developer training, and Ascendigo Sports Instruction Curriculum training.

Physical Requirements/Equipment Used:

Equipment used may include computer and software, mobile devices, client technology, sports equipment, client employment equipment like farming tools and recycling power tools. Job may require bending, lifting heavy objects (up to 25 lbs), sports endurance, and physical client prompts and manipulation for skill building or for safety. competency to learn new technologies related to disabilities, able to accompany residents in all exercise and recreational activities. Applicants are required to have and use their own smart phone for work duties. Ascendigo provides a monthly cell phone stipend for this use.

Knowledge, Skills, Abilities:

Requirements

- Thorough understanding of project/program management techniques and methods.
- Knowledge of performance evaluation techniques and key metrics.
- Knowledge of data analysis, reporting and budgeting.
- Working knowledge of general office and specialized program management software (e.g. MS Office).
- Excellent organizational, problem-solving and leadership skills and strategic ability.
- Excellent and professional communication skills, with staff, clients, and families.
- Knowledge of autism learning techniques including principles of NDBIs.
- Knowledge of innovative employment practices for people with disabilities
- Knowledge of the field of autism as it pertains to adults including advances in residential, vocational, and community engagement.
- Direct experience and a working knowledge, or the ability and willingness to gain a working knowledge of state regulations and other compliance issues.

Personal Characteristics

- **Behave ethically:** understand ethical behavior and business practices, and ensure that own behavior and the behavior of others in LE is consistent with these standards and aligns with the values of Ascendigo;
- **Build relationships:** establish and maintain positive working relationships with others, both internally and externally, to achieve LE goals;
- **Communicate effectively:** speak, listen and write in a clear, thorough and timely manner using appropriate, effective, and professional communication tools and techniques;
- **Honor creativity/innovation:** develop new and unique ways to improve operations of the organization and to create new opportunities;
- **Focus on client needs:** anticipate, understand, and respond to the needs of clients to meet or exceed their expectations within the organizational parameters;
- **Foster teamwork:** work cooperatively and effectively with others to set goals, resolve problems, and make decisions that enhance organizational effectiveness;
- **Lead:** positively influence others to achieve results that are in the best interest of Ascendigo;

- **Make decisions:** assess situations to determine the importance, urgency and risks, and make clear decisions which are timely and in the best interests of Ascendigo;
- **Organize:** set priorities, develop a work schedule, monitor progress towards goals, and track details, data, information and activities;
- **Plan:** determine strategies to move the organization forward, set goals, create and implement actions plans, and evaluate the process and results;
- **Solve problems:** assess problem situations to identify causes, gather and process relevant information, generate possible solutions, and make recommendations and/or resolve the problem through collaboration.