

Recruitment Profile
for
Executive Director

stepping stone
of san diego

Stepping Stone
San Diego, CA

OCTOBER 2022 (Re-Launch)

LEADERSHIP TRANSITION | EXECUTIVE SEARCH | BOARD ADVISORY

Position **Executive Director**

Organization: **Stepping Stone of San Diego** (<https://steppingstonesd.org/>)

Reports to: **Board of Directors**

Location: **San Diego, CA**

ORGANIZATION & OPPORTUNITY:

Stepping Stone San Diego (Stepping Stone) is a nonprofit drug and alcohol recovery center committed to serving the LGBTQ+ and HIV communities with inpatient, outpatient, and transitional living programs. Since its founding in 1976, Stepping Stone has been a pillar of the LGBTQ+ and recovery communities in San Diego County, especially for those seeking a safe, welcoming, and culturally competent place to receive treatment for alcohol or drug addiction and co-occurring disorders. Stepping Stone is also known for the diverse and engaged community of alumni and supporters who give back to the organization and serve as a resource to those starting their sober journey. (See “We are Stepping Stone” at <https://wass.love/>).

Research from the National Institute on Drug Abuse has shown that the incidence of drug and alcohol dependency in the LGBTQ+ community is nearly three times higher than in the general population. Stepping Stone was a pioneer in understanding and responding to the impact of identity-based marginalization and isolation on behavioral health and was one of the first recovery programs in the county explicitly for LGBTQ+ individuals. The organization’s understanding of the unique needs of LGBTQ+ and HIV+ individuals and its incorporation of the best, evidence-based practices has established Stepping Stone as a leader in the field of drug and alcohol recovery and a valued community partner. Stepping Stone’s approach to treatment includes 12-step programs, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Enhancement Therapy, Seeking Safety (trauma-informed) Curriculum, and Sexual Health programs.

Stepping Stone has a current, annual operating budget of around \$4 million and a staff of 30 employees plus clinical interns. In addition to its 31-bed inpatient program, the organization also operates 3 transitional housing units and an out-patient treatment facility. As the State of California has continued to evolve the mechanisms by which it funds and administers drug, alcohol, and behavioral health programs, Stepping Stone has seen an marked increase in the number of clients who present with co-occurring mental health needs. This change in turn has impacted hiring, training, program delivery, and compliance practices. The majority of government funding, which currently represents 62% of Stepping Stone’s total revenue, now falls under the CA state Drug Medi-Cal program.

The organization is overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors who represent the local LGBTQ+, HIV+ and recovery populations, as well as leaders in San Diego’s business and philanthropic communities. Stepping Stone’s mission is “to create, improve, and deliver alcohol and other drug treatment, HIV and health interventions, recovery, education, and prevention services specializing in the challenges of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities of the San Diego region.”

Until recently, Stepping Stone was led by long-term Executive Director Cheryl Houk (she/her) whose planned retirement in August followed more than two decades of service to the organization (see: ["Stepping Stone Executive Director Announces Retirement"](#)). In mid-summer, the Stepping Stone Board of Directors made a strategic decision to engage an experienced Interim Executive to guide the organization through this important leadership transition. At that time, our search for the new, permanent Executive Director was temporarily paused to accommodate a period of intentional interim Leadership.

During this transitional period, the Interim Executive is working with Board and Staff to review and strengthen the organization’s finances, internal systems and controls, revenue streams, and staffing structure to set the stage for a new, permanent executive. With this work well underway, we are formally

Program Highlights

Residential Treatment:

Stepping Stone has been providing excellent residential treatment to people dealing with alcohol and drug dependency for over 40 years. Clients are treated in residence on site for up to six months. As part of a continuum of care, residents stay connected with Stepping Stone events, groups, and communities for at least two years.

Outpatient Treatment:

For some struggling with addiction, a residential recovery program isn't possible or necessary, yet 12-step meetings aren't quite enough. The Stepping Out outpatient program bridges that gap, and meets clients where they are in their addictions, providing an on-ramp to recovery.

Sober Living:

Sober living accommodations in one of three local group homes are available for people transitioning out of the residential phase of treatment. This offers a "step down" effect, which assist clients in transitioning safely and successfully back into their communities.

Aftercare:

Following their residential stay, Stepping Stone clients participate in a 12-week aftercare program. This helps to facilitate a smooth transition from the structure of residential treatment.

Mental Health:

It is not uncommon for people entering drug and alcohol treatment to have diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health concerns. Stepping Stone supports its clients with direct access to in-house counselling and psychotherapy, specialized treatment, and referrals to outside specialists.

for more information see:

<https://steppingstonesd.org/programs/alcohol-and-other-drug-use-disorders/>

re-launching the search. It is envisioned that the Interim Executive will remain in leadership of Stepping Stone until the arrival of a new, permanent Executive Director, likely in the first quarter of 2023.

Building on its long history, and with the hard work of an active, engaged Board of Directors and dedicated staff, Stepping Stone finds itself today back on very solid footing. It enjoys a strong programmatic base, solid financial health, the respect of funders and partners, and an excellent reputation among the communities it serves. The new Executive Director will join an organization that is well-positioned for continued growth and impact and ready to embrace new leadership, new vision, and new directions.

(For more information, please visit <https://steppingstonesd.org/>)

REPORTING:

Reports to the Board of Directors (with primary accountability to the Executive Committee). Oversees a staff of 30 full- and part-time employees, plus intern, contractors, and volunteers. Direct reports include Director of Programs, Director of Operations, and Director of Finance.

THE POSITION:

The Executive Director will assume primary operating and oversight responsibility for Stepping Stone of San Diego and will work closely with Board, Staff, and community partners to advance the organization's work and mission. She/He/They will have ultimate responsibility for strategic, operational, administrative, and financial stewardship, and will actively engage community, constituents, and partners to ensure a successful, effective, and sustainable organization.

The Executive Director will also work with Board, staff, and stakeholders to develop and implement a strategic vision for the future. They will provide motivational leadership to Stepping Stone with a focus on the following organizational priorities:

- Ensure ongoing financial sustainability through growth of government grants and earned income, and diversification of fundraising capacity and results
 - Strengthen and improve internal systems and structures to ensure robust support of people, programs, and organizational growth
 - Expand, improve, and evolve programming to meet changing community needs, particularly in the area of mental health and outpatient treatment options
 - Grow and expand organizational capability through training, professional development, and strategic talent acquisition
- Raise visibility, awareness, and understanding of Stepping Stone's work and accomplishments with all relevant audiences.

The Executive Director will also function as a primary representative of Stepping Stone (and the people and communities it serves) at public events, in the media, with policy makers, and in coalition with other allied community organizations and leaders.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

[NOTE: While no single candidate will have equal expertise in all the areas of responsibility or skills, experience, and characteristics below, successful candidates will possess a compelling combination of many of them and the self-awareness and wisdom to leverage existing and/or new resources in the area(s) where they lack personal mastery.]

Organizational Leadership & Development

- Lead long-range visioning and strategic planning in partnership with Board of Directors, while engaging staff, volunteers, community, and stakeholders in this work;
- Inspire, motivate, and lead a team of committed and engaged professionals to realize the organization's mission, vision, and strategic goals;
- With the Director of Operations, work to expand and improve organizational infrastructure – including business processes, systems, policies, and tools – to maximize efficiency and support current and future growth;
- Build strategic relationships and partnerships that will strengthen Stepping Stone's overall reputation, visibility, and reach in San Diego and environs.

Fundraising & Resource Development

- Lead efforts to grow fundraising programs and diversify revenue streams to broaden Stepping Stone's base of support and strengthen its financial position;
- Personally maintain positive relationships with key individual and institutional funders;
- With the Development Committee, re-imagine special events to expand participation, reach, and results in a post-COVID environment;
- Collaborate with a staff Development Manager to ensure appropriate support is available for Board and staff fundraising efforts.

Staff Management & Development

- Maintain a professional climate that supports staff in setting and achieving goals, while attracting and retaining top-quality staff;
- Create professional development plans for staff members that provide opportunities for continued learning, training, and advancement, and build a leadership pipeline for Stepping Stone;
- Revise organization structures, roles, responsibilities, and job descriptions – as necessary, and within budget parameters) – to maximize capacity and impact;
- Lead the establishment of human resources policies, procedures, and/or protocols that support effective people strategies, as well as the recruitment, selection, employment, and management of employees.

Financial Management

- Manage and support the Finance Office and provide oversight/enhancement to financial operations, budgeting, and financial management processes;
- Ensure sound financial practices and stewardship of the organization's resources;
- Lead and oversee organizational strategies for annual budget, resource allocation, and financial reserves;
- Ensure fiscal transparency and provide the Board with regular information about the financial health of the organization;
- Ensure the organization has adequate insurance coverage and manage any claims processes that arise, including liability, property, D&O and worker's compensation.

Community Building & Outreach

- Nurture and develop relationships with community leaders, government agencies, partner organizations, local businesses, elected officials, and other external stakeholders;
- Attend community events and cultivate speaking opportunities to deepen local networks, engage new donors, and expand community presence;
- Develop and implement strategies to further solidify Stepping Stone’s reputation as a respected community leader and partner and the “Go-To” organization in San Diego County for LGBTQ+ recovery and mental health support.

Program Support

- Manage and support the Director of Programs and the Program Teams in ensuring programmatic excellence, evaluation, and quality of services;
- Partner with staff, program participants, and community members in proactively identifying opportunities to expand, improve, and/or redesign programs to meet evolving needs;
- Support the development and implementation of systems for program evaluation, monitoring, and continuous improvement.

Board Relations

- Collaborate with and support the Board of Directors in fulfilling its governance and fiduciary roles;
- Partner with the Board and its various Board Committees/Chairs to implement strategic plans and identify areas of growth;
- Report regularly and transparently to the Board of Directors to provide insight and awareness into operational, financial, and programmatic progress and challenges;
- Ensure that the Board is kept fully informed on the condition of the organization and important factors influencing it.

CANDIDATE PROFILE:

The new Executive Director & CEO will be an experienced and dynamic leader with a high level of emotional intelligence and professional maturity. They will have proven skills in fundraising, strategic planning, and organizational leadership and growth, as well as a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels of the organization. They will bring a transparent, fair, and collaborative leadership style as well as a successful track record of managing, developing, and supporting people and teams of broadly diverse ages, background, experience, and identity.

Successful candidates will demonstrate personal passion for Stepping Stone’s work and mission and a deep understanding of current issues facing the LGBTQ+ and recovery communities. They will be empathetic, warm, and people-centered and, at the same time, bring the professional skills and knowledge of systems, processes, and policies to lead an organization to new levels of growth and success. Regardless of professional background, strong cultural competency and humility around intersecting LGBTQ+, HIV, mental health, and substance use/recovery identities is critical.

Required Skills and Experience (Must Haves):

- Minimum of 10 years of successful senior leadership and management experience (CEO, Executive Director, Deputy Director or similar), including strong strategic planning, staff management, operations development, and relationship management skills, ideally in a nonprofit environment;
- History of having led organizational growth and transformation while facilitating greater mission achievement;
- Successful track record of nonprofit revenue development including individual, corporate, foundation, and special event fundraising;
- Experience building and managing budgets while driving sound financial decisions and policy making;
- Financial oversight and budget management experience in an organization of comparable size and complexity and with similar funding sources;

- Excellent people and team management skills with proven ability to positively coach and mentor staff while also ensuring accountability for results and outcomes;
- Intersectional understanding of LGBTQ social, political, healthcare, and equity issues;
- Ability to cultivate strategic relationships with other nonprofits, community organizations, public officials, LGBTQ Movement leaders, and non-LGBTQ allies;
- Exceptional written, oral, and electronic communications skills;
- Ability to lead effectively across differences in age, sexual orientation, gender identity, racial and ethnic background, ability, and socioeconomic status.

Desired Skills and Experience:

(competency in one or more of these areas may compensate for a gap elsewhere)

- Familiarity with San Diego’s service provider and funding networks; in particular, government agencies who fund Stepping Stone’s programmatic work;
- Knowledge and experience with grant-based programs and service delivery, such as Medicare, MediCal, HOPWA, Ryan White, and/or Departments of Health, Mental Health, or Human Services;
- Leadership experience in an organization or environment with Mental/Behavioral Health and/or Clinical programs or operations;
- Formal marketing, branding, and/or communications education and training;
- Knowledge and/or experience overseeing human resources policies and practices;
- Work in another LGBTQ or other community-based/community-centric, direct service organization;
- Experience working collaboratively and transparently with a Board of Directors or similar volunteer leadership group.

Desired Personal Qualities and Characteristics:

- Passion and commitment to Stepping Stone’s work, mission, and people it serves;
- Cultural competency and humility with regards to LGBTQ+, HIV, substance use/recovery, and other identity-based marginalization;
- Engaging, inclusive, and motivational leadership style;
- Strong interpersonal skills and high level of self-awareness;
- Charismatic leadership presence and engaging public speaker
- Prioritizes fairness, honesty and transparency;
- Willing and able to act as ‘the face and voice’ of Stepping Stone in a small-ish, tight-knit community;
- Able to build bridges when working with diverse communities;
- Accessible, relatable, personable, authentic, and warm;
- Able to set and respect personal and organizational boundaries (for self and others);
- Empathy, compassion, and sense of humor.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS:

Stepping Stone is offering a comprehensive compensation package inclusive of salary in the range of \$140,000 to \$165,000 (commensurate with experience) and full benefits. Benefits include: health, dental and vision insurance with 100% of premiums paid by Stepping Stone, a retirement savings plan with employer match up to 5%, three weeks of PTO in the first year (in addition to paid holidays), and Life/ADD insurance.

TO APPLY:

Inquiries, nominations, or applications (including a cover letter and resume) should be directed electronically and in confidence, to search@kevinchasesearch.com. We are pleased to answer any questions or supply further information.

Kevin Chase Executive Search Group has been retained to lead this recruitment effort on behalf of Stepping Stone of San Diego. Stepping Stone is an equal opportunity employer; a diverse workforce and inclusive

culture are core values. Stepping Stone and Kevin Chase Executive Search Group encourages applications from all qualified individuals without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, marital status, citizenship, disability, or veteran status. Candidates with LGBTQ+ and or BIPOC identities, as well as lived experience with substance use and recovery are strongly encouraged to apply.

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All inquiries or referrals will be held in strict confidence.

Please note that all education, dates of employment, compensation and other information provided will be verified prior to an offer of employment.