

# Executive Director’s Report

**Date:** 04/01/2021

**To:** Minnesota Council on Disability

**From:** E. David Dively, Executive Director

First, my deep appreciation and gratitude for each Council member and Ex Officio member that serve on our Council, the time investments you have made, and for your passion and advocacy to achieve MCD’s goals.

## The First 6 Months

It has now been over six months since I joined MCD as the Executive Director. During my interview, I committed to not making sweeping changes quickly. I believe that organizational change needs to be grounded in experience, meeting with staff, and learning in an on-the-job context. I believe we have made tremendous strides and there are opportunities for growth. It has been a challenge, joining MCD during the pandemic, working closely with staff (some of whom I have never met in person), and building trust within the organization, with the Council board, and external partners. At some points it has felt like building the plane while flying it, particularly as it comes to our legislative work.

Some of our high-level successes:

* Hired our new Public Policy Director
* Met with over 25 legislators to do meet-and-greet, introductory meetings, and rebuilding relationships
* Planned and hosted two public engagement events around COVID-19 with the Minnesota Disability Action Partnership (MnDAP)
* Work through significant risk management issues
* Build morale and strengthen staff collaboration
* Host the Public Policy Forum with positive feedback from the community
* Host a roundtable with the Office of the Governor and leadership at the Department of Health on COVID-19 equity to vaccines for Minnesotans with disabilities; shortly after, disabilities became part of qualifying for the vaccine
* Coordinate with Homeland Security and Department of Health for disability access
* Hosted an event with the Governor and Lt. Governor to discuss the fiscal year 2022-2023 budget
* Build out a centralized source of agency-wide policies and procedures
* Significant relationship growth and collaboration with advocacy organizations and state agencies
* Invited to, and participate in, the Governor’s Office’s Community Resiliency & Recovery Advisory group. A significant step towards building bridges and having input to high levels of state government
* Develop a position description draft for Ex Officio Members of the Council
* Supporting and implementation of the three Council committees to further the governance and oversight work of the Council
* Despite COVID19 and telework changes, a continuity of programming and services such as Worker’s Compensation consultation, training workshops, building code consultation, and numerous advisory committees and task forces.

## Focus Areas Going Forward

We have a strong and talented team who has been through several tough years and numerous changes. Wise and strategic change management is crucial during this time. With progress and change can come friction. This is true in every organization and considering the history of MCD, is especially true in this context. There are several areas that need to be attended to going forward:

1. Organization
   1. Long-term staff planning
   2. Fully staffing the agency
   3. Strengthen staff relationships, catch up on performance reviews and performance management
   4. Clarification of roles and scope of work
   5. More opportunity for professional development for staff
   6. Bring in culturally affirming consultants to advise, consult, and help the organization grow in a healthy way
   7. Right sizing the budget to meet our agency’s needs
   8. A long-term lease solution (including moving and renovation costs in the new space)
   9. Database utilization for data entry, task-tracking, and reporting
   10. Improved accessibility in virtual meetings
   11. Successful legislative passage to build our influence, relationship, and to show our value to the legislative branch
   12. Strengthen and repair relationships with stakeholders
   13. Increase expertise and involvement in special education policy and implementation
2. Council-level support
   1. Finish drafting policies
   2. Activating all policies
   3. Creating operational interpretation of policies
   4. Creating measurement and reporting mechanisms to demonstrate compliance with policies
   5. Translate Ends Policy goals into Annual Work Plans
   6. Improve compliance with Open Meeting Laws with minutes and voting journals
   7. Adopt and utilize the Annual Governance Planning Calendar

As shown above, there are numerous areas for organizational, and Council-level growth from the management and leadership role. These are long-term goals but also, many of them are time-sensitive and urgent.

## Budget for Remainder of Fiscal Year 2021 with 2022-2023 Outlook

We needed to set aside funds for risk mitigation and accrued salary-savings because I did not feel it was appropriate to hire additional staff while handling sensitive issues. As a result of that, we are planning to hire one full-time staff this fiscal year as well as go through a spend-down to utilize as much of our funding as possible. We are in a good place in our budget for Fiscal Year 2021.

We will need to be creative with our budget around Issue 2(b), a new long-term lease solution. Not only might the new lease location cost more as an ongoing budget item, the agency will undergo significant one-time costs to pay for packing, moving, and building out the new lease space if we are unable to stay in our current location. Our current lease expires December 31, 2021, and it has been very challenging determining the best leasing option for MCD. The expiration of our lease is at the beginning of the new two-year budget cycle which means we will not have much funds saved up at that point from salary savings or other opportunities for cost-savings. The lease situation and fully staffing the agency are the primary budgetary challenges for MCD in 22-23.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe our agency has a tremendous charge with dedicated and hard-working staff along with a strong Council membership. I believe we are up to the challenge of the next three years as we build capacity as a staff, as a Council, and as an agency.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

E. David Dively, Executive Director