CENTERS FOR NEURODEVELOPMENT

*Bridging science and service to build a brighter future*

# CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

## POSITION SPECIFICATION

viacenters.org

VA CENTERS FOR NEURODEVELOPMENT

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# POSITION OVERVIEW

The **Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)** reports to the President & CEO, serves on VIA's executive leadership team, and functions as the organization's Chief Financial Officer. The CAO leads finance, accounting, payroll, human resources, facilities, information technology, and business development across all VIA locations. The role combines financial stewardship with administrative leadership to support effective, secure, reliable, and efficient service delivery. The Director of Human Resources reports directly to the CAO for day-to-day management and administrative coordination, including payroll and benefits, with a dotted-line relationship to the President & CEO for strategic workforce planning, leadership development, employee engagement, and organizational culture.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

*Ensure Fiscal Accountability*

- Lead organization-wide budgeting, financial planning, cash-flow forecasting, and liquidity management in partnership with the President & CEO and program leaders.
- Oversee accounting, accounts payable and receivable, billing and collections, and accurate census and staffing projections.
- Strengthen financial systems and internal controls; coordinate the annual audit and implement recommendations.
- Manage financial and administrative risk, insurance, credit arrangements, and contractual obligations, and promptly communicate financial concerns.

*Communication with Board of Directors*

- Prepare timely monthly financial reports and analysis for the Finance Committee and Board.
- Partner with the Board Treasurer on committee agendas, materials, and recommendations; attend Board meetings and serve as a staff resource to support informed oversight within the Board's established authority.

*Payroll Administration Human Resources Benefits and Policies*

- Oversee payroll administration, taxes, year-end reporting, and payroll/HR systems in coordination with Human Resources and the Controller.
- Provide financial and administrative support for salary programs, benefits, and HR policies, and monitor benefit costs and efficiencies.
- Supervise HR through the reporting relationship described above.

*Monitor and Maintain Facilities*

- Ensure safe, appropriate facilities that meet applicable requirements and changing program needs.
- Oversee maintenance and housekeeping through the Facilities Coordinator, manage leases and landlord relationships, and guide facilities planning, renovations, and expansion.
- Support capital financing and facility grant development.

*Information Technology*

- Lead technology strategy, governance, and a multi-year investment roadmap aligned with VIA's mission, program needs, and resources.
- Oversee enterprise systems, integration, data warehousing, vendors, budgets, and equipment lifecycles. Establish cybersecurity, privacy, data-protection, backup, disaster-recovery, and continuity practices.
- Partner with clinical and administrative leaders to improve workflows, support implementation and staff training, and evaluate AI and automation responsibly.
- Monitor service performance and compliance, and elevate material technology risks and incidents to the President & CEO.

*Purchasing Activity*

- Direct purchasing in accordance with VIA policies and applicable legal, contractual, and funding requirements.
- Negotiate and oversee service and lease-purchase agreements, and improve procurement processes to capture cost savings and organizational value.

*Executive and Senior Leadership*

- Contribute to strategic and operational planning and supervise administrative leaders and staff assigned through VIA's organizational chart.
- Partner with the President & CEO, Chief Clinical Officer, and program leaders to assess new services and expansion, including financial feasibility, capital needs, facilities, contracts, and administrative readiness.
- Help develop the facilities master plan and prepare the annual Board report on an agreed schedule, distinguishing preliminary from final financial results.

*Fundraising and Development*

- Partner with the Director of Advancement on annual fundraising planning and grant proposals by providing budgets, projections, feasibility analysis, and financial reporting.
- Support donor meetings, community connections, and special events as appropriate.

## QUALIFICATIONS

- Master's degree in business, accounting, or finance, or a CPA credential; at least five years of financial administration experience, including leadership of staff and multiple administrative functions; and facilities operations experience.
- Demonstrated oversight of technology strategy, enterprise systems, data warehousing, cybersecurity, privacy, and vendors, with knowledge of IT governance, procurement, disaster recovery, and project management.
- Human services, nonprofit, and multi-site experience preferred.

# ABOUT VIA

*Bridging science and service to build a brighter future.*

VIA Centers for Neurodevelopment (formerly Virginia Institute of Autism) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Charlottesville, Virginia. Founded in 1996 by parents of children with autism, VIA uses its decades of combined expertise to translate science into service with approaches that are tailored to each individual and their family. VIA currently serves individuals, families, and communities across central and southwest Virginia at our centers in Charlottesville, Roanoke, Lynchburg, and Lexington.

## OUR MISSION

VIA's mission is to empower people to embrace the strengths and meet the challenges related to autism and neurodevelopmental disabilities by providing compassionate, evidence-based services throughout their lives.

## OUR VISION

We envision a world in which individuals, families, and communities support, embrace, and celebrate the differences related to autism and neurodevelopmental disabilities so that all lead more fulfilling lives.

## OUR APPROACH

VIA employs state-of-the-art, evidence-based approaches, built around the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis tailored for each individual and their family. Through our collaborative partnerships with premier colleges, universities, and institutes of higher education, we develop innovative services that result in meaningful and profound changes in the lives of the people we serve.

With our Day School Services, Adult Services, and Pediatric ABA Services, VIA addresses the unique learning challenges of the individuals we serve throughout their lifespan.

## RECOGNITION

The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), calls VIA's programs "a gold standard for the field." VIA has consistently earned 3-year CARF accreditation across programs and 5-year Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Education Facilities (VAISEF) accreditation.

# KEY OPERATING STATISTICS

## LOCATIONS

### CHARLOTTESVILLE

Pediatric ABA, 24 clients
School, 73 students
Adult, 27 clients

### ROANOKE

Pediatric ABA, 6 clients
School, 46 students
Adult, 37 clients

### LYNCHBURG

School, 34 students
Adult, 11 clients

### LEXINGTON

School, 16 students

## STAFF

349 across all locations

## OPERATING BUDGET

Total Current Budget: $29,700,000
12 Cost Centers

# MEET THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

## ETHAN LONG, PH.D., BCBA-D

The Chief Administrative Officer at VIA will report directly to Ethan Long, who has led VIA as President & CEO for over 15 years. Ethan brings a steady, mission-driven presence and is known for his collaborative, honest, and down-to-earth leadership style. He works closely with his senior team, offering guidance while empowering others to build and execute bold, thoughtful strategies. Ethan's deep relationships with VIA's Board, families, and community stakeholders—and his commitment to quality and advocacy—offer an incredible foundation for advancing VIA's services. His leadership style makes it easy to bring your best ideas forward—and to share a few laughs along the way.

## CAROLE NELSON, MEDL

Carole Nelson serves as VIA's Director of Human Resources where she is directly responsible for the overall administration, coordination, and evaluation of the human resource function. Carole supervises recruitment and talent management, salary and benefits administration, training, employee relations, recognition programs and employee services for all VIA employees and interns. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Education from James Madison University and a master's degree in Educational Leadership from Longwood University. Carole joined VIA in August 2017 after working in public education for 32 years where she served as a teacher, building level administrator, and a division level administrator in the roles of director of human resources, assistant superintendent of human resources and administration. She has been working in human resources since 2006. Carole is committed to the mission of VIA and supporting our employees, who in turn support our students, clients, and families.

## REBECCA ELLISON, CFRE

Rebecca Ellison is VIA's Director of Advancement and works to secure resources to further the mission and reach of the organization. Rebecca holds a Bachelor of Science in Architecture and minors in Urban and Environmental Planning and Global Sustainability from the University of Virginia. She has spent the last 10 years in the nonprofit sector, raising funds to ensure organizations' long-term health and sustainability. Before joining the VIA team in 2021, Rebecca worked for a housing organization in the DC area and helped set the stage for a multimillion-dollar campaign to fund a purpose-built shelter and permanent supportive housing. In her free time, Rebecca enjoys exploring all Charlottesville has to offer with her husband and two young daughters.

## LAURA GROW, PH.D., BCBA-D

Laura Grow serves as the Chief Clinical Officer at VIA Centers for Neurodevelopment where she is responsible for strengthening clinical quality, staff development, data-informed systems, and meaningful outcomes across all of VIA's programs. She holds a Ph.D. in behavior analysis from Western Michigan University, completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Munroe-Meyer Institute, and is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst at the doctoral level. Laura has more than 25 years of experience implementing, evaluating, and directing services for individuals with developmental disabilities across the lifespan. Laura previously served as Executive Director of a nonprofit school for children with autism and as a faculty member at the University of British Columbia and California State University, Fresno.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*VIA's board of directors exemplifies all of the values instilled in this organization by our founders: dedication, compassion, effectiveness, innovation. Taken as a group, their range of accomplishments, and their depth of commitment, enrich VIA and enrich the community of people with special needs.*

## ALICIA MURPHY, CHAIR

Alicia Murphy recently retired as Chief Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney for Albemarle County and brings legal, nonprofit, and community leadership experience to VIA. Her commitment to children and families includes service as a CASA advocate and as a board member of ReadyKids.

*Alicia Murphy, second from left, and family*

*Kelley MacDougall and Mike Pausic*

## KELLEY MACDOUGALL, VICE-CHAIR

Kelley MacDougall offers extensive professional and board experience in business, nonprofit leadership, and community service. Since moving to Charlottesville in 2008, she has been actively involved with organizations supporting children, families, and the local community.

## KAYE FORSMAN, SECRETARY

Kaye Forsman brings decades of leadership in nonprofit work and fundraising, including serving as Director of Development at VIA and spearheading strategic advancement programs at the University of Virginia.

*Kaye Forsman*

*Caruso Brown with wife Christine Brown*

## CARUSO BROWN, TREASURER

Caruso Brown's experience in human services, community leadership, cultural preservation, and advocacy include more than three decades in senior leadership with Region Ten Community Services Board. A longtime Charlottesville resident, he is passionate about strengthening communities.

## JASON COCKERILL

Jason Cockerill has previously served as the Treasurer, Vice President, and President of the VIA Board of Directors. His current role as QIM's Chief Operating Officer helps shape financial decisions for the board.

## AMY DUNKENBERGER

Amy Dunkenberger is a retired communications professional with more than 30 years of experience in public relations and crisis management, including work with healthcare, cultural, and nonprofit organizations. Now living in Roanoke, she remains active in her community through volunteer service.

## TOM DUNKENBERGER, JR.

Tom Dunkenberger serves as First Vice President–Wealth Management, Financial Advisor, and Senior Investment Management Consultant with Morgan Stanley. He is also active in the Roanoke community through service with the UVA Club of Roanoke Valley and the Shawsville Ruritan Club.

*Ethan Long, Tom Dunkenberger, Amy Dunkenberger, Kyle Miller, and Susan Miller celebrate the Wells Fargo Tower illuminated in blue for Autism Acceptance Month in Roanoke.*

## C. MILTON DUNLAP, III

Milton Dunlap serves as Administrator for Contracts with the University of Virginia Health System.

*David Gordon, right, with former VIA Executive Director Erika Viccellio, center, and VIA co-founder Alison Webb, left, at the Thirtieth Anniversary Gala.*

## DAVID C. GORDON

David C. Gordon is one of the founders of VIA and served as the organization's first Executive Director from 1996 to 1997. His longstanding personal and professional connection to VIA includes board service and a deep commitment to its mission.

## FRANK GRISTINA

Frank Gristina is the founder of Acadia Wealth Advisors and has over 25 years of experience in equity analysis and wealth management. As a VIA parent, he has seen firsthand the impact of VIA's services through his son, strengthening his commitment to the organization's mission.

*Frank Gristina speaks at a donor stewardship event in Charlottesville.*

## BRIAN JOHNSON

Brian Johnson recently retired from Woods Rogers PLC in Charlottesville where he served as a corporate attorney. He now practices independently through Law Offices of Brian S. Johnson PLLC, focusing on corporate formation and governance, private equity finance, and real estate transactions.

*Ryan King, right, with Alex Jones, Assistant Director of Economic Development in Roanoke, at the opening of the new Roanoke Pediatric ABA clinic.*

## RYAN KING

Ryan King serves as Chief of Staff and Executive Director for Administration at Roanoke College and has held leadership roles in healthcare, research, and higher education. He brings a strong commitment to the Roanoke Valley and a personal connection to VIA's mission through his great uncle, who lived with profound autism.

## SUSAN MILLER

Susan Miller joined the VIA Board following the merger with SVH Services in Roanoke in 2023 and brings 32 years of experience as a special education teacher and offers extensive board leadership experience. Her son has received VIA services throughout his life, giving her both professional and personal insight into VIA's mission.

## LEE MULLEN

Lee Mullen is a Charlottesville native and longtime community leader who has been involved with UVA Children's Hospital for more than 30 years. Her longstanding commitment to supporting children, families, and the Charlottesville community lead her to serve on VIA's board.

## MARC NELSON

Marc Nelson is the Director of Economic Development for the City of Roanoke and brings more than 20 years of public service experience in government, economic development, and community building. Marc's work helps shape Roanoke's innovation, advocacy, and economic inclusion efforts.

*Celebrating CAAAS Roanoke, a new center for Adult Services; left to right, Marc Nelson, VIA's Regional Director of Adult Services Lauren Shaw, Ethan Long, Susan Miller, Kyle Miller.*

## TONY ROBINSON

Tony Robinson is President and Chief Executive Officer of Framatome Inc. and has nearly 40 years of experience in the nuclear industry. He also serves on several corporate and community boards and brings extensive leadership and strategic experience to VIA.

## RICHARD STEVENSON

Rich Stevenson is a Professor in the Developmental Pediatrics Division of the University of Virginia Children's Hospital and specializes in developmental disabilities, including autism. He has certifications from the American Board of Medical Specialties in Pediatrics and in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities.

*VIA Board of Directors, past and present, with VIA co-founders, Thirtieth Anniversary Gala, April 2026.*

## BERNARD C. WEBB

Bernie Webb is one of the founders of VIA and helped build the organization from the ground up after seeking effective services for his two children, both of whom are on the autism spectrum. He has served VIA in numerous capacities and upholds a longstanding personal commitment to its mission.

*Bernie and Alison Webb*

*John and Sandra Will*

## JOHN T. WILL, DDS

Dr. John Will is a pediatric dentist and dental anesthesiologist with specialized training in anesthesia, pharmacology, physiology, and internal medicine. He is a member of the Special Care Dentistry Association and the American Society of Dentist Anesthesiologists.

## JOHN BATTISON, DIRECTOR EMERITUS

John Battison was elected to Emeritus status in recognition of his extraordinary dedication and leadership as a member of the VIA Board of Directors. During his tenure, he helped advance VIA's mission through board leadership, fundraising, recruitment, and service as Interim Executive Director.

*John Battison, right, with previous VIA Board Chair, Chris Little*

# LIVING AND LEADING IN CENTRAL VIRGINIA

Central Virginia offers a rare blend of professional opportunity, cultural richness, and exceptional quality of life—making it an ideal place to both live and lead. Nestled between the Blue Ridge Mountains and the vibrant cities of Richmond and Washington, D.C., this region combines natural beauty, historic charm, and a growing innovation ecosystem focused on healthcare, education, and human services.

Charlottesville, home to the University of Virginia, consistently ranks among the best places to live in America. It offers a sophisticated yet welcoming environment with top-rated schools, nationally acclaimed restaurants, a thriving arts scene, and quick access to world-class hiking, wineries, and cultural events.

VIA's roots are deep here, and the city provides a strong network of advocates, professionals, and community partners committed to individuals with autism and neurodevelopmental disabilities.

Central Virginia is also known for its affordability, safety, and access to exceptional healthcare and education systems—making it an attractive destination for families and professionals alike.

Whether you're drawn to the energy of a university town, the tranquility of mountain living, or the connectedness of a close-knit community, you'll find a home here.

As the Chief Adminstrative Officer at VIA Centers for Neurodevelopment, you'll be at the forefront of transforming lives in a region that values collaboration, compassion, and excellence. This is more than a career move—it's an invitation to join a mission-driven community and to live with purpose in one of the most inspiring areas of the country.

# CONTACT & APPLY

**Contact Carole Nelson, Director of Human Resources, for questions and more information.**

**cnelson@viacenters.org**

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## Visit viacenters.org/careers to apply.

*VIA Centers for Neurodevelopment is an equal opportunity employer and values diversity at all levels of the organization.*

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