

## American Brain Foundation (ABF) Executive Director

***With a bold vision of life without brain disease, ABF's next Executive Director will expand the organization's profile and fundraising among prominent donor/investors, its collaborations with the American Academy of Neurology and other partners, and will continue to expand programs that advance innovative brain research.***

The [American Brain Foundation](#) is dedicated to advancing brain research across a broad spectrum of individual, but related diseases, and brings together individual, industry and foundation donors to support its mission.

The organization was founded in 1992 as part of the American Academy of Neurology (AAN), the world's largest professional association of neurologists with more than 40,000 members, and subsequently spun off as an independent 501c3 nonprofit organization. Guided by its long serving (now retiring) Executive Director, in 2022 ABF raised about \$6M, in 2023 is expected to raise \$8M, and over the next five years is positioned for continued fundraising growth. The next Executive Director will manage this growth, and will in the process scale the organization's board, staff, programs, partner and donor relationships, fundraising and its public profile.

ABF's Board of Directors includes both neurologist members of the AAN as well as high-profile members of the public. The foundation has achieved the highest ratings from the most trusted non-profit rating organizations (Charity Navigator and Guidestar). ABF's grant making and public education activities of activities currently include:

- **Next Generation Research Program:** ABF fully funds the innovative research of 30 early-career brain disease researchers per year, positioning them to receive NIH grants and achieve lifetime research careers.
- **Cure One, Cure Many Awards:** setting strategic direction in collaboration with the board, convenes partners to advance research focusing on the common mechanisms shared by multiple brain diseases.
- **Public Leadership Awards:** Awards given annually to high profile individuals—from Seth Rogen to Cindy McCain for their philanthropy and leadership to raise awareness around brain disease.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** A robust, multi-channel marketing strategy which raises awareness of brain disease and the need for research through content shared via social media, website/SEO, blogs, paid advertising, email, and virtual events and video.
- **Special Events:** Annual Commitment to Cures gala raising more than \$500,000 from individuals and sponsors. Third-party events given by donors.

ABF, AAN and the staff and boards of the two organization are fully committed to their ongoing strategic collaboration based on their shared commitment to research, which includes AAN administering research grants with dollars raised by ABF.

***Building on this strong track record and existing individual, industry, and foundation relationships, the Executive Director will expand ABF's name recognition, fundraising opportunities and donor base.***

## **THE ROLE**

Reporting to the board through its current Chair [David Dodick](#) (MD, FAAN), ABF's Executive Director is the organization's chief executive responsible for managing ABF's staff, finances, brand, partner relationships and other resources, in order to fund innovative brain research. The Executive Director and the team will identify research areas that would benefit from added investment, take a lead role in engaging donors to fund such investments, and will build strong relationships with the AAN and other allied health advocacy groups such as the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, ALS Association, Alzheimer's Association, the Michael J. Fox Foundation and many others.

Specific responsibilities include:

***Set Vision and Strategy*** - With the participation of ABF board, staff, partners and other stakeholders, the Executive Director will shape the organization's vision and programs, and will develop strategies that advance and fund innovative brain research.

***Manage Staff*** - The Foundation has a staff of ten self-motivated professionals, many with relatively long tenure. The Executive Director will set project goals for each team member and ensure their success by leading and directing them as required. In the next months, the new Executive Director will also be transitioning operating infrastructure, including IT, HR, Finance, and other services. Such services had been purchased from AAN, and will now be either brought in-house or outsourced.

***Market ABF to Donors, Partners and the Public*** - The ABF seeks to be known as a national brain research authority and ally. The organization is working actively to build awareness of the interconnectedness of brain diseases, and encourages the view that diverse "brain disease" conditions comprise an interrelated single medical challenge like "cancer". ABF seeks to rally public support for significant increases in "brain disease" research.

***Identify Research Projects and Initiatives*** - Working with ABF and AAN research committees, the Executive Director will help identify research projects which could benefit multiple diseases of the brain (in line with the Foundation's principle of "Cure One, Cure Many") and bring together the appropriate parties on proposals which can be presented to various donors for funding. As part of the research, there may be opportunities to host meetings of researchers, presentations to the general donor public, and other events to broaden awareness and understanding of ABF's mission and the specific project's goals.

***Drive Fundraising Results*** – A singular focus of the Executive Director will be working with the Board Chair, Finance Committee and Board as a whole to set ABF's fundraising goals for each year, develop plans to achieve the goals and then individually and through ABF staff, execute upon them. This includes developing a plan to increase funding from existing and new sources across individual donors, and private nonprofit and corporate foundations, including the pharmaceutical industry, aligned health advocacy groups, AAN members and others. The Executive Director will have their own portfolio of major donors and will regularly interact with major donors and donor representatives.

***Build Relationships*** - The Executive Director will serve as the organization's primary spokesperson to the AAN, allied health advocacy groups, donor groups and the general public. As such, they will be looked upon to strengthen and create new relationships across the various constituencies important to the ABF's success.

***Strengthen Governance and Identify Board Candidates*** - The Board is comprised neurologist members of the AAN and non-neurologist members of the general public. Together these members add medical and private sector expertise to ABF's Board. In addition to supporting the Board's committees and functions, the Executive Director will build a pipeline of neurologist and non-neurologist members who are ready to serve.

## **QUALIFICATIONS and EXPERIENCE**

The Executive Director will be an entrepreneurial, big-picture thinking roll-up-your-sleeves leader, with demonstrated expertise in each of the six areas identified above. In addition, the successful candidate will have a background which includes:

- Senior-level managerial, operational and financial experience in areas that intersect with the mission of the American Brain Foundation; the ability to understand issues – medical, scientific, financial and political – surrounding brain research and education on such initiatives.
- Highly accomplished fundraising experience achieved through being comfortable in the role of seeking and asking for individual and major gifts and grants; being adept at developing institutional partnerships to advance the mission.
- Strong management skills, both strategic and operational, and a demonstrated ability to build, manage, motivate and inspire others to productive action; an ability to work with a range of different personalities and to inspire trust and be recognized for their integrity, fortitude and grace under pressure.
- Skills in effectively managing organizations through aggressive top-line growth in funding and revenue while being a competent team builder with strong skills in management and leadership who understands the subtleties of motivating, directing and retaining a diverse group of colleagues with different work styles.
- Experience in leveraging existing technologies to maximize online presence and optimize innovation, magnify impact and improve fundraising efforts.
- Strong communication skills, both in writing and orally, who can translate the American Brain Foundation's mission and programs into fundraising initiatives that garner financial support through an ability to build constructive working relationships characterized by a high level of acceptance, cooperation, and mutual respect.
- A BA/BS. A master's degree or certification(s) in a relevant field is preferred.
- A sense of humor and perspective.

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