

Pre-Employment Reference Verification

Executive Director

Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

Erica McFadden

- 1. Name of individual providing the reference, position and organization.**
David Daugherty, Associate Director, Morrison Institute for Public Policy (MI).
- 2. Relationship to applicant as a member/employee of organization.**
Immediate Supervisor
- 3. Length of time of work relationship.**
Since 2010, 6 Years.
- 4. Applicant's position or job title in organization.**
Started as a Policy Analyst, now Senior Policy Analyst.
- 5. Length of time applicant served in position.**
Six years.
- 6. What were the general duties of position?**
Maintain relationships with various organizations/agencies contracting with MI; Conduct research on topics to support organizations/agencies; Maintain effective and collaborative relationships with agencies and varied community organizations who serve as stakeholders on issues relevant to clients; Produce written reports, publications, media presentations and other content as required by clients. Supervise multiple projects to ensure completion in accordance with client wishes and meeting established deadlines; maintain a working knowledge of critical issues pertaining to clients served.
- 7. Performance:**
 - **How would you rate overall performance on a scale of 1-10?**
I'd rate Erica a 10+. She's an industry onto herself and is extremely passionate and dedicated to those she works with. The ADDPC has been her sole responsibility and you can see that she knows your organization very well. This is a characteristic unique to Erica.
 - **Describe organizational and time management skills.**
Erica is a self-starter and is capable of completing an astounding amount of work with minimal or no assistance from her supervisor.
 - **Ability to change/adapt to varying priorities.**
The MI is all about change and flexibility. Erica readily adapts to changing priorities and tasks and is always ready to take on more responsibilities and fulfill them effectively.
 - **Capacity to develop and maintain positive working relationships with others.**
Erica is very well-liked and works very well with everyone. She's always willing to help others and is extremely supportive.

- **Ability to meaningfully engage community stakeholders to promote the mission of the organization.**

In my 40 years of working with and supervising employees (perhaps at least a hundred) Erica stands out as one of the top five in her abilities to work with stakeholders in establishing important and meaningful relationships.

8. Management Skills:

- **Capacity to manage complex and difficult tasks/projects.**

Erica does extremely well with in working with multiple assignments, especially those that create challenges. I think the Erica really likes tackling challenging situations and excels.

- **Ability to direct and coordinate activities among colleagues/subordinates.**

Erica is a very direct but diplomatic leader and is very capable in motivating her colleagues in getting the job done.

- **Ability to manage challenging/difficult behaviors demonstrated by colleagues/subordinates.**

When issues arise, Erica is very clear with others in sharing the need to get past issues to get the job done. She's not afraid of confronting others when needed but tends to use her abilities to draw people to her side.

- **Ability to provide clear expectations to peers and subordinates and follow-up on progress in meeting expectations.**

Erica has a vision on goals and is very good at communicating that vision and getting others to participate. She is very capable of setting guidelines and expectations with others.

- **Capacity to take necessary steps in intervening in difficult/challenging behaviors including progressive discipline with subordinates.**

I see Erica as using a participatory management style which I think is very effective in getting staff on board. However, knowing her previous experience in management and based on my observations she will not be afraid to address issues when they arise. As I said earlier, Erica is very open and straight forward in working with others.

9. Ability to manage the operations of a small office.

Erica works in a small office situation and functions very effectively. I think she'll do very well.

10. Awareness of DD issues and ability to develop concepts that when fiscally supported can become projects that support persons with DD in their efforts to seek full community inclusion.

I can't think of anyone who's as well informed on DD issues as Erica. She's incredibly dedicated to helping people with DD find ways of being better included in the community. I think for her, the work she does is much more than a job, it's a passion. I think she'll be very creative in leading the Council to develop projects that will be beneficial to the entire state.

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1. Name of individual providing the reference, position and organization.

Peter Fischer, ADA Coordinator/Commission Liaison, City of Phoenix

2. Relationship to applicant as a member/employee of organization.

Collaborator/Commission Support

3. Length of time of work relationship.

3 years.

4. Applicant's position or job title in organization.

Not an employee. She recently completed her appointed term as a Commissioner and Vice-Chairperson, Mayor's Commission on Disability Issues (MCDI)

5. Length of time applicant served in position.

Three years.

6. What were the general duties of position?

Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor of Phoenix to represent persons with disabilities living within the city. The Commission develops and follows an annual strategic plan that addresses issues pertaining to quality of life, accessibility and inclusion. Through research and advocacy the MCDI makes recommendations to the Mayor and the Phoenix City Council for consideration in active governance. Erica has been very involved in a critical project as assigned by the Mayor related to police relationships with persons who have disabilities. She designed an assessment tool to measure attitudes and coordinated administration within multiple police precincts and among a wide range of community stakeholders and consumers. The data collected has proven to be very meaningful and Erica is working with the Mayor to assist in forming a response to the findings.

7. Performance:

• **How would you rate overall performance on a scale of 1-10?**

My involvement with Erica as shown her to be a 10 performer.

She's very high-energy and I regard her as a consummate professional.

• **Describe organizational and time management skills.**

In my work with Erica I've never had any problems with her time management and found her very capable of sticking to timetables to achieve scheduled outcomes.

• **Ability to change/adapt to varying priorities.**

I've not had personal experience in working with Erica to judge her ability in this area, although I can't imagine that she'd have any difficulties in adapting.

• **Capacity to develop and maintain positive working relationships with others.**

Erica is a very positive person and easy to work with. Her ability to maintain a positive attitude helps her in working well within complex organizations such as City Hall.

- **Ability to meaningfully engage community stakeholders to promote the mission of the organization.**

I think that Erica maintains an extensive Rolodex of community contacts – she seems to know everyone. As I mentioned earlier, her positive demeanor and acceptance of diversity is key to her effectiveness.

8. Management Skills:

- **Capacity to manage complex and difficult tasks/projects.**

Erica works well with the Mayor and his office, a sometimes difficult environment to navigate. In spite of obstacles, she'd done an excellent job in completing the police/community relationship initiative that I mentioned earlier.

- **Ability to direct and coordinate activities among colleagues/subordinates.**

In her work with the MCDI, Erica has worked well with other Commissioners when assigned tasks. In the special project with the Mayor's Office, she helped to coordinate the activities of Commissioners as they administered surveys and evaluated findings.

- **Ability to manage challenging/difficult behaviors demonstrated by colleagues/subordinates.**

I can't speak to this question since I've not witnessed any problems. However, from what I know of Erica, I think she could handle issues if they came-up.

- **Ability to provide clear expectations to peers and subordinates and follow-up on progress in meeting expectations.**

I think that Erica is very good in this area. She communicates well, sends out requests for support and participation when needed and does regular follow-up.

- **Capacity to take necessary steps in intervening in difficult/challenging behaviors including progressive discipline with subordinates.**

Again, I can't speak to this issue.

9. Ability to manage the operations of a small office.

I've seen the excellent work that Erica does on projects and her work within the MCDI. The skills she demonstrated seem highly transferable into an office setting.

10. Awareness of DD issues and ability to develop concepts that when fiscally supported can become projects that support persons with DD in their efforts to seek full community inclusion.

Erica possesses a very unique ability to obtain multiple perspectives on issues in a non-judgmental and objective way. She works very well within diverse populations which helps her to gain acceptance and trust which helps in drilling down to important topics.

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Erica McFadden

1. **Name of individual providing the reference, position and organization.**
Lynn Hatfield, Assistant Executive Director, LINC – Independent Living Center (ILC)
2. **Relationship to applicant as a member/employee of organization.**
Subordinate staff member, reported to Erica.
3. **Length of time of work relationship.**
4 Years
4. **Applicant's position or job title in organization.**
Executive Director
5. **Length of time applicant served in position.**
4 Years
6. **What were the general duties of position?**
General operation of a non-profit agency located in Swansea, Illinois, serving 3 counties including a mix of rural and suburban communities, many of which are very diverse and consist of low-income residents. Reported to a 12 member board comprised of at least 51% of individuals with disabilities. Directed a staff of 12, including all recruiting, hiring, coach and disciplinary activities including involuntary terminations. Managed a budget of approximately 450K funded through multiple grants, and was also responsible for fund-raising projects. Guided the agency as a premiere advocacy organization to expand outreach and services.
7. **Performance:**
 - **How would you rate overall performance on a scale of 1-10?**
9-10. I can't think of any weaknesses or areas where improvement was needed. I viewed Erica as being very creative, a forward thinker and a person who anticipated areas of need. Excellent in relating to staff, always maintained an open-door policy.
 - **Describe organizational and time management skills.**
Excellent, could keep the ball rolling and get things done on time. Could handle multiple tasks simultaneously. Extremely energetic.
 - **Ability to change/adapt to varying priorities.**
Very flexible. In the state of Illinois things are always in flux due to the nature of state government. The state is always immersed in financial struggles which has a big impact with LINC since we rely on the state for funding. I always thought that Erica did a great job of navigating through an unclear system.

- **Capacity to develop and maintain positive working relationships with others.**
Very effective with outside stakeholders and especially board members. She significantly improved relationships with the Board from the previous executive director by visibly showing them that she valued their involvement and participation. She always worked hard to be transparent with the board in all of her work.
- **Ability to meaningfully engage community stakeholders to promote the mission of the organization.**
Absolutely can do this – she’s a terrific relationship builder. The local Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) was created by Erica’s expanded relationship with the Area Agency on Aging. We find that we need to continually promote the LINC to heighten awareness. Erica was very good at this by becoming a part of the community. She was involved with the Rotary and other civic organizations. She’s just a friendly person and a natural in getting to know people.

8. Management Skills:

- **Capacity to manage complex and difficult tasks/projects.**
ADRC stands out as the biggest and most complex project since it took a long time and lots of effort to create. I also working with Erica on a very difficult federal grant application that was new territory for us. She did a great job in providing leadership and support.
- **Ability to direct and coordinate activities among colleagues/subordinates.**
Exceptional person in this area. A transparent leader not just a Director. She was a great mentor for me and I’m still using many of the skills and strengths that Erica helped me develop. One example that stands out is a multi-year 5K fundraiser we did with another ILC across state lines. It was a difficult fundraiser and Erica spent a lot of time with us to ensure that it was successful. We made money!

Ability to manage challenging/difficult behaviors demonstrated by colleagues/subordinates.

I can think of a difficult situation with a disabled employee and use of FMLA. Erica worked very hard to make sure she proceeded correctly. I know that she was also involved in at least one situation where an employee had to be terminated due to behavioral issues.

Ability to provide clear expectations to peers and subordinates and follow-up on progress in meeting expectations.

Erica held regularly scheduled staff meetings, where we’d discuss issues and upcoming activities. She was always very thorough in the meetings so we’d know what was expected. It was pretty common for her to stop by our offices

and check-in with us to see if we had questions, problems or things that we needed help with.

Capacity to take necessary steps in intervening in difficult/challenging behaviors, including progressive discipline with subordinates.

As I mentioned earlier, I think she's very capable of dealing with these issues.

9. Ability to manage the operations of a small office.

She's a very good operations manager. There are a lot of pieces to running a small non-profit and things are constantly changing. I always thought that Erica was a great fiscal manager, since she always knew how to keep things running even when we faced financial problems.

10. Awareness of DD issues and ability to develop concepts that when fiscally supported can become projects that support persons with DD in their efforts to seek full community inclusion.

The one example that comes to mind is from Erica realizing that we needed to expand our outreach/services and envisioned a new volunteer program. The idea grew into a project which was very helpful in allowing our small staff to better use their time in non-service areas. In addition, creating the volunteer program gave us the chance to learn much more about the people we served through new relationships. If Erica is selected you won't be disappointed. We were very sad to see her leave.