



# Executive Director

**\$105,000 to \$145,000**

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**Arrowhead Regional  
Development Commission**

Serving Northeast Minnesota

Established in 1969 under Minnesota’s Regional Development Act, the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) serves as the regional planning and development organization for northeastern Minnesota, throughout Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis Counties. The Commission works in partnership with local governments, state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and regional stakeholders to address issues that extend beyond individual jurisdictions and require coordinated regional solutions.

ARDC’s mission is to provide local governments and community organizations a collaborative framework for identifying needs, solving complex problems, and fostering local leadership. Through planning, coordination, and strategic investment, the organization helps communities strengthen economic opportunity, infrastructure systems, and quality of life across the region.

ARDC operates through three primary divisions that deliver specialized programs and services to communities and residents throughout the region:

- **ARDC Planning Division** – Leads regional and community planning initiatives, economic development strategies, and implementation of the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs), while supporting local governments with planning, infrastructure, and development projects.
- **Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging** – Designated under the Older Americans Act, this division provides services, advocacy, and coordination to support older adults, caregivers, and aging-related programs across northeastern Minnesota.
- **Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council (MIC)** – Serves as the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for the Duluth-Superior region, coordinating transportation planning, regional mobility initiatives, and federal transportation funding programs.

ARDC is governed by a regional Commission and Board and supported by an interdisciplinary staff of approximately 47 that works collaboratively with local governments, regional partners, and community organizations. Through its programs and partnerships, the organization helps communities access resources, coordinate long-range planning efforts, and implement initiatives that strengthen the long-term vitality of the Arrowhead Region.

## People & Communities



- 325,716 Residents
- 7 Counties
- 70 Cities & Towns
- 180 Townships
- 34 School Districts
- 4 Tribal Nations

## Geography & Scale

- 19,946 Square Miles
- 23% of MN’s Land Area
- 13,650 Miles of Highway
- 5 Commercial Ports



## Natural & Regional Assets

- 63% Public Land
- 2 National Forests
- 4,621 Miles of Shoreline
- 259 Miles of Lake Superior Shoreline



## Economic Context

- \$9M+ Federal Investments (2024)
- \$17M+ Revolving Loan Fund Distributed
- 1,122 Jobs Created
- 3,260 Jobs Retained

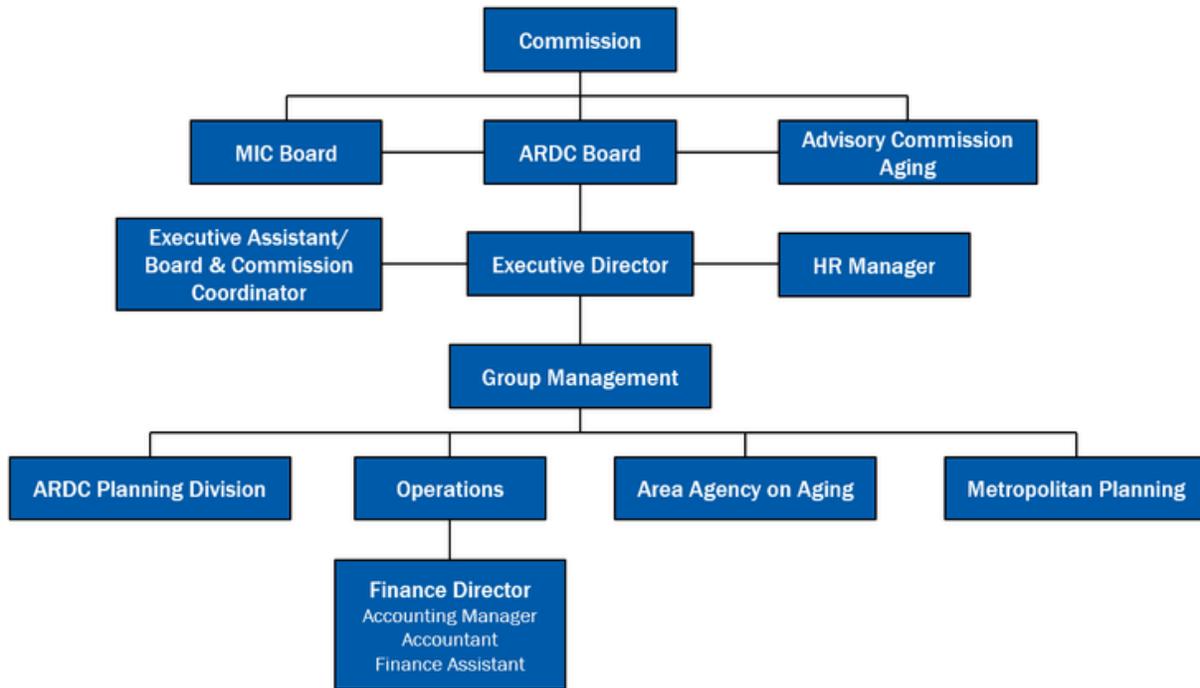
## Strategic Focus Areas



- Economic Competitiveness
- Workforce & Human Capital
- Broadband Expansion
- Housing Access
- Resilience & Sustainability
- Regional Collaboration

## Organizational Structure

ARDC operates through three primary divisions - ARDC Planning, the Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging, and the Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council, and is supported by finance, human resources, and administrative functions. The Executive Director provides overall leadership for the organization and works closely with division directors to guide regional initiatives and operations.



## Budget at a Glance

	2025 Budget	2026 Budget
<b>Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>	\$4.13M	\$4.63M
<b>Contracts/Subawards</b>	\$3.81M	\$1.49M
<b>Revolving Loan Fund Distribution</b>	\$950,000	\$1.58M
<b>Other Operating Costs</b>	\$1.13M	\$1.5M
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$10.02M</b>	<b>\$9.2M</b>

Major Revenue Sources	2025	2026
<b>Federal Grants</b>	\$1.27M	\$1.63M
<b>State Grants</b>	\$1.13M	\$2.42M
<b>Federal Service Contracts</b>	\$2.23M	\$1.79M
<b>State Service Contracts</b>	\$3.11M	\$286,711
<b>County Levy</b>	\$761,513	\$784,358
<b>Other Revenue &amp; Interest</b>	\$1.52M	\$2.29M

## Core Duties

- Provide strategic and inclusive executive leadership that advances ARDC’s mission, anticipates regional needs, and establishes clear organizational goals and priorities.
- Direct implementation of short- and long-range plans, policies, and operating procedures approved by the Commission.
- Maintain strong working relationships with local governments, legislators, and regional, state, and federal partners.
- Serve as primary liaison to the Commission and Board, providing regular updates on projects, staffing, finances, and organizational performance.
- Oversee fiscal operations, budget development (in partnership with the Finance Director), grant administration, and long-term financial sustainability.
- Lead organizational structure, staffing, and human resource functions, ensuring legal compliance, professional development, and a high-performance culture.
- Supervise and mentor division directors and operations staff; foster accountability, collaboration, and continuous improvement.
- Oversee the ARDC Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) and other major program initiatives.
- Advise and assist local governments with federal and state funding opportunities and facilitate program implementation benefiting the region.
- Prepare and oversee required reports, including the Annual Report to Government and Legislature and the Five-Year Assessment.
- Secure funding through proposal development and grant writing; contribute to technical reports and regional planning documents.
- Represent ARDC publicly through presentations, advisory committees, intergovernmental meetings, media engagement, and regional forums.
- Monitor legislative and policy developments affecting regional programs and communicate impacts to stakeholders.
- Ensure strong internal communication systems, organizational transparency, compliance processes, and quality standards.
- Lead agency meetings, strategic initiatives, and training efforts; pursue ongoing professional development.
- Perform other duties as directed by the Commission and Board.



## Desired Attributes

- Collaborative and relationship-oriented leader who can unify ARDC's diverse divisions: planning, aging services, and transportation, around a shared vision and mission.
- Strategic thinker and organizational leader capable of guiding a complex regional agency serving multiple counties, tribes, and communities.
- Strong communicator and ambassador who can effectively represent ARDC to local governments, state and federal partners, and regional stakeholders.
- Approachable and transparent leader who builds trust with staff, the Board, and the Commission through openness, accountability, and honest communication.
- Adaptable and resourceful problem solver who can navigate changing funding landscapes, regulatory environments, and evolving regional needs.



## Key Priorities and Goals

- Strengthen organizational stability and culture during a leadership transition while supporting and mentoring newer division directors and staff.
- Enhance regional visibility and engagement by strengthening relationships with local governments, tribes, community partners, and stakeholders across the seven-county region.
- Advance succession planning and leadership development to address upcoming retirements and preserve institutional knowledge.
- Lead the update of the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) in partnership with the Economic Development Planner, including completion of ARDC's required Five-Year CEDS Assessment due in 2026.
- Lead a comprehensive strategic planning process to establish clear organizational priorities, direction, and long-term vision for ARDC.
- Position ARDC for future growth by identifying opportunities to expand programs, partnerships, and funding sources that support regional development.



**Organization:** Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC)

**Position:** Executive Director

**Salary:** \$105,000 to \$145,000

**Benefits:** Health, dental, life, and disability insurance, PERA retirement, paid time off, holidays, employee support programs, and more

**Application Deadline:** April 12, 2026

**Job Summary:** The Executive Director serves as the chief administrative officer of the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC), leading strategic and operational efforts across its seven-county northeastern Minnesota region. The position oversees fiscal, personnel, and administrative functions and ensures effective implementation of Commission-approved policies and programs.

**Minimum Qualification:** Bachelor's degree and a minimum of six (6) years of combined economic development and planning experience, experience working with communities, boards, committees, and government entities, and supervisory experience. A master's degree in Business, Public Administration, Planning, Economic Development, or related field is preferred.

**Apply:** Visit <https://daviddrown.hiringplatform.com/382372-arrowhead-regional-development-commission-executive-director/1456869-application-form/en> and complete the application process by April 12, 2026. Finalists will be selected on April 17, 2026, and final interviews will be held on April 24 and 27, 2026 .

Please direct any questions to Liza Donabauer at [liza@daviddrown.com](mailto:liza@daviddrown.com) or 612-920-3320 x111.

EOE/AA/M/F/Vet/Disability/LGBTIQ/Age-Friendly Employer