



2023

ANNUAL
REPORT

NATIONAL
LEADERSHIP
CONSORTIUM



ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Our Vision

To increase the capacity of leaders, organizations, and systems to better promote and support the rights, inclusion, and human dignity of people with disabilities.

Our Core Values

Authentic Leadership: We promote professionalism, respect, and values-based leadership for everyone.

Human Dignity & Rights: We believe that all people have basic human rights of dignity, choice, and control and that autonomy, decision-making, and access to chosen supports are social justice imperatives.

Inclusion: We believe that all people should be supported to live, work, and become meaningful members of their communities in valued roles.

Networking & Collaboration: We create a mutually supportive national and international community of leaders committed to integrity, learning, and informing one another.

Responsiveness: We work to effectively serve disability sector organizations and leaders working in them to best impact the lives of those supported in the system through research, customized support, collaboration, and outstanding programs and training.

Our Mission

The National Leadership Consortium provides high-quality, values-based training, customized support, research, and evaluation to develop the skills, knowledge, resources, and networks of leaders so that organizations and systems support people with disabilities to direct their own services and lives and fully belong in their chosen communities.

www.natleadership.org



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Letter from the Co-Directors

2023. Phew. It seems like everyone we've talked to this year has been busier and trying to accomplish more with less time, resources, bandwidth, you name it, than in years before. Maybe it's the drive to try to pick up momentum in a 'post-COVID' environment. Maybe it's the fact that we are even more connected than ever. Technology makes work accessible and our endless to-do lists, email inboxes, and meeting-filled calendars are always at our fingertips. Maybe we are projecting because our team has felt a bit overwhelmed in parts of 2023— but we don't think so.

Since we all have so much on our plates, we want to say an extra thank you for spending some time reviewing our 2023 annual report. Over the next several pages, we reflect on the past year, celebrate the accomplishments of leaders in our field, and share some of the work we did at the National Leadership Consortium that we're particularly proud of.

In 2023, our team focused outwardly on expanding our reach and refining our efforts to make sure that our programs, customized support, and research and evaluation met the needs and interests of leaders like you, who are passionate about continuously developing your leadership skills and transforming systems in which you work, and have precious little time to devote to learning and taking in new information and resources. We also focused inwardly to sure up our structures and operations so our team is well supported to accomplish our important mission and goals, and to continue to prioritize diversity and inclusion in our recruitment and partnerships with speakers and participants.

In this annual report you'll read about examples of our work and stories of impact and perspectives from field leaders about initiatives and leadership practices that continue to drive our field forward. Throughout the year, 625 established and emerging leaders attended our programs and training, and our resources and practical, evidence-based reports, articles, and guides were read more than 11,000 times. We continued to offer training and opportunities to field leaders that more than 3,500 people have accessed around the world, and we launched 13 new initiatives and resources to stay ahead or at least keep up with the needs and interests of leaders across the field.

We are excited about what we've accomplished in 2023, and we hope this annual report reflects our intentions and efforts to support leaders to continue to make great strides in advancing the human rights and dignity of people with disabilities. Thanks again for reading!

Looking forward,



Caitlin Bailey and Kristen Loomis Greenidge

Strategic Objectives and Goals for 2023



In 2023, the National Leadership Consortium selected ambitious strategic goals to improve our reach, impact, and usefulness to leaders in the disability service sector. Our small but mighty team is constant in our determination to continually improve, innovate, and meet the current and emerging needs and interests of field leaders. This effort is reflected in our 2023 strategic goals and the examples of work that are shared below and throughout this report.

2023 Strategic Goals and Examples of Related Work

GOAL ONE Increase the reach, presence, and connectedness of the National Leadership Consortium to ensure that our partnerships, communication, electronic resources, information, marketing, and social media outreach are useful and engaging for current and future members of the National Leadership Consortium network. To reach this goal in 2023 we:

- Created more info sheets, checklists, and resources highlighting effective leadership practices, research findings, and information useful to field leaders than ever before.
- Increased our online communication and social media outreach (through Facebook and LinkedIn) to share about the great things that leaders are doing, connect field leaders to our network, and share about events.

“The National Leadership Consortium is absolutely amazing. They created an innovative and effective environment for learning about a wide range of topics. I am walking away from this week with a renewed sense of purpose as well as a new set of skills that I know will be incredibly impactful in both my personal and professional realm.” ◆◆◆

GOAL TWO Expand awareness of the needs, efforts, and interests of leaders in our field by making the National Leadership Consortium longitudinal evaluation data and results more useful, available, and accessible. To reach this goal in 2023, we:

- Shared our impact and research findings in short one-page Research Briefs and through the National Leadership Consortium Bulletin posted on our listserv, Community of Practice, website, and social media pages.
- Began a research project to better understand the leadership practices and efforts that lead to full inclusion for people with disabilities, which expanded when we were awarded a DD Council Grant to focus on effective practices in North Carolina. Please look for more information about our findings in 2024.

GOAL THREE Grow and improve the impact of National Leadership Consortium programs, customized support, and research and evaluation efforts to enhance field leaders' (at all levels) access to information, resources, connections, and development opportunities that help them lead more effectively and authentically. To reach this goal in 2023, we:

- Developed and facilitated new programs for field leaders and organizations, including a menu of training options that offer leaders an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of their strengths, learn more about critical leadership skills, and practice applying essential skills with others from their organization or the National Leadership Consortium network. We are excited to expand these programs in 2024.
- Beta-tested, validated, and launched the Organizational Priorities and Practices Inventory™ (the OPPI) — an action- and evidence-based tool designed to inform customized and strategic support related to organizational best practices. The OPPI helped several organizations determine areas of strength and strategically plan opportunities to better align their values and practices.

GOAL FOUR Secure the processes and operations of the National Leadership Consortium as an affiliate of the Council on Quality and Leadership to continually improve our innovation and effectiveness. To reach this goal in 2023, we:

- Did our best to walk our talk and focused on developing the skills and cohesiveness of our team to make sure that all team members have the support they need to thrive in their roles.

GOAL FIVE Continue to enhance diversity and inclusion within the National Leadership Consortium's team, partners, program speakers, and customers. To reach this goal in 2023, we:

- Began offering Leadership Institute scholarships to Direct Support Professionals and people with disabilities to address disparities in access to leadership development programs in our field. We intend to expand scholarship opportunities in future years as well. ◆

2023 Initiatives By the Numbers

Total Participants
in Our Programs
for 2023:

625

Workshops facilitated:
4 virtual workshops
43 people attended

43

Webinars attended:
3 Webinars
341 people

341

Leadership Institutes facilitated:
7 total (2 virtual with one open to
only Canadian leaders and
5 in-person in Pennsylvania, Missouri,
Delaware, California, and Texas)

7

Leadership Institute graduates:
151 people graduated from
Leadership Institutes in 2023;
2686 graduates total since 2006

151

Targeted Training and
Customized Support:
90 people attended

90

Funding for 2023 Programs, Research, and Customized Support:

29%

Foundation
Funding

26%

State Government
or Developmental
Disabilities
Council Funding

41%

Fee for
Service
Funding

4%

Sponsorship
Funding

“By far this is one of the most thought out, structured and fun seminars I have attended. The speakers and the co-directors were all experts in the field, and it was a pleasure to meet such welcoming and resourceful people. This seminar should be attended by all supervisors in the first year of their position. Job well done!” ◆◆◆

Presentations at conferences/webinars/podcasts:

- ◆ AAIDD ◆ ANCOR ◆ APPAM ◆ ASPA ◆ AUCD ◆ NACDD ◆ NAQ ◆
- ◆ NASDDDS ◆ Temple Institute on Disabilities IM4Q Conference ◆



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& MANAGEMENT



Exhibiting at Conferences:



Making a world of difference
in people's lives



Leadership Training and Programs

As an organization dedicated to developing disability service sector leaders, the National Leadership Consortium provides essential leadership training and support programs designed to meet the specific needs of those leaders in every stage of their careers.

All National Leadership Consortium programs are grounded in the belief that leaders' professional purpose in this field is to advance the rights and human dignity of people with disabilities. To support that goal, our programs center around enhancing the knowledge, skills, resources, and networks of current and emerging field leaders within the context of best practices and innovation in disability sector organizations. Attendees of our programs develop and enhance their skills to transform their organizations and systems, build a strong and engaged workforce, and advance their careers in ways that promote inclusion, autonomy, control, and fulfillment for people with disabilities.

Our flagship program, the **Leadership Institute**, is an intensive leadership development training for established and emerging field leaders. The Leadership Institute builds attendees' knowledge of trends and best practices in the disabilities service sector, professional and interpersonal leadership skills and strengths, and transformational leadership acumen. Leaders participate in interactive, exercise

and discussion-based sessions and learn from field experts who offer practical strategies, approaches, and lessons in enhancing professional, organizational, and systems practices. The Leadership Institute is offered in-person and virtually and can be tailored to specific states, provinces, and countries or can be more general and whole-system focused.

In 2023 we facilitated seven Leadership Institutes across the United States and Canada. Some standouts include our 2023 Texas Leadership Institute, which was the last in a series of Institutes that made up part of Project Leadership Challenge, a project run by a team at Texas Tech University and funded by the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities. This five-year project included five Leadership Institutes, with cohorts of up to 20 leaders representing five organizations each year. Leaders attended the Institute in teams of four and continued meeting monthly for five months of mentorship and coaching with National Leadership Consortium and Texas Tech University staff. Throughout the project, 94 leaders attended the Texas Leadership Institute.

Another exciting opportunity for the National Leadership Consortium in 2023 was to be able to offer additional scholarships for leaders to attend the Leadership Institute. In addition to the longstanding Gary Smith Scholarship for state agency leaders, supported by NASDDDS

"After working in this field for 20 years, the Leadership Institute provided an awesome reset. It opened my eyes to areas we may have gotten a bit stagnant!" ◆◆◆

◆ ◆ ◆ Leadership Training and Programs ... *continued*

and the George Braithwaite Scholarship supported by OASIS, the National Leadership Consortium added two scholarships to our winter, summer, and western states Leadership Institutes. These scholarships, open to Direct Support Professional leaders and leaders with disabilities, include not only tuition but also travel and hotel stipend. We hope more leaders who otherwise may not have had opportunities to attend the Institute are able to do so with the continuation and expansion of these scholarships in 2024.

After successfully launching **National Leadership Consortium Workshops** in 2022, the National Leadership Consortium designed and facilitated additional multi-session workshops in 2023. The workshops aim to help leaders in our network focus on developing and honing specific skill sets needed to effectively lead their organizations. In 2023 we offered four online workshops for 44 leaders from our network. Attendees honed their strengths and developed skills related to: evaluating, creating, and implementing strategic plans focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives; essential leadership skills such as thinking strategically and developing others; strategies to enhance communication skills and engage in challenging conversations more effectively; and deepened their understanding of personal decision-making styles and practices that can help to make quick, tough, or unpopular choices.

Workshops offer a deep dive into different topics to help leaders assess, strengthen, and translate important leadership skills relevant to their day-to-day responsibilities. Workshops are offered by National Leadership Consortium staff and faculty who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience in each area highlighted. The National Leadership Consortium looks forward to hosting more workshops in 2024, offering a menu of crafted workshop selections for leaders and teams to select from and presenting tailored workshops to organizations. ◆



“The Leadership Institute was very well done. The workshops, exercises, discussions, and the speakers were all useful. The flow of the sessions was good and thoughtfully planned. I feel like I learned so much, especially from the other attendees. I love that we were given so many resources and information that we can take back to our organizations.” ◆ ◆ ◆

Impact of the Leadership Institute

Impact of the National Leadership Consortium Training and Programs

In 2023, we took a deeper look into our data to better understand the impact of our training and programs. As you can see from the quotes shared throughout this Annual Report, people value their time and experiences during the training they attend. We also hear stories of impact long after participation in the Leadership Institute and other programs. To better understand trends in leaders' experiences at the Leadership Institute, we analyzed data gathered in 2023.

Leadership Institutes are designed to challenge and enhance the values and practices of current and emerging leaders in our field. The National Leadership Consortium periodically collects data from Leadership Institute alums to gauge the impact of the training over time. In January 2023, we asked past participants to describe their most significant professional and organizational changes, as well as significant changes that impacted people with disabilities they support after attending the Leadership Institute. Participants also rated the level of contribution that participation in the Leadership Institute had to these changes. Our analysis shows that participation plays a large role in leaders' change efforts.

Professional Changes

When asked to describe significant professional changes since attending the Leadership Institute, leaders reported promotions and advanced degrees, increased leadership skills (better communication with staff, more flexible and creative thinking, increased delegation, etc.), increased confidence in themselves, feeling less intimidated to execute their visions, increased involvement in policy change, becoming more intentional in their leadership, and more.

Leaders said:

"Based on the leadership assessment [I took during the Leadership Institute], I've changed certain things I do as a leader to support my direct reports and colleagues better."

"The recognition that we need to constantly change and grow to meet the needs/wants of the people we serve. Going into the institute, we believed we were leaders in person-centeredness but quickly came to realize that we can indeed do better!"

"In less than a year after completing the Leadership Institute, I advanced from a frontline supervisor to program director. I do not think I would have felt competent enough to pursue that advancement if not for the reassurance I gained during the Leadership Institute."

"I found all of the information and especially the speakers very informative and inspirational. I'm excited to bring all that I've learned back to my organization and implement as many strategies as possible to better us and better serve the people we support." ◆◆◆



Impact of the Leadership Institute ... *continued*

Organizational Changes

Responses to significant organizational changes since attending the Leadership Institute included reorganizing the organizational structure, building organizational infrastructure, growing the organization, reallocating work based on staff skills, implementing new procedures like revamping onboarding, improving communication across the organization, increasing ongoing staff development, improving succession planning, increasing representation of people receiving services on organizational boards and committees, increasing input from all staff, and making overall improvements to organizational culture.

“We have had a significant culture change at my organization, and I feel as though I have been a part of that shift.”

“We completely changed our organizational chart, job descriptions, and with that staff training.”

“I helped facilitate some organizational restructuring to better utilize administrative resources more efficiently. This allowed for more flexibility in individualized funding to be better utilized and accessed by people supported.”



Changes Impacting People with Disabilities

When asked to describe the most significant change impacting the people with disabilities that they have influenced since attending the Leadership Institute, participants shared that they have developed college programs, established consulting services to support employers who want to hire and retain people with disabilities, improved response times for people supported, increased use of technology, developed virtual trainings and activities, increased independent and supported decision making, surveyed people supported to improve services, and enhanced choice, voice, and individualized and community based services (increased competitive integrated employment opportunities, closing sheltered workshops, ending subminimum wage employment, less large residential centers, etc.).

“We have been focusing on offering a larger swathe of services for the people, we support to choose for themselves in their own way of communicating, what community-based service options matter the most to them and then working to provide those opportunities.”

“We have hired people we support to work on our training team. They are currently presenting during orientation on people’s rights and choices. Our goal is to expand that in the future to other topics that they feel new employees have to know before working with them.”

“We’ve closed our workshops and day programs and eliminated subminimum wage payments. Over 100 people once languishing in a workshop became successfully employed.”

Impact of the Leadership Institute ...continued



The Contribution of the Leadership Institute

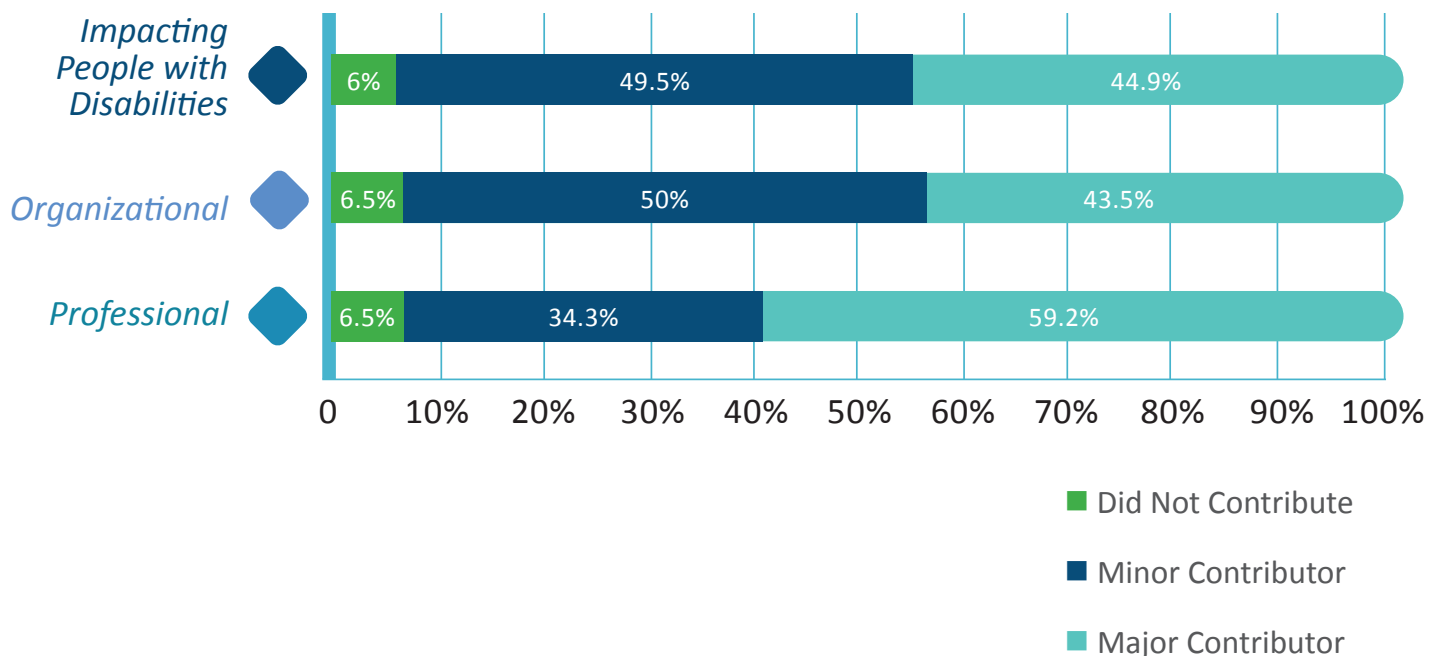
The impressive changes shared by past participants were generally, at least in part, attributed to attending the Leadership Institute.

More than 90% of participants said attending was either a major (59.2%) or minor (34.3%) contributor to their professional changes. Organizational changes were also impacted by attending the training, with 43.5% of respondents saying that it was a major contributor and 50% saying that it was a minor contributor. Almost all leaders surveyed said that attending the Leadership Institute was a major (44.9%) or minor (49.5%) contributor to changes made that impacted the lives of people with disabilities.

These results show that the Leadership Institute plays an important role in advancing professional and organizational changes and positively impacting the lives of people with disabilities. Leaders who participate gain essential knowledge, skills, and connections needed to advance their own practices and those of their organizations and systems. Investing in the development of field leaders results in better led agencies and higher quality of life for people with disabilities. ◆

How Much Participating in the Leadership Institute Contributed to Changes

(n=108)



Research and Evaluation Projects

Research and Evaluation Projects

The National Leadership Consortium research team designed and executed multiple research and evaluation projects in 2023 that helped advance the disabilities field and services and supports for people with disabilities. Some of our work that has had the biggest impact included: partnering with the Oregon Developmental Disabilities Council to facilitate and evaluate efforts to bring about systems change in Oregon; the evaluation of DSPs LEAD, a leadership-focused training program developed for DSPs in Delaware; the continued validation of the Organizational Priorities and Practices Inventory (OPPI), a self-assessment tool developed by the National Leadership Consortium that helps professionals gauge the priorities of their organizations and the alignment of their practices; and the revamping of the surveys we use for our ongoing longitudinal study of leadership development and impact using data collected from the participants of our Leadership Institute trainings.

Program Evaluation

The National Leadership Consortium continued to work closely with the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) in 2023 to reach its goals related to increasing technology education and access in Oregon, improving access to mental health services, expanding community-based housing efforts, and building a cohesive system of supports across the state. In 2023, our research team worked with stakeholders in Oregon to refine their ideas into actionable and measurable goals, objectives, benchmarks, and action steps toward their visions for better outcomes for people with disabilities across the state. Our team met regularly with the groups that are working toward systems change in late 2023 and we will continue to support and evaluate their progress as they head toward their goals in 2024.

The National Leadership Consortium partnered with the Delaware Department of Developmental Disabilities Services to develop the Leadership, Empowerment, Advancement & Development (LEAD) training for Delaware DSPs and emerging frontline leaders. The first cohort met in the spring of 2023, the second cohort in the summer of 2023, and the third cohort began in the winter of 2023. Our research team has been continuously gauging the effectiveness and impact of the training in six stages for each cohort.

The evaluation cycle was completed for Cohort 1 in November 2023 and is ongoing for Cohorts 2 and 3. Overall, participants of Cohort 1 were very satisfied with the training, giving it an average score of 95% satisfaction (3.73 out of 4) on things like logistics, exercises and discussions,





Before LEAD	After LEAD	1 Month After	2 Months After	Quarterly	6 Months After
Pre-Program Survey	Post-Program Survey	Follow-Up Interview	Community of Practice Survey	Networking and Learning Event Survey	Agency Impact Survey
All Participants	All Participants	Select Participants	All Participants	All Participants	Coworkers of Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Skills • Leadership Capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth in Skills • Growth in Content Knowledge • Satisfaction with Training 	<p>Impact of Training on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Practice Skills • Team/Org Functioning • Collaboration/Networking • People Supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection to other DSPs • Satisfaction with Community of Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usefulness to Work • Satisfaction with Event 	<p>Impact of Training on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Practices • Team/Org Functioning • People Supported

and speaker presentation quality. The session that participants felt was most useful to their current work was about “Strengths Based Leadership” while the sessions they thought would most impact the people with disabilities they support were “Fostering a Sustainable Workforce,” “Transforming Organizational Culture,” and “Strengths Based Leadership.” Interviewed participants of Cohort 1 described the positive impact of the training on their personal leadership skills (e.g., increased confidence, better communication skills, and increased organization), team functioning and organization (e.g., better communication, increased recognition and praise for work, and sharing knowledge from the training that will help other staff), and the people with disabilities they support (e.g., encouraging and supporting advocacy, better services, and increased independence). Positive feedback about the training included:

“Overall, it was a welcoming environment. People felt comfortable and were open with how they felt, which I really appreciated. I really liked the topics and how they covered different areas of management. I also really liked how the program focused on enhancing our strengths rather than what we needed to work on. I had never heard that perspective before.”

“What really touched me was the history of what we do. I thought that was really good to bring that to light. A lot of people go into this field and don’t have a general idea of where we come from and where we are now. It gave me that perspective of why I’m doing what I’m doing.”



“Thank you for doing this and opening it to the DSPs because it’s not really something that has been there before. I was telling my coworkers, ‘If you’re able to do it, do it! It will change your perspective on what this job is.’”

“I’m so proud [I completed the training] and I am bragging about it and referring people for the next one. I’m referring people and told everyone it’s very good. I don’t think there was any better career boost I was looking for than this. It has really helped me as a person because of the things we talked about, the stories we shared, the information we got, it was just exactly what we needed. This field needs to have this. It was overdue. I really enjoyed it!”

Results of the evaluations will continue to be reviewed between each cohort into 2024 and used to improve the training curriculum, format, and accessibility to more effectively train emerging leaders and impact service delivery in Delaware.

The Organizational Priorities and Practices Inventory

The National Leadership Consortium research team spent a lot of time in 2023 conducting research to validate the Organizational Priorities and Practices Inventory (OPPI). The OPPI is a holistic survey that measures the alignment between organizational priorities and practices with evidence-based principles in our field. In 2023, the validation study completed the data collection stage, and the research team collected roughly 450 new responses, adding to the more than 850 responses in total. Of those, 37% of respondents were Leadership Institute participants, while 43% were from seven organizations in the United States and Canada.

Among the participating organizations, Makom, an organization that supports people with disabilities in Maryland and the District of Columbia, notably embraced the OPPI this year to fortify its strategic planning assessment initiatives. Over 120 employees from Makom responded, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the organization’s dynamics. An organizational report highlighting their findings was provided to Makom that detailed diverse responses based on employee positions, unveiling crucial implications. This insightful analysis empowered Makom to identify areas of success and growth, furnishing a roadmap for strategic enhancements and continued progress over the following years.

The OPPI has made a significant impact on organizations in our field, as shown by feedback we’ve received from participants:

“I appreciate the structure of this survey - often times, organizations have high ideals and values but don’t quite hit the mark in actual practice. This survey highlights that discrepancy.”

“This survey was a good reflection of the important parts of serving people with disabilities and allowed me to reflect of what I know about my agency values and how they are carrying out those values.”

In 2024, the National Leadership Consortium is poised to fully launch the Organizational Priorities and Practices Inventory, providing an opportunity for interested organizations to access this valuable assessment tool. To learn more about the OPPI and its full suite of features, we invite you to explore further information available on our website:

www.natleadership.org/OPPI.



What have we learned from the OPPI so far?

- Organizations often rate their priorities (values and intentions in key areas of best practice) higher than their practices (what they actually do).
- The lowest alignment between priorities and practices was related to supporting, recognizing, and including employees at all levels in important agency decisions (OPPI category of Staff Participation and Support).
- The greatest alignment between priorities and practices was related to how people with disabilities are supported to live, work, and become meaningful members of their communities (the areas of Community Inclusion, Participation, Autonomy and Choice).

Findings from the OPPI validation study were presented at national conferences of disability and policy organizations throughout 2023, including ANCOR, the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), and the Association for Public Policy and Management (APPAM).

Longitudinal Research and Data Migration

Throughout 2023 the National Leadership Consortium has been organizing its large longitudinal dataset, comprised of responses from all pre-, post-, evaluation, and annual surveys from its Leadership Institutes since 2006, in anticipation of migrating all data to be stored and collected in the future through RedCap, a secure, streamlined web platform for databases and surveys. The data migration opened an opportunity for the National Leadership Consortium research team to pause and review existing Leadership Institute surveys. We decided to revamp and improve our surveys in 2023, tying them more directly to the training content and evidence-based leadership skills and practices, shortening them, and clarifying questions and responses to make them more easily analyzed. The data migration into RedCap is now complete, and we hope the new surveys will be easier to complete and will provide information that we can translate into results that benefit the field through publications in peer-reviewed journals, monthly research briefs, and reports. We will also use the data collected from the Leadership Institutes as empirical evidence of what we have been hearing anecdotally for years — that the Leadership Institute strengthens leadership knowledge and skills, promotes organizational and systems change, and contributes to improving services and supports, which ultimately all lead to better outcomes for people with disabilities. ◆

Customized Support for Leaders and Organizations

Customized Support

The National Leadership Consortium was created to offer disability service sector leaders training and development opportunities beyond generic leadership programs to meet their specific needs and interests. As we've trained more than 3,000 people over the last 17 years, we've learned that, in addition to training and programs that reinvigorate, build confidence, and grow the skills and networks of emerging and established leaders, many organizations and systems benefit from customized support specifically designed to aid in transformation and growth efforts in their organizations or states.

For those who could use some additional guidance and tailored assistance, the National Leadership Consortium's customized support approaches connect leaders with our faculty of field experts who bring helpful experience, evidence-based practices, applicable resources, and historical knowledge needed to build momentum and sustain change. The National Leadership Consortium is thrilled to be part of the ongoing work of organizations, systems, and leaders. A few examples that we're particularly excited about from 2023 are listed below.

Ongoing Systems Transformation Support in Oregon

In 2022, the National Leadership Consortium facilitated the Oregon Visioning Summit, a three-day meeting of stakeholders with disabilities, family members, and professionals working in provider, case management, and advocacy organizations to determine goals and action plans to improve the developmental disabilities system across the state. As a follow-up, the National Leadership Consortium is providing ongoing support to help organize, inform, and evaluate systems change efforts. We are facilitating ongoing meetings with goal-oriented work groups focused on technology, housing,

and mental health for people with disabilities in Oregon to sustain momentum and progress, provide outside expertise and resources, and develop evaluation benchmarks and measurable outcomes to track change over time. Our work with the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities to bring about systems change across the state will continue in 2024. We are excited to support the movement toward a more inclusive and innovative system.

Curated Lived Experience Speaker Series for Case Managers

In 2023, the National Leadership Consortium received funding from a managed care organization to curate a speaker series with leaders with disabilities for case managers. The speaker series included leaders from the Northeast, Southeast, and Western United States who shared their perspectives, experiences, and recommendations for case managers to ensure that they are supporting people to live fully included and person-directed lives. Case managers who attended gained actionable knowledge and learned from both positive and negative experiences shared by people with lived experiences.

Executive Coaching

The National Leadership Consortium is launching an executive coaching program beginning in 2024 with founders Steve Eidelman and Nancy Weiss to provide targeted and ongoing support to field leaders in the areas of career planning and development, innovative leadership practices, transforming organizational culture and practices, succession planning, and more. Executive coaches offer their significant experience and knowledge of leading across the disabilities service sector to help emerging and established executives achieve their goals, become more effective leaders, and build the confidence needed to succeed in their essential roles.

The Bulletin and Briefs

In 2023, we published four issues of the National Leadership Consortium Bulletin, a free, quarterly online publication committed to providing relevant, trustworthy, and thought-provoking information to leaders and practitioners in the disability field that serves as a bridge between scientific journals and day-to-day leadership. This year, we also introduced Research Briefs and Leadership Briefs, one- or two-page summaries of research or key tips for professionals in the field on relevant topics and skills. Our publications are distributed through our website, the Leadership Consortium email listserv, and our web-based Community of Practice of Leadership Institute graduates. Ultimately, our goal is to deliver timely and useful information in easily digestible bites for busy professionals.

The National Leadership Consortium Bulletin

The National Leadership Consortium Bulletin has been produced quarterly since January 2022, publishing eight issues to date. The four issues of the Bulletin this year featured 39 contributing writers, including professionals, scholars, and advocates in the field with and without disabilities. Each issue of the Bulletin in 2023 had an average of nearly 850 readers. The most popular issue of the Bulletin was October's issue, "Realizing HCBS in Everyday Leadership," which gave examples of how agencies are transitioning to the new HCBS Final Rule regulations and shares knowledge about the creation and rollout of the regulations from state and national systems leaders, advocate leaders, organizational leaders, and self-advocates.

Topics for the Bulletin in 2023 included:

- **Issue 5:** Leading Toward Authentic Language and Services
- **Issue 6:** Engaging in Data Driven Leadership
- **Issue 7:** Leading Positive Organizational Cultures
- **Issue 8:** Realizing HCBS in Everyday Leadership

Check out past issues of the Bulletin at www.natleadership.org/bulletin.

"This was exactly what I needed to re-engage myself. I am leaving feeling empowered, motivated, and refreshed. My experience and the opportunities provided throughout will be something I will be forever grateful for." ◆◆◆

“The Leadership Institute is a wonderful week led by powerful, informative, and innovative professionals in the developmental disabilities field. This week gave me a jump start to look at how I want my career to grow and how I can make positive changes through my company.” ◆◆◆

Research and Leadership Briefs

The National Leadership Consortium has been collecting data from the graduates of its 100+ Leadership Institutes and programs for more than 17 years. Our database houses information about trends in the field, the impact of our programs, and perspectives from more than 2,500 leaders of disability organizations across the nation. We are pleased to analyze and deliver the results of this longitudinal research in easily accessible one- or two-page research briefs. Additionally, our short leadership briefs highlight skills and strategies relevant to leaders in our field and system. The most popular Research Brief was from May 2023, “Leadership Institute Graduates Improve in Goal Setting Skills,” which showed that Leadership Institute graduates become stronger goal setters after our week-long training. The most popular Leadership Brief was published in June 2023, “How to Get the Most Out of Virtual Meetings and Training,” which shared strategies to help leaders be more productive when connecting with their staff online.

Topics for Research and Leadership Briefs in 2023 included:

- Feedback: Giving Thanks Now and Throughout the Year
- Culture of Gratitude
- OPPI
- Becoming a Lifelong Learner
- Leadership Institute Contributes to Change
- How Much Opportunity for Growth Do Leaders Have in Their Roles?
- How to Get the Most Out of Virtual Meetings and Trainings
- Leadership Institute Graduates Improve in Goal Setting Skills
- Leadership Institutes Bring Shift in Mindset



Check out previous Research and Leadership Briefs at

www.natleadership.org/research-briefs. ◆

Our Partners

The National Leadership Consortium currently partners with 19 national disability organizations. These partnerships play a vital role in informing and supporting our initiatives, fostering mutual connections aimed at advancing the field, and advocating for the rights of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Through their expertise in field trends, innovations, and specific interests, our partners offer valuable input and insights, enriching and guiding our work throughout the year.

- **The American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry (AADMD)**
www.aadmd.org
- **American Association on Health and Disability (AAHD)**
www.aahd.us
- **The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**
www.aaid.org
- **The Alliance for Citizen Directed Supports**
www.citizendirectedsupports.org
- **The American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)**
<https://www.ancor.org>
- **Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)**
www.apse.org
- **The Arc of the United States (The Arc)**
www.thearc.org
- **The Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)**
www.autisticadvocacy.org
- **The Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL)**
www.c-q-l.org
- **Human Services Research Institute (HSRI)**
www.hsri.org
- **The Learning Community for Person Centered Practices (TLC-PCP)**
www.tlcpcp.com



- National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD)
www.nacdd.org
- National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD)
www.thenadd.org
- National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP)
www.nadsp.org
- The National Association of QIDPs (NAQ)
www.n-a-q.org
- National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS)
www.nasddds.org
- Research and Training Center on Community Living, Institute on Community Living at the University of Minnesota (RTC)
<https://ici.umn.edu/program-areas/community-living-and-employment>
- Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE)
www.sabeusa.org
- TASH
www.tash.org



“The Leadership Institute took me out of my routine in terms of both my job and my patterns of thinking. I can see more of the disability field now and understand better how the pieces move and respond to change. I’m inspired to work for change and understand better that it is hard and takes time, but that it is worth the effort.” ◆◆◆

Our Faculty, Staff, and Advisors

In addition to the National Leadership Consortium staff, a distinguished group of local and national leaders support our programs and targeted support work, including Leadership Institutes, technical assistance, and skill-based workshops as faculty. Faculty include leaders with a range of experience and expertise in:

- Effective leadership and management skills, values, and strategies
- Best practices in services and supports for people with disabilities
- Disparities that impact the human rights of people with disabilities
- Sustainable change and transformation strategies and management for disability sector organizations and systems
- National trends and policy impacting the disability service sector
- Impaction advocacy and self-advocacy efforts
- The history of the disability service sector
- Research and evaluation of disability service sector organizations and systems



2023 Faculty

Tony Anderson, *Valley Mountain Regional Center*

Max Barrows, *Green Mountain Self Advocates*

Angela Bradley, *Community Living Toronto*

Grant Bruno, *University of Alberta*

Krista Carr, *Inclusion Canada*

Erik Carter, *Baylor University*

Shelly Christensen, *RespectAbility**

Jaime Cooper, *Values Into Action*

Corey Dagleish, *Community Living Essex County**

Nicole Dama, *National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals**

Bryan Dooley, *North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities**

John Dickerson, *My Quillo*

Annette Downey, *Community Living Services**

Cody Drinkwater, *Maryland Department of Health**

Derrick Dufresne, *CRA Consulting*

Steve Eidelman, *National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities*

David Ervin, *Makom**

Syard Evans, *Arkansas Support Network**

Amanda Faulkner, *Frontier Community Services**

Marian Frattarola-Saulino, *Values Into Action**

Corey Gilmore, *Alaska Governor's Council for Disabilities and Special Education**

Gail Godwin, *Shared Support Maryland, Inc.**

*Graduate of the Leadership Institute





◆ ◆ ◆ Our Faculty, Staff, and Advisors
... continued

Michael Jacques, *Community Living Ontario*

James Janeiro, *Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence*

Emmanuel Jenkins, *Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council*

Serena Lowe, *AnereS Strategies, LLC*

Sean Luechtefeld, *ANCOR**

Joe Macbeth, *National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals**

Ciara McClinton, *Values into Action*

James Meadours, *Texas Advocates*

Jonathan Meagher-Zayas, *Equity Warrior Solutions*

Marion Olivier, *Qlarant**

Rebecca Pauls, *Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network*

Nancy Pennington, *Missouri Association of County Developmental Disabilities Services**

Santa Perez, *Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities**

Sheli Reynolds, *UMKC Institute for Human Development**

Amanda Rich, *York College*

Diane Richler, *Inclusion International's Catalyst for Inclusive Education*

Helen Ries, *Siblings Canada*

Jody Roberts, *Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Services*

Gabriel Rogin, *North Bay Regional Center**

DJ Savarese, *Lives in Progress, Alliance for Citizen Directed Supports*

Lynne Seagle, *Hope House Foundation*

Sue Swenson, *Inclusion International*

Kaela Talafili, *Becoming Independent**

Cathy Terrill, *Terrill Consulting*

Jennifer Tozer, *Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Services*

Adam Tucker, *Colorado Department of Healthcare Policy and Financing**

Elizabeth Vasquez, *Management Consulting Associates*

Nancy Weiss, *National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities*

Keenan Wellar, *Live Work Play*

Cheryl Wpooran, *Pooran Law*

Jeanine Zlockie, *National Association of State Developmental Disabilities Directors**

*Graduate of the Leadership Institute ◆ ◆ ◆

"The Leadership Institute is absolutely a 'game changer.' The speakers and the team were amazing! This Institute has me eager to get back to my organization and impose real long-term change." ◆ ◆ ◆

We asked faculty and Leadership Institute graduates: “What are the most successful strategies that you use or know of to keep connected with family members, board members, stakeholders, and other organizations?” and here’s what they said:

“In my work nobody is disposable, and everybody is indispensable, so I ask, ‘Why is connecting with these people essential to my work?’ and let that determine how and when I connect with them. There’s nothing routine, standardized, or mechanical about how and when I communicate or meet with them. Instead, I connect with people individually, not through computer-generated form letters or group emails. I actually type their name as I’m writing each of them. I value everybody doing what they can with the time and energy they have, and I want them to actively engage so I don’t jam their inboxes with newsletters and summaries, agendas are focused on specific questions, and meetings are a chance to hold space for meaningful and substantive discussions.”

David James “DJ” Savarese

*Director, The Lives-in-Progress Collective and Co-Chair,
The Alliance for Citizen Directed Supports*

“Connections are intentional and individualized! At Frontier Community Services (FCS) we encourage employees to ‘summon the courage to engage and collaborate with integrity.’ This statement is in our leadership philosophy which has been instrumental in creating a culture that is active, responsive, and transparent. Positive connections with family members, stakeholders, and partner organizations are cultivated through consistent communication, attentive responsiveness, and involvement. Listen, show up, and do the extra work!! Further grow your connections by joining state associations and attending national conferences. Listen, show up, and do the extra work in these settings too. Successful connections strategies often emerge from unsuccessful connections. Give yourself grace and know you are only half of the relationship connection. Keep trying, listen, show up, and do the extra work!”

Amanda Faulkner

Executive Director, Frontier Community Services in Soldotna, Alaska



“Growing an effective communications system for your organization is critical to its growth and advancing its mission. The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) began as a grassroots organization with no real legacy or history on which to rely, which meant we had to organically grow our network and build trust with our customers, members, and colleagues. We did this by focusing on, and never drifting from, our mission, values, and guiding principles. We carefully identified and built partnerships with other national organizations that shared our values. In my strong opinion, advocacy work never ends — once we’ve achieved success on one issue, we immediately move to our next priority. It is a relentless effort to deliver clear messaging, remain true to the mission, and engage your network. There’s a fine line in sharing important information and not being a nuisance by overwhelming someone’s inbox with unnecessary information. Choose what and how to communicate carefully.”



Joseph M. Macbeth

President and Chief Executive Officer, National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals

“Recently, we’ve [Charles Lea Center] focused on creating trust and knowledge in our organization. We hold ‘let’s talk’ meetings with families and employees, which are town hall-style meetings where people can ask questions and get feedback about what is going on at Charles Lea. We have also worked to make sure that employees understand how the funding works. We try to make sure that every DSP understands how we receive funding and what it means for their pay. Making DSPs more involved in business operations beyond their traditional day-to-day tasks makes it so there is less separation between DSPs and other staff. It also makes employees more aware of their impact; it has helped employees understand why it’s important to show up to work and why they should speak up and advocate for themselves.”



Kristie Littlejohn Kendall

Vice President of Professional Development, Charles Lea Center

“The Leadership Institute is extremely helpful at any point in your career. The connection to people from different states, in different positions adds to the topics that are presented by people that are connected with the most up to date information.” ◆◆◆

Our Staff and Advisors



Kristen Loomis, MBA
Co-Director



Caitlin Bailey, PhD
Co-Director



Cory Gilden, PhD
Research and Evaluation Manager



Lay'vaon Paulley
Program Coordinator



Nicole Jones
Program Coordinator



Monica Mesa-Alvarez, Ph.D ABD
Research Assistant



Steven Eidelman, MBA, MSW
Co-Founder and Advisor



Nancy Weiss, MSW
Co-Founder and Advisor

"The Leadership Institute was an incredible experience. I learned how I can improve my leadership style, spent time with a phenomenal group of leaders in the industry, and became a part of a community of passionate, like-minded change-makers." ◆◆◆

Looking Forward in 2024

Planning for the start of a new year is always invigorating for us. The opportunity to reset our sights, goals, and strategies, paired with the freshness and new beginnings that come with January 1st are motivating. In 2024, we are continuing to hone and meet some of the goals that we set in the past few years, such as increasing our reach to diverse and underrepresented leaders and enhancing our communication and outreach approaches. We are also looking in new directions, such as increasing our research impact. After spending a good part of the last year building some of the new operational infrastructure of the National Leadership Consortium team, we are enthusiastic about the start of 2024 and adding some exciting initiatives to our established programs and work.

2024 Strategic Priorities

- Increase the reach and reputation of the National Leadership Consortium through enhanced marketing, communication, and outreach
- Solidify a sustainable direction and plan for growth for the next several years
- Enhance the reach, connections, and impact of National Leadership Consortium research and evaluation
- Build National Leadership Consortium partnerships, networks, and engagement, focusing on increasing the inclusion of diverse, underserved, and underrepresented leaders

"I highly recommend anyone that is a leader within their organization attend the Leadership Institute. This Institute really has been an eye opener for me. It helped me understand how I could be a better leader for others while also improving the services to the individuals we serve. They are very well organized, give you a lot of information and tools necessary to become a better leader, and they also make you challenge yourself and really look into ways you can become a better leader, and why that will help and improve your organization! It has been the best experience I have ever had!" ◆◆◆



Projects We're Excited About

In 2023, the National Leadership Consortium looked at some of our interview data to initiate more **research focused on the leadership skills and practices that promote inclusion and person-directed services**. In 2024, we will continue to build on this research through case studies that we are conducting in North Carolina to understand the factors and practices that matter to organizations that provide only individualized and inclusive services. We plan to use these findings to expand our research nationally. There is so much knowledge and innovation happening in our field. We know that systematically learning from leaders who are doing the work will help us to disseminate and support evidence-based leadership strategies and organizational practices that align our fields' values and practices with the human dignity and rights of people with disabilities.

Next year, the National Leadership Consortium will continue to **expand our workshops and organizational leadership development opportunities** by offering a [menu of targeted action-oriented workshops](#) that will help emerging and established leaders build essential skills and practices and learn valuable strategies to transform and improve their organizations' practices, services,

and culture. Additional workshops focused on leading organizations that promote positive behavioral supports and longstanding workshops such as the leadership bootcamp will be more widely available to leaders across our sector. More opportunities and planning for workshops and development trainings that are tailored to meet the needs of employees within specific organizations will be available so that coworkers can learn and develop together.

In 2024, the National Leadership Consortium will finalize the validation and **expand opportunities to use the Organizational Priorities and Practices Inventory (the OPPI)**. [The OPPI](#) offers organizations an opportunity to holistically understand how their actions and values align in six key areas of evidence-based practices. Organizations that use the OPPI gain a deeper understanding of how employees at all levels view their operations, governance, support, inclusiveness, and approaches to improving the lives of people with disabilities. We are looking forward to offering the OPPI to more organizations next year and building related technical support and resources so that agency leaders can strategically strengthen what they do to be more in line with their values and evidence-based practices. ◆

"You have given me the tools and drive to want to make myself the best leader I can be and also grow my team into the best leaders they can be." ◆◆◆

"Having a week dedicated to developing my skills, critical self-analysis and leadership development has been a gift! I am often in action mode and problem solving and supporting others and it has been great to have time for uninterrupted reflection and planning." ◆◆◆

"As a leader, we often do not take time to analyze our style and appreciate our strength or develop plans to improve our challenges. The Leadership Institute was a great way to slow down for a moment and have some introspective time with myself working with some fabulous assessment tools and resources." ◆◆◆

"The National Leadership Institute helped me identify skills that I could improve on as a leader as well as helped connect to other exemplary leaders across the country. Thanks to them, I made lifelong connections." ◆◆◆

"The Institute is a melting pot of creativity and innovation where good ideas are born." ◆◆◆



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www.natleadership.org



<https://www.facebook.com/NLCDD/>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-leadership-consortium-on-developmental-disabilities/>

