



The Current State of Leadership Practices in the Disabilities Field

Using data from the Organizational Priorities and Practices Inventory (OPPI)

Organizations providing services for people with disabilities play a transformative role in enhancing the quality of life for their stakeholders. Central to their success are leaders who act as catalysts, driving organizational well-being through the implementation of effective practices.

This research brief presents data from 820 respondents from disabilities organizations across the United States on the Leadership Strength and Development practices from the Organizational Priorities and Practices Inventory (OPPI), a comprehensive tool designed by the National Leadership Consortium to measure the overall alignment of organizational priorities and performance with evidence-informed practices.

The brief presents data on seven key elements of leadership: *Ethical Leadership*, *Compelling Leadership*, *Leadership Development*, *Internal Leadership Succession*, *Team Leadership*, and *Resourceful Leadership*. Previous research has highlighted the importance and impact of these elements in organizational performance. The study identifies critical elements of leadership performance that can be improved to enhance the quality of services provided to people with disabilities.

January 18, 2024

By: **Monica Mesa-Alvarez**,
Research Assistant

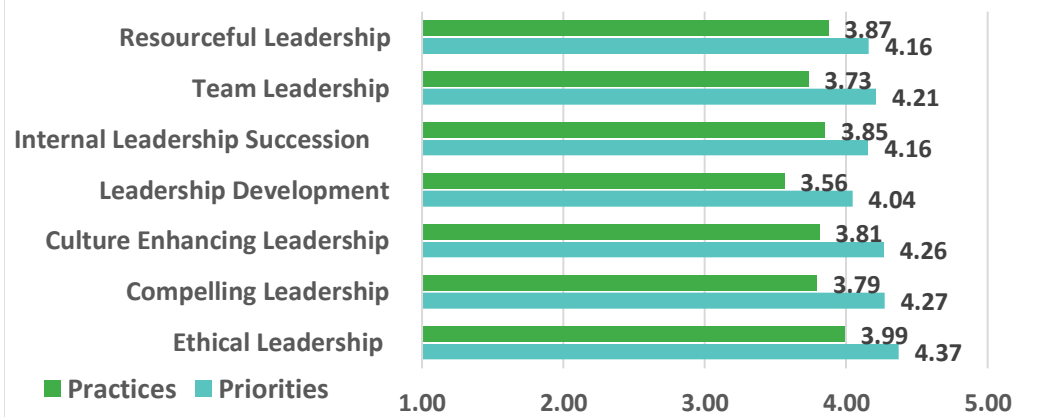
Questions? Comments? Contact Us!

For additional information about the National Leadership Consortium's programs and research, visit www.natleadership.org.

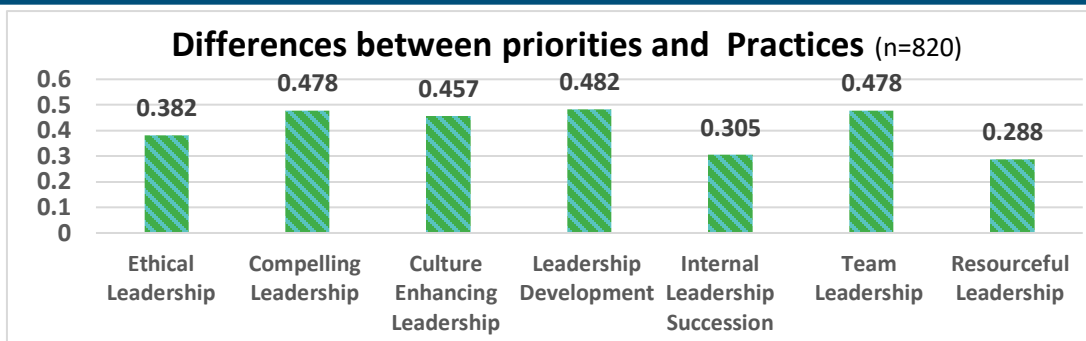
To learn more about upcoming Leadership Institutes or workshops, email Nicole Jones at njones@natleadership.org

Contact Cory Gilden at cgilden@natleadership.org with questions related to our research.

Leadership Strength and Development (n=820)



- Priorities were rated higher than Practices for all Leadership indicators
- Organizations highly prioritize and implement practices related to Ethical Leadership (highest priorities and practices rates)
- Organizations should prioritize and improve the implementation of practices related to Leadership Development because it has the lowest priorities and practices rates



- The average difference between priorities and practices is 0.41 scale points (8%)
- There are statistically significant differences between priorities and practices in organizations are for all leadership indicators
- On average, organizations closely prioritize and implement practices related to *Resourceful Leadership* (smaller difference between priorities and practices rates)
- On average, organizations loosely prioritize and implement practices related to *Leadership Development* (larger difference between priorities and practices rates)

To improve **Ethical Leadership**, organizations must ensure that leaders act ethically, inspire trust and act in ways that are in line with the organization’s values and beliefs. There is a positive relationship between ethical leadership and employee commitment (Zhu et al., 2004).

To improve **Compelling Leadership**, organizations must ensure that leaders provide clear, compelling direction for the organization. Transparent organizational communication plays a significant role in cultivating employee trust (Jiang & Luo, 2018) and increasing overall performance (Jiang & Luo, 2018).

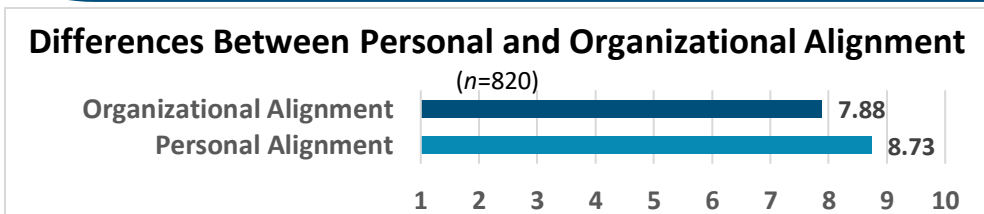
To improve **Authentic Leadership**, organizational leaders need to foster a positive and open culture. Authentic leaders create open and engaged environments (Ilies et al., 2005, p. 374).

To improve **Leadership Development** organizations, need to develop leadership strengths and skills at all staff levels. Employees that use and identify their strengths are more likely to be engaged at work (Gallup, 2020).

To improve the **Internal Leadership Succession**, organizations must develop people from within for internal leadership positions. Creating comprehensive leadership pipelines decreases turnover while increasing engagement and satisfaction (Griffith et al., 2019).

To improve **Team Leadership**, organizational leaders need to build and guide strong teams that are committed to an ambitious mission and make progress toward organizational goals. Leadership enhances cohesive relationships among team members (Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2013).

To ensure **Resourceful Leadership**, organizational leaders must seek and apply information from outside of our organization relevant to current best practices. Leaders who embrace evidence-informed best practices recommendations will successfully promote voice and knowledge sharing and help their organizations thrive (Kremer et al., 2019).



- Personal alignment is rated higher than organizational alignment
- There is a statistically significant difference of 0.85 scale points between personal and organizational alignment
- There is gap between how employees perceive their engagement with leadership best practices and how those are organizationally implemented

[Learn how your agency can use the OPPI](#)

[Learn how to get started using the OPPI](#)

[Read Frequently Asked Questions](#)