



## What Organizations Need to Support the Goals of People with Disabilities

At our Leadership Institutes and other trainings, we are constantly hearing from leaders of provider organizations about the barriers to delivering quality, person-centered, community-based services to the people with disabilities they support. To better understand the top obstacles leaders face, we ask them on our surveys about what is needed to provide better services.

On our Leadership Institute presurvey collected since summer of 2023 and on our annual surveys from January 2023 and January 2024, which was completed by past graduates of the Leadership Institute from 2006 to present, we asked, “What changes, if any, would need to be made in your current organization to fully support the goals of the people with disabilities?” Based on our experience in training leaders, we offered a list of 15 choices of issues we hear most often as possible responses to the question, and also offered a place for people to write in their own response if it was not listed. Choices of responses included: 1) Change in current state or federal regulations, 2) More community involvement and connections, 3) Investment in staff retention and recruitment, 4) Change to organizational policies and practices, 5) Increased financial support, 6) Change to services offered, 7) Leadership change, 8) Increased skill and technical training, 9) Changes to organizational structure(s), 10) Cultural & philosophical change, 11) To embrace values of inclusion, 12) Increased leadership and management training and development, 13) To embrace person-directed practices and approaches, 14) Inclusion of family members and staff in advisory and decision making, 15) Inclusion of people with disabilities in advisory, staff, and decision making and leadership positions, 16) Other (please specify).

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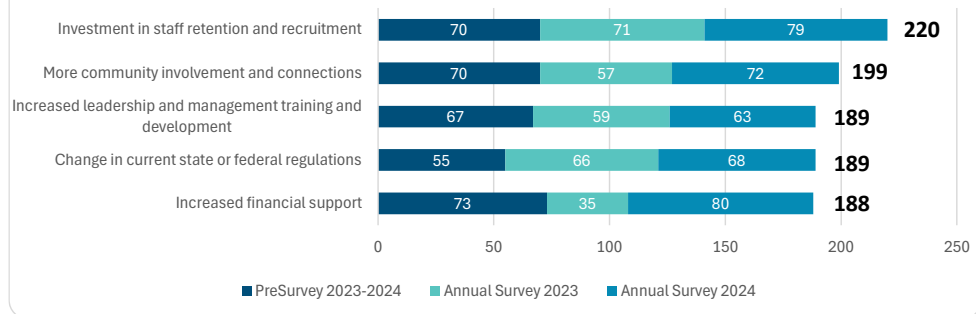
### Questions? Comments? Contact Us!

For additional information about the National Leadership Consortium’s programs and research, visit [www.natleadership.org](http://www.natleadership.org).

To learn more about upcoming Leadership Institutes or workshops, email Nicole Jones at [njones@natleadership.org](mailto:njones@natleadership.org)

Contact Cory Gilden at [cgilden@natleadership.org](mailto:cgilden@natleadership.org) with questions related to our research.

Top Rated Changes Needed to Fully Support the Goals of People with Disabilities



The most selected organizational change that leaders needed to fully support the goals of the people they support was *Investment in staff retention and recruitment* (220). The second most selected change desired was *More community involvement and connections* (199). Third selected was a tie between *Increased leadership and management training and development* and *Change in current state or federal regulations* (189 each), followed closely by *Increased financial support* (188). This data confirms what we hear frequently about staffing recruitment and shortages hindering leaders’ capacity to provide ideal services and promote innovation.

Some respondents chose to add their own ideas of things that are needed to achieve the goals of the people they support beyond the 15 options we provided on the surveys. These write-in responses fell into five categories: 1) Regulation and Bureaucracy, 2) Community Factors, 3) Staff Factors, 4) Family Factors, and 5) Other Factors.

#### **Regulation and Bureaucracy**

- “Adoption of digital accessibility standards”
- “Pivot from bureaucracy to humanocracy” and
- “External stakeholder intervention to foster a culture of accountability”

#### **Community Factors**

- “More transportation”
- “More resources in the community. For example, we have individuals who want to live on their own, but there is no safe and affordable housing in our area”

#### **Staff Factors**

- “Increased staffing (we have the resources, but not the applicants)”
- “The ability to recruit and retain staff”
- “Staff accountability”
- “Recognize the valuation of Direct Support Professionals (DSP) by elevating job quality”
- “Fair financial recognition to supervisory roles in social services”

#### **Family Factors**

- “Healthy boundaries with participant families and stakeholders.”
- “Trainings for families on how to navigate services”
- “Education of family members about the value of community inclusion”

#### **Other Factors**

- “Update person centered forms (i.e. updating path plans and other pcg forms)”
- “Create a Deliberately Developmental Organization (DDO)”

The needs of leaders in the disability field are diverse and vary depending on state, community, resources available, cost of living, and many other variables that make it difficult to find a one-size-fits-all solution. Successful leaders are creative, flexible, and balance the day to day demands of their work with continuously advocating on a systems level for the people they support. At the Leadership Institute, we help leaders focus on goals that are important to them, while also emphasizing the importance of their role in the larger systems and societal changes that need to happen in order for people with disabilities to achieve self-determination and live fulfilled lives of their choosing.