

Employee Participation as a Foundation for Human Rights

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Organizations that intentionally develop, include, and listen to their employees are more driven by Human Rights

Employees need to feel valued, supported, and included to provide quality, person-directed services that advance the rights of people with disabilities. Results from the Organizational Priorities and Practices Inventory (OPPI) show that this type of staff participation is closely linked to how organizations demonstrate human rights in what they say and do. Employee participation includes having a voice in organizational decisions, receiving effective support, accessing training and development opportunities, having flexibility and input into their work, being recognized for their contributions, and staying informed about organizational and disability field issues.

THE BIG TAKEAWAY

Supporting employees and advancing human rights go hand in hand. Employees are among the primary people responsible for turning organizational commitments into everyday experiences; making sure they feel valued, supported, and included is more than a workforce strategy. When staff have information, influence, flexibility, development opportunities, recognition, and support, OPPI findings show that they are better positioned to promote choice, inclusion, and meaningful participation for people with disabilities they support.

KEY FINDING

Organizations with stronger employee participation tend to demonstrate a stronger commitment to human rights

Employee Participation

- Voice & Decision Making
- Training and Support
- Flexibility & Development
- Recognition & Information

**STRONG
POSITIVE
RELATIONSHIP**

Human Rights

- Self-Determination
- Community Inclusion
- Stakeholder Participation

Priorities
 $r = .663, p < .001$

Stronger **Employee Participation** is associated with stronger **Human-Rights Priorities** and **Practices**.

Practices
 $r = .666, p < .001$

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Questions or comments?
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Are you a data nerd? Read about the methodology:
<https://bit.ly/RBAUGUSTDATA>

Learn More:
<https://linktr.ee/nlodd>



National Leadership Consortium
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WHY IT MATTERS FOR DISABILITY LEADERS

For decades, disability leaders have been working to navigate the dual challenge of addressing workforce shortages while also striving to strengthen person-directed services. These OPPI findings suggest that these goals are closely connected: investing in staff participation and support may also strengthen the implementation of human rights more broadly. When leaders value employees, provide effective supervision and development opportunities, recognize staff contributions, and share information and decision-making power, they create stronger conditions for employees to promote choice, inclusion, and meaningful participation in their everyday work for people with disabilities

WHY IT MATTERS FOR THE DISABILITY FIELD

● These findings suggest several important implications for the future of disability services and supports:

Supporting employees is an important part of advancing human rights. When staff have a voice, feel valued, and receive the training, information, and support they need, organizations are more likely to put self-determination, community inclusion, and stakeholder participation into practice. Across the disability field, workforce development, organizational improvement, and human-rights strategies should be treated as connected parts of building stronger, more sustainable, and person-directed services.

WHAT CAN DISABILITY LEADERS DO?

- ✓ **Share information and decision-making power.** Give staff timely, understandable information and meaningful opportunities to shape organizational goals, services, and decisions.
- ✓ **Provide comprehensive training and support.** Audit your training and development process to ensure you offer comprehensive onboarding, regular support, coaching, mentoring, and accessible resources to help employees succeed.
- ✓ **Offer flexibility and opportunities for input.** Make sure employees give input into schedules, responsibilities, evaluations, and learning and training opportunities they need to succeed in their roles. If a decision impacts an employee, make sure they have an opportunity to give input.
- ✓ **Move beyond training to focus on meaningful development.** Most employees in our field only participate in mandatory topics and skill-based training that have nothing to do with who they are as a disability sector leader. Support professional development beyond required training to promote engagement, connection, and purpose-driven leadership across your agency
- ✓ **Recognize and value staff.** Ensure employees at every level feel respected, important, and connected to the organization's mission. Make sure that people are consistently appreciated in ways that engage who they are as leaders.
- ✓ **Include staff in financial and strategic decisions.** Share understandable budgets and strategic goals and create real opportunities for staff at different levels to inform spending priorities and strategic plans.
- ✓ **Keep staff connected to the field.** Provide current information about disability services, public policy, community issues, and other developments that affect employees' work.

Have a question or need help accessing this Research brief?

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Learn More: <https://linktr.ee/nlccd> | Reach out to: contactus@natleadership.org

