

Leadership Institute Contributes to Significant Change

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!"

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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.

"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."

Organizational Changes

Responses to significant organizational changes since attending the Leadership Institute included reorganizing the organizational structure, building organizational infrastructure and 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."

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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, participant responses included developing college programs, establishing consulting services to support employers who want to hire and retain people with disabilities, improving response times for people supported, increasing use of technology, developing virtual trainings and activities, increasing independent and supported decision making, surveying of people supported to improve services, and enhancing 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, allowing them to choose for themselves in their own way of communicating with 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."

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.

