Support models for people with developmental disabilities are transitioning at break-neck speed; little priority and few resources have been directed to leadership development, succession planning and mentoring for the next generation of disability leaders and advocates. An enormous amount of work remains to be done to ensure a world where full participation and meaningful lives for people with disabilities are a reality. This is a moral imperative that can only be achieved by visionary, competent, and passionate servant leaders. That is why the training, development and mentoring offered through the National Leadership Consortium is fundamental and essential.

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The National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities is a project of the University of Delaware’s Center for Disabilities Studies in collaboration with the College of Human Services, Education and Public Policy, the Department of Individual and Family Studies, and the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy. The Consortium includes as partners the major national developmental disability organizations.
There is a leadership crisis in the developmental disabilities field arising from the increasing demand for high quality, responsive supports occurring at the same time as the leaders of developmental disability non-profit and government organizations are retiring.

The work of the National Leadership Consortium is critical because:

A recent study found that three-quarters of current non-profit executive directors do not plan to be in their jobs five years from now and one-in-ten plans a job change within just one year.

As the CEOs and other top staff of disability organizations are reaching retirement age, there is not a “next generation” of leaders prepared to move into these positions.

There have been dramatic changes in the quality and types of services that people with disabilities and their families request and deserve.

Poorly managed, a change in leadership can be damaging to an organization and the people it supports. Well-planned, a transition to a skilled and creative leader who has a strong values-base can breathe new life into an organization that has settled too far into complacency.

The shaping of the philosophies and understandings of the future leaders in this critical field cannot be left to chance. Support, training, and mentoring opportunities are necessary to inspire approaches that assure full and meaningful community participation.

Supporting the Next Generation of Leaders—
A Vision for the Future

There is a need for a rich supply of skilled developmental disabilities leaders who are passionate about quality, are capable of assembling top-notch teams of caring staff, have a resolute commitment to progressive values, and have the management and financial abilities needed to run solid not-for-profit businesses and government agencies.

The National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities has been established at the University of Delaware to support leaders who will make quality lives for adults with developmental disabilities the rule rather than the exception.

As the demand for quality supports for people with developmental disabilities has grown, the field has not purposively produced leaders for inclusive and individualized supports for adults. In partnership with the major, national developmental disability organizations, The National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities at the University of Delaware is identifying potential leaders today and supporting them to become effective leaders for the future.

The National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities at the University of Delaware Offers:

- Intensive, week-long Leadership Institutes,
- Interdisciplinary graduate and undergraduate Disability Leadership programs including the University of Delaware’s highly regarded Master of Public Administration program, now offering a specialization in Leadership in Community-Based Disabilities Services,
- Leadership training to assist agencies to move from program-based services to quality individualized supports,
- Mentoring programs for current and future executive-level staff,
- An on-line certificate program in Disability Leadership (under development),
- Training and support for top-level staff of state departments of developmental disabilities,
- A website tailored to the needs of emerging leaders, and
- Research on best practices and innovations specific to disability leadership.

“The opportunities people with disabilities experience today are the result of leadership in the disability community yesterday; the opportunities of the future will be the result of leadership that emerges today. To not invest in future leadership is at best to leave the future of persons with disabilities in doubt, at worst it is to not care about that future.”

- K. Charlie Lakin, Director,
  Research and Training Center on Community Living,
  University of Minnesota

Learn more about the programs and activities of the National Leadership Consortium on our website: www.nlccd.org.
The recognition of the need for a national focus on leadership and the strong support for the establishment of the National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities is demonstrated by the fact that the major developmental disability organizations in the country are partnering with the University of Delaware as a part of the Leadership Consortium. Partners include:

- The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
  
  [Website](www.aaidd.org)

- The ANCOR Foundation
  
  [Website](www.ancor.org/foundation)

- The Arc of the United States
  
  [Website](www.thearc.org)

- Association of University Centers on Disabilities
  
  [Website](www.aucd.org)

- The Council on Quality and Leadership
  
  [Website](www.thecouncil.org)

- Human Services Research Institute
  
  [Website](www.hsri.org)

- The Learning Community for Essential Lifestyle Planning
  
  [Website](www.elpnet.net)

- National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
  
  [Website](www.nacdd.org)

- National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
  
  [Website](www.nasddds.org)

- TheANCOR Foundation
  
  [Website](www.ancor.org/foundation)
The Leadership Institute was the most powerful week of professional development in my thirteen-year career in disability services. It has increased my ability to empower every person I supervise to reach their full potential which in turn has produced results for people served by my agency.

~ Becky Hansen, Vice President of Services, South Dakota ACHIEVE, Sioux Falls, SD

The Leadership Institute offers a forum where new ideas, experiences, and information are shared and strengthened. I came away with a renewed sense of commitment, new tools, and strategies for making the organization I work with more responsive to, and more respectful of, people with disabilities and their families.

~ Marian Frattarola-Saulino, CEO, Values into Action, Inc., Philadelphia, PA

The Leadership Institute at the University of Delaware is grooming our future leaders to move this field toward new directions in an ethical and responsive manner. It was an opportunity to learn, network, and rekindle my passion.

~ Joseph Macbeth, Director of Member Services, New York State Association of Community & Residential Agencies, Albany, NY

This experience pushed me out of my comfort zone and I feel renewed and energized. Really gained a new perspective on my vision and where I can lead my organization.

~ Diane O’Rourke, CFO/Associate Administrator, The Arc of Mercer County, Hermitage, PA

It was an empowering and interactive week that will forever enlighten my thinking and decision-making. It took my participation in the Leadership Institute to realize that I have the individual power to enhance the future for individuals with developmental disabilities.

~ Sandra Root-Elledge, Coordinator for Community Education, Wyoming Institute for Disabilities, Laramie, WY