



NC Advocacy Leaders Network – Year 1

10/1/2023 – 9/30/2024

System Gap Addresses

- North Carolina does not have an organized network of developmental disabilities advocacy leaders made up of North Carolinians that are graduates from state and nationally recognized advocacy and leadership development programs, including:
 - *Partners in Policymaking*®, *Advancing Strong Leadership*, *Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Related Disabilities*, *Steps Toward Independence and Responsibility*, *Ability Leadership Project of NC*, and *NC IDD Peer Mentor Training*. Other non-disability specific innovative leadership training programs (e.g., *The Council on Quality and Leadership professional leadership*) will be considered.

Initiative Goals and Timeline

- Establish, maintain, and engage an NC Advocacy Leaders Network made up of North Carolinian graduates of state and nationally recognized advocacy and leadership development programs.
- In collaboration with the NCCDD, establish and maintain the customer relationship management (CRM) data collection system to record and track network member contact and related information, continued education experiences, and advocacy activity.
- Keep informed of the Council's Five-Year State Plan goals and public policy priorities for continued education and engagement opportunities for network members.
- Establish the NC Advocacy Leaders Network as a shared benefit and shared investment for NC orgs, entities, etc. that need well-trained/informed, and savvy advocates including individuals with IDD/self-advocates, parents, family members, and other stakeholders to advance advocacy priorities.

The investment by the NCCDD to Akalaka co. started October 2023 and will end September 2024.

Description of Activities

- Recruit North Carolinian graduates of state and nationally recognized advocacy and leadership development programs.
- Maintain regular contact with network members to:
 - a) continuously build members confidence in reliability of the network;
 - b) keep members informed of disability-related news;
 - c) continuously build upon member skills and knowledge;
 - d) actively work to strengthen member relationships with network coordinators and the NCCDD; and
 - e) connect members with other advocacy organizations and opportunities.
- Coordinate and implement a minimum of 6 virtual gatherings of the network as “getting to know you” experiences and to set the foundation for future events involving continuing education, advocacy, engagement, or information sharing.

Outcomes to Date

The investment by the NCCDD to Akalaka co. started October 2023 and will end September 2024.

- Developed a webpage, 1-page flyer and email that offers a concise overview of the initiative, including website and contact details.
- Provided introduction presentation of the initiative and recruitment message at 2 statewide events.
- Opened access to the website: <https://www.akalaka.org/nc-advocacy-leaders-network>
- Revised the landing page for the NC Advocacy Leaders Network
- Started developing a revised workplan reflecting the planning and implementation of a July 31st Kick-off event, 1 virtual training event (August 2024), and four ECHO model sessions to be held 1x weekly throughout September 2024.