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Characteristics of NRLI Leadership Seminar Series Participants – 2004 to 2023

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This report contains characteristics and outcomes of the NRLI cohort participants. This information is available for all participants commencing with the first cohort (2004-05). The total includes 444 enrolled participants, including 35 current participants. The completion rate of the participants through 2022, is 94%. There have been 55 participants who were either the State Director at the time of their participation or were appointed to the Director’s position during or after NRLI enrollment. Of the participants who completed the four sessions of the Leadership Seminar Series, approximately 40% earned at least one promotion.

NRLI participant demographic characteristics:

The first demographic characteristic is the number of participants in the 25 cohorts from 2004 through 2023. The average number of participants is 18 with a range from 10 (first cohort) to 23 participants. There were two cohorts in three years. The targeted number for a cohort is between 15 and 20 participants to ensure interactions and diversity of shared experiences among all participants. The participants have been within this range in all but 5 cohorts.

The second demographic characteristic identifies the State, Territory, Commonwealth or tribal setting for the participants. Participants were from 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Territory of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas and two Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs. These participants represented approximately 64% of the State Vocational Rehabilitation programs in the United States. On average, there are between 8 and 11 different agencies represented in each cohort by the participants. This representation is consistent with the principle of cross-organizational sharing of knowledge, expertise and learning.

The third demographic characteristic (Table 1) is the classification of each participant’s agency as either an independent Agency for the Blind (N = 12) or a General or Combined Agency (N = 40). The two tribal programs are included in the latter category since they serve all tribal members with disabilities. When comparing the data from all cohorts, 16.4% of the participants represent Agencies for the Blind and 83.6% of the participants represent the General or Combined Agencies and the two Tribal Programs.

Table 1: Demographic Three - Participants by Agency Designation

Agency Designation	N Totals	% Totals
Agencies for the Blind	73	16.4
Agencies for General or Combined	371	83.6
Total	444	100.0

The fourth demographic characteristic (Table 2) is the gender of the NRLI participants. There has been an increase in female participants from the first seven cohorts to the remaining 18 cohorts. This included one cohort when all participants were female. Overall, there have been 64.2% female participants and 35.8% male participants. In all cohorts, the female participants were in the majority.

Table 2: Demographic Four - Participants by Gender

Gender	N Totals	% Totals
Female	230	64.2
Male	128	35.8
Total	358	100.0

The fifth demographic characteristic (Table 3) is the NRLI participants' professional role and function. Each organization has their own nomenclature for position identification. Therefore, we identified six professional roles for all participants. Based on their organizational title and the knowledge of each person's responsibilities and function, they were placed in one of these six professional roles. State Director are identified as those who held the position when they participated in NRLI and those who assumed the position while or after completing NRLI. The Senior Administrators (i.e., Chief Deputy Director and comparable positions) have remained consistent through the cohorts. The Field Service Administrators include District and Regional Administrators. Since 2012, there has been an increase in Support Administrators (i.e., information technology, employment, transition, cooperative agreements and contracts, community-based programs, staff development, etc.) and a slight decrease in Field Services Supervisors (i.e., staff whose primary responsibility is providing direct supervision to the agency's service providers).

Table 3: Demographic Five - Professional Role and Function of the Participants

Professional Role and Function	N Totals	% Totals
Director	60	13.5
Senior Administrator	63	14.2
Field Services Administrator	150	33.8
Field Services Supervisor	49	11.1
Fiscal and Legal Administrator	30	6.7
Support Administrator	92	20.7
Total	444	100.0

NRLI Participant Characteristic Summary:

When we examine the participants across the five demographic characteristics, there is a consistency of the participants over the 25 cohorts who have participated in NRLI. In recent cohorts, there is increase in female participants and 9 Fiscal and Legal Administrators and Support Administrators. The geographic, organizational designation and cohort size has remained consistent during NRLI's 19-year history. Finally, the instructional framework (four one-week sessions with three of the sessions in San Diego and one session in Washington, DC), executive coaching throughout the Seminar Series and consistency of the experiences and expertise of the instructional staff since 2004.