

Leadership Institute for People with Disabilities

A Legacy Project of ADA 25 Chicago



Evaluation Report

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Evaluation Completed by: **Randall Owen, Ph.D.**
Valerie Barich
Tamar Heller, Ph.D.
Institute on Disability and Human Development
University of Illinois at Chicago
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**DISABILITY AND
HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT
COLLEGE OF
APPLIED HEALTH
SCIENCES**



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Executive Summary

The Institute (formerly known as the Leadership Institute for People with Disabilities, now ADA 25 ADVANCING LEADERSHIP) is a program composed of two pieces: a leadership training retreat and the Civic Connections Project. The inaugural leadership training retreat was conducted in early December 2015 with 16 Fellows (15 chosen through a competitive process, and a participant observer, who is the lead author on this report). Using pre-and post-training surveys and post-training interviews of the Fellows, online training evaluations from the Fellows, and interviews with staff and trainers involved in the leadership training retreat, this evaluation reports on what went well with the training, what areas could be improved, and what the future steps are for the Institute.

The body of this report includes a process and outcome evaluation, stakeholder views on next steps for the Institute, and recommendations. This Executive Summary focuses on recommendations developed through the evaluation process. **The overarching recommendation is that the Institute should be continued**, and 11 specific recommendations for improving the Institute are provided. These are divided into four areas: general recommendations for the Institute, facilitation team, curriculum, and logistics. Each recommendation is followed by a short summary of the data/findings that led to that recommendation.

Institute

- 1. Include employment as an outcome:** The Institute in general should consider expanding its goals. In almost all communications, written and verbal, with ADA 25 Chicago staff members, the clear goal was to increase participation of people with disabilities in Chicago area boards, committees, and commissions. While this was not specifically about increasing employment options and leadership, the Institute should also track changes in employment and take some “credit” for those changes, especially because they are related to civic leadership, which is often partially dependent on a person’s employment status and economic situation.
 - This recommendation is derived from feedback from the Fellows, many of whom credited the leadership retreat for improvements in their confidence, which help them to find a new job or seek a promotion. One of the Institute advisory committee members was also very adamant that it is difficult to separate civic leadership from employment leadership. Based on this data, it makes sense for the Institute to also include employment as an outcome, even if it is not the primary goal of the Institute (which is civic leadership).
- 2. Establish accommodations and attendance policies:** ADA 25 Chicago should clarify their policies and make these known to people who are considering applying to future trainings. Two major pieces of policy emerged from this evaluation: (1) is there a limit to

accommodations that a potential Fellow can request? and (2) what are the requirements for attendance? If a Fellow is absent for any portion of time, will they be allowed to return to the training? The evaluation team recommends against imposing limits to accommodations, especially since the Institute stemmed from a year-long celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act – limits on accommodations (whether real or perceived) do not align with the spirit of the ADA. Similarly, a Fellow who is absent for a portion of the time, especially because of a medical emergency, should be allowed to return to the training. When a Fellow is accepted into the Institute, s/he should have every opportunity to remain connected to that class of Fellows. This is important in light of the fact that one of the strongest outcomes from the Institute is the sense of community that the Fellows create with one another.

- The majority of trainers, ADA 25 Chicago staff, and Institute advisory committee members mentioned a specific incident with one of the Fellows, who had a medical emergency on the first day and one of the trainers decided that Fellow would not be able to participate in the rest of the retreat. The stakeholders noted that they were surprised by this decision and thought that it could have been handled differently. A related issue was brought up by one of the Fellows, who noted that they considered not participating in the retreat because they were unsure about asking for accommodations relating to stamina of having to participate in four days of an intensive leadership retreat.
3. **Develop future plans for Civic Connections and more:** The Institute should develop a plan for its future and share that plan widely with the Fellows and the broader leadership community. They are currently working with the Fellows to figure out what the next step should be, and this is the correct approach to take. The future of the Institute should focus on promoting opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in leadership. Part of this will be the development of a “pipeline.” The Institute should work with Fellows and the leadership community to develop a plan for the scope of this “pipeline” and what format it will take (i.e. a website, database, etc.). There should also be concrete guidelines on the pipeline concerning who can be a part of it (just Fellows or other people with disabilities as well).
- One of the key themes of the evaluation was that Fellows are still concerned with finding opportunities for leadership in the Chicago region. However, they are optimistic about the future, especially about the Civic Connections project. Other stakeholders also talked about the importance of ensuring long-term success and outcomes. Nearly all stakeholders recognized that the training retreat was a good first step, and the sustainability of the Institute would depend on extending their work, primarily through the Civic Connections Program.

Facilitation Team

4. **Have a facilitator with a disability:** Future trainings should include a person with a disability as a co-facilitator from the very beginning.
 - This is closely related to recommendation 7, below. The majority of stakeholders discussed the need to integrate disability throughout the curriculum. One of the frequent suggestions for the future noted by the trainers, ADA 25 Chicago staff, and Institute advisory committee members was that at least one of the trainers should have a disability and be an equal partner in developing and delivering the training. In December 2015, one of the trainers was a person with a disability, and most stakeholders noted that it helped to bring “credibility” to the training. In future trainings, it is important to maintain that credibility by having someone with a disability as a trainer; this would help the training team be able to address disability-related topics that emerge during the retreat.
5. **Prepare facilitators for the diversity of disability:** While the training facilitators need to include someone with a disability, they do not all have to have a disability. There are not many experts in leadership development with a disability who would fit the Institute. However, they should have some experience working with people with disabilities, and training if necessary, to be sure that they are prepared for the time it takes for many people to communicate using different accommodations and interpreters. They should also have etiquette training to ensure that the Fellows feel comfortable and respected; during the December 2015 retreat, one Fellow mentioned not wanting assistance finding the way around the room, and one of the trainers insisted on helping when it was not wanted.
 - This recommendation is based on feedback from various stakeholders, most importantly, feedback from the trainers/facilitators themselves. Several of them noted that they were surprised by various aspects of disability, notably the length of time that it took for each Fellow to participate in the different training modules. They discussed the value of the training retreat to themselves as facilitators, saying that they learned a lot from the experience and were better equipped to work with people with disabilities in the future. This recommendation is also based on one Fellow’s experience with one of the trainers insisting on helping when the help was not wanted. Although the majority of Fellows did not mention a problem with this, etiquette training for the facilitators would help ensure that Fellows’ various disabilities are respected.

Curriculum

6. **Ensure sensitivity to diversity in all sessions:** Future classes of Fellows should continue to show diversity with regard to disability type and other demographics. The initial class

had a lot of variation on demographic factors. Along with this, care needs to be taken to ensure that people do not feel treated differently than other Fellows. One of the Fellows in December 2015 felt disrespected because of race at one of the dinners with advisory board members and other guests (although not in relation to the trainers or ADA 25 Chicago staff). While this is a tough situation, the Institute needs to ensure that all people who come into contact with the Fellows understand and promote the value of diversity. In addition, there should be a forum each day for people to bring up issues like this, preferably within the group/community of Fellows, and also with the Institute staff, if appropriate.

- This recommendation is fully based on data from only one Fellow. However, because diversity is a key component of the Institute, it is important to acknowledge experiences of diverse Fellows. As the recommendation states, it is nearly impossible for the Institute to ensure that every interaction, especially interactions involving guests, promote diversity; yet, it should be clear that the Institute welcomes and promotes open discussions of and dialogue around diversity issues that arise during the curriculum or the wider retreat.
7. **Integrate disability into the curriculum:** Disability needs to be the base of the curriculum content rather than interjected into a (mostly) prepared training curriculum.
- Nearly all stakeholders discussed the need to include disability in all aspects of the training curriculum. In particular, they noted that disability should not just be “added on” but rather a focal point of the curriculum. People with disabilities have unique experiences, challenges, and barriers that the training should be developed around. Centering the curriculum on disability was an overarching theme of the evaluation.
8. **Ensure flexibility in the curriculum:** The training curriculum should focus less on “teaching” and delivering concrete content, especially content that is too academic. There should also be less introduction to all material. The time spent as a group of Fellows should include some content, but with an emphasis on how it can be applied in various situations they found themselves then. In particular, a few hours of “open space” need to be included in the curriculum to allow for Fellows’ questions and enough flexibility to give attention to what is most important to the Fellows.
- Nearly all of the Fellows and ADA 25 Chicago staff noted that the facilitation style was very “rigid”. Many of them pointed to one instance of a Fellow asking a question about how to present disability and the best way when interacting with other leaders. They noted that this could have been a large and important discussion, but it was not addressed because the training team felt that they had to move on to the next part of the training curriculum. Other Fellows expressed interest in learning more about other disabilities, and the trainers said it could be discussed in the next

day, but the topic was not returned to. The trainers themselves also noted the lack of flexibility in the schedule and recommended that future retreats schedule time for discussion of questions, areas of interest, and other issues that arise during the retreat.

Logistics

9. **Prepare pre-training materials that introduce training content:** To help reduce the amount of introduction to material, the training team should consider making short videos about the content for the Fellows to view before the training (of course, accounting for accessibility) or making material available for pre-work. It should be made clear to Fellows that, as part of their acceptance into the Institute, they are expected to have reviewed this material before the training. Pre-work for future trainings should be directly discussed in the training retreat.
 - Most of the Fellows noted that there was too much introduction to the material during the retreat, and they wanted more time for discussion or application of the material. While there was “pre-work” for the Fellows prior to the retreat, it was not directly referenced. The evaluation team feels that combining the “pre-work” with training content would help to eliminate the need for as much introduction during the retreat. This could be done either through videos (as suggested by a couple of stakeholders) or by requiring reading of material/the retreat handbook available to Fellows before attending training.
10. **Move the timing of panels:** Several of the ADA 25 Chicago staff noted that there was a noticeable difference in the panel on the last day compared to the first day. On the first day, the participants are still getting to know one another and are not completely comfortable. The first night should be dinner together (which was held on the second night of the 2015 retreat) and the panel with leaders with disabilities should be moved to the second night. This will help ensure a more likely experience for all involved.
 - This recommendation is based on feedback from ADA 25 Chicago staff and Institute advisory committee members who noted the differences from the first to the last day. The evaluation team agrees that this is important, the first night could be used to build camaraderie amongst the Fellows before having the dinner with invited guests on second night.
11. **Consider options for the logistics of retreats:** Future retreats could be held in a location that combines training space and lodging/accommodations under the same roof. In addition, the Institute should consider moving the retreat to another time of the year. The length of time required for the retreat also needs to be considered. The logistics of the retreat may need to change each year depending on availability of in-kind donations and other supports.

- The majority of Fellows were very favorable towards having the training in the Deloitte building and lodging at a nearby hotel. The trainers were a little less favorable; one was surprised that the Fellows liked the separation they did. ADA 25 Chicago staff put a lot of work into the logistics of the retreat, and it all ran very well. However, because the training has only been conducted once, there is not comparative data on how Fellows would rate the logistics of having the retreat in a single space that combines lodging and training space. Very few stakeholders commented on the time of the year during which the training retreat was held. However, the few Fellows who did comment on this noted that the time of the year should be adjusted so that it is not held in early December. They noted that they had long holiday breaks immediately following the retreat and had limited opportunities to apply what they have learned.

The stakeholders had varying ideas about whether the retreat should be extended to additional days or time. The trainers, and some of the Institute advisory committee members, felt that additional time was needed in order to get through all the content. On the other hand, the Fellows generally felt that the retreat was “too long” and much of the content could have been shorter (see recommendation 9 for a suggestion on cutting down introduction to the material).

The evaluation team is not recommending specific changes to the logistics, but rather that logistics of the retreat be continuously reconsidered to make sure that they make sense each year. Factors to consider include the availability of training/facilitation teams, in-kind donations of space and food, and comparative costs of having the training in various locations (including time spent arranging logistics like transportation). Another factor to consider is that having the training in a different location than the lodging or extending the length of the training could be a challenge to the stamina of some people with disabilities. A few Fellows noted concerns with stamina (and one mentioned considering not applying because of those concerns), so careful consideration should be given to the impact of potential changes on who would apply for the Institute.

Introduction

The Leadership Institute for People with Disabilities (referred to in this report as the “Institute”)¹ originated as a legacy project of ADA 25 Chicago, a year-long initiative focused on leveraging the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with increased commitments to fulfilling the promise of the ADA across the Chicago region. The primary sponsor of ADA 25 Chicago was the Chicago Community Trust. Exelon was the founding sponsor of the Institute with additional support provided by the Chicago Community Trust, Robert R. McCormick Foundation, ManPowerGroup, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, Deloitte, and Hyatt Regency Chicago. In 2015, ADA 25 Chicago piloted the first year of the Institute with a focus on further incubation in the following years. In its pilot the Institute consisted of two phases:

1. **Leadership Training** designed to provide leadership training to selected emerging leaders with disabilities (“the Fellows”) to contribute to a ready network of individuals with disabilities seeking civic engagement, and helping to prepare them to participate in the civic life of the Chicago region.
2. A **Civic Connections Project** which is being designed to connect the program’s members to existing, relevant positions. This phase will be conducted through direct communication between ADA 25 Chicago staff, members, and external organizations that have expressed interest in helping identify qualified leaders with disabilities for their civic boards and groups.

A small advisory committee helped to guide the vision and implementation of the Institute.

The inaugural Leadership Training was held December 3-6, 2015 in downtown Chicago. Originally, 17 people with disabilities from the Chicago region were accepted as the first class of Fellows; 16 were identified through a competitive application and interview process and one participated as an evaluator/participant. Of those who applied, a small group was identified as more advanced in leadership, and therefore less likely to benefit from the type of training being offered. These applicants were accepted into the program as “advisors,” positioning them to advise and participate in the development of the Institute. These advisors did not participate in the training. One of the 16 accepted Fellows had a medical emergency during the first day of the training, and had to leave the site to attend to that emergency. The lead trainer did not allow that Fellow to participate in further days, but they were later invited to remain connected to the Institute as an “advisor.”

While there are a variety of leadership trainings on disability throughout the US, they primarily focus on leadership in organizations that work with people with disabilities, policy on disability issues, or career advancement for people with disabilities, the training that was part of the

¹ As this report was being prepared the Leadership Institute for People with Disabilities was renamed ADA 25 ADVANCING LEADERSHIP and a new strategic plan was developed. The term “Institute” refers collectively to the Leadership Institute for People with Disabilities and ADA 25 ADVANCING LEADERSHIP.

Institute was unique in its focus. After a national search for leadership programs/facilitators, no existing programs that focused on civic leadership skills for people with disabilities were identified. A new training needed to be developed. ADA 25 Chicago contracted with Leslie Sholl Jaffe Consulting to develop and deliver this training. Jaffe partnered with Jeffrey Hull, PhD, and Carol Gill, PhD, because of Dr. Hull's expertise in leadership training with marginalized groups and Professor Gill's expertise in Disability Studies and disability identity, as well as her personal experience as a person with a disability.

ADA 25 Chicago contracted with the Institute on Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois at Chicago to conduct an evaluation of the training. Because the training was newly developed and had not been used on this population, an evaluation was important to help identify what worked, what didn't work, and areas that for future development. This evaluation report is intended to help further develop the Leadership Institute.

The leadership training facilitation team sought to develop a leadership training curriculum designed to increase the following outcomes:

- Keener sense of self through personal reflection, self-assessment and feedback
- Increased awareness of their approach to leadership and their impact on others, their strengths and how to build on them as well as areas for improvement
- Higher skill set regarding cultural competence as it relates to triggers, cross cultural communication, and breaking through the internalized voice of oppression that inhibits their leadership
- Increased capacity to influence people through more effective communication
- Knowledge that they know how to develop and leverage relationships with the intention of creating a strong network of peers and support
- Clearly articulated vision for manifesting their leadership in the world as well as next steps to begin moving their leadership forward
- Feelings of self-confidence and readiness to lead
- Understanding about the role of disability identity and societal attitudes in their lives

ADA 25 Chicago's long term goals following the Institute were to develop with Members who were ready for:

- Developing a supportive community of leaders with disabilities who also attended the Institute
- Appointments to boards, commission, or other civic appointments and appointments to leadership positions in organizations
- Confidence in their leadership roles and contributions

Evaluation Design and Data Collection

In order to evaluate the aims and desired outcomes of the Institute, the evaluation team designed an approach that used mixed methodology, including quantitative and qualitative

data and participant-observation, to collect data that informed a series of questions that guided this evaluation:

1. Did the participants feel that the experience was important and worth their time?
2. What critical aspects did participants learn/experience that will change their personal outlook?
3. Did each participant leave the Institute with a personal leadership plan?
4. Did participants build relationships with each other as well as with external entities?
5. What aspects of the curriculum were helpful, effective, and why?
6. Did the Institute run smoothly, length of time appropriate, etc.? What worked, what didn't, and why/why not?
7. What did we learn about the "market" for this concept? What parameters should change next time?
8. What did the pilot training teach us about next steps for educating this target group and the opportunities for the Appointments project?
9. How did the partnerships work, including the advisory committee; what additional partnerships are needed to advance the development of the Institute?
10. What are overall lessons learned for the design of the Leadership Institute?

The methods used to collect data to address these questions are detailed below.

Participant-Observation

The primary author of this report participated in the Institute not only as an evaluator but also as one of the Fellows, which allowed him to take a participant-observer approach, a highly accepted approach to research involving people with disabilities. He is a person with a disability himself, and has a level of understanding of the issues discussed by the other Fellows that an evaluator without a disability may not be able to achieve. All Fellows, staff, and trainers associated with the Leadership Institute were informed of his dual role. During the training, it was emphasized that his role was to observe the delivery of the training itself and not to study or evaluate any of the other Fellows individually. Following the training, the lead author has been a full participant in activities with the other Fellows, including a private Facebook group, and is regarded as a Fellow and not an outside evaluator.

The majority of this report is solely based on the surveys and interviews; that is they are presented without any of the primary authors' own viewpoints or analysis. At various points throughout this report, the primary author has included a more qualitative analysis that contains his own assessments including any insights from his role as a participant-observer combined with the primary themes from the rest of the direct data collection. These insights are included in a light orange box with the title "Participant-Observer Reflection", and the sections use the personal "I" to signify that the primary author is including more than just the direct data collection that was part of this evaluation.

A draft of this report was available to all participants in the evaluation to ensure that this report is an honest reflection of the feedback that was received, and is not biased towards any opinions that the primary author may hold.

Pre- and Post-Surveys

A few weeks before the leadership training, each Fellow was asked to complete a short survey online. It contained questions on demographics, employment, past training, civic leadership, and scales that have been published in literature to assess a person's disability identity, comfort with leadership activities, and attitudes towards leadership. A shortened version of this survey was completed by each Fellow in early February, two months following the training. This survey contained only the same scales that were used prior to the training. By matching pre- and post-training responses, the evaluation team can assess whether the training had an impact on these aspects of leadership and identity. All 16 Fellows (including the participant-observer) who participated in the training completed both the pre-and the post-training surveys.

Many of the measures used in the pre- and post-training surveys were developed by the evaluation team in consultation with ADA 25 Chicago staff members. These measure general concepts about their attitudes towards their personal future and leadership skills.

Two of the scales used in this training are based on previous research. The scale about whether a person believes statements about their comfort with leadership activities are absolutely false or absolutely true is based on research conducted by Bobbio and Manganelli.² The questions about disability identity were originally developed by Carol Gill³ and were slightly modified by the evaluation team, Carol Gill, and ADA 25 Chicago staff in order to fit this evaluation.

Training evaluations

Within a week of completion of the training, each Fellow was also asked to complete an evaluation of the training itself. This was done through an accessible online survey, which contained questions specific to each training topic, logistics of the training, and assessments of the trainers. Each aspect could be rated quantitatively and comments could be left for each aspect. The survey also included open ended spaces for the Fellows to identify their favorite part of the training, their least favorite part of the training, and suggestions for improvement of the training. All 16 Fellows (including the participant-observer) completed the training evaluation online.

² Bobbio, A. & Manganelli, A. M. (2009). Leadership self-efficacy scale: A new multidimensional instrument. *TPM-Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology*, 16(1), 3-24.

³ Dr. Gill has developed the "Disability Identity Scale" and used it in her own research. She contributed to modification of the scale for use in this evaluation, including reducing the number of items in the scale and re-orientating many of the statements in a positive, rather than negative, direction.

Interviews

The evaluation team also conducted individual interviews with both the Fellows and staff members associated with the training (including the trainers, staff from ADA 25 Chicago, and members of the Institute Advisory Committee, who conducted the interviews use to select the Fellows). The interviews were conducted by a graduate student who worked on the evaluation team, not by the first author of this report who also participated in the training, in order to avoid a conflict of interest.

The staff interviews were conducted in January with 11 of the 13 individuals that were identified as potential interviewees (two of the people from the Institute advisory committee were unable to participate). These interviews were intentionally broad and allowed the interviewee to talk about the aspects of the training that were most important to them. Some of the questions that were asked were about the origins of the Institute and development of the training, what the interviewee had heard about the delivery of the training, and hopes and goals for the future outcomes of the Institute. On average, these interviews lasted about an hour and a half, and the interviewees were excited to talk about the process.

Interviews with the Fellows were conducted in February 2016. All 15 Fellows provided qualitative feedback. The participant-evaluator did not complete an interview, so as not to influence this report. One Fellow did not directly participate in an interview, but did provide feedback through an email to the evaluation team. The Fellows had already provided input through the online survey and online training evaluation, so the interview guide was shorter. It focused on the lasting impressions of the training, future goals and needed supports, and suggestions for improving the Institute overall. These interviews averaged about 45 minutes.

Limitations

Although this report is based on a variety of data sources to triangulate and reach consensus on the evaluation of the Institute leadership retreat, it is limited by the short timeframe following that retreat for the data collection. Institute staff and the trainers were interviewed approximately one month following the training, while the Fellows completed the online training evaluation within one week of training, and one follow-up survey and one interview at the two-month mark following the training. Another follow-up with the Fellows six months or one year following the training is recommended in order to capture a more complete picture of the impact of the training. Nonetheless, the information that has been collected will provide important insights for the Institute to consider as it continues to develop.

Report Organization

The Executive Summary of this report is organized around recommendations that emerged from the evaluation. The body of this report is organized into three main sections that present straightforward analysis from the survey and interview data. At various points throughout this report, the primary author has included a light orange box with the title “Participant-Observer

Reflection”, these sections use the personal “I” to signify that the primary author is including personal observations and insights along with the direct data collection that was part of this evaluation. The body of this report is divided into five sections:

1. **Process Evaluation** (page 7) – Evaluates the processes used to prepare, deliver, and follow up on the leadership training; selection of Fellows and their demographics; and assessments of the training and the trainers. This section uses data from the pre-training survey, interviews with the Fellows and staff associated with the Institute, and the online training evaluation.
2. **Outcome Evaluation** (page 9) – Evaluates outcomes that the Fellows have reported following participation in the leadership training. It uses data from matched pre- and post-training surveys, the online training evaluation, and interviews with the Fellows and staff associated with the Institute.
3. **Stakeholder Views on Future Steps** (page 35) – Reviews data provided by stakeholders about their opinions on the next steps of the Institute.
4. **Overarching Themes** (page 39) – summarizes the evaluation data into eight primary themes: community building, integration of disability, facilitation team, flexibility, logistics, formal outcomes, informal outcomes, and opportunities (or the lack thereof) for leadership and optimism for the future of the Institute.
5. **Recommendations** (page 42) – Provides recommendations made by the evaluation team for the future of the Institute. It uses data from the first three parts of this report as the basis for its recommendations.

Process Evaluation

Institute Origins

Most members of the Institute advisory committee credited Karen Tamley of the Chicago Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities for coming up with the vision of the Institute. She and fellow coworkers, including Laurie Dittman, sought to address the problem of having to turn to the same small group of people with disabilities to recommend to boards or commissions when solicited. One way to address this situation emerged through ADA 25 Chicago, whose goal was to establish legacy projects that would be enduring and would expand inclusion in four areas: community living, education, employment and technology. As ideas developed, plans for a Leadership Institute for People with Disabilities coalesced as a primary legacy project. The concept was to start with a pilot leadership training retreat and a second phase focused on connecting people with disabilities to existing opportunities for leadership. The Institute became a legacy project of ADA 25 Chicago with the goal of creating a pipeline of people with disabilities who could serve in the civic life of the Chicago region.

Many programs for people with disabilities begin at the grassroots level. The Institute (and to some extent, ADA 25 Chicago) is a rare program for people with disabilities because of the strong support from the top down. Several people expressed a desire that the Institute would eventually be "seen as a national model that others will replicate" (Institute Advisory Committee Member, Interview).

Many members of the ADA 25 Chicago staff and the Institute advisory board noted the importance of having people with disabilities on boards and committees in the Chicago region order to reflect the diversity of the region and ensure that they have representation. As one person said, "If you are not at the table, you are on the table" (Institute Advisory Committee Member, Interview). These views were echoed by the Fellows in their interviews, primarily to ensure that they have a voice in the Chicago region, especially around diversity.

Institute Goals for Addressing Barriers to Leadership

The recognition that **people with disabilities are underrepresented in the civic leadership of Chicago** directly translated into the goals of the Institute, according to the people that were interviewed. Thus, the overarching goal was to help facilitate a process to provide leadership training to and develop a pipeline for connecting leaders with disabilities with civic organizations that were looking for candidates to join their boards or committees. This process would also help to raise the visibility of people with disabilities within the Chicago region, create more demand for leaders with disabilities, and increase representation in the region.

While these are important goals for most cities and regions, a few people noted the importance of increasing leadership for people with disabilities in Chicago in particular. Chicago has an important history within the disability rights and independent living movements. Chicago is also

a hub for disability art and culture. “It makes sense that [Chicago] would also be the center of disability leadership” (Trainer, Interview).

The ADA 25 staff members and trainers who were interviewed noted a few reasons that people with disabilities are underrepresented in leadership. They frequently mentioned stigma, bias, and fear towards disability within the general population, because of the lack of knowledge of an education on disability issues. People simply do not understand disability and may “choose people who are most like them” to work in leadership positions in order to increase their own comfort level (Institute Advisory Committee Member, Interview). People with disabilities are generally not seen as leaders, rather the prevailing stereotype is that they are “dependent and childlike” (Trainer, Interview). Leadership is not expected of them, and in turn they learn not to expect it of themselves. Other people mentioned that people with disabilities are typically segregated from people without disabilities in many areas, either because of policy, inaccessibility, or attitudes. Some of these directly influence informal networking that is typically done between leaders, such as meeting at bars for happy hour (which are not always accessible), cocktail parties, and during rounds on a golf course.

Other issues that stakeholders noted that are common barriers for people with disabilities in general, are also barriers to leadership. Many people with disabilities take longer to express themselves or physically get from one place to the next because of barriers to accessible transportation. This perceived inefficiency may limit the opportunities available to someone with a disability. Another common barrier is economic; it often requires donations to be in positions of leadership, and it requires clothing and other material goods that a person with a disability may not be able to afford because of their economic situation.

These barriers feed into one primary issue: **the lack of opportunities for people with disabilities to be involved in leadership**. The Institute was developed to help address perceived barriers to leadership opportunities for this population. A significant piece of that is bringing people with disabilities together to form a community. They can network with one another and also network with people in Chicago leadership in general. Working together they can build a support system and start to meet mentors who can help to open and create new opportunities for leadership.

Interviews with the Fellows following the training retreat also emphasized the lack of opportunities as the main reason that they are not more engaged in Chicago region leadership. Very few of them mentioned lacking the skills to participate, while nearly all mentioned the importance of building connections and being made aware of all the opportunities that do exist. As one Fellow said, the biggest barrier “just knowing where to go to find places or organizations that are looking for people with disabilities to lend their voice... I don’t know how to get involved” (Fellow, Post-Training Interview).

Participant-Observer Reflection

As a researcher and evaluator, one of the questions that I frequently ask myself is, “Do the methods that I am using address the problem/question?” Prior to my involvement with the Institute, I was not sure that leadership training was an appropriate response to the lack of opportunities for people with disabilities to be involved in leadership, especially when applicants had to show at least seven years of leadership experience. The interviewees rarely mentioned improving the leadership skills of people with disabilities as one of the barriers that they face. This is one of the key phenomena that we find regarding people with disabilities, even when the “problem” is “out there in society,” people try to “fix” or teach people with disabilities rather than addressing the environment.

Most of my fears in this regard have been allayed, especially if the leadership training continues to improve in the future and engage Fellows more directly with applying the leadership content with real life scenarios. Furthermore, it is clear that ADA 25 Chicago staff are not just treating this as a leadership training/retreat and expecting it to succeed. They are working to ensure that the next phase of the Institute, the Civic Connections Project, connects Fellows with opportunities in Chicago-region leadership in a very applied way. Networking sessions where Fellows can develop relationships are being planned, with the input from Fellows. If the Civic Connections Project can effectively increase opportunities, the combination of the retreat with the Civic Connections Project has the potential to be extremely effective.

Pre-Training

Participant (Fellow) Recruitment and Selection

In the summer of 2015, ADA 25 Chicago put out a call for applications and actively recruited applicants for the inaugural class of the Leadership Institute for People with Disabilities. Information on a training to be held in early December 2015 was shared widely on the ADA 25 Chicago website, shared by email listservs for people with disabilities and sent directly for recruitment and/or wider dissemination to colleagues in the leadership community of Chicago to help identify potential Fellows. In order to apply, potential Fellows had to meet the following criteria:

- 7-12 years of management and/or leadership experience demonstrated in professional, civic or community contexts.
- Self-identifies as a person with a current disability (may include both apparent and non-apparent disabilities, defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities).
- Is a resident of the Chicago region (includes Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties).

- Is interested in being engaged in the civic life of metropolitan Chicago and seeking out the possibility of voluntary participation on a board, commission, or other leadership position in public, private or non-profit sectors.
- Has personal leadership characteristics including:
 - Emotional Intelligence and agility.
 - Strategic thinking.
 - Gets results.
 - Brings different groups together and has a commitment to collaboration.
 - Wants to learn from others. Is comfortable engaging with people across cultures and across disabilities?
- Willing to self-disclose and be a visible and vulnerable learner/leader in an intensive group learning setting.
- Has a vision for leveraging their participation in the Leadership Institute for longer term leadership in the Chicago region.
- Will commit to the three and a half day schedule of the Institute, from 11 a.m. December 3rd – through 3 p.m. December 6th, 2015. Programming on Friday and Saturday will extend from early morning transportation from the hotel (approximately 9 a.m.) through the day, supplemented by required dinners and evening sessions in the hotel (see approximate hours above).

Interested individuals completed an application packet online or through email, approached a leader at their job or in their field to submit nominations in support of their application. A total of 58 applications for the Institute were received, 8 were incomplete and, therefore, not fully considered. Out of those considered, 33 were selected to be interviewed by a small panel of at least two members of the Institute advisory committee. Interviewers utilized a Likert rating sheet, and narrative questions related to criteria and individual application information. The Selection Committee sought to identify individuals who represented the qualities of an emerging leader. These were individuals with enough experience so that they were not “too green,” but on a developing trajectory of experience considered to be “emerging.”

The Selection Committee sought to not just go for the “regular suspects” and tried to get people with disabilities that are outside of typical disability-centered jobs, especially people from the business or corporate sectors. In general, the Selection Committee sought people who were open and outgoing and would work well in a group. Interviewers also looked for people who could articulate their goals and would appreciate and benefit from the four pillars that guided the training: self-awareness, awareness of others, willingness to take action, and ability to collaborate. Alternatively, people who were insensitive to the needs of others or who like to work alone and not as part of the team would not be good participants in the training.

Selection of the Fellows also strongly valued diversity in terms of disability, professional, geography, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, and veteran status.

Following the interviews, ADA 25 Chicago staff and advisory committee met to decide on the final Fellows who would participate in the training. They considered the applications and reviews of the interviews to put together a class of people who were diverse and represented Chicago as a whole. Following the interviews, 16 Fellows were accepted to participate in the leadership training of the Institute, and 5 people were selected as alternates; 2 of the alternates took the place of those who had been accepted but were unable to attend. Three alternates were asked, however due to inability to take time from work one could no longer commit to the full weekend, and so withdrew. In the end, 17 people (16 who applied plus the participant-observer) were scheduled to participate in the leadership retreat. One individual had a medical emergency on the first day and was not allowed to continue with the retreat; the lead designer made this determination based on her experience of successful group dynamics.

Nine applicants were named advisors to the Institute; they were more advanced leaders who may not have benefited as much as the applicants that were selected. They did not participate in the training. However, the Institute still wanted them to be involved, and the advisor role allowed them to remain part of the overall plan to increase the number of people with disabilities in civic leadership positions in Chicago. The Fellow who had a medical emergency and was not allowed to continue the training was transitioned to this advisor role.

One of the trainers noted that it may be beneficial in the future include the training team in selection of Fellows to ensure that they were well suited for the training. This trainer expressed feelings that some participants were more interested in advancing their careers or finding a new job than actual civic leadership skill development. On the other hand, one of the Institute advisory committee members talked at length about the difference between civic leadership and employment. Their argument was that the two are so closely tied that little attention should be given to whether the training also improved employment outcomes. They argued that better employment outcomes would be a great impact to measure following participation in the Institute. One of the reasons for this is that prestige of employment transitions is often a factor in who gets on what boards. The two are inextricably linked and the training does not need to differentiate one from another.

During the post-training interviews, the evaluation team asked the Fellows if they thought it was a good idea to limit the training to only people with a minimum of seven years of leadership experience. The fellows were very mixed on the subject. Several noted that requiring a minimum level of leadership experience was helpful because some of the training topics required personal experience with what was being taught. In particular, they that it was useful for selecting the Fellows because of the demand for this training, it was a useful tool for being able to limit the number of applications. However, other people noted that this requirement quickly leaves out younger people who are part of the next generation of leadership. One Fellow mentioned that people who are born with disabilities are natural leaders and they have to be to lead their lives. That person noted that many times “someone younger with less formal

experience has the desire and skills, and just lacks the formal opportunity to be a formal leader” and the Institute could be an important first step (Fellow, Post-Training Interview).

Fellow Demographics

The 16 Fellows who participated in the leadership training represented a wide variety of demographic characteristics (see Table 1). They were fairly evenly split by gender, with half identifying as male, almost half as female and one person who preferred not to respond. The majority of participants (68.8%) identified as white, while 18.8% identified as black and one person (6.3%) identified as mixed race. Two participants (12.5%) were from Hispanic origins. The participants could identify with more than one disability type, and the disability that was most frequently identified was mobility disability (43.8%). Five (31.3%) people identified as having a physical disability aside from a mobility impairment, and an even number of Fellows (2, 12.5% each) identified as blind/visually impaired, deaf/hearing-impaired, and as having a mental health disability. One person (6.3%) had a sensory disability. One person (6.3%) was a military veteran and two people (12.5%) identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and/or Queer. The Fellows were very well educated, with all Fellows having at least a Bachelor’s degree, and more than half (62.5%) having a graduate degree. The vast majority (93.8%), all but one, of the Fellows were employed and nearly half (43.8%) were currently involved with a board or civic commission. The Fellows ranged in age from 26 to 65, and the mean age of the 14 people that responded to this question was 40.9 years.

Demographic	Number	Percent
Gender		
- Male	8	50.0%
- Female	7	43.8%
- No Response	1	6.3%
Race		
- White	12	68.8%
- Black	3	18.8%
- Other (Mixed Race)	1	6.3%
Hispanic Origin	2	12.5%
Disability Type		
- Blind/Visually Impaired	2	12.5%
- Deaf/Hearing Impaired	2	12.5%
- Mental health	2	12.5%
- Mobility disability	7	43.8%
- Physical disability	5	31.3%
- Sensory Disorder	1	.3%
Military Veteran	1	6.3%
LGBTQ	2	12.5%
Employed	15	93.8%
Graduate Degree	10	62.5%
Current Board Involvement	7	43.8%
Age (n=14)	Mean: 40.9; Range: 26-65	
Data Source: Pre-Training Survey of Fellows and Applications		

Of the 15 Fellows who were employed, the majority (9, 60.0%) describe their employer as a nonprofit organization. Two (13.3%) Fellows each described their employer as for-profit, government, or said they were an individual entrepreneur/self-employed. The largest number of Fellows said that they worked in the Health/Human Service sector (7, 46.7%). The Fellows

also represented other sectors: education (3, 20.0%), advocacy (3, 20.0%), social services (1, 6.7%), and technology/computer (1, 6.7%).

Evaluation Commentary

While the **demographic variation among the Fellows was very strong, a few notable groups were not represented, notably people who identify as Asian and people with intellectual or learning disabilities**. This training was for people with at least seven years of leadership experience, and it over represents people with disabilities who have a graduate degree and who are employed. People with disabilities are typically underrepresented in education and employment compared to people without disabilities. As the program evolves, it should consider including people with intellectual or learning disabilities and people who are unemployed or not well educated in order to better represent the disability community. However, people from these groups did not apply to be part of the Institute in 2015.

Fellows’ Strengths and Weaknesses

Prior to participation in the leadership training, the Fellows were asked to describe their leadership strengths and weaknesses. Several themes emerged from these responses, and these are presented in Table 2. With regard to leadership strengths, many of the Fellows identified substantive knowledge and experience related to their jobs or professions, including their professional training and education that they have received. Others talked about social skills, especially the ability to relate to and work with people from a variety of backgrounds, communication skills and speaking to groups, and the ability to think logically and critically. **Interestingly, while some Fellows talked about their life experience as a strength, none specifically mentioned disability when discussing their leadership strengths.**

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Substantive Knowledge/Experience	1. Disability-related barriers
2. Social Skills	2. Working Individually (Not Collaboratively)
3. Communication Skills	3. Avoiding Risks/Conflict/Vulnerability
4. Logical/Critical Thinking	4. Applied Skills

Data Source: Pre-Training Survey of Fellows and Applications

On the other hand, **disability-related barriers were a theme among the weaknesses that the Fellows identified, particularly around communication and interacting with others** for the participants who were deaf/hard of hearing, but also around disclosing challenges or limitations that might impact participation in a group. A few Fellows explained that sometimes they did not work very collaboratively; they felt that circumstances encouraged them to take the approach: "if I want something done, I will do it myself; I can do it myself in less time than it takes me to

explain it to others" (Fellow). Another frequent theme was that the Fellows tended to avoid taking risks and wanted to be more courageous and share their viewpoints rather than avoiding conflict. There was a desire to work on being more vulnerable. Another **weakness identified by the Fellows was applied skills**: managing time/over commitment, networking and making small talk, and thinking strategically/not being rash.

During the interviews, several people noted that they were impressed by the strengths of the class of Fellows and their ability to gel together. One of the trainers made a point to mention that the strengths of the Fellows were that they “were willing to drop into a place of open communication, getting connected, and willingness to do the work.”

Participant-Observer Perspective

The class of the Fellows who were selected to participate in the first year of the Institute represented a variety of disabilities, and they all worked well in a group and were willing to share their own experiences. The selection committee is to be commended on selecting such a wide variety of people with disabilities who represented Chicago. In particular, they had a good sense of how individuals would act in a group and took that into consideration for this class of Fellows. The sense of community and rapport that the Fellows developed during the retreat should not be dismissed lightly; the selection committee and the trainers did a remarkable job arranging and developing a group of people with disabilities who, from my perspective, will remain in touch and support one another into the future.

Fellows' Leadership Goals and Challenges

As expected given requirements of the interview process and the overall goal of the Institute leadership training, all of the Fellows expressed a desire to be more involved in leadership in the Chicago region. The **specific leadership goals they had were tied to their personal interests**; most concerned civic leadership (e.g. some people were interested in nature, while others were concerned with transportation in and around Chicago or government affairs) although a few people only talked about leadership in terms of their employment (e.g. pushing for accessible videos at work or being promoted to a supervisory position).

Regardless of leadership goals, the **challenges the Fellows faced had to do with access, both to people in or opportunities for leadership positions and physical access** related to their disability.

- Building relationships and networking with people in leadership positions was a dominant theme among the challenges the Fellows faced. They expressed some fear about not knowing where to start or who to talk to regarding their interest in leadership opportunities.

“I'm not sure how to get involved with those kind of activities.”

- Institute Fellow (Pre-Training)

- Physical access was also a barrier. These discussions primarily revolved around communication barriers for people who were deaf/hard of hearing and transportation issues for people with mobility disabilities.

A few Fellows talked about challenges they had managing their time and other commitments to be able to pursue more leadership opportunities. One Fellow talked about the need for the Fellows and other people with disabilities to work together to achieve change in Chicago. If they were united, they could be more influential and have a larger impact.

The challenges discussed by the Fellows highlight the importance of the Civic Connections Project. While the leadership training was designed to solidify leadership skills and introduce the Fellows to networking with a disability, the Civic Connections Project can help to further networking opportunities by making connections with people currently in the Chicago region. Following the training, as noted earlier, the need to make connections and identify opportunities, was the largest barrier to leadership for the Fellows. Further follow up with the Fellows may be needed to discuss disability access issues in more detail, as that was not a large part of the training curriculum.

The Fellows' expressed many of the same barriers that ADA 25 Chicago staff and the Institute advisory committee members mentioned during their interviews. The importance of the Civic Connections Project to continue to build relationships and networks and provide more opportunities was essential to all stakeholders.

As will be seen later, another barrier that the Fellows wanted to address in the training has to do with **physical access and the unique challenges for a person with a disability** to be more involved in leadership. They mentioned the need for all additional training topics specific to those issues, especially issues of accommodations and body language (for instance, eye contact), should be part of future work through the Civic Connections Project.

Fellows Preparation for the Leadership Training

The Fellows felt that they were well prepared for participation in the leadership training. They had received all of the information that they needed and were well informed about what to expect. While a few people were still working out details of accommodations and scholarships for the training when they completed the pre-training survey, they were also confident that it would not be a problem. As one person said, "the Program Coordinator has been extremely responsive to my questions" (Institute Fellow).

While the Fellows were satisfied with communication and information prior to the leadership training, a few mentioned that it would be beneficial to clarify expectations of the Fellows and that sometimes they felt like they were making it up as they go. However, the Fellows understood the process and were willing to trust the Institute organizers about the future. A few the Institute advisory committee members also mentioned that they thought it would be beneficial to more clearly define expectations of the Fellows following participation in the

leadership training. However, they too recognized the challenge of this because of the relatively short time that the Institute had to organize the first training. One of the common refrains among the interviewees involved in developing the training and Civic Connections Project was that they were, “flying the plane as we were building it.” While this was generally accepted for the first year, the interviewees stressed the importance of coming up with a plan for sustained engagement with the Fellows and to make the Leadership Institute more of a legacy project.

“There could be more explanation of expectations after the retreat. But I understand that this is the inaugural class, so we're still figuring things out.

- Institute Fellow (Pre-Training)

During the post-training interviews, over two months following the training retreat, the Fellows’ opinions remained largely the same. Most (13 of the 15) noted that the Institute met or exceeded their expectations. The other two expressed a mixed bag, with one wanting more disability-specific content and the other withholding judgment until after finding out the next steps. **Optimism about the future still was a key theme**, with one fellow noting, “knowing our trajectory all, I am so glad I became involved” (Fellow, Post-Training Interview).

Training Development

ADA 25 Chicago originally identified Leslie Sholl Jaffe Consultants to develop the training. Leslie invited Jeff Hull to be a co-facilitator along with her. Together, Leslie and Jeff had an incredible amount of knowledge about and experience training leaders. They were chosen because of their strong track record for leadership training with underrepresented/minority groups. All stakeholders involved noted the strength of the knowledge about leadership in general that these two trainers had.

However, they had **little personal experience with disability and did not have a firm grasp of the unique issues for dealing with a group of people with disabilities**. One noted, “up until a few days before, we were not aware of variety of disability” (Trainer, Interview). The ADA 25 Chicago team decided to pair them with a person with deep disability expertise and identified Carol Gill, a Professor in Disability Studies, as a consultant on the curriculum and became a co-facilitator. As a person with a disability, she brought the disability experience and expertise to the training. The contracts required that the consultant team collaborate to design an integrated curriculum. Several people (ADA 25 Chicago team and Fellows) noted that Carol Gill brought “credibility” to the group. Part of her job was to review existing material and to identify language and content that was not appropriate for people with disabilities. She also created modules on disability language and disability history.

Many people interviewed noted that one of the things they would have done differently is to have **disability as more of a core to the training. The approach used for the leadership retreat**

tried to infuse disability content into a training that, for the most part, already existed. The training team also realized that this should be improved in the future. “It was kind of generic leadership training that had to be fitted to disability content, rather than disability content being part of it from the beginning” (Trainer, Interview). Another trainer noted that “good leadership training must be adaptive across groups” (Trainer, Interview).

The theme about the integration of disability and leadership also came up in discussions with the Fellows and other stakeholders. One Fellow mentioned that it is important to have disability integrated into the curriculum and activities “rather than it being an afterthought” (Fellow, Online Training Evaluation). Many of the questions about the relationship between leadership and disability were not able to be addressed within the time constraints of the training, as detailed below. One of the trainers noted that, “it is not that there was not enough disability content - it just needs to be more integrated” (Trainer, Interview).

Participant-Observer Perspective

To emphasize the point, the curriculum training needs to have disability perspectives integrated throughout, not tacked on to an existing training. They should be done thoughtfully with significant contributions from a person with a disability, and the training also needs to realize that it cannot be prepared for every possible question. Therefore, time and space to address questions from the Fellows relating to how disability applies to the content of the curriculum is imperative.

Training Delivery

Trainers

The Fellows rated the overall effectiveness of the facilitation team/trainers 5.81 on a scale from 1 to 7 (between somewhat satisfied and satisfied). Nine Fellows (56.3%) were “very satisfied,” while two (12.5%) were “dissatisfied” and another (6.3%) was “somewhat dissatisfied.” See Table 3 for more information.

Content Area/Module	Rating: 1 (Very Dissatisfied) – 7 (Very Satisfied)							Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Overall Effectiveness of the facilitation team	0	2	1	0	1	3	9	5.81

Data Source: Online Training Evaluation completed by the Fellows

The overall feeling among the Fellows was that the **training team was very good at what they do and had a lot of substantive knowledge**, but a few themes emerged with regard to criticisms of the trainers and suggestions for the future. While Leslie and Jeff knew a lot about leadership training, several Fellows noted that they felt that Leslie and Jeff were sometimes **uncomfortable with disability as a topic**. Sometimes they tried too hard to be accommodating;

one Fellow described how the training team kept trying to help even when that Fellow told them that the help was not needed. Another noted that “the inclusion of Carol was very important to give Leslie and Jeff credibility with this group” (Fellow, Online Training Evaluation). One of the trainers described this as “lack of political understanding of disability, how important power dynamics were as context” but also commended the training team for creating a sense of comfort and equality with the fellows and by “being open and eager to learn” about disability issues (Trainer, Interview).

Other criticisms were not about disability. One of the frequent criticisms was that there was **too much introduction** to most material and that people wanted things to progress more quickly and allow more time for discussion; one person felt that they were being talked AT and would have preferred more time in small groups working with the other Fellows. Another participant noted that sometimes the **facilitation was very rigid and the trainers were struggling to stick with the timelines/schedule** and ignoring questions from the Fellows. In particular, one Fellow asked about disability-related barriers to leadership; one Fellow described that “it had the potential to be a HUGE conversation, one that could really lead to breakthroughs for everyone, and it was shut down. There was not enough time” (Fellow, Online Training Evaluation).

All of these themes continued over into the post-training interviews. This is unsurprising because the interviews were conducted very close to the initial training evaluation and at the same time as the post-survey. One noticeable difference was that the Fellows were much more willing to criticize the trainers in the interviews. While people noted that they liked the trainers personally and thought they were good at leadership training in general, there were also questions about whether they (the Fellows were also eager to express that they meant Leslie and Jeff, not Carol) were the most appropriate for training people with disabilities. One fellow recommended that the Institute “find new trainers” while another expanded on that and said, “I’d like to find people trained in both teaching and leadership skills and working with people with disabilities and knew what their issues were” to be the trainers (Fellows, Post-Training Interviews). Others mentioned that the trainers may need disability etiquette training.

Participant-Observer Perspective

The level of discomfort with disability that was displayed by some of the trainers was very surprising, especially because they knew that the training was only for people with disabilities. This was a common theme amongst feedback from the Fellows, and was clear to observers of the training, including myself. Experience working with people with disabilities is extremely important. Furthermore, it is dismaying to hear that one of the Fellows was uncomfortable with some of the trainers because of their lack of disability etiquette.

Training Content

The challenge with assessing the individual components of the curriculum is that it is unlikely that there will ever be a consensus. One person may love one component and not care for

another, while another person may be the opposite. The Fellows’ ratings of the content area/modules of the training curriculum are detailed in Table 4. Table 4 presents the number of Fellows who rated each component of the curriculum 1 (not valuable) to 7 (very valuable), along with the mean (average) rating for each content or activity. Simple comparisons of the mean of each component is informative as to how content areas rated in relation to another.

While each area was rated above “somewhat valuable” on average, there was still variation amongst the different content areas. The content/activities that the Fellows found to be the most valuable were the networking panel discussion (6.5), the introduction process of getting to know each other (6.19), dinner with guest speakers (6.19), and the module on “Understanding Diversity: Leadership in the 21st Century” (6.13). On the other hand, the areas that were the least valuable to the Fellows were “Becoming More Resourceful Leaders (Archetypes and Triggers)” (5.13), “Presence, Power and the Spirit of Leadership” (5.38), leadership timelines and lifelines (5.5), “POP: A Results Producing Model” (5.69), and the historical overview of the disability rights movement (5.69).

Content Area/Module	Rating: 1 (Not Valuable) – 7 (Very Valuable)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean
Introduction Processes – getting to know each other	0	0	0	1	3	4	8	6.19
Leadership Timelines / Lifelines	0	1	0	1	6	4	4	5.5
Dinner with guest speakers	0	0	1	0	3	3	9	6.19
Learning from our Past to Lead Forward: A Historical Overview of the Disability Rights Movement	0	2	0	1	2	4	7	5.69
Understanding Diversity: Leadership in the 21 st Century	0	0	2	0	1	4	9	6.13
Responsible Leadership	0	0	1	0	3	8	4	5.88
Breakthrough Leadership Statements	0	0	1	1	3	2	9	6.06
Giving and Receiving Effective Feedback	0	0	1	1	3	2	9	6.06
Becoming More Resourceful Leaders (Archetypes and Triggers)	1	1	2	0	2	7	3	5.13
Interpersonal Leadership Styles (ILS)	0	0	0	1	4	4	7	6.06
Presence, Power and the Spirit of Leadership	1	1	0	2	2	5	5	5.38
Skits	1	0	1	2	1	4	7	5.63
Party	0	0	0	3	2	6	5	5.81
Leadership Statements (The Story of Me)	0	1	0	0	5	4	6	5.81
POP a Results Producing Model	0	1	1	0	3	6	5	5.69
Networking Panel Discussion	0	0	0	0	1	6	9	6.5
Next Steps and Commitments Going Forward (Learning Partners)	0	0	0	1	3	7	5	6

Data Source: Online Training Evaluation completed by the Fellows

Organizers of the Institute leadership retreat and the trainers received the raw, un-analyzed feedback from the Fellows, and only the main themes and highlights are included in this report.

The primary theme that emerged from the Fellows' training evaluations was that across all the different content areas, there was too much introduction by the facilitation team (which sometimes felt too academic) and the Fellows wanted more opportunity to work with the material, either one another or individually, and apply it to their own situations. In general, more time was needed for each activity. Real-life stories and applied experiences from other leaders with disabilities were typically viewed as the most important parts of the weekend.

- **Introduction Processes – getting to know each other:** The Fellows generally appreciated the introductory process and said it helped people to get to know each other better, which was an important base for the rest of the retreat. However, because the whole retreat was about those personal relationships, some people wanted to make this part of the training shorter and get on with the other content and allow the Fellows to get to know one another as they went. Still, this activity was important for starting to break the ice for the group. One suggestion was to limit this to one round with another Fellow, rather than three separate rounds.
- **Leadership Timelines / Lifelines:** Many Fellows viewed this as an important activity. It helped to ground people and reminded them of past leadership activities. While the first activity was a broad introduction to the group, the leadership timelines/lifelines helped to build connections more deeply with one other Fellow. As one Fellow stated, “[t]he one-on-one work was a great contrast to the large group introduction” (Fellow, Online Training Evaluation).
- **Dinner with guest speakers:** The dinner was a highly rated activity. People enjoyed getting to hear stories from people with disabilities in leadership positions and how they got to be where they are. People felt that they could start to network at the dinner and that “will help in my relationships going forward” (Fellow, Online Training Evaluation). Although the dinner was very highly rated, one fellow mentioned a situation at this dinner where they felt that they were treated insensitively with regard to race; they (identified as African-American) asked for advice with the situation and received a negative response, and another person who was white asked a very similar question and received a positive, supportive answer.
- **Learning from our Past to Lead Forward: A Historical Overview of the Disability Rights Movement:** Although this was one of the lower rated modules, most of the feedback was positive and “well put together” (Fellow, Online Training Evaluation). However, a few people mentioned that some disability groups (e.g. mental health and the intercession of disability with their minority groups, such as race) were missing from the history and the Fellows primarily only learned about one of the periods in this module. Overall, it was viewed as a starting point and Fellows expressed desire for more of this content or a list of resources to use for more information.

- Understanding Diversity: Leadership in the 21st Century:** The module on “Understanding Diversity” was a highlight for a few Fellows who noted that this was where they started to have meaningful conversations with one another and they wanted more opportunity for interaction amongst the Fellows with one another. Some of the conversations about diversity were cut short “because the facilitators wanted to move on” (Fellow, Online Training Evaluation).
- Responsible Leadership:** Although they felt that the content in this module was important, most Fellows felt that this could have been a shorter content area. Encouraging the Fellows to pay attention to their word choices and attitudes was important (e.g. reframing from “have to” to “choose to”), although it may have been better to make this more “actionable” than just repeating a list in the large group.
- Breakthrough Leadership Statements:** Many Fellows felt that developing “I am” statements was “perhaps the most impactful exercise” that the group did (Fellow, Online Training Evaluation). They felt that it was very empowering and enjoyed that the facilitators pushed them out of their comfort zones to further develop their own leadership statements. However, not all of the Fellows felt that it was well facilitated; one person noted that “someone joked that it felt like a roast, but in reality, it did. By the end of the exercise, it felt like my breakthrough wasn’t my own” (Fellow, Online Training Evaluation).
- Giving and Receiving Effective Feedback:** The module on giving and receiving effective feedback was overall appreciated because of its importance; one Fellow said it is, “always important for leaders to be able to” give effective feedback (Fellow, Online Training Evaluation). A few people wish that there was more time for this activity, and thought it might go better with “families” so that the groups knew each other and could provide thoughtful feedback.
- Becoming More Resourceful Leaders (Archetypes and Triggers):** This module was rated the lowest by the Fellows. While many people felt that it was interesting, they also felt that it was too “academic” and not very practical. The Fellows did prefer the discussion around triggers to the discussion around archetypes, but more disability-centered discussion around triggers would have been helpful. For the most part, the Fellows did not find it interesting to identify their personal archetype and would like a more applied approach to strengths and weaknesses for each type.
- Interpersonal Leadership Styles (ILS):** All of the Fellows felt that this module was at least somewhat valuable (with the exception of one who was neutral). Many of the

Regarding the Breakthrough Leadership Statements:

“This was a life changing and transformative experience.”

- Institute Fellow (Training Evaluation)

Fellows described this exercise as “fun” and one of the more lively activities. They liked identifying their strengths and the types of people they work well with and don’t work well with. It made a few Fellows “appreciate having a balanced team with a variety of strengths” (Fellow, Online Training Evaluation).

- **Presence, Power and the Spirit of Leadership:** The trainers made the decision to skip over this module very quickly. The Fellows did not offer any comments about it.
- **Skits:** Overall, most Fellows enjoyed the skits, which surprised many who thought that they would not enjoy it. The one suggestion to improve this would be to assign the groups at an earlier stage to allow more thoughtful skits and to plan it at a different time because the dinner was rushed.
- **Party:** On Saturday evening, the Fellows had dinner/a party with organizers from the Institute and the trainers. There were no negative comments: “who doesn’t love a party?” (Fellow, Online Training Evaluation). However, there were few suggestions for improving the experience, primarily around logistics. A few people commented that they wished it was earlier and they did not have to get up so early the next day, and other people mentioned that the room setup was not good for a group of people with disabilities because of the way that the tables were arranged.
- **Leadership Statements (The Story of Me):** For the most part, the Fellows enjoyed this activity. Everyone approached the activity of preparing a short leadership statement slightly differently, which some enjoyed, and others found unclear. It would be helpful to have more time to plan and practice these before speaking in front of the group. A few Fellows noted that they continue to work on this after the retreat to further refine their leadership statement.
- **POP a Results Producing Model:** The Fellows had mixed feelings about this model. Many of them did not feel like it added to the training, while others appreciated that having it in a single model and indicated that they had “already began it at work” (Fellow, Online Training Evaluation).

Regarding the Leadership Statements (The Story of Me):

“Very effective and valuable”

- Institute Fellow (Training Evaluation)

- **Networking Panel Discussion:** This was the highest rated activity. The Fellows enjoyed all of the real-life discussions and hearing from other people with disabilities about their experiences on board. A couple of people thought it could be even longer. One suggestion was to have it as part of breakfast instead of lunch because it went a little long and it was difficult to finish the training on time. A number of Fellows thought this was well moderated although they wish that the Fellows could formulate questions earlier in the training to ask the panel.

Regarding the Networking Panel:

“Thank you for coordinating that experience- especially on a Sunday! It shows how committed everyone is to our development and growth.”

- Institute Fellow (Training Evaluation)

- **Next Steps and Commitments Going Forward (Learning Partners):** Fellows appreciated being held accountable to one another with regard to progress on leadership. However, the group was evenly split on being assigned to a “family” that they were accountable to. Several Fellows expressed the desire to form their own groups of people to follow up with, rather than being assigned to a group. Still, a few Fellows indicated that they were already in the process of communicating with their “families” and the larger group by the time that they completed the online training evaluation (that is, within a week of the leadership retreat).

Evaluation Commentary

Again, it is difficult to reach a consensus on individual components of the training. While individual Fellows differed in which parts of the curriculum was most valuable, in the end, there was value to each component for some people. The challenge for the future of the Leadership Institute is to make sure that there is enough flexibility in components that are kept and/or added that they can reach as many people as possible. However, there was a clear trend that the **Fellows wanted more hands-on and real world applicability rather than abstract psychological theory.**

An important area for improvement in the future is to make **better use of lost opportunities for discussion around areas important to the Fellows.** In the interviews, the story that was told the most was when one of the Fellows asked a question about body language and eye contact, especially when they had a visual impairment that made that difficult. The response from the trainers was “that is a great question for another time.” The trainers may not have been equipped to answer that question, but could have facilitated a discussion around it to engage the Fellows. Many of the interviewees pointed to this as one example of a lost opportunity for sharing that got cut off.

This is related to the overall structure of the training in general. There was not “open space” for the Fellows to ask questions or have dialogue about topics that were not explicitly included in the schedule. **The lack of flexibility was a weakness of the training retreat.** Even though it was “good training curriculum, sometimes it did not leave enough time for what was working the most, the sharing of experience and telling of stories in the community that had formed” (Trainer, Interview). The other trainers also acknowledged this and said that they would plan to cut back on content and leave room for “both group and individual reflection around the day’s learning” (Trainer, Interview).

Another trainer acknowledged that a weakness was that there was “an abundance of content [to cover] in a very short time” (Trainer, Interview) yet another noted, “We were too connected to keeping our set up, and the experience suffered from that.” (Trainer, Interview).

Retreat Logistics

The overall logistics of the retreat and the lodging experience at the Hyatt Regency (who donated more than half of the rooms, two meals and provided reduced room rates for the additional rooms) were each rated 5.88 of 7 by the Fellows. While nearly half (7, 43.7%) were “very satisfied” with these aspects, one (6.3%) was “slightly dissatisfied” and another (6.3%) was “dissatisfied.” On the other hand, none of the Fellows were dissatisfied (to any extent) with their experience at Deloitte and the accommodations received during the retreat, which were rated 6.56 and 6.4, respectively.

- **Lodging experience at the Hyatt Regency:** Overall, the Fellows were satisfied with their day at the Hyatt Regency. They reported that the staff was friendly and courteous. A few people mentioned that their bags were misplaced on the first day and were difficult to locate that evening. Others mentioned that dining service on the second night was sub-par, with part of the group being moved to a separate room apart from the rest of the group.
- **Experience at Deloitte:** Reviews of the experience at Deloitte, who donated the meeting space and much of the food for the retreat, were exceptional. Everybody felt very welcomed and appreciated the attentiveness of staff whenever small issues came up (not having decaffeinated coffee, outlet problems in the room). There were no accessibility problems.
- **The overall logistics of the retreat:** The main criticism of the overall logistics was that the days were too long and the training was long as well. This led to some stamina problems for the Fellows, especially considering that the hotel and the training site were a short cab ride

“The CCT were rock stars. Their support for the retreat and fellows was apparent throughout.”

- Institute Fellow (Training Evaluation)

away. While some people with physical disabilities felt that the logistics of the transportation could have been better because of the timeliness of wheelchair accessible taxis, on a whole, the group felt that this went very smoothly. One Fellow suggested that future retreats have dedicated wheelchair vehicles and a few people thought that it might be better to hold the training in the hotel and avoid the need for transportation altogether. Still, for the most part, the Fellows were impressed with the logistics of the weekend and were especially thankful for the work and attentiveness that CCT put into the weekend. However, one Fellow wished they had asked for accommodations to help deal with stamina issues for the long days of the retreat, but did not feel comfortable asking for them. That person expressed that they felt that they “had no choice if [they] wanted to participate in the Institute” (Institute Fellow, Online Training Evaluation).

Several fellows noted in the post-training interviews that they really liked being able to stay at the hotel and having the retreat at a separate location. It added to the “professionalism” of the experience, which may have been lost if the hotel and training were in the same place, because it may have been “more casual” (Fellow, Post-Training Interview).

- **Accommodations received during the retreat:** There were few comments about the accommodations except to say that they were great. One person noted that the menus were not accessible, but also took responsibility for not asking for that accommodation.

Content Area/Module	Rating: 1 (Not Dissatisfied) – 7 (Very Satisfied)							Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your lodging experience at the Hyatt Regency	0	1	1	0	2	5	7	5.88
Your experience at Deloitte	0	0	0	0	1	5	10	6.56
The overall logistics of the retreat	0	1	1	0	2	5	7	5.88
Accommodations you received during the retreat	0	0	0	2	0	3	10	6.4

Data Source: Online Training Evaluation completed by the Fellows

Evaluation Commentary

Although the participants were very favorable towards their experience at Deloitte, it is something that should be considered for future trainings. One of the main reasons that Deloitte was chosen was because ADA 25 Chicago was “looking at aura and prestige and importance” with regard to the retreat location along with a substantive curriculum (ADA 25 Chicago staff, Interview). In that regard, having the retreat at Deloitte was a good choice because of the increased visibility the Institute received from the partnership with Deloitte (who donated the space, which made it economically efficient as well).

However, the trainers were less positive about the space. One of them was surprised at how much the Fellows liked the space given the logistics of transportation between the hotel and the training retreat location. The days were often very long, and having transportation that sometimes required waiting, extended those days even further. A few participants and trainers noted the stamina issues required to have the retreat at a location separate from the hotel. One of the Fellows was appreciative of the space and said it was very nice, but it was not necessary. It would have been okay to have the training and hotel accommodations closer or in the same building in order to save time and to allow the Fellows to take a short break if needed.

In addition, a few people, both Fellows and Trainers, noted that having more space in the training room would have been important. More flexibility with the ability to move tables into different arrangements would have been helpful for working with groups. The problem with the size of the room was exacerbated after accounting for all the interpreters and other equipment that is needed in the room. Even though the space was on the smaller size for what was needed, the audio needs of the room were brought up by some stakeholders. The decision not to use microphones and speakers for all trainers and fellows was primarily an economic one. In the future, a few stakeholders, especially the trainers, expressed desire to have microphones available.

Finally, because the space was small and because the days were long, many people thought that in the future there should be a separate room from the training room for meals. This would help with Fellows not feeling like they are trapped in a room for the entire day.

Participant-Observer Perspective

The logistics of the leadership training retreat are something that the Institute will need to decide for the future. While I agree that the space provided by Deloitte was great (although the room was a little small for the group to be in the entire day -- a separate room for eating would have been appreciated), it may be better to have the training and lodging in the same location to reduce the need for logistics with transportation. Part of the reasoning to have the retreat at Deloitte was to be in the middle of the city, which was a great connection to the civic engagement theme of the training. However, I am not sure that it had that impact. While the Fellows were in the middle of the city, they were also isolated away in a separate room without engaging with the city. The same could be accomplished in other locations that do not require transportation. Especially for a group of people with disabilities, having the training and lodging accommodations in the same place makes a lot a sense for the future.

Most Valuable Parts of the Retreat

When asked what the most valuable parts of the retreat were, one **central theme emerged from the Fellows: building a community/networking with other Fellows**. This is clearly seen in

along with panels with existing leaders; the least valuable parts were some of the more academic leadership modules and the fact that there was little time and/or flexibility with regard to the curriculum.

Overall Retreat Experience

Each Fellow was positive about their overall experience with the retreat. Nearly all mentioned the value of connecting with other leaders in the Chicago disability community, and each found different parts of the training to be highly valuable. Most of the participants noted that they appreciated being able to better identify their strengths and gaining a better understanding of themselves as leaders. Only 12 of the Fellows responded to the question about whether or not the training met or exceeded their expectations. Of these, 7 (58.3%) “strongly agreed”, 3 (25%) “agreed”, and 1 (8.3%) “slightly agreed.” Only 1 (8.3%) Fellow “slightly disagreed,” and felt that the training did not quite live up to their expectations.

The Fellows were also overwhelmingly positive when asked about what they want to communicate with sponsors of ADA 25 and organizers of the Institute. Many of them described the experience as transformative and that it reawakened and reinvigorated their desire to be leaders. The retreat also provided meaningful opportunities to connect with leaders to position the Fellows to be more impactful in the community. It has helped them to dream big and shown them that they have the skills to achieve their dreams. One Fellow summed up most of the perspectives by stating:

“Thank you. Thank you for recognizing a need. Thank you for organizing a wonderfully inclusive training environment. Thank you for believing in us. Thank you for connecting me to my new friends. Thank you for supporting the next generation of leaders. I'm excited to work alongside you.” (*Institute Fellow, Online Training Evaluation*)

Missing Content from the Fellows' Perspectives

Following the training, the Fellows had several suggestions on topics that could be added to the training in the future. Most of these were related to content on disability-issues, including more discussion of racial diversity and intersectionality, more diverse historical perspectives, more discussion of language about disability, and content about specific disabilities themselves and the unique challenges that accompany them. Others wanted to learn more about disability culture and specific disability rights, notably around discrimination relating to disability. One Fellow was surprised that the training focused on leadership skills, which were “their strengths” because of their experience and leadership, and that person was “hoping to get more information about the ADA as it stands as a law” (Fellow, Post-Training Interview).

One participant reinforced a common theme throughout the evaluations which was that the **participants wanted more practical skills** that they could take with them. As this Fellow noted,

it would also be important to learn more about how to recover from this training and go forward with their lives:

“...there are a lot of parallels with Burning Man in regards to reintegrating to the world that we all came from and escaped from for 3 ½ days. We spent a lot of time in a safe environment. It is very, very weird going back to a fully abled environment and [returning] to ‘business as usual’ with a real sense of coming down from something special.” (*Institute Fellow, Online Training Evaluation*)

Another idea was that in future retreats, past Fellows should talk to the new Fellows about changes in their lives or leadership since the previous retreat. This could be done either at future retreats, or one Fellow suggested that it may work well as a networking/introductory meeting for future classes of fellows before they attend the training retreat.

Outcome Evaluation

Formal Evaluation Measures

Table 6 presents how likely Fellows were to participate in certain activities following the training. Each was rated at least 4 of 5, indicating that they felt they were “likely” to: Network with people with disabilities; Network with people without disabilities; Join a board or task force; Volunteer in the community; Talk to a group about my experience with disability; and Organize people to take action around an issue. The two activities that dealt the most with disability (network with people with disabilities and talk to a group about my experience with disability) were rated the highest, indicating that the Fellows were the most likely to do those activities. Interestingly, the activity that was rated the lowest, joining a board or task force, was the central goal of the leadership retreat. Four (25%) of the Fellows indicated that they were “undecided” on whether or not they would join a board or task force.

Activity	Likelihood: 1 (Very Unlikely) – 5 (Very Likely)					Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	
Network with people with disabilities	0	0	0	2	14	4.88
Network with people without disabilities	0	0	1	4	11	4.63
Join a board or task force	0	0	4	2	10	4.38
Volunteer in the community	0	0	2	4	10	4.5
Talk to a group about my experience with disability	0	0	0	3	13	4.81
Organize people to take action around an issue	0	0	1	6	9	4.5

Data Source: Online Training Evaluation completed by the Fellows

The Fellows also completed pre- and post-training surveys that contain questions about their comfort with different leadership activities, disability identity, and the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with certain statements. Results of the comparisons of pre- and post-test are included in Table 7. There were no significant differences, although that is unsurprising given that there were only 16 Fellows and only about two months were between the pre- and post-training surveys. More time may be needed to see any significant differences.

In order to test for significant differences between pre- and post-training survey responses, nonparametric, Wilcoxon tests of significance were used on each scale and each individual item. This statistical test incorporates the mean of each item, along with the standard deviation (a measure of the range of the answers) and sample size to determine whether the average rating in the pre-tests is significantly different than the post-tests. Thus, the test accounts for standard errors in the responses to determine whether the difference that can be seen from the pre- test to the post-test is greater than what can be expected by chance alone. This measure is known as a probability value (p-value) measured from 0 to 1; a small p-value

Outcome Evaluation

indicates less of a probability that any difference is due to chance. In most social science research, if a p-value is below 0.05, a difference is considered statistically significant; any difference between pre- and post-survey measures are likely due to the treatment (in this case, the leadership training retreat) and not chance.

Table 7: Pre- and Post-Training Survey Question			
Scale – Variables	Pre Score	Post Score	p-value
Comfort with Leadership Activities: Very Uncomfortable (1) to Very Comfortable (7)	6.31	6.54	0.087
- Working with People from Different Backgrounds	6.50	6.69	0.257
- Giving a Presentation	6.25	6.44	0.257
- Telling a Personal Story	6.19	6.50	0.16
True/False (Leadership): Absolutely False (1) to Absolutely True (7)	5.59	5.98	0.163
- Identify Strengths and Weaknesses	5.63	6.00	0.096
- Confident in the Ability to Get Things Done	5.88	6.25	0.236
- Make the Best Out Of Situations	5.31	5.63	0.272
- Can Help a Group Reach a Target	5.44	5.94	0.107
- Affirm Personal Beliefs in a Group	5.69	6.06	0.248
Agree/Disagree Personal Future: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)	4.01	4.08	0.523
- Lack Opportunities for Leadership	2.31	2.50	0.341
- Able to Network with People with Disabilities	4.25	4.44	0.257
- Able to Network with People without Disabilities	4.25	4.38	0.317
- Have a Strong Support System	3.75	3.75	1
- Can Foster Diversity in the Leadership Community	4.19	4.44	0.102
- Have Opportunities for Growth	3.94	4.00	0.963
Disability Identity: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)	4.00	3.97	0.163
- Have Many Strengths Because of My Disability	4.67	4.75	0.564
- People with Disabilities Have Made Major Accomplishments	4.69	4.69	1
- Happy to Be a Person with a Disability	3.88	3.94	0.763
- Disability Is an Important Part of Who I Am	4.19	4.25	0.739
- Other People Generally Respect People with Disabilities	2.81	2.50	0.248
- I Belong to the Disability Community	3.56	3.56	0.951
- I Want to More Closely Belong the Disability Community	4.25	4.13	0.527

Data Source: Pre-Training and Post-Training Surveys completed by the Fellows

Most of the changes did trend in the direction of improving following the training. In particular, the first scale about comfort with leadership activities increased from a score of 6.31 before the training to 6.54 following the training; the significance level of this difference is 0.087 which can be considered marginally significant and is a noteworthy outcome of the training. It increased the Fellows' comfort levels with leadership activities.

Similarly, the Fellows were more confident that they could identify their strengths and weaknesses following the training. On a scale of 1 to 7, the ratings improved from 5.63 before the training to 6.00 following the training; the significance level was 0.096, which should also be considered marginally significant. A few other measures that were close to marginally significant improvements were comfort telling a personal story (which was part of the training), belief that they could help foster diversity in the leadership community (a major goal of the Institute), and belief that they can help a group reach of target (teamwork and how different strengths work together was also part of the training).

Only two items showed decreases following the training, although neither was close to being a significant difference. One of these was how strongly people agreed that "other people generally respect people with disabilities," which decreased from a score of 2.81 to 2.50 on a scale from 1 to 5. This may show that, following the training, the Fellows had a better understanding of the marginalization and barriers that people with disabilities face in the community. The other measure that showed a slight decrease was "I want to more closely belong to the disability community" (4.25 to 4.13). This difference may be because the Fellows became a part of the community during the training and no longer felt like they want to be closer to that community to which they already belonged.

Board Membership

Because the process of joining a board or receiving an appointment to a commission is typically lengthy, it is not feasible to measure changes in the number of Fellows who participate in these activities from before the training to when this report was produced (only a difference of 2-3 months). Most stakeholders noted that "it is too early to tell" with regard to what would be the outcomes of the Institute. Most stakeholders were very positive about their expectations for outcomes based on anecdotal evidence from Fellows, as described in the next section.

One of the Fellows did note that they were under consideration for two boards, although "they are large organizations and it is a long process" (Fellow, Post-Training Interview). They had been invited to join the board, and would be visiting the board soon to make a decision on whether it is the right fit. Two other Fellows noted that they had joined different civic commissions. Therefore, **four of the 15 fellows had joined or applied to either a board or commission in just over two months following training.**

Informal/Anecdotal Outcomes

Many of the trainers, ADA 25 Chicago staff, and the Institute advisory board noted that they had had conversations and exchanged emails with many of the Fellows. The outcome that was mentioned most frequently was the “enthusiasm and rapport” that the Fellows displayed (ADA 25 Chicago staff, Interview). They were hungry to network and build relationships, and have continued to do that following the training. As noted earlier, this sense of community was the biggest outcome of the retreat. The Fellows have created a support network for themselves. One of the trainers knew that there was value in having people come together, but was surprised and “did not know how deprived people with disabilities are for a sense of community” (Trainer, Interview).

“[The Fellows] have already found themselves with a rich network, an opportunity, sense of community with other people that they did not have before and most importantly they are feeling excited and enthusiastic about what could be possible for them.”

-Trainer, Interview

There are many pieces of anecdotal evidence that support outcomes related to community:

- The Fellows were eager to participate in meetings hosted by ADA 25 Chicago following the retreat about the future directions of the Institute
- The Fellows have a private Facebook page that they used to share information and communicate with one another
- Prior to the involvement of ADA 25 Chicago and the Institute, the Fellows planned an in person quarterly meeting to check in with one another (accountability) and see how they can support one another

A few other outcomes are more tangible, but are also slightly unanticipated because they were not part of the original goals of the Institute. These include:

- One of the Fellows advocated for Exelon to caption all of their videos, and Exelon found that they had the capability to do so easily and agreed to make many of their videos accessible over time
- A group of Fellows developed an advocacy letter and mailed it to the dean of a university to encourage the dean to include disability among the University’s efforts around diversity

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- One fellow noted that they had made a change in their employment situation and felt that the Institute helped with their confidence to make the change. Another Fellow taking steps to get a promotion in their current place of employment
- Two Fellows changes related to their education. One had taken steps to finish a Master's degree, while another had applied to several graduate programs to further their career

The Fellows were asked in the post-training interviews about how participation in the training retreat had changed themselves as leaders. They mostly pointed to changes in their personal characteristics. Many of them noted that they were more confident, especially in interactions with people at work. Others noted that they have a better understanding of themselves as leaders; they could identify their strengths and weaknesses and work to incorporate them in their lives. A few Fellows noted that they were more reflective and were learning to think strategically.

The facilitation team also noted a few outcomes in their own work. One of the trainers noted that her idea of community was expanded because of the training in the way that she has seen the Fellows use social media such as Facebook and LinkedIn. Another noted that they personally have an increased sense of what it means to be a person with a disability, and is starting to look at things regarding disability in a larger frame. They have developed a greater appreciation for what it means to be a person with a disability.

Stakeholder Views on Future Steps

“What occurred this past December is exactly what it needed to be: a start.”

(Trainer, Interview).

A common theme throughout the evaluation was the understanding by all stakeholders that the Institute training retreat that met in December 2015 was a start, and more work is needed to better define the future of the Institute as a program. These fall into three primary themes: Ideas for the sustainability of the Institute; Suggestions for changes to the curriculum and logistics of the retreat; and the need for additional evaluation and follow-up.

Sustainability

As was noted throughout the interviews, there is demand for a program like the Institute, as evidenced by the number of people who applied to participate in the first year. Therefore, it is important that the Institute continues to develop and become sustainable, to really become a “legacy” of ADA 25 Chicago. In the winter-spring of 2016, the Institute advisory board will continue to meet to develop the long-term plans and vision for the program. As with most projects of this nature, the immediate challenge is funding; the other necessary parts for the future of the Institute are already in place, including buy-in from people in leadership positions who understand that leadership training and networking for people with disabilities is important.

The first step in this process occurred within two months of the leadership training when ADA 25 Chicago hosted a meeting for the Fellows and advisers to talk about the next steps. At the meeting, they outlined a plan for the structure of the Institute. This meeting was well attended by Fellows where they had a “chance to talk about how they see the future of the program and how they see themselves participating in the program for future Leadership Institutes” (ADA 25 Chicago staff, Interview).

Most of the Fellows expressed a strong desire to remain connected with the group. There were several ideas for this, some social and others more structured. For structured activities, many of the Fellows were interested in having speakers/presentations on specific topics, including both disability and leadership topics. Networking was also a highly desired activity for the Fellows. They wanted opportunities to get together with other Fellows as well as leaders in the Chicago region to discuss opportunities for leadership on different boards or with different organizations. There was a strong feeling that having structured meetings for the first year would help reinforce the training and also would offer some support from the other Fellows.

The next phase of the Institute is to begin developing a “pipeline” to connect emerging leaders with disabilities to leadership opportunities. More thought needs to go into the logistics for this before it becomes a reality. The Civic Connections Project was originally known as the Appointments Project, but was changed to reflect that “the pipeline is not automatic, Fellows will not automatically be placed in a leadership position”; Rather, the project is designed to “decrease the perceived barriers to civic appointments”, specifically the lack of opportunity and visibility (ADA 25 Chicago staff, Interview).

Several stakeholders noted that one of the challenges that the Institute will continue to face is the need to scale up, and reach more than 16 Fellows each year through the leadership retreat. One possibility that was suggested by one of the ADA 25 Chicago staff is that the pipeline may include other people with disabilities ready for leadership, but the advisory committee will need to develop policies for who is included in the pipeline, what vetting needs to happen, and other logistic concerns. One of the Fellows thought that future classes in the training retreat could be larger, although several other stakeholders disagreed because they did not think that Fellows would get to talk to one another and network as much in a larger group. The trainers also noted that more people in the training would require more time.

A few people noted that the success of the Institute is also partially dependent on other factors, including the hospitality of the environment: “We could do the most amazing job of transforming the participants into leaders, but if the world out there does not cooperate or opportunities are not there, then we have not reached our goals.” (Trainer, Interview). Continued networking opportunities are important along with other efforts to increase visibility of the Institute, and work to increase demand for people with disabilities in leadership positions.

Changes to the Retreat Curriculum and Logistics

While the curriculum was well designed and the participants generally reacted favorably; as noted earlier, most stakeholders could identify small changes to the curriculum that should be made. One suggestion that was frequently brought up was to change content around archetypes and resiliency. Other suggestions were to make sure that the content was easily applicable to the lives of people with disabilities, and was not overly academic.

Aside from content changes to the curriculum, most of the changes that stakeholders mentioned have to do with logistics of the training and the retreat weekend as a whole. Future retreats will be able to learn lessons from the inaugural retreat. As one trainer mentioned, they can learn from “everything we did not know we did not know” (Trainer, Interview). For people who were unfamiliar with accommodations used by many of the Fellows, one of the biggest learning curves has to do with the amount of time that it can take to effectively communicate. The trainers noted that, although they had been advised as to what to expect, they still were not prepared. One of the trainers noted surprise in particular with dealing with people who are deaf or hard of hearing and the extra time that it took to deal with interpreters.

Future Steps

Another area for improvement of the retreat is better clarity on policies, two in particular. First, there needs to be better clarity on policies about accommodations and any limits that would be placed on them. One Fellow noted that they were afraid to ask for accommodations (relating to the need to rest during the long days of the training retreat) because they were afraid that they would not be allowed to participate. More clarity on this is necessary and Fellows should be made aware of accommodation policies as early as possible (Note that this Fellow mentioned that after arriving at the training, all of the fears about accommodations disappeared and they felt very comfortable). A related area for more clarity on policies has to do with the participant who had a medical emergency on the first day of the retreat and was not allowed to return when it became clear that she couldn't return until the second evening or third day. Several advisory committee, ADA 25 Chicago staff, and one of the trainers disagreed with the decision that prohibited this person from returning. More understanding between trainers, staff, and other parties and a plan to address reintegration into the training is necessary for dealing with similar situations in the future.

Finally, logistical aspects of the retreat need to be decided. Trainers and Fellows felt that there was not enough time for all of the content and allowing open space for discussions. Some of the suggestions for handling this were that there could be more pre-work so that less "setup" of activities was needed, the partial first day could be expanded to a full day, and another questioned whether it was necessary for all of the work to be in-person or whether parts (or all) could be done remotely, for instance through a webinar.

A few of the interviewees were present for panel discussions at the retreat on the first evening and the last day. They noticed a huge difference in the atmosphere surrounding the Fellows from the first night to the last. The Fellows were more comfortable and talkative on the last day. They figured that this was probably natural as the group started to gel together, and suggested that perhaps they should not have a dinner panel on the first day; rather, move it to the second or third day in order for the rapport among the fellows to build before this event.

A few of the Fellows suggested changing the time of the year that the retreat was held. One noted that it was difficult to have in the winter because of the shorter days: "when you come out of the training, it is already dark" (Fellow, Post-Training Interview). Another noted that it was difficult to have it in the first week of December because of the upcoming holidays, there is a longer break than usual for many people in regard to when the training is completed and when they are at work on a regular basis with a chance to apply what they learned.

Evaluation and Follow-Up

The need for a more long-term evaluation was noted by each interviewee in order to assess the long-term impact of the Institute retreat and Civic Connections Project. This should be done qualitatively/anecdotally and also quantitatively. Stakeholders were interested in knowing how the Fellows had used what they learned in the training retreat, including whether they had more leadership opportunities at work or in the community, and whether they felt more

Future Steps

connected to the disability community. Most people noted that it would be important to follow up with the each fellow regularly, every six months or one year. Some stakeholders also wanted to continue to track Fellows' opinions: as to whether they think that the training retreat helped with their self-knowledge, confidence, and openness, along with the scales that were used in the pre-training survey. A few stakeholders also noted that it is important that the evaluation connect with the Civic Connections Project, whether a "pipeline" has been developed, and whether existing leaders feel that they are able to utilize it to help identify people with disabilities to recommend for leadership positions

Overarching Themes

Eight primary themes emerged from data provided by the various stakeholders: community building, integration of disability, facilitation team, flexibility, logistics, formal outcomes, informal outcomes, and opportunities (or the lack thereof) for leadership and optimism for the future of the Institute.

Community Building: One of the outcomes that stands out (enough that it is its own theme, rather than incorporated into the outcomes themes presented below) was the cohesion that the Fellows developed. They all mentioned that meeting the other Fellows, building a community, and having a network of support to turn to for advice and accountability for their leadership activities were the most valuable part of the leadership training retreat. They pointed to electronic communication as one of the most important ways that they sustain their network (Facebook and email), although they began to plan quarterly meetings separate from ADA 25 Chicago, which shows their commitment to the sense of community that they developed. The other stakeholders (ADA 25 Chicago staff and the facilitation/training team) also noted that they were pleased to see how well the Fellows worked together and were determined to continue to support one another.

Integration of Disability: Nearly all of the stakeholders realize that future training retreats need to better integrate disability in the curriculum. The Fellows and ADA 25 Chicago staff thought that the training curriculum was a little disjointed; there were activities related to disability and activities related to leadership, but little integration of the two. In the future, all curriculum modules need to integrate disability from the beginning. Some Fellows mentioned that one of the big changes that they would make to the curriculum was to include more content directly on disability, especially on the Americans with Disabilities Act

Facilitation Team: Most stakeholders noted that the facilitation/training team was very good at what they do. However, some questioned whether the two primary trainers had enough disability experience to conduct the training. One of those trainers agreed and emphasized that future training retreats need to include a trainer with a disability in all phases of the training. Most stakeholders agreed and thought this would help with integrating disability throughout the curriculum, as well as ensure a proper level of understanding of issues that leaders with disabilities face, which is important for addressing questions from the Fellows as they arise throughout the training. Many stakeholders also felt that including one trainer with a disability (who participated in some, but not all, of the training) was a strength of the training retreat as that trainer had “credibility” with the Fellows, and it is important to increase credibility in the future.

Flexibility: Stakeholders also emphasized the need for flexibility in the curriculum. Part of this was because of the trainers, who wanted to get through the material and may not have been comfortable with some of the disability-related questions that the Fellows asked. The Fellows pointed to several instances, but one in particular (which related to a question about how to

present one's self the best with a certain disability), which could have been great discussions, but there was not room in the curriculum (and some inflexibility on the part of the trainers) to delve into topics that were not on the schedule. The trainers noted the need for more "open space" in future retreat schedules.

Logistics: Stakeholders were fairly pleased with the logistics of the retreat. Most Fellows appreciated that the retreat training was held at Deloitte (which was very well reviewed, although the trainers and a few Fellows thought that future training should have more than just one room) and lodging was separate. They felt that this added to the "professionalism" of the retreat. Experiences at the hotel (Hyatt Regency Chicago) were also fairly favorable, with the exception of a few misplaced bags upon arrival, poor service on the second night's dinner, and a poor layout for the "party." The accommodations provided during the retreat were also appreciated, and Fellows noted their appreciation for the work of ADA 25 Chicago staff to arrange them. However, one person was concerned that asking for accommodations (related to stamina/continuous participation in the training retreat's activities) might mean that they could not participate).

Formal Outcomes: The full impact of the training retreat will not be known for several months or years. However, a few (4) of the Fellows did note that they either had applied to or joined a board or city commission in the two months following the retreat. Others had not yet taken steps towards this area of leadership, noting time commitments and finding opportunities (see the final theme below) as the barriers they still face. Pre- and post-training surveys also showed improvements following the training. In particular, Fellows were more confident in their leadership abilities (especially being able to identify their strengths and weaknesses) and comfortable displaying leadership (working with people from different backgrounds, telling a personal story, etc.).

Informal Outcomes: Many of the outcomes were less formal to the goals of the Institute. One of these was the first theme presented, the community that the Fellows developed. Some Fellows did not point to anything specific, but mentioned that they had more confidence or were able to think/reflect more on themselves as leaders. This led to some "unintended outcomes" (outcomes that are important, but not necessarily anticipated as a result of the training retreat), especially changes in employment or promotions and applications towards graduate education. Most of the Fellows noted that they were more involved in advocacy related to disability or wanted to be; one of the Fellows successfully educated for better captioning of videos at Exelon, while a group of faculty members who were Fellows drafted an advocacy letter to a University to encourage inclusion of disability within the definition of diversity.

Opportunities as a Barrier and Optimism for the Future: Following the training retreat, most of the Fellows noted that they still needed more information on how to identify available opportunities for civic leadership, and were looking forward to the Connections Project. They

Overarching Themes

mentioned that including more practical information in the leadership curriculum might help with that need. All of the Fellows indicated that they wanted to continue to be involved with the Institute, and the majority specifically noted that they were interested in networking events to help identify opportunities. Still, although the Fellows noted this is a barrier, the vast majority were very optimistic about the future. They were looking forward to contributing to the development of the Civic Connections Project, which would hopefully help identify those opportunities and connect them with community leaders. Therefore, the Civic Commissions Project will be instrumental in the long-term success of the Institute. The Fellows had confidence that the Institute team would develop this project successfully and appreciated being consulted for input on its future (including being invited to participate in a planning session with ADA 25 Chicago in late January and having two Fellows represent them on the Planning Committee for the Institute).

Recommendations

The recommendations that follow were developed by the evaluation team. They were developed from evidence that was collected through interviews and surveys with various stakeholders. However, some of these recommendations also include personal experiences of the participant-evaluator and overall impressions from the evaluation team as an independent contractor. While some of these recommendations span several areas, they are divided into four areas: general recommendations for the Institute, facilitation team, curriculum, and logistics. Each recommendation is followed by a short summary of the data/findings that led to that recommendation.

Institute

1. **Include employment as an outcome:** The Institute in general should consider expanding its goals. In almost all communications, written and verbal, with ADA 25 Chicago staff members, the clear goal was to increase participation of people with disabilities in Chicago area boards, committees, and commissions. While this was not specifically about increasing employment options and leadership, the Institute should also track changes in employment and take some “credit” for those changes, especially because they are related to civic leadership, which is often partially dependent on a person’s employment status and economic situation.
 - This recommendation is derived from feedback from the Fellows, many of whom credited the leadership retreat for improvements in their confidence, which help them to find a new job or seek a promotion. One of the Institute advisory committee members was also very adamant that it is difficult to separate civic leadership from employment leadership. Based on this data, it makes sense for the Institute to also include employment as an outcome, even if it is not the primary goal of the Institute (which is civic leadership).
2. **Establish accommodations and attendance policies:** ADA 25 Chicago should clarify their policies and make these known to people who are considering applying to future trainings. Two major pieces of policy emerged from this evaluation: (1) is there a limit to accommodations that a potential Fellow can request? and (2) what are the requirements for attendance? If a Fellow is absent for any portion of time, will they be allowed to return to the training? The evaluation team recommends against imposing limits to accommodations, especially since the Institute stemmed from a year-long celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act – limits on accommodations (whether real or perceived) do not align with the spirit of the ADA. Similarly, a Fellow who is absent for a portion of the time, especially because of a medical emergency, should be allowed to return to the training. When a Fellow is accepted into the Institute, s/he should have every opportunity to remain connected to that class of Fellows. This is important in light of the fact that one of the strongest

outcomes from the Institute is the sense of community that the Fellows create with one another.

- The majority of trainers, ADA 25 Chicago staff, and Institute advisory committee members mentioned a specific incident with one of the Fellows, who had a medical emergency on the first day and one of the trainers decided that Fellow would not be able to participate in the rest of the retreat. The stakeholders noted that they were surprised by this decision and thought that it could have been handled differently. A related issue was brought up by one of the Fellows, who noted that they considered not participating in the retreat because they were unsure about asking for accommodations, relating to stamina of having to participate in four days of an intensive leadership retreat.
3. **Develop future plans for Civic Connections and more:** The Institute should develop a plan for its future and share that plan widely with the Fellows and the broader leadership community. They are currently working with the Fellows to figure out what the next step should be, and this is the correct approach to take. The future of the Institute should focus on promoting opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in leadership. Part of this will be the development of a “pipeline.” The Institute should work with Fellows and the leadership community to develop a plan for the scope of this “pipeline” and what format it will take (i.e. a website, database, etc.). There should also be concrete guidelines on the pipeline concerning who can be a part of it (just Fellows or other people with disabilities as well).
- One of the key themes of the evaluation was that Fellows are still concerned with finding opportunities for leadership in the Chicago region. However, they are optimistic about the future, especially about the Civic Connections project. Other stakeholders also talked about the importance of ensuring long-term success and outcomes. Nearly all stakeholders recognized that the training retreat was a good first step, and the sustainability of the Institute would depend on extending their work, primarily through the Civic Connections Program.

Facilitation Team

4. **Have a facilitator with a disability:** Future trainings should include a person with a disability as a co-facilitator from the very beginning.
- This is closely related to recommendation 7, below. The majority of stakeholders discussed the need to integrate disability throughout the curriculum. One of the frequent suggestions for the future noted by the trainers, ADA 25 Chicago staff, and Institute advisory committee members was that at least one of the trainers should have a disability and be an equal partner in developing and delivering the training. In December 2015, one of the trainers was a person with a disability, and most

- stakeholders noted that it helped to bring “credibility” to the training. In future trainings, it is important to maintain that credibility by having someone with a disability as a trainer; this would help the training team be able to address disability-related topics that emerge during the retreat.
5. **Prepare facilitators for the diversity of disability:** While the training facilitators need to include someone with a disability, they do not all have to have a disability. There are not many experts in leadership development with a disability who would fit the Institute. However, they should have some experience working with people with disabilities, and training if necessary, to be sure that they are prepared for the time it takes for many people to communicate using different accommodations and interpreters. They should also have etiquette training to ensure that the Fellows feel comfortable and respected; during the December 2015 retreat, one Fellow mentioned not wanting assistance finding the way around the room, and one of the trainers insisted on helping when it was not wanted.
 - This recommendation is based on feedback from various stakeholders, most importantly, feedback from the trainers/facilitators themselves. Several of them noted that they were surprised by various aspects of disability, notably the length of time that it took for each Fellow to participate in the different training modules. They discussed the value of the training retreat to themselves as facilitators, saying that they learned a lot from the experience and were better equipped to work with people with disabilities in the future. This recommendation is also based on one Fellow’s experience with one of the trainers insisting on helping when the help was not wanted. Although the majority of Fellows did not mention a problem with this, etiquette training for the facilitators would help ensure that Fellows’ various disabilities are respected.

Curriculum

6. **Ensure sensitivity to diversity in all sessions:** Future classes of Fellows should continue to show diversity with regard to disability type and other demographics. The initial class had a lot of variation on demographic factors. Along with this, care needs to be taken to ensure that people do not feel treated differently than other Fellows. One of the Fellows in December 2015 felt disrespected because of race at one of the dinners with advisory board members and other guests (although not in relation to the trainers or ADA 25 Chicago staff). While this is a tough situation, the Institute needs to ensure that all people who come into contact with the Fellows understand and promote the value of diversity. In addition, there should be a forum each day for people to bring up issues like this, preferably within the group/community of Fellows, and also with the Institute staff, if appropriate.

- This recommendation is fully based on data from only one Fellow. However, because diversity is a key component of the Institute, it is important to acknowledge experiences of diverse Fellows. As the recommendation states, it is nearly impossible for the Institute to ensure that every interaction, especially interactions involving guests, promote diversity; yet, it should be clear that the Institute welcomes and promotes open discussions of and dialogue around diversity issues that arise during the curriculum or the wider retreat.
7. **Integrate disability into the curriculum:** Disability needs to be the base of the curriculum content rather than interjected into a (mostly) prepared training curriculum.
 - Nearly all stakeholders discussed the need to include disability in all aspects of the training curriculum. In particular, they noted that disability should not just be “added on” but rather a focal point of the curriculum. People with disabilities have unique experiences, challenges, and barriers that the training should be developed around. Centering the curriculum on disability was an overarching theme of the evaluation.
 8. **Ensure flexibility in the curriculum:** The training curriculum should focus less on “teaching” and delivering concrete content, especially content that is too academic. There should also be less introduction to all material. The time spent as a group of Fellows should include some content, but with an emphasis on how it can be applied in various situations they found themselves then. In particular, a few hours of “open space” need to be included in the curriculum to allow for Fellows’ questions and enough flexibility to give attention to what is most important to the Fellows.
 - Nearly all of the Fellows and ADA 25 Chicago staff noted that the facilitation style was very “rigid”. Many of them pointed to one instance of a Fellow asking a question about how to present disability and the best way when interacting with other leaders. They noted that this could have been a large and important discussion, but it was not addressed because the training team felt that they had to move on to the next part of the training curriculum. Other Fellows expressed interest in learning more about other disabilities, and the trainers said it could be discussed in the next day, but the topic was not returned to. The trainers themselves also noted the lack of flexibility in the schedule and recommended that future retreats schedule time for discussion of questions, areas of interest, and other issues that arise during the retreat.

Logistics

9. **Prepare pre-training materials that introduce training content:** To help reduce the amount of introduction to material, the training team should consider making short videos about the content for the Fellows to view before the training (of course,

accounting for accessibility) or making material available for pre-work. It should be made clear to Fellows that, as part of their acceptance into the Institute, they are expected to have reviewed this material before the training. Pre-work for future trainings should be directly discussed in the training retreat.

- Most of the Fellows noted that there was too much introduction to the material during the retreat, and they wanted more time for discussion or application of the material. While there was “pre-work” for the Fellows prior to the retreat, it was not directly referenced. The evaluation team feels that combining the “pre-work” with training content would help to eliminate the need for as much introduction during the retreat. This could be done either through videos (as suggested by a couple of stakeholders) or by requiring reading of material/the retreat handbook available to Fellows before attending training.

10. Move the timing of panels: Several of the ADA 25 Chicago staff noted that there was a noticeable difference in the panel on the last day compared to the first day. On the first day, the participants are still getting to know one another and are not completely comfortable. The first night should be dinner together (which was held on the second night of the 2015 retreat) and the panel with leaders with disabilities should be moved to the second night. This will help ensure a more likely experience for all involved.

- This recommendation is based on feedback from ADA 25 Chicago staff and Institute advisory committee members who noted the differences from the first to the last day. The evaluation team agrees that this is important, the first night could be used to build camaraderie amongst the Fellows before having the dinner with invited guests on second night.

11. Consider options for the logistics of retreats: Future retreats could be held in a location that combines training space and lodging/accommodations under the same roof. In addition, the Institute should consider moving the retreat to another time of the year. The length of time required for the retreat also needs to be considered. The logistics of the retreat may need to change each year depending on availability of in-kind donations and other supports.

- The majority of Fellows were very favorable towards having the training in the Deloitte building and lodging at a nearby hotel. The trainers were a little less favorable; one was surprised that the Fellows liked the separation they did. ADA 25 Chicago staff put a lot of work into the logistics of the retreat, and it all ran very well. However, because the training has only been conducted once, there is not comparative data on how Fellows would rate the logistics of having the retreat in a single space that combines lodging and training space. Very few stakeholders commented on the time of the year during which the training retreat was held. However, the few Fellows who did comment on this noted that the time of the year

Recommendations

should be adjusted so that it is not held in early December. They noted that they had long holiday breaks immediately following the retreat and had limited opportunities to apply what they have learned.

The stakeholders had varying ideas about whether the retreat should be extended to additional days or time. The trainers, and some of the Institute advisory committee members, felt that additional time was needed in order to get through all the content. On the other hand, the Fellows generally felt that the retreat was “too long” and much of the content could have been shorter (see recommendation 9 for a suggestion on cutting down introduction to the material).

The evaluation team is not recommending specific changes to the logistics, but rather that logistics of the retreat be continuously reconsidered to make sure that they make sense each year. Factors to consider include the availability of training/facilitation teams, in-kind donations of space and food, and comparative costs of having the training in various locations (including time spent arranging logistics like transportation). Another factor to consider is that having the training in a different location than the lodging or extending the length of the training could be a challenge to the stamina of some people with disabilities. A few Fellows noted concerns with stamina (and one mentioned considering not applying because of those concerns), so careful consideration should be given to the impact of potential changes on who would apply for the Institute.

“The Institute is helping to create the next generation of civic, community and corporate leaders with disabilities. This leadership Institute will give people the skills, tools, and connections to be our community’s leaders.”

(ADA 25 Chicago staff, Interview).