

ITAC Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Roster for 2019-2021



Alyx Medlock	Training Director, New Mexico LEND	Speech-Language Pathology
	<p>Alyx Medlock, MS, CCC-SLP is a speech-language pathologist who has worked with interdisciplinary, family-centered teams throughout her career. She is a life-long New Mexican with deep family and cultural ties to the state. She was the Director of the Early Childhood Evaluation Program (ECEP) and continues to work clinically, providing interdisciplinary, developmental and diagnostic evaluations to children under three. Her previous experience, in running a private practice, fostered varied professional and personal experiences throughout the state and across the lifespan. She has experience working with families of children with prenatal drug and alcohol exposure, individuals with ASD, children and adults with feeding and swallowing difficulties, and many other populations.</p>	
Christina Sakai	Associate Director, Tufts DBP	Medicine – DBP
	<p>Christina Sakai, MD is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Tufts University School of Medicine. She is a board-certified Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrician. Dr. Sakai completed her Developmental-Behavioral Pediatric fellowship training at the Center for Children with Special Needs at Tufts Medical Center and her LEND Advanced Leadership Fellowship Program through the Eunice Kennedy Shriver UMass Medical School. Dr. Sakai leads an interprofessional team and has an active practice evaluating and treating children with a broad range of neurodevelopmental issues. She is the associate fellowship program director for developmental behavioral pediatric training and associate project director of the MCHB DBP training grant. Dr. Sakai’s research focuses on the social-cultural context within which complex medical illness and neurodevelopmental issues are understood and managed.</p>	

Jairo Arana	Clinical Programs Coordinator, Mailman Center (FL) LEND	Self-Advocacy
	<p>Jairo Arana, BA began his journey as an advocate when, after being diagnosed later in life with ASD, he joined the SALT (Self-Advocate Leadership Training) Program. After graduating the SALT Program, he became a trainer for SALT and a consultant for the University of Miami Mailman Center for Child Development. He was also the UM Mailman Center for Child Development’s first LEND (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities) Self-advocate trainee. He has worked with UM Mailman Center as a consultant, written for the UM Mailman Center’s Newsletter, has traveled to Washington DC for the AUCD Conference and AUCD Disability Policy Seminar, where he has met with policymakers to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities. He is currently going through UM Mailman Center’s ETLP (Emerging Transformational Leadership Program, under LEND). He graduated from the University of Miami with bachelor’s degrees in Motion Pictures and Creative Writing. He now works full-time as UM Mailman Center’s Clinical Programs Coordinator.</p>	

Jenean Castillo	Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator, Westchester (NY) LEND	Psychology
	<p>Jenean A. Castillo, PhD, is a New York State Licensed Psychologist, the Assistant Director of Child Welfare Services, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator at WIHD, a 2015 Diversity and Inclusion Fellow for the Association of University Centers on Excellence in Disabilities (AUCD), a LEND faculty member and a former LEND trainee at WIHD. She is also an Assistant Professor of Practice in Disability and Human Development in the School of Health Sciences and Practice at New York Medical College. Dr. Castillo co-developed and manages the Every Family Counts Aftercare Program, which provides intensive in-home and community-based services to all families in Westchester County who are reuniting after regular foster care placement to maintain safety and permanency. She conducts and oversees programs for children and families in foster care including evaluations as well as direct clinical and therapeutic services. In addition, Dr. Castillo supervises and trains graduate and post-graduate students, including LEND trainees. In her capacity as Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator, Dr. Castillo is responsible for WIHD's LEND linguistic and cultural competency curriculum development and implementation. Dr. Castillo's current research activities include evaluation of the Aftercare Program and examining the psychological profiles of children in foster care. She is also an evaluator for a federally funded program, Project LAUNCH, which seeks to promote healthy development of young children birth to age eight.</p>	

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Kruti Acharya	Director, Illinois LEND	Medicine – DBP
	<p>Kruti Acharya, MD is a board certified developmental and behavioral pediatrician and internist in the Department of Disability and Human Development. She is the director of the Illinois Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and other related Disabilities (LEND) Program, an interdisciplinary graduate-level training program to develop leaders to care and advocate for individuals with disability, funded through the Maternal Child Health Bureau. Dr. Acharya cares for individuals with developmental disabilities using a lifespan perspective from childhood to adulthood. She is particularly interested in supporting adolescents and young adults with developmental disabilities as they transition to adult-systems of care and beyond.</p>	

Mike Bray	Dissemination and IT Director, Michigan LEND	Developmental Psychology / Education
	<p>Mike Bray, MA, EdS is a researcher, data analyst, and instructional specialist that has worked in higher education for his entire career. His primary area of interest lies in enhancing access to, and success in, higher education for students with disabilities and diverse adult learners. He regularly utilizes the concepts and tools of Universal Design for Learning and Instruction as a means for creating accessible, effective learning environments. As a data analyst, he routinely implements data-driven methods of instructional design to guide practice. He believes that all individuals are capable of succeeding in higher education. With the appropriate supports and tools, students with and without disabilities can share the classroom and create inclusive learning environments.</p>	

<p>Cristina Leon Pujol</p>	<p>Training Director, Mailman Center (FL) LEND</p>	<p>Speech-Language Pathology</p>
	<p>Cristina Leon Pujol, MS, CCC-SLP is a bilingual English and Spanish speech-language pathologist and the Director of Training for LEND at the Mailman Center for Child Development. Her background includes a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and earned her master’s degree in Communication Sciences Disorders. She has experience in screening, assessing, diagnosing and treating speech and language disorders, as well as swallowing disorders in children and adults. In 2015, she joined the University of Miami Mailman Center for Child Development as a speech-language pathologist serving in various clinics, including Interdisciplinary Developmental Evaluation Services (IDES) Team, Cleft-Lip and Palate Clinic, and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) clinic. She is also responsible for training initiatives for the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) Program at the Mailman Center for Child Development focusing on interdisciplinary education.</p>	
<p>Jerry Alliston</p>	<p>MS Site Director, Arkansas-Mississippi LEND</p>	<p>Social Work / Higher Education Administration</p>
	<p>Jerry Alliston, PhD, MSW currently serves as the Associate Director at the Institute for Disability Studies (IDS) at the University of Southern Mississippi. Dr. Alliston has over 25 years of experience in the social sciences and disability fields focusing on medical social work, military disability case management, disaster case management, early intervention, and transition services. Dr. Alliston received his doctoral degree in Higher Education Administration from The University of Southern Mississippi as well as a master’s degree in Social Work. Dr. Alliston oversees the IDS Transition to Adulthood Programs and is the primary faculty representative for LEND Southern Miss. Dr. Alliston researches, develops, obtains funding and implements best practice programs and has recently concentrated on the development of transition to adulthood programs and services including inclusive national service, employment, advocacy, leadership and post-secondary education for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He considers himself “blessed” to work with the leaders of tomorrow.</p>	

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Jeiri Flores	Discipline Coordinator, Rochester (NY) LEND	Self-Advocacy / Sociology / African-American Studies
	<p>Jeiri Flores is a strong, passionate Puerto Rican disability rights activist from Rochester, NY. She earned her bachelor’s degree in the study of Sociology and African-American Studies at SUNY Brockport in 2014. She serves as a resource for residents in her community by connecting them to existing services and supports. As a disability advocate, Jeiri shares her unique perspective at various colleges and conferences where she introduces attendees to the struggles and invisibility people with disabilities face. She provides insight regarding inclusion, citizenship, disability intersectionality and challenges that remain unaddressed by society. She hopes to influence young disabled people to fulfill their purpose and create a new narrative for what it means to be disabled.</p>	
McCafferty Kermon	Discipline Coordinator, North Carolina LEND	Self-Advocacy
	<p>McCafferty S. Kermon BFA, is a LEND Faculty member at the CIDD (Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities), part of the University of North Carolina School of Medicine, where she also consults with TEACCH Transition Services and supports curriculum development for the HEELS Summer Intensive. She speaks nationally on neurodiversity, education coaching and leadership. McCafferty is an accomplished artist, a decorative painter and is on the autism spectrum.</p>	

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Maria Blanco	Associate Director, Louisiana LEND	Education
	<p>Maria Blanco is the Director of Early Childhood Initiatives at Human Development Center, part of LSU Health’s School of Allied Health Professions. She has worked in the field of early childhood and special education for over 20 years. Maria serves on the Louisiana Early Care and Education Advisory Council and the New Orleans Early Education Network Advisory Committee. Her work focuses improved quality and access to early childhood education for all children, especially those at risk, and strengthening the family.</p>	

Jenny Miller	Training Director, Alaska LEND	Public Health, Nursing
	<p>Jenny Miller, DrPH is an Associate Professor of Public Health in the Division of Population Health Sciences at the University of Alaska Anchorage. She serves in the role of Training Director for the Alaska LEND and as a faculty member in the MPH Program. Dr. Miller completed her DrPH at Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in New Orleans. Prior to her doctoral studies, she was a Program Director for the Maternal and Child Health, Genetics Program at the Ohio Department of Health. In this role, she was responsible for program planning, administration and policy development for the statewide newborn screening program and a network of university-based genetic centers that offer services to families throughout the state. She completed an MPH in public health nursing and an MS in Maternal and Child Health from the University of Minnesota. Her research interests include maternal and child health, women’s health, the impact of new technologies on families' lives and access to preventive health services for individuals with disabilities.</p>	

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Kim Brossart	Family Faculty, Arizona LEND	Family, Public Health
	<p>Kim brings the unique perspective to her work of having both family experiences with disability as well as an academic background. Her experiences as a mother of a child on the autism spectrum and a member of the faculty of a program in pediatric neurodevelopmental disability afford her a perspective that is both personal and professional. Kim holds a master’s degree in public health and is currently on the faculty of the Arizona LEND program (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disability as well as the founder and CEO of WholeStory Foundation, Inc. Her work focuses on helping families to develop advocacy skills and build family-professional partnerships to improve health outcomes.</p>	