

## Background

The longest relationships that people with disabilities have in their lives is often with their siblings. Siblings are uniquely positioned to provide support, especially as parents age, to enhance self-determination, and to engage in advocacy for and with their brothers and sisters with disabilities. Yet, siblings are rarely provided with information and support to prepare them for these roles. Sibling chapters of the SLN provide opportunities for siblings to receive peer support, learn insights from each other, share relevant information about their roles, and understand how to navigate the system of services and supports for their families.



[www.siblingleadership.org](http://www.siblingleadership.org)

The Sibling Leadership Network (SLN) is a national nonprofit with state sibling chapters dedicated to provide siblings of individuals with disabilities the information, support, and tools to advocate with their brothers and sisters and to promote the issues important to them and their entire families.



## Leadership Training for Adult Siblings

The Sibling Ambassadors Program is a leadership training program developed for adult siblings of people with disabilities to build the sibling network in states and become SibAmbassadors in their region. This is a program model piloted in Pennsylvania and that can be implemented in other states to increase sibling engagement, advocacy and leadership. This model helps expand the reach of the state sibling chapter by engaging and training adult siblings across the state.

### Objectives

The objectives of the leadership training for adult siblings:

- ❖ To learn about the sibling movement and how to engage and support siblings
- ❖ To connect siblings with their state sibling chapter and build the chapter across the state
- ❖ To develop and implement action plans in regional teams to increase awareness about the sibling experience and share resources to support siblings

| Demographics     | % (n=21)   |
|------------------|------------|
| Gender           |            |
| Female           | 71.4% (15) |
| Race             |            |
| White            | 85.7% (18) |
| African American | 4.8% (1)   |
| Asian American   | 4.8% (1)   |
| Latino           | 4.8% (1)   |
| Education        |            |
| Attended college | 33.3% (7)  |
| College graduate | 28.6% (6)  |
| Graduate school  | 14.3% (3)  |
| Graduate grad    | 23.8% (5)  |
| Marital Status   |            |
| Not married      | 57.1% (12) |

| DAY 1      | Training Outline  |
|------------|---|
| 12 – 5 pm  | Welcome and Introductions   |
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing Context: National Sibling Movement &amp; State Sibling Chapter</li> </ul>  |
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying Sibling Needs Across the Lifespan</li> <li>• Developing Leadership Skills</li> <li>• Enhancing Outreach to Siblings</li> </ul>   |
| 6 – 8 pm   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating an Action Plan to Support Siblings</li> </ul>   |
| DAY 2      |   |
| 8am - 12pm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting with Statewide initiative on Supporting Families</li> <li>• Building skills/Becoming a change agent and resource navigator</li> <li>• Using your knowledge, skills, and connections as you head home</li> <li>• Evaluation</li> </ul> |

## Results

A pre-post survey was conducted with the 21 adult sibling participants who attended the Sibling Ambassadors Leadership Training. Results found significant increases in the following areas:

- ❖ **Empowerment** (ie. the confidence of siblings in both navigating and improving services and supports that impact their families) and
- ❖ **Disability connectedness** (ie. how connected siblings feel to the disability community and knowledge of the field).

### Acknowledgements

This project is supported by a grant from the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council. The project is led by the Sibling Leadership Network in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Sibling Support Network (PSSN), the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.