STATE of TRAINING
2015
Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
RELIAS LEARNING
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In 2014, we were privileged to have organizations throughout the country use Relias Learning to deliver training to their staff. Across the broader health care spectrum, more than 2 million people in the United States trained on the Relias Learning platform, completing more than 20 million courses.

A key aspect of our work is a broad, ongoing engagement with executives, training managers, licensed and non-licensed staff, and HR directors throughout the industries we serve.

Conversations in this field often center on the challenge of responding to rapidly changing industry dynamics. Organizations everywhere are striving to keep up with the pace of change, and performance improvement is an imperative.

In light of this, Relias is continually looking to understand the impact of training and workforce development on organizational performance—better outcomes, lower costs, increased compliance, reduced turnover and more.

**The purpose of this report**

Relias Learning’s *2015 State of Training* report was based on a national survey designed to get a perspective on five broad staff development and training issues:

1. The perceived business alignment, value and impact of today’s staff development and training programs
2. Principal training drivers and emerging influences
3. Perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses of existing training programs
4. Current common practices in training management and delivery
5. Budgeting and the economics of staff development and training

To get as broad a set of responses as possible, we reached out not only to our customer base, but also to organizations throughout the industry. In this, we are indebted to many partner organizations that promoted this survey to their members.
Who is this report for?

This report is for two groups of people: The executives responsible for driving organizational performance and the individuals responsible for overseeing and delivering staff development and training programs.

Our hope is that this report provides an opportunity for organizations to 1) benchmark their current practices, investments, and beliefs against a national sample, and 2) spur discussion on how to improve staff training and workforce development—both to fulfill your organization’s mission, and to do so in a sustainable way.
Respondent Demographics

This version of the Relias Learning 2015 State of Training Report focuses principally on staff at organizations that serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The demographics of this survey response group are summarized below.

Position Within Organization

880 professionals participated in this survey, with 29% of respondents holding executive/senior management positions within their organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Within Organization</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training Director / Administrator / Manager</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Program / Department Director / Administrator / Manager</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Director / Administrator / Manager</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Management</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Staff Member</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Member or Chief Executive</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organization’s Headquarters

Strong geographic representation—survey participants from 49 states, Washington, D.C., & Virgin Islands
State of Training 2015 • Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities • Respondent Demographics

Company Size by Employee Count

- 13% fewer than 50 employees
- 27% 51-250 employees
- 23% 251-500 employees
- 16% 501-1000 employees
- 9% 1001-2000 employees
- 12% 2000+ employees

Types of Organizations

- 16% For profit
- 70% Not-for-profit
- 14% Government, public sector

Accreditation

- 3.0% Yes
- 34.5% No
- 62.5% Accreditation pending

Services Provided

- 16% Mental Health Services
- 17% Autism Services
- 23% Intellectual & Developmental Disability Services
- 11% Social Services
- 9% Substance Use / Addiction Services
- 6% Community Health
- 15% Children, Youth & Family Svcs
- 4% Other
Key Takeaways

If we think of this survey as a kind of self-assessment of staff development and training processes and organizational impact, a high level statement of findings might be best summarized in this way: “Our staff development and training program is an important component of what we do. It contributes value and has a number of strengths, but at the same time there are a variety of significant weaknesses and gaps between the actual and the ideal. There are some significant challenges that have not been fully mastered.” The report provides a detailed summary of findings for all questions. In this section we summarize some of the most significant findings and possible implications.

1. Training Programs Face Both Strategic and Practical Challenges. Respondents reported a wide range of weaknesses with their current staff development and training programs, but the two most prominent themes were: 1) a lack of time and competition with regular staff duties; and 2) limited resources and budget. The picture that emerges is that there are gaps between training program design and intent, and actual execution in the face of many competing demands and finite resources that can be devoted to the staff development and training function.

2. Staff Development and Training Substantially Supports Key Business Priorities and Results. Some notable weaknesses notwithstanding, the staff development and training that is offered significantly supports top business priorities. Those priorities are most often framed in mission-type terms, such as providing specific, high-quality services. There is also a perception that the program has a very positive impact on a wide variety of key measures, such as compliance with external requirements and program outcomes. One way of summarizing these beliefs might be “we are able to do a lot with what we have.”
3. While Generally Impactful, Staff Training Programs are Still Not Viewed as Impacting “Financial” Results and Retention. The two areas with the lowest rate of reported substantial impact by staff training programs were impact on financial results and impact on staff retention. As competition increases—both for revenue and workforce—this is an area where training may need to show more impact.

4. External Compliance Drives the Training Agenda—But There is a Need for More Strategic Alignment. Respondents tell us that external factors are the principal driver of the training offered to staff today. However, many respondents report that in their view, this is not ideal. Respondents estimate that 44% of training today is driven by external requirements and only 29% is internally driven by strategic aims. They believe that this weighting is out of balance and those external drivers and internal tactical and strategic drivers should be more evenly weighted. One way to interpret such findings is that there is a general belief that externally-driven, “must-do training” consumes some of the resources that should be used to support other “should-do/want-to-do” training.

5. Blended Training and the Use of Technology is Not Yet Fully Mainstream. There is published research suggesting that blended learning (a combination of online and classroom training) can be thought of as an emerging best practice.1,2 25% of respondents report that it is not used at all or only to a limited degree, 46% report some use of blended training, and only 29% reported significant or extensive use. Some comments suggest that, in part, more extensive adoption may be held back by computer literacy issues and/or technology resource limitations.

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6. Costs of Training Not Well Known. We asked respondents to estimate their annual cost per employee for staff development and training and also approximately what percent of their total operating budget is devoted to this (cost and percent band choices were offered for these questions). It is noteworthy that 16% of executive respondents could not offer even an estimate regarding the annual cost per employee and 27% of them could not estimate what percent of budget staff development and training represents. Given the tight budgets most organizations are under, and given the increasing critical need to optimize staff training and workforce development, knowing and tracking these numbers may be an important first step.
Findings

Business Alignment, Value and Impact

The #1 Business Priority

Participants were asked to specify their organization’s current #1 business priority using free text responses that were subsequently coded into discrete categories. 64% of the responses were coded either as providing a specific service, or providing a specific service with a quality emphasis as their business’ #1 priority. The third most commonly mentioned priority (20% of mentions) was coded as budget, revenue, sustainability and competitiveness.

Organization’s #1 Business Priority

Providing Specific Services
Providing Specific Services—Quality Emphasis
Budget, Revenue, Sustainability, Competitiveness
Staffing or Staff Training & Development
Staff, Client or Community Safety
Accreditation/External Compliance
Other
Customer Service/Satisfaction

EXAMPLES OF VERBATIM RESPONSES FROM EXECUTIVES:

Assisting developmentally disabled in living the life of their choice.
Community services for people with developmental disabilities.
Delivering personalized services.
Financial stability.

Preparing people with disabilities for employment; assisting students to transition effectively after high school.
Provide quality services to individuals with disabilities.
Provide services to people with disabilities and special needs.

Providing special education students with highly individualized academic and related services, designed to prepare the student for independence.
To provide excellent service.
Working toward making all departments having a positive cash flow.
Staff Development and Training Support for #1 Business Priority

Although staff development and training was not often mentioned as their top business priority (just 10% of the mentions), 61% of executive respondents indicated that their staff development and training program does significantly or substantially support their #1 business priority (a rating of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale).

Training support for your organization’s #1 business priority

SAMPLE RESPONDENT COMMENTS:

This is a new strategic priority and focus for us and our training is not yet driving it.
We have not been focused on new programs so our staff are not well-equipped in this area.
Work in progress.
We need to improve and develop a strong onboarding process and mentoring program.

The training in some departments supports the mission better than in others.
The state trainings on Relias Learning help to keep these priorities in effect and in line with our goals.
Ongoing accessible, affordable training is critical.
We have to ensure this because we are the ones who mediate for our consumers.

Need to devote more resources for professional development.
We do basic but could do a better job with supervisory and/or specific to certain disabilities.
I chose five because staff development is central to positive outcome measures and I think improvement should always be sought.
Training Program Impact Results in Key Areas

Executive respondents ranked the extent to which their current staff development and training program positively or negatively impacts results in 11 distinct areas. Responses indicated a positive impact in all 11 areas, with the two highest impact areas reported as being service or program outcomes (72% reporting substantial positive impact) and compliance with external requirements (75% reporting substantial positive impact). The two lowest areas of substantial impact reported (but still positive) were the organization’s financial results (40% substantial positive impact) and staff recruitment (41% for substantial positive impact).

Percent of Respondents who Reported that Training Impacts the Following Areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Substantial positive impact</th>
<th>No impact</th>
<th>Substantial negative impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Recruitment</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff Retention</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Staff Clinical Competencies</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service or Program Outcomes</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Practice Standardization</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Organization’s Financial Results</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; Leadership Competencies</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance with External Requirements</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Risk Management Protection</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Brand Reputation in the Community</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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The InterAgency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies (IAC) is a member organization for 150 non-profit agencies providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities located in New York City, Long Island, Westchester and Rockland.

Expert View

Suzanne Timmerhans,
Associate Executive Director for Management Services,
InterAgency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies, Inc.

The InterAgency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies (IAC) is a member organization for 150 non-profit agencies providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities located in New York City, Long Island, Westchester and Rockland.

2. IAC members serve many individuals in the New York metropolitan area who speak Spanish. Although all staff must speak English, there was a concern that the reading comprehension of some of the bilingual staff might be better in their native tongue. To meet this demand IAC used a feature in Articulate to export, translate into Spanish and then import back the IAC created courses. These Spanish versions are then shared with the IAC members who can access them through their Relias site.

3. An important component of IAC’s services is IATS (InterAgency Transportation Solutions) whereby IAC manages the transportation of individuals to day programs operated by IAC members. By contract, the bus companies are required to ensure their drivers and matrons meet specific training requirements. Prior to Relias these trainings were provided in person. This meant IAC had to conduct them repeatedly to meet the needs of new hires throughout the year. Using Articulate, IAC created a series of interactive training courses that engaged and instructed the bus staff. As a result IAC saw training compliance soar to 99%. IAC is able to use the Relias reports to quickly identify compliance failure—which due to the ease of access to the courses is usually corrected immediately.

Given the overwhelming response of our members to the introduction of the Relias platform and the I/DD Library, IAC looked at unique training needs that were not part of the library for the next step in the development of its learning management system.

The use of Articulate in conjunction with the Relias platform has enabled IAC to meet the following unique training demands:

1. Although the New York State Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) offers a number of trainings on its website, access is difficult and course presentation dated. To remedy this problem, IAC has undertaken reproducing the OPWDD trainings, updating presentation without altering content and uploading them into the Relias platform. Now IAC members have quick access to trainings that are 100% consistent with OPWDD directives as well as the ability to track staff’s completion of assigned courses.
Importance of Staff Development and Training Compared to All Other Priorities

Asked to indicate how staff development compared in importance to all other priorities, 54% of all respondents rated it a 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale of importance.

QUESTION: Considering all of your organization’s top business priorities, where does staff development and training rank in importance?

SAMPLE RESPONDENT COMMENTS:

54%
Very important

Meeting licensing requirement is not the only motivation for staff development. We value the professional and personal growth of our staff.
We have a new CEO who is completely behind all staff receiving the training needed and making it a requirement that must be done.

38%
Somewhat important

Everything else is secondary if we don’t meet basic needs of the individuals we serve.
Informed staff is what makes the programs work and work effectively.
Not enough time to be as thorough as necessary.
This is where it is at now, but it needs to become more important.

8%
Not that important

It should rank much higher but as a non-profit and tight financial constraints, training and staff development is pushed to the back burner.
Training as a Competitive Advantage

38% of respondents reported that their training programs granted their organizations a substantial competitive advantage (ranking it a 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale). Only 18% reported that the program offered them little or no competitive advantage.

RESPONDENT COMMENTS:

38% Substantial advantage

We are not completely there yet but I know that a well-qualified staff places an organization front and center in the marketplace. Our organization provides its employees with so many tools and learning opportunities, the skills learned in these trainings give us a competitive edge. There’s always room for improvement.

44% Some advantage

This is more impactful in our ABA program than any other service we provide. Advantage in comparison to community-based agencies but parallel with comparable facilities.

18% No advantage

Meet compliance requirements and clinical competence but this is not marketed. We offer lots of training but getting staff to attend is problematic as many have more than one full-time job. Our vision is not competition, while all other organizations are competitive.
How important is it that the Staff Development and Training Program supports the licensing/certification needs of the staff?

The response to this question represented one of the strongest areas of consensus for all the survey questions. 73% reported that it is very important that their program supports these needs of staff (6 or 7 on a 7-point scale).

**Respondent Comments:**

- CEUs for re-licensure required.
- Much of the budget we provide allows staff to maintain certification needs.
- Certification and licensing are very important.
- It is important because I work in a female group home and it is important that staff can become medication-certified and get the certifications necessary to work.
- Required by our state contracts.
Budgeting and Economics

Cost of Training per Employee

We asked executives to estimate the annual cost of training per employee. A series of cost ranges were offered as possible response choices for this question. 16% of respondents indicated that they did not know. For those who did offer an estimate, the range of responses was relatively evenly divided amongst the choices. By a very slight margin, the modal response (25% of executive respondents) indicated that $501-$1,000 was spent per employee per year on staff development and training.

Annual Cost of Training per Employee
**Training cost as a Percent of Total Budget**

As a variant of the previous question, we also asked what percent of the total annual budget is devoted to staff development and training. Again, ranges were offered as possible response choices for this question and once again, a significant number of respondents (27%) said they did not know. For those who did offer an answer, the modal response (36%) said that it was between 3% and 5% of their total budget. 31% believe that it is 2% or less.

**Annual Percentage of Overall Annual Operating Budget Allocated to Staff Training and Development**

![Graph showing the percentage of annual budget allocated to staff training and development.](image)

Taken together, the results from these two questions suggest that there is less than absolute certainty among executives about their annual training costs. It may be that this figure is not carefully tracked. Just as likely, if not more so, is the possibility is that there are not standard practices regarding what is and what is not counted as a training-related cost. It may be that factors such as use of overtime, travel-related training expenditures, or cost of materials and the like are handled differently from one organization to the next.

**SAMPLE RESPONDENT COMMENTS:**

- *Staff in some programs get more training than other programs, dependent on programs’ fiscal picture and time said staff have available for training.*
- *We utilize internal sources to keep down the cost. Overall training. Closer to the 6-10% for clinical staff.*
- *This is a tricky question. It really depends on what amount of time and resources we include in the definition of training.*
**What Percent of Budget Should it Be?**

A comparison of the “is” versus “should be” budget responses is revealing. Whereas 67% believe that staff development and training is less than 5% of the total budget, only 39% believe that it should be 5% or less—the remainder (61%) believes that this should represent a higher percent of the total budget. One respondent commented, “One can dream!”
External Training Drivers and Emerging Influences

Macro-Environment Influences

We asked respondents how much changes in the macro environment (e.g. legislation, state or federal regulations, public financing changes in accreditation standards, or other) were likely to impact their staff development and training program. Opinions on this question vary considerably: 24% believe that changes in the macro environment are likely to have a negative impact on their staff development and training program; an additional 43% believe that these changes are likely to have either no impact or a slightly positive impact; 32% believe that these changes are likely to have a significant to substantially positive impact. A look at some of the comments associated with this question provides more insight into this thinking.

QUESTION: To what extent do you believe that changes in the macro environment are likely to directly impact your staff development and training programs during the next few years?

RESPONDENT COMMENTS:

Fee-for-service rates do not account for training and staff development costs.
Staff are already feeling regulatory pressure to keep up on new paperwork requirements, deadlines, etc.
Mandated requirements take away funding for staff to focus on specific skills needed.

Departments are trying to streamline budgets, so trainings will probably be limited in order to keep under the administrative budget.
Any budget cuts impact the agency as a whole and can cause cutbacks in the training budget.

State developing state-funded online trainings for core requirements.
If they require more documentation, plans, procedures, monitoring etc... then we will need more training on what exactly they are looking for.
What is the #1 External Factor That Will Have an Impact?

We followed up the previous question by asking what the #1 external factor was likely to be. On this question there was substantial consensus, with 72% of the responses falling into two broad categories:

- 36% believe that **government regulations or contract requirements** will be the highest impact driver
- 36% cited **money or other resource reductions** as the most significant factor.

### External Factors Impacting Staff Development Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Factor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government regulations, rules or other contract requirements</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money &amp; other resource reductions, limits, gaps</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in client or program mix, or program size</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology factors</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managed care, the Affordable Care Act, insurance factors</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce factors</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation or other survey, audit, or licensing factors</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging EBP, expanded knowledge base, focus on outcomes</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public perception, political factors; media, investigations</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### QUESTION: What is the #1 external factor that will have an impact on your staff development and training program?

### RESPONDENT COMMENTS:

- **What the state will require in education.**
- **State statutes and state administrative rules.**
- **Waiver reimbursement rates.**
- **Unfunded mandates.**
- **The state’s budget ... how much they pay our organization.**
- **Training requirements for hiring and from the government, our contracts, and accreditations.**
- **The development of service outcomes, integration, and rule changes.**
- **Mandates from federal or state regulators.**
- **Rewriting the Medicaid regulations and how state money is allocated.**
- **New regulations for home and community-based settings from CMS—specifically integrated day services.**
External Versus Internal Drivers

We asked survey participants how training drivers are weighted today, and how they should ideally be proportioned. The results show a gap between what is driving training today and what is perceived as ideal. Executive respondents told us that today, 43% of training drivers are external and only 29% are driven by strategic aims. However, respondents indicated that ideally, they would like to see strategic drivers take on more weighting compared to external drivers.

Weighting of Training Drivers: Today vs. Ideal

QUESTION: What comments do you have about how training drivers are weighted today?

RESPONDENT COMMENTS:

Obviously we must comply with licensing, but the goal to have the best possible outcomes should be the driving factor. Employee engagement as influenced by content training is enhanced by the tactical aims, and then the 5% remaining could be focused on new trends/technologies and planning for the future. While mandatory trainings are necessary, trainings targeting skill development are critical for the population of people that we serve.

We simply have not been tactical or strategic in our trainings and therefore have not gained the ground we needed with individual staff or for our longer-term goals. There is no ideal for us. We are governed by contracts and this creates both external and internal requirements for us.

I believe that even the certification requirements should reflect the strategic aims of the desired outcome for the client.

We cannot ignore the externally driven training needs, however we need to address efficiently and move beyond. I believe increased focus on strategic aims could help with staff retention because it can increase job experience and satisfaction.
Training drivers can be thought of as falling on a continuum:

Support External Requirements
Example: Regulatory Requirements
State licensing authority requires that “All staff will have annual fire safety training”

Support Internal Tactical Aims
Example: Onboarding New Staff
“All new staff will be oriented to the agency benefits package”

Support Internal Strategic Aims
Example: Better Program Outcomes
The EBP Prolonged Exposure (PE) Therapy is applied expertly for the treatment of traumatic exposure

Results show there is a gap between perceived versus ideal training drivers.
Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses

Most Commonly Cited Strengths of Training Programs

Respondents were asked to list the top two strengths of their staff development and training program. These free-form text responses were coded into 16 strengths categories. Responses were relatively evenly divided amongst the categories. The three strengths categories that received the most mentions as the top strength of their program were job relevance (16% of the mentions), followed by staff development and training personnel (12% of the mentions) and availability, accessibility, convenience (12% of the mentions). These three categories accounted for 40% of all strengths mentioned with the remaining mentions divided among the 12 other strengths categories.

Main Strengths of Current Staff Development/Training Program
QUESTION: What are the main strengths of your current staff development and training program?

RESPONDENT COMMENTS:

98% of all staff members are meeting or exceeding their training hours.
A great deal of the training takes place online—very user-friendly.
A lot of expertise available on staff.
A training team that focuses on training only. This is their only job to train and develop team members.
Ability to get it done on their individual schedule.
Ability to make online assignments and maintain online documentation of completion.
Access/Availability.
Agency financially supports vs. staff paying out of pocket.
All departments involved in discussing, designing, and delivering organization-wide trainings.
Asynchronous - People can take trainings whenever they want.
Blending both online and in person training.
Blending Technical training with personal development.
Combined Training: Classroom & Online Training for annual refreshers.
Compliance with all regulations.
Core Curriculum covers all aspects of development and doesn’t focus only on certain areas.
Deep and strong knowledge base of our trainers.
Ease of access to training.
Ensuring that our staff is comfortable with the job requirements.
Flexibility in the variety of ways specific training requirements can be met.
Focuses on the needs of the employees and the families we serve.
Hands on experience and shadowing until the trainee is ready to work completely independently.
Involvement with the NADSP Credentialing program.
New staff understand role expectations.
Online and accessible.
Preparing staff to be successful.
Quality of the training we provide to staff.
Relevant to what people do in jobs.
Staff Development is supported at the Executive Level.
Standardized / Consistent.
Tracking and running reports strengthens our department so we can make sure everyone is compliant.
We offer the training as added value and as a benefit.
Well developed to meet specific needs of employees.
Most Commonly Cited Weaknesses of Training Programs

Respondents were asked to list the top two weaknesses of their staff development and training program. These free-form text responses were coded into 17 weakness categories. While there were mentions in all weakness categories, three areas stood out with considerably more mentions than other categories. The category labeled time/competition with regular duties/loss of billable hours received the most mentions (16%), followed by the category limited resources, cost, limited budget and limited availability, staff participation, buy-in, compliance (both with 13% of the mentions).

Main Weaknesses of Current Staff Development/Training Program

1. Time; competes with regular duties, loss of billable hours (15.7%)
2. Limited resources, cost, limited budget (12.9%)
3. Limited availability, limited staff participation, buy-in, compliance; high staff turnover (12.7%)
4. Limited in breadth/depth, quality; repetitive, not engaging (9.4%)
5. Poor structure, organization, consistency, communication, accountability, documentation (8.7%)
6. Limited relevance to practical job needs; limited follow up, supports for application on the job (8.2%)
7. Technology online training negatives (5.7%)
8. No or minimal staff development and training function; stretched thin (4.6%)
9. Other (4.2%)
10. Focused mainly on external requirements; not enough development, CEU, license support (3.9%)
11. Lack of leadership, management, supervisory support; don’t seek input (3.1%)
12. Specific topic or CEU omission (2.8%)
13. Too much information; too many requirements (2.0%)
14. Inconvenient training location; poor space (1.9%)
15. Not kept up-to-date, hard to keep current (1.7%)
16. Knowledge, skills of training dept and/or supervisory staff are limited (1.5%)
17. Limited or no onboarding/orientation program (1.1%)
QUESTION: What are the main weaknesses or limitations of your current staff development and training program?

RESPONDENT COMMENTS:

Access to trainings outside of work hours.
Application upon return to programs of information and skills developed in training.
Attendance.
Benefit vs. cost (i.e. time away from revenue-generating services).
Boring.
Budget limitations.
Challenging to schedule staff to be there.
Compliance is a problem.
Consistency across many locations.
Consistency given our 24-hour program.
Curriculum is seldom updated and trainer is not an educator/trainer.
Difficult to free up staff from client coverage obligations to conduct meaningful training.
DSP workforce has multiple jobs, making additional training time difficult.
Expense.
Finances—right now my staff would love to add to their knowledge base but we can’t afford.
Focus on external requirements leaves little resources for higher-level staff development.

Follow-through.
Funding resources do not support staff training.
Hard to train new hires when we only offer trainings monthly.
Having all staff complete training by due date.
High employee turnover.
Inconsistency of instructors.
Inexperienced trainers.
It’s lack of standardization.
Lack of comprehensive follow up to better measure impact and outcomes.
Lack of financial wiggle room or funding to offset the time away from generating revenue/encounters so that staff can participate in trainings and development programs.
Lack of resources to get people trained beyond the new hire process.
Lack of time to participate in In-Service or external training opportunities.
Never sufficient time to get all training accomplished.
No formal mentoring program.
Not competency-based, no standard for “completion” of training other than attendance.

Not enough time in the day.
Onboarding stops after a couple of weeks.
People still tend to see training as tedious and not make it a priority.
Reaching a remote workforce - working in offsite locations.
Reactive rather than proactive at times ... seem to respond to external expectations more.
Scheduling is difficult for 24/7 schedules (shifts).
Sometimes difficult to spend money when people then leave our employment.
Staff balancing time for training/staff development with their service delivery/meeting client needs.
Supervisors having time to ensure things learned in training are applied to work setting.
Training is not consistently given, therefore staff operate under differing assumptions about procedures, etc.
Turnover results in expensive maintenance of compliance.
Would be most effective if there were a staff position devoted solely to training.
Training Management, Delivery & Common Practices

Methods to Evaluate Whether Training is Put Into Practice?

The results suggest that evaluating whether what is trained is subsequently put into practice is not highly developed at most organizations. 21% report few or no methods in place, 52% report some methods, but only 27% indicate that they have good or well-developed methods to accomplish this.

QUESTION: To what extent does your organization have any methods in place to evaluate whether what is taught in training is put into practice on the job?

RESPONDENT COMMENTS:

Well-developed methods

Methods are informal, but are present. We rely on feedback from supervisors, conversations in training, and have a section in our employee satisfaction survey related to training and development.

All clinical work is done on site; high supervision contact.

Weekly supervision, several observations a month per employee, and rating forms for meeting criteria on skills and other knowledge.

Some methods

We do utilize regular employee performance appraisals.

We are working on putting more methods in place with the QA program.

We are working on more methods.

Few or no methods

This should be done, but is not currently the practice.

This is a huge concern.
**Use of Skills or Competency Checklists?**

This question is somewhat related to the previous question insofar as some settings make use of skills checklists to document that skills training is in fact applied on the job. 51% of respondents indicate that skills or competency checklists are either not used or are only used for some job roles. 49% of respondents report that they are used for many or almost all job roles.

A total of 49% of respondents use skills and competency checklists to some extent.

**How is training tracked, and what is the level of satisfaction with your tracking methods?**

45% report use of old school methods such as paper (24%) or spreadsheets (22%) to track training. The most commonly reported method of tracking training was use of a learning management system (27%).

27% use a learning management system to track training.
State of Training 2015 • Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities • Findings

Looking at the results reported for satisfaction with their training tracking methods, 33% report that they are very satisfied (6 or 7 on a 7-point scale). Most (45%) are neutral to slightly positive, and the remainder (22%) report varying levels of dissatisfaction with current methods.

**Satisfaction with Tracking Training with Current Tracking Method**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Very satisfied (6-7)</th>
<th>Neutral (4-5)</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied (1-2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreadsheets</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMS</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the tracking method is cross-tabulated with the level of satisfaction, the results show that the group that reports the lowest level of satisfaction is the group that relies on paper methods (only 21% report satisfaction at the 6 or 7 levels on a 7-point scale). The groups that report the highest level of satisfaction with their tracking method are the groups that make use either of a database system or a learning management system for tracking purposes (43% and 43%, respectively, report satisfaction at the 6 or 7 levels on a 7-point scale).

**SAMPLE COMMENTS:**

We will now be graduating into a learning management software in the next phase of development.

We are in the process of getting all training set up in Relias for easier tracking and for compliance reasons.

Transitioning from spreadsheets to Relias.

Paper and spreadsheets are used more for program-specific training (i.e., medication administration training); system software is used to track the common, organization-wide training.

EMR software with HR component.

Are in process of looking at one system to track all.

Although in place, not very effective.

All trainings and certifications are first entered into Relias LMS and certifications are also entered into Abra database.
Blended Training: Still in the Early Stages of Adoption:

There is good research evidence supporting the efficacy of blended training and anecdotally we know that organizations are adopting a blended learning approach as part of their staff development and training program. The results of this survey suggest various levels of adoption at the present time. 33% of respondents report that it is not used at all or only to a limited degree; 43% report some use of blended learning, and only 24% reported significant or extensive use.

The Extent to Which Blended Training is a Part of Staff Development and Training Programs

Blended training:
A method of training in which online courses are paired with related face-to-face instruction.

QUESTION: To what extent is “blended training” a part of your staff development and training program?

RESPONDENT COMMENTS:

Our agency does face-to-face instruction. Not all staff know how to use a computer nor do they have access. We’ve never used online training. We are just implementing our LMS to support blended training.

Especially in the area of supervision/management. Often have staff complete an online learning course prior to attendance at a face-to-face instruction. Needed! Currently working to develop a more seamless integration of live & online training.

We are using it more frequently. The company has developed their own online/video training modules that new hires go through as part of their initial training.

Use of Written Annual Training Plans

Only 23% of respondents report no use of an annual training plan. Another 25% report use of annual training plans for parts of the organization but not for the organization as a whole. 44% of respondents reported that written annual training plans are developed for the organization as a whole.

Does Your Organization Create Written Annual Training Plans?

We should have it. Unfortunately, this was stopped by senior executive staff about 5 years ago. This is very much needed.

Great idea, I think we will look at this; currently the training plan is individual as to what each staff person needs or is interested in attending or training, plus what is offered in the community.

We do it for all DSPs, but not consistently for all other staff.

Not done as consistently as it should be.

We have most courses and their frequency listed in policy with some exclusions noted for specific departments.

Annual training plans are included in each individual performance appraisal.

We have a written annual training calendar based on regulations then Quarterly/Monthly plan individualized training.

We have a very informal written annual training “list” or “schedule.”

Annual training plan is developed with each staff as part of their annual performance evaluation. Strategic training at agency level is not in a formal written format but discussed between Directors.
Survey Methodology

The invitation to participate in the online survey was extended to more than 30,000 executives, managers, and training personnel in multiple markets. Links to the survey were also made available through several associations to their memberships, and through social media channels. As an incentive, respondents were entered into a drawing for a gift certificate for one of seven iPad minis.

The survey was open during the period from October 22, 2014 through November 8, 2014. Respondents who only answered the first question in this 31-question survey were eliminated. This report provides a synopsis of findings for 880 respondents in the Intellectual and Developmental sector. Data was received and processed by the Center for Outcome Analysis (COA), a non-profit research organization.

Some of the questions involved free text responses, and in these instances, responses were hand-coded into broad categories.

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About Relias Learning

Relias Learning provides online training solutions to more than 4000 healthcare organizations. We provide online training for direct support professionals and staff who support individuals with disabilities.

The Relias platform includes content needed for accreditations and staff development—as well as the ability for customers to create unique content and incorporate live training—all in a singular, feature-rich learning management system. For more information, please visit us at www.reliaslearning.com.