

Successes, Challenges of Diverse LEND Trainees | CPD

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A poster presented at the recent Association of University Centers on Disability (AUCD) conference examined the successes and challenges of recruiting and supporting racially and ethnically diverse Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) trainees. The poster was presented by Judith Holt, Lisamarie Turk and Natalie Allen from the Utah Regional and New Mexico LEND programs.

To strengthen the capacity of LEND programs, PacWest LEND representatives from Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Hawaii/Guam, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Nevada conducted focus groups to further understand how to better recruit and retain racially and ethnically diverse long-term trainees. Focus groups were aimed at identifying how trainees select a career path in maternal and child health care professions, how long they are supported in their respective LEND programs, and their recommendations for how LEND programs can better recruit and support racially and ethnically diverse trainees.

Frequently mentioned challenges included a lack of role models within participants' families and the ongoing need to attend to the caregiver and financial provider role within their family. Many trainees expressed the subtle challenge of the culture of independence (belief that trainees do not ask for help).

Essential components of recruitment and retention included financial incentive information in recruitment materials, strategic recruitment of all maternal and child-health relevant disciplines, recruitment materials crafted with racial/ethnic diversity as a priority and face-to-face recruitment.

Next steps include activities to maximize leadership potential of racial and ethnic minority LEND fellows and to increase the number of LEND applicants who are minorities are planned, including workshops, individual coaching sessions and growth plans.