OPPI Section Name: Stakeholder Input into Organizational Governance

Overarching Principle: *Organizations in the disability service sector are ultimately responsible to people with disabilities, their families, regulators, and funders. All governing and management practices are informed by people with disabilities and their families and should reflect principles of person-centeredness and self-determination.*

Why should organizations focus on this? When organizations include people who are most impacted by their work in governance, evaluation, and decision-making, they ensure that they are moving in a direction that meets the wants, needs, interests, and goals of people with disabilities.

Indicators in the Assessment *Our organization...*	What the research says
Encourages people with disabilities to provide both formal and informal input into our organization's decisions.	Factors that support governance effectiveness include Broad-based engagement of stakeholders in decision-making processes and a high degree of transparency and accountability in decision-making (2014 study by the World Federation of Public Health Associations).
Includes people with disabilities as members and participants in our organization's governing body. Their opportunity to have influence is equal to that of all other members.	Enfranchising people with disabilities and their families is an essential process to ensure that the mission and practices of an organization align with the needs of the people who are most impacted by their work (Kendrick, 2011).
Regularly evaluates our policies, actions, outcomes, and strategic priorities using a structure that seeks input from stakeholders, including people with disabilities.	The governance of many organizations includes both internal influences, such as executive leadership, boards of directors, and external influences, such as active input from service recipients and members of an organization's community. At their creation and over time, organizations enfranchise or empower both internal and external stakeholders to participate in the processes of decision-making (Klein et al., 2019).
Ensures/promotes that people receiving services, family members, community partners, and staff at all levels can easily have access to agency leadership.	Experts (Chauven et al., 2016) argue that procedures that promote effective long-term governance are key to organizational success. Governance best practices include elements that foster sustainability, including transparency and access to organizational leaders (Vallejo & Hauselmann, 2004).
Includes language specific to choice, control, community engagement, and self-determination in our organization's operating	When organizations align their values and priorities with organizational rules and norms, they are more likely to realize their purpose. Including values-

materials, including written mission and values statements, strategic/ business plans, written policies, etc.	based language in operating materials, policy manuals, and organizational documents enhances the likelihood that priorities will be enacted (Bailey et al., 2018; Kendrick, 2011).
Includes language specific to choice, control, community engagement, and self-determination in documents and practices related to employee roles and expectations such as job descriptions, training materials, staff development, supervision, and coaching.	Researchers have found that leaders can enhance organizational transparency and effectiveness by including the language of self-direction in written policy, training materials, and performance indicators for employees (Kendrick, 2011).
Values the collaborative role of family members, friends, and outside professionals.	Studies show that community and citizen-stakeholder engagement and participation in governance have become vital best practices (Lockwood et al., 2010; Stoker, 1998) for organizations in the disability services sector (Lantz & Marston, 2012).

Where to Start

1. Examine your organization's board, advisory committees, and groups that provide input to governance and decision-making. Do those groups include people with disabilities? Family members of people with disabilities? And others who are impacted by your agency? If so, do they have meaningful roles beyond a token seat?

2. Review your organization's foundational documents- policy manuals, written mission, vision, and values, strategic plans, employee handbooks, and more. Do they include language focused on self-determination, promoting the rights and dignity of people with disabilities, choice and control, and inclusion?

3. Review your organization's evaluation approaches. Who is providing input and feedback? Do people with disabilities, family members of people with disabilities, and people who are most impacted by your organization's work have the opportunity to meaningfully and regularly assess how the organization is meeting their expectations?