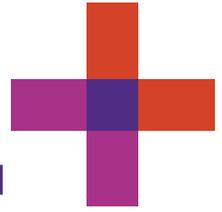


Disability Leadership Summit



Disabili+y Lead

Welcome

Thank you for joining us today! I am pleased to welcome you to our 3rd Annual Disability Leadership Summit.

The Disability Leadership Summit was spearheaded by a committed group of people, most of whom are professionals with disabilities, who are passionate about building inclusive workplaces.

Over the next two days, you will hear from leaders, all of whom are advancing disability inclusion in the workplace. You will learn how storytelling and community-building are powerful tools and can be leveraged in advancing you on your unique leadership journey. Each day will have a different focus:

- **February 24: PEOPLE: Empowering Disabled Leaders.** Learn about bringing your whole self into the workplace and sharing stories and experiences that foster better understanding and combat ableism.
- **February 25: CULTURE: Strengthening Inclusive Workplaces.** Learn how to integrate inclusion and accessibility into the workplace.

Alongside gaining tangible tools and practical application, you will have opportunities to build your network, further your leadership journey, and help brainstorm how to increase the visibility and influence of people with disabilities in workplaces nationwide.

We understand that attending a virtual conference means a great deal of time in front of a computer. We encourage you to take care of yourself in whatever ways you need so that you can remain present and engaged. We've worked hard to ensure this virtual event is as accessible as possible. Each session includes CART, ASL and additional accessibility considerations. If you have any issues accessing accommodations, please contact us within the Zoom platform. Lastly, please help us to maintain a safe and productive virtual experience by adhering to the Summit Code of Conduct (P 4).

We are excited to get to work!



Emily Blum
Chief Executive Officer

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Summit Commitments

Our commitment to you

Disability Lead makes the following commitments to you:

1 – Inclusion and Accessibility

Summit sessions have incorporated best practices in accessibility. We welcome any input or requests prior to or during the Summit to enhance your access to the content and experience you are looking for.

2 – Connection

We aim to create an environment where you can engage in meaningful peer networking. In addition to connections made during interactive sessions, please [use this directory](#) to maintain contact with other attendees and speakers. Everyone in the directory has consented to share their contact information.

3 – Continuous improvement

The goal of Disability Lead is to make the Disability Leadership Summit a unique and valuable annual event. We commit to evaluating how well the Summit achieves its goals of Connection, Innovation, and Collaboration. We commit to active solicitation of your feedback and welcome your suggestions for improvement at any time.

4 – Our request to you

To make the Summit a success, we invite you to commit to:

- Show up and be present to the best of your ability
- Adhere to the community guidelines of professionalism and generosity
- Share from your own experience, when contributing

We are so excited to co-create this event with you.

Summit Code of Conduct

Please do your part to ensure the Disability Leadership Summit remains a safe environment for all attendees by adhering to the following guidelines:

- **Prioritize Respect and Kindness:** Treat everyone with respect. Healthy debates are natural, but civility and kindness are required.
- **Value All Perspectives:** Assume that while everyone holds different backgrounds and identities, each of us has something to contribute and something to learn.
- **Center Accessibility:** Ensure all attendees have opportunities and access to actively engage, participate, and contribute.
- **Practice Confidentiality:** What is said here, stays here. Apply what you learn here while honoring the privacy of stories shared in this space.
- **Engage Collaboratively:** Work together to discuss issues and identify solutions. Encourage partnerships and opportunities for collective efforts and teamwork.
- **Communicate Mindfully:** Listen to understand, not to respond. Share your ideas, while ensuring space is made for others to share as well.
- **Extend Empathy and Grace:** Give fellow attendees the benefit of the doubt if their comments don't sit well with you. We are an intersectional community and not everyone will share your communication style, perspective, or approach.
- **Own Your Actions:** Understand that each of us holds a shared responsibility for maintaining a welcoming, inclusive, and productive environment for all.

Zoom Etiquette

- We will be using Zoom Webinar for the keynotes and panels, and Zoom Meetings for all the other Summit sessions. Instructions for how to join the Webinars and Meetings as well as how to access captions and the ASL interpreters are available here:
 - [Zoom Webinar Instructions](#)
 - [Zoom Meetings Instructions](#)
- Take care of yourself! But please turn your camera off when engaging in activities such as eating/drinking, moving between spaces, or personal care.
- Participate in a way that's comfortable for you! But please stay muted when not speaking and minimize use of the chat unless prompted by presenters. Disability Lead's technical assistance team reserves the right to mute participants as necessary. You may be notified of this with a prompt via Zoom when joining sessions.
- To respect everyone in the space, we will not be admitting AI notetakers into the virtual environment. If you have accommodation requests that include a notetaker, please reach out to summit@disabilitylead.org, and we can discuss alternative options.
- All attendees will receive calendar invitations for the sessions they selected upon registration. These invitations will be sent in the few days leading up to the event and will include the necessary Zoom details for joining sessions. Zoom links for most sessions can also be found on the Detailed Agenda page (P 6) of this booklet.

Detailed Agenda

Day 1 // PEOPLE: Empowering Disabled Leaders // February 24, 2026

10:00 – 10:45 AM CT // ALL ATTENDEES*

Keynote featuring Claudia Gordon, Disability Rights Attorney and Advocate	<i>Webinar</i>	Join the Zoom
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11:00 – 11:45 AM CT // ALL ATTENDEES*

OWN It: Embrace, Elevate, Empower with Alycia Anderson	<i>Meeting</i>	Join the Zoom
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12:00 – 12:45 PM CT // ALL ATTENDEES*

Lessons in Leadership (Panel) with Emily Voorde, Leah Katz-Hernandez, Chaz Kellem, and Shannon Fitzpatrick	<i>Webinar</i>	Join the Zoom
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1:00 – 1:45 PM CT // ATTENDEE CHOICE OF SESSION*

Option 1 — How to Tell Your Story: Centering Disability in Your Narrative and Leadership with Keidra Chaney	<i>Meeting</i>	Zoom details shared with registrants
Option 2 — Cultivating Connections: Professional Networking with Purpose with Alexis J. Steals	<i>Meeting</i>	Zoom details shared with registrants

2:00 – 2:30 PM CT // ALL ATTENDEES*

Closing Reflection with Clare Killy and Shannon Parris	<i>Meeting</i>	Join the Zoom
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To join any session by phone, dial: +1 312 626 6799 and enter the corresponding Zoom ID located in the calendar invite.

Accessibility and Event Production Partner: INTO Strategies



Detailed Agenda

Day 2 // CULTURE: Strengthening Inclusive Workplaces // February 25, 2026

10:00 – 10:45 AM CT // ALL ATTENDEES*

Keynote featuring Keely Cat-Wells , Founder and CEO of Making Space	Webinar	Join the Zoom
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11:00 – 11:45 AM CT // ATTENDEE CHOICE OF SESSION*

Option 1 — Building and Sustaining Neuro-Inclusive Workspaces with Wesley Wade	Meeting	Zoom details shared with registrants
Option 2 — Cultivating Connections: Professional Networking with Purpose with Alexis J. Steals	Meeting	Zoom details shared with registrants

12:00 – 12:45 PM CT // ALL ATTENDEES*

Digital Accessibility at Work (Panel) with Greg Gulledge, Crystal Preston-Watson, and Nandita Gupta	Webinar	Join the Zoom
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1:00 – 2:15 PM CT // ALL ATTENDEES*

Future of Work, Powered by Leaders with Disabilities with Ana Monga	Meeting	Join the Zoom
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To join any session by phone, dial: +1 312 626 6799 and enter the corresponding Zoom ID located in the calendar invite.

Accessibility and Event Production Partner: INTO Strategies



Session Descriptions

Day 1 // PEOPLE: Empowering Disabled Leaders

Keynote 1 – “Empowering Disabled Leaders” Keynote Address featuring Claudia Gordon // Following welcome remarks from Disability Lead’s CEO, Emily Blum, attendees will center their attention on the day’s theme of “Empowering Disabled Leaders” with a keynote address from Claudia Gordon, accomplished disability rights attorney, advocate, and Senior Accessibility Strategist & Policy Leader at T-Mobile US.

Session 1A – OWN It: Embrace, Elevate, Empower // Blending lived experience with actionable strategies, Alycia Anderson introduces her three-part framework, Embrace who you are, Elevate what you do, Empower where you’re going to turn barriers into breakthroughs. Audiences leave with clear steps to amplify impact, lift others, and confidently own their path forward.

Panel - Lessons in Leadership // Attendees will join Emily Voorde (INTO Strategies), Leah Katz-Hernandez (LinkedIn), Chaz Kellem (Highmark Health), and Shannon Fitzpatrick (Microsoft) for a conversation about how Disabled self-advocacy manifests itself throughout one’s career. Panelists will discuss the power of building and maintaining strong networks, navigating ableism in the workplace, and how to leverage technology to drive personal leadership development.

Session 1B - How to Tell Your Story: Centering Disability in Your Narrative and Leadership // This session helps participants explore how disability identity can shape an authentic and powerful personal story. Led by Keidra Chaney, this session guides attendees in aligning their lived experience with their purpose and professional brand while setting healthy boundaries for sustainable storytelling.

Networking – Cultivating Connections: Professional Networking with Purpose // Join us for an engaging virtual networking session designed to bring professionals together to foster valuable connections and community. This is your opportunity to expand your network, share perspectives, and explore potential collaborations. Cultivate connections that can fuel your passions and lead to new opportunities!

You’ll have the option to discuss a topic that is most relevant to your professional journey in a collaborative space facilitated by Leadership and Life Coach, Alexis J. Steals.

Session Descriptions

Day 2 // CULTURE: Strengthening Inclusive Workplaces

Keynote 2 – “Strengthening Inclusive Workplaces” Keynote Address featuring Keely Cat-Wells // Following welcome remarks from Disability Lead’s CEO, Emily Blum, attendees will center their attention on the day’s theme of “Strengthening Inclusive Workplaces” with a keynote address from Keely Cat-Wells, founder and CEO of Making Space,—a platform that has supported over 10,000 Disabled professionals in building meaningful careers— as well as a leader and visionary shaping disability presentation in media.

Session 2A – Building and Sustaining Neuro-Inclusive Workspaces // In this workshop, participants will learn some of the critical areas of focus, strengths, and challenges per recent research for building and maintaining neuro-inclusive workspaces. Additionally, ways to support and engage with neuro-inclusion efforts as both neurodivergent and neurotypical staff will be highlighted and discussed.

Networking – Cultivating Connections: Professional Networking with Purpose //Join us for an engaging virtual networking session designed to bring professionals together to foster valuable connections and community. This is your opportunity to expand your network, share perspectives, and explore potential collaborations. Cultivate connections that can fuel your passions and lead to new opportunities!

You’ll have the option to discuss a topic that is most relevant to your professional journey in a collaborative space facilitated by Leadership and Life Coach, Alexis J. Steals.

Panel – Digital Accessibility at Work // Attendees will join Greg Gulledge, Crystal Preston-Watson, and Nandita Gupta for a conversation about digital accessibility as a cornerstone of inclusive workplaces. Panelists will discuss the importance of inclusive technology while addressing critical topics impacting the future of accessibility.

Session 2B - Future of Work, Powered by Leaders with Disabilities // AI will have a transformative impact on the future of the workplace and society at large. Ana Monga will discuss why this revolutionary era needs empowered leaders with disabilities who can be architects in building and collaborating on an accessible AI agenda, driving inclusive products, responsible policy, and human-centered best practices.

Alphabetical List of Speakers and Session Leaders



Alexis J. Steals

Professional Coach and Leadership Advocate, Forbes Fund

[!\[\]\(f4349ea867b307dd2675269f68d0971f_img.jpg\) LinkedIn](#)

Alexis James Steals is a former financial services professional with over 25 years of experience in senior leadership roles, spanning Treasury Management and Corporate Banking. After a successful career in banking, Alexis transitioned her experience, expertise, and knowledge to support the mission of non-profit organizations and foundations, including The Advanced Leadership Institute (TALI), The Forbes Funds, the FISA Foundation, and Jack and Jill of America Foundation.

With a strong desire to see others enhance their leadership abilities, Alexis serves as an Executive-in-Residence Coach with the Forbes Funds and leads TALI's Emerging Leaders Program. As a leadership champion, Alexis guides individuals and teams toward maximizing their personal and professional leadership potential to drive impactful organizational change. With her extensive corporate background, executive leadership experience, and professional coaching training, Alexis combines deep insights with practical strategies to foster growth, innovation, and transformation.

Alexis is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Pittsburgh's School of Education. Alexis has an Executive Leadership Certification from Carnegie Mellon University, a Professional Coaching Certification from Duquesne University, and a certification in Non-Profit Financial Management from Cornell University. Additionally, she serves on the board of directors of Brentwood Bank.



Alycia Anderson

CEO, *The Alycia Anderson Company, LLC*

[LinkedIn](#) [Website](#)

Alycia Anderson is a Global Keynote Speaker, Disability Advocate, Accessibility Strategist, Podcast Host of *Pushing Forward with Alycia*, and CEO who empowers workplaces worldwide through transformative keynotes and workshops.

A wheelchair user since birth, Alycia holds a Master's Degree in Adaptive Physical Activity and serves on California's Insurance Diversity Task Force as the inaugural Persons with Disabilities Business Enterprise (PDBE) Representative. Her work have been featured by TEDx, the Los Angeles Times, NBC, CBS News, and Authority Magazine's Female Disruptors series. She has partnered with 200+ global brands, including Microsoft, Victoria's Secret, Netflix, Etsy, and the International Paralympic Committee and modeled at New York Fashion Week 2024.

Alycia delivers keynotes, workshops, and trainings that help teams operationalize inclusion and build high-performing cultures. She is also the Founder & Facilitator of *Own It Mastery*, a community and resource program for early-stage entrepreneurs to speak, sell, and scale with purpose through curriculum, coaching, and peer accountability. Known for "right-sizing" everyday obstacles, Alycia opens minds to a world of possibility. And that's how she rolls.



Ana Monga

Future of Work Policy Lead, Google

[LinkedIn](#) [Website](#)

Ana Monga leads Future of Work policy at Google, focused on topics like hybrid work, AI in the workplace, and workforce & talent planning. With 15+ years at Fortune 50 companies like Google, PepsiCo, Twitter, and Cargill, Ana has experience overseeing and implementing HR strategy on a breadth of topics and organizational phases across people development, organizational change management, and talent policies and programs. Ana has a B.A. in Economics from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and is a certified change management professional, leadership coach, and program management expert.

Ana is also a small-business owner, writer, speaker, and a board member providing independent consulting and coaching for organizations and individuals on topics like future of work, navigating change in complexity, workforce and career planning, personal and professional growth, disability, and frameworks for multidimensional moms.



Chaz Kellem

Program Manager, Institute for Strategic Social and Workforce Programs (S2W), Highmark Health

[LinkedIn](#)

Chaz Kellem serves as a Program Manager at Highmark Health's Institute for Strategic Social and Workforce Programs (S2W), dedicating his efforts to advancing inclusion and belonging. With a passion for fostering inclusive environments, Chaz leverages his educational background, which includes a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership from Robert Morris University and a Bachelor of Science in Health and Physical Education from Edinboro University, to drive meaningful change within the organization.



Claudia Gordon

Disability Rights Attorney and Advocate

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Claudia L. Gordon is a dedicated advocate for people with disabilities, leveraging over 30 years of versatile professional expertise and a personal mission to ensure equitable opportunities for all. She currently serves as the Senior Accessibility Strategist with T-Mobile US, Inc., where she drives strategies for a disability-inclusive culture and an accessible, equitable work environment.

Gordon has held senior leadership positions with Sprint Corporation, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the National Council on Disability, and the National Association of the Deaf Law and Advocacy Center. During the Obama-Biden Administration, she served as Chief of Staff for the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs and Associate Director of Public Engagement for the White House Office of Public Engagement. As a Biden administration appointee, she also served on the National Council on Disability, notably as Chair.

Claudia Gordon volunteers her time and expertise on numerous boards and advisory groups, including the Washington, DC American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU-DC) Affiliate Board, where she is also their representative to the National ACLU Board. Her lived experience as an immigrant at the intersections of race, disability, and gender informs her work, with a strong emphasis on disabled individuals with multiple marginalized identities.

Recognized for her unwavering commitment to advocacy, compliance, civic engagement, and mentoring, Gordon has received accolades from the American Association of People with Disabilities, Google, AT&T Humanity of Connection, National Disability Mentoring Coalition, National Association of the Deaf, National Black Deaf Advocates, and The Root 100. A native of Jamaica, she is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and a graduate of Howard University and American University's Washington College of Law.



Crystal Preston-Watson

Accessibility and Quality Engineer

[LinkedIn](#) [Website](#)

Crystal Preston-Watson is an accessibility and quality engineer based in Denver, Colorado, with a career spanning journalism, web development, and enterprise software, all centered on disability rights and digital equity. She has led accessibility and testing efforts across various agencies and product companies, including roles at Ping Identity, Aetna, and Salesforce, where she worked to embed accessibility into everyday development and release workflows. She is also a speaker, technical advisor, and contributing author, and creates accessibility education content on her YouTube channel.



Greg Gulledge

CPACC, Digital Accessibility Program Lead, Health Care Service Corporation

[LinkedIn](#)

Greg Gulledge created and runs the Digital Accessibility Program at Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC), where he strives to make health insurance information fully accessible to the company's 27 million members. Greg believes that accessibility is a cultural value that shows up in how we work. His approach is led by education and connection and the belief that organizations only become accessible when they understand disability first.

Greg is also a leader of HCSC's IN-Abled BRG where he has focused on delivering programs that create a real, human understanding of what it means to work with a disability. Self-reporting of employee disability status has risen from 2% to over 14% during this time and resulted in Greg winning the HCSC President's Award for Inclusion.

Greg and his family's disability journey includes multiple dimensions of neurodiversity and vision-related disabilities. He holds the CPACC designation from the International Association of Accessibility Professionals.



Keely Cat-Wells

Founder and CEO, Making Space

[LinkedIn](#) [Website](#)

Keely Cat-Wells is the Founder and CEO of Making Space, a platform that has supported over 10,000 Disabled professionals in building meaningful careers. Under her leadership, Making Space made history by training and placing the first-ever Disabled hosts on NBC Sports' Paralympics broadcast. Other partners include Indeed, Netflix, and Visa. Keely also co-founded Making Space Media, a division producing film and TV content centering Disabled voices, securing a first-look deal with Reese Witherspoon's Hello Sunshine. Notably, their documentary "Fight To Fly" exposed the inequalities that Disabled travelers face, triggering policy reform.

Before Making Space, Keely founded C Talent, an agency that reshaped disability representation in media and grew a roster reaching more than 50 million people. Acquired in 2022, C Talent became the largest acquisition of a company specializing in Disabled talent. Keely is a Forbes 30 Under 30 honoree, Diana Award recipient, and has served on the advisory board of Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation. She currently sits on the Los Angeles City Major Event Advisory Council, Human Rights Watch LA Committee and holds the distinction of being the youngest-ever Presidential Leadership Scholar. Additionally, she is an Obama Leader USA and inaugural Gloria Steinem Fellow.



Keidra Chaney

Program Director, Disability Culture Lab

[LinkedIn](#) [Website](#)

Keidra Chaney is currently at the forefront of digital communications and digital strategy in the nonprofit sector. Her goals and motivators are reflected in every stage of her multifaceted career. As a marketing professional, writer, and educator, Keidra endeavors to create equitable, just, and safe spaces for marginalized people. She achieves this goal through understanding via any and all modes of communication, by challenging perspectives, and ultimately providing information and services to those in need.

Keidra currently works at Disability Culture Lab as their Program Director where she steers transformative programs like the Disability Rising Fellowship all while advocating for disability inclusion in communications. Prior to this role, Keidra worked for the National Network of Abortion Funds, where she established herself as a leader in NFP digital marketing and strategy. A self-described “writer in a complicated relationship with the internet”, Keidra is also a pop culture critic. She is the founding publisher of *The Learned Fangirl* and founder of the TLF Freelance Emergency Fund for freelance writers. Keidra was also recognized as a 2024 Notable Black Leader by *Crain’s Chicago Business*.

Her work with TLF centers around the goal of driving social change through critique of cultural/social norms in pop culture. Keidra’s writing has been featured in a multitude of publications including *The Chicago Sun Times*, *Time Out*, *Paste Magazine*, *Camera Obscura*; *Facta Ficta: Journal of Theory, Narrative & Media*; *I/S: A Journal of Law and Policy for the Information Society*; *New Media & Society*; *Persona Studies*; *Suffolk University Law Review*; *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform*; She is a Disability Lead Fellow for their 2020 Institute, the only program in the country for emerging leaders with disabilities.



Leah Katz-Hernandez

Senior Manager, Social Impact, LinkedIn

 [LinkedIn](#)

Leah Katz-Hernandez is a Senior Manager at LinkedIn's Social Impact team. She previously worked at Microsoft's Office of the CEO and served in the Obama Administration. Leah was a member of President Biden's Advisory Commission and has advised various universities and organizations. She holds degrees from American University and Gallaudet University. In 2018, she contributed to the book "WEST WINGERS: Stories From The Dream Chasers, Change Makers, and Hope Creators Inside The Obama White House."



Nandita Gupta

Senior Product Manager, Accessibility, Cisco

 [LinkedIn](#)

Nandita Gupta is a TEDx speaker and Senior Product Manager, Accessibility at Cisco, where she leads accessibility for WebEx. With over 10 years of industry experience, Nandita holds a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering and a Master's degree in Human-Computer Interaction. She was named ADCLOR in Tech 2024 and recognized as Faces of Inclusive Excellence and Diversity Champion in 2020. Nandita serves on various boards, including Lime Connect, and was inducted into the Susan M. Daniels Disability Mentoring Hall of Fame. She has been an invited speaker at major conferences globally, including UX Talks Tokyo, Grace Hopper Celebration, World Information Architecture, M-Enabling, and many more.



Shannon Fitzpatrick

HLS Partner Development Manager, Healthcare at Microsoft

 [LinkedIn](#)

Shannon Fitzpatrick is a globally recognized leader, advocate, and changemaker dedicated to advancing accessibility, inclusion, and opportunity for people with disabilities. As part of the leadership team for Microsoft’s Disability Employee Resource Group (ERG), Shannon plays a pivotal role in shaping Microsoft’s inclusive culture across the Americas. She has been instrumental in creating transformative programs such as the Disability Career Jams Mentorship Program, which has provided more than 750 mentorship opportunities for employees with disabilities, and the Disability ERG Leadership Fireside Chats, which spotlight Microsoft leaders who have built successful careers while navigating disability — empowering others to do the same.

With a Doctorate in Behavioral Health and a bachelor’s degree in Disability Studies, Shannon blends academic rigor with lived experience and deep empathy. Her research into comorbidities within disability has informed her approach to advocacy—focusing on the intersection of mental health, accessibility, and inclusive leadership.

Before moving to the United States five years ago, Shannon made her mark in Canada as the creator, producer, and host of “Accessibility Toronto,” a television series dedicated to news, events, and stories from the disability community. The show became a trusted platform for elevating voices and promoting awareness across the Greater Toronto Area.

Today, Shannon continues her advocacy work as a Board Member for the March of Dimes, advancing maternal and infant health equity, and as a Board Member for Hope House, supporting individuals with disabilities through accessible housing and services.

Whether leading initiatives within one of the world’s largest technology companies or amplifying community voices on the global stage, Shannon Fitzpatrick’s mission remains constant: to empower people with disabilities to not only belong—but to lead, thrive, and shape the future.



Shannon Parris

Founder and Principal, Shannon Parris Consulting

[!\[\]\(b6fe3d974b20682aca79f7e6638f28cd_img.jpg\) LinkedIn](#)

Shannon Parris is the Founder & Principal of Shannon Parris Consulting, which propels nonprofits and small businesses to reach ambitious goals while protecting and uplifting the people who power them. Working at the intersection of nonprofits, entrepreneurship, and disability justice, Shannon is on a mission to reshape how we work, lead, and belong because most workplaces weren't set up for everyone to succeed. As a multiply-disabled, neurodivergent Korean adoptee who was raised in a predominantly white community, Shannon has a unique perspective on privilege and equity. She is most passionate about working to dismantle systems of oppression and to advocate for and galvanize leaders with marginalized identities.



Emily Voorde

Founder and CEO, INTO Strategies

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Emily Voorde is the Founder and CEO of INTO Strategies, a disability-led inclusion consultancy committed to bringing people with disabilities into campaigns, moments, and movements. Emily most recently worked as an Associate Director with NEWCO Strategies, a majority-women, majority-LGBTQ progressive consulting firm. During her time with NEWCO, Emily led communications strategy, project management, and landscape research on a number of client accounts, including The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) and EMILY's List. Following the tragic passing of Judy Heumann, Voorde spearheaded AAPD's response, including drafting of a press release, press pitching, digital engagement, rapid response, and coalition coordination.



Wesley Wade

Founder, Forward Counseling & Consulting

[LinkedIn](#) [Website](#)

Wesley Wade holds two master's degrees from North Carolina Central University, owns and operates Forward Counseling & Consulting, and has been featured on NPR, PBS, and CBS News for his work in mental health and higher education. While working as a career counselor and coach at NC State University, Wesley created and led Students Moving Forward (SMF), an award-winning career-focused program for autistic college students in North Carolina from fall 2017 to fall 2021. While leading SMF, Wesley also created and led the North Carolina Autistic Career Summit; served on planning committees for state-government programs offering paid internships for autistic college students; and served in an advisory role for the Black Male initiative living and learning village.

Currently, Wesley is a Ph.D. candidate at NC State University studying how the intersections of race, disability, and identity impact our mental health. Wes is a proud late-diagnosed AuDHDer, avid sci-fi and comic fan, and a parent of 2 kids under 10.

Partners



Contact Us

For questions or feedback about program content, accommodations, or sponsorship:

summit@disabilitylead.org

For general information about Disability Lead: info@disabilitylead.org

Accessibility and Event Production Partner: INTO Strategies, www.intostrategies.com

Graphic Design: Sarah Sommers Design, sarahsommersdesign.com