**PURPOSE**

Persons of color working in health departments and other government agencies face a myriad of challenges pertaining to job advancement, leadership development, and growth opportunities in these institutions. NASTAD recognizes the need to increase the capacity of senior level leaders of color in health departments and seeks to equip them with skills, peer support, strategies to dismantle white supremacy and oppressive systems, and introspection to advance in their varied personal career trajectories. NASTAD’s Minority Leadership Program (MLP): Executive Activator serves as a space rooted in social justice for health department staff of color to engage in critical conversations about relinquishing power; program sustainability; overcoming institutional barriers to equity; developing succession plans; addressing workforce wellness; dismantling white supremacy; establishing leadership accountability mechanisms. and more. MLP: Executive Activator is specifically designed to increase partnerships among staff of color working in state or CDC directly funded city/county health department HIV, viral hepatitis, or drug user health programs.

**OUTCOME**

MLP: Executive Activator participants hone and develop both hard and soft skills that assist them as they expand and nurture their leadership in public health. Participants complete a one week in-person retreat and are paired with peers in their cohort for continued support beyond the convening.

Additionally, participants build meaningful professional relationships with members of previous cohorts, forming a national presence of active public health leaders of color working towards equitable public health practice. Moreover, cohorts help advance the mission to eliminate stigma and dismantle white supremacy by sharing their stories about the fears, challenges, successes, and growth experienced as persons of color leading and serving in health departments.

“MLP is definitely the fire that ignites a level of confidence you never thought you had. This program allows you to tap into a space where you can clear your thoughts from the negativity that clouds your self-esteem, your self-belief, and your self-determination by learning how to acknowledge, manage, and exude power as a Minority Leader.”

**DR. TANGEE SUMMERS**
Ryan White & HOPWA Program Services Manager
working in health departments, at times under very
difficult and challenging political and organizational
constraints.

**PROCESS**
MLP: Executive Activator participants will engage
in a weeklong in-person retreat. Before attending
the retreat space, participants will complete a 360-
assessment to identify personal and professional
gaps, strengths, areas for change, and readiness to
take risks. The 360-assessment also incorporates
feedback from various colleagues and peers to provide
participants with a comprehensive perspective on how
they see themselves and how others perceive them.

During the entirety of the retreat, participants will
be introduced to key foundational concepts rooted
in a social justice-oriented framework that will help
them uncover more about themselves as leaders,
advocates, and public health experts. Facilitators
will guide participants on an interactive and personal
journey that will require them to identify and address
triggers, develop strategies to succession plan, give
and receive feedback, and build collective power
across organizations.

Recognizing that we stand on the shoulders of giants,
the leadership retreat will help participants channel
the ancestral resilience and motivation that helps
guide their passions for social change. Participants
will further develop core skills and values, pushing
them further into thinking about their evolution as
executive leaders.

MLP: Executive Activator participants will practice
identifying their vision for executive leadership and
sharing it with their cohort for feedback and recognition.
Participants will also develop accountability tools
with sustainability goals to keep
the momentum and partnerships
going when they return to their
respective health departments.

When MLP: Executive Activator
participants are not engaged in
workshops, they will conduct
consistent check-ins with peers
to work more effectively in their
health departments and further
expand on skills learned during
the retreat. Additionally, MLP
cohorts from across cycles will
have opportunities to engage
meaningfully, mentor, learn from, and share resources
with each other, creating a coordinated, national
network of public health professionals of color striving
for health equity and an end to the Syndemics of HIV
and viral hepatitis.

“MLP offered a family support system I never thought I was
missing or needed. This experience allowed a space where
I could walk in my power and truth. Through transformative
sessions and conversations with my cohort and trainers, I
discovered a newfound peace and renewal to continue the
work as a person of color for health equity and social justice.”

**NIKKI WEST, MSPH**
Health Services Program Director