



# Leading Skills for Success

## Implementation Superpowers

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"One of my leadership superpowers is relationship building and creating connections with community partners. Connection is the key to success!" — Julie Herzog, Community Champion of the IRIS network serving Tazewell, Peoria, and Woodford Counties in Illinois

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Every IRIS network is helmed by a Local IRIS Leadership Team that guides their community partners through implementation and continues cultivating their network after launch. Local IRIS Leadership Teams are unique in their make-up, ranging in size, sectors, and purpose. Their responsibilities are diverse (hence, a team!), but Leadership Team members come together to facilitate decision-making, engage partners in the IRIS vision, manage user access, and lead improvement processes. While IRIS Leaders represent various professions and backgrounds, all leaders share a commitment to applying their time, energy, and skills to improving their community's system for helping families receive support when they need it.

The IRIS team has thought a lot about the skills and qualities that allow an IRIS Leader to flourish. A compelling vision, tenacity, hope, and productive relationships are a few of the characteristics that we recognize and appreciate in our remarkable IRIS Leaders. Curious about IRIS leaders' own sense of the factors that help them succeed in their IRIS leadership role, we asked our network of IRIS Leaders "What is your IRIS implementation Superpower? What skill do you rely on the most in your IRIS Leadership role? How do you use that skill to support your IRIS network?" You may not be surprised, but nearly all the superpower responses were related to relationship building or strategic thinking. We agree, these two characteristics are key to successful implementation.

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### **IRIS LEADERS' SUPERPOWERS IN THEIR OWN WORDS:**

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"My IRIS Superpower is *PERSISTENCE!* I will NEVER take an agency off my engagement list...even if they have told me no! Someday, there will be a change in leadership at that organization and that is when I will put my superpower to use and get IRIS in front of the new person!"

--Dana Keim, Community Champion and System & Data Manager  
Stephenson County, Illinois

"Because our IRIS network covers multiple counties, we've had to develop a superpower of being really adept at *networking and making connections* with folks that we may not work with every day."

--Michele VanWinkle, Community Champion  
Southeast Kansas

"Connecting with others or collaborating is probably my superpower. However, the *ability to learn new things and problem-solve* are skills I rely on to support the implementation of IRIS."

--Saundra Irish, System & Data Manager  
Madison and St. Clair Counties, Illinois

"One of my leadership superpowers is *relationship building and creating connections* with community partners. Connection is the key to success! Building a collaborative environment builds trust, commitment, and an infrastructure to make IRIS successful and impactful in our community. Meeting face-to-face brought about excitement, opening communication and possibilities for our community. During the pandemic face-to-face was not possible; Zoom brought about new opportunities to connect and continue to build our network."

--Julie Herzog, Community Champion and System & Data Manager  
Tazewell, Peoria, and Woodford Counties, Illinois

"Our IRIS superpower is *finding other superheroes!* Like Professor X and the Cerebro, our IRIS Leadership Team has identified critical and influential community members to help drive engagement and onboarding of new partners. Our Leadership Team also leans heavily on our Implementation Coordinator like Captain Planet to come to the rescue when extra support is needed."

--Thomas Skinner, Community Champion and System & Data Manager  
Sedgwick County, Kansas

"Our Leadership Team's superpower is our *connection to our long-standing community collaborative network* that have established strong working relationships and using them as a support as steps have been implemented."

- Stephanie Diehl, Community Champion  
Geary County, Kansas

"My special skill is *building relationships and making the process easy* for programs to get started."

--Rebecca Deang, Community Champion  
Will County, Illinois

"We rely heavily on our *teamwork* superpower! As our network has grown, we've recognized that it takes a well-staffed IRIS Leadership Team to onboard new organizations and serve our current partners. Coordinating schedules and processes across the larger Leadership Team requires a lot of teamwork."

--Anita Muniz-GrandPre, Community Champion  
Wyandotte County, Kansas

"I feel my position within IRIS and our community is unique. I can *show program supervisors how IRIS can benefit their program* with grant writing and obtaining funds and for the end-user and direct workflows for staff. In addition, I am part of the leadership team that's building the system that I will be utilizing once we launch!"

--Diana Merdian, System Manager  
Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside Counties, Illinois

"Flexibility"

--Anonymous