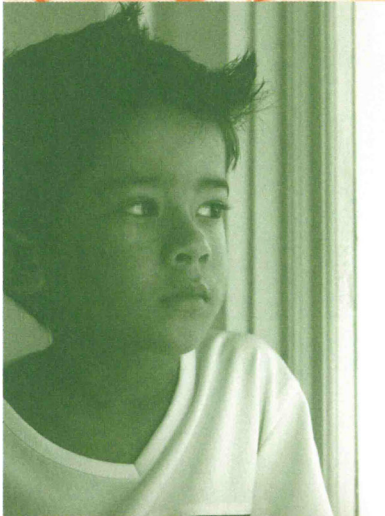


Wilder
Research

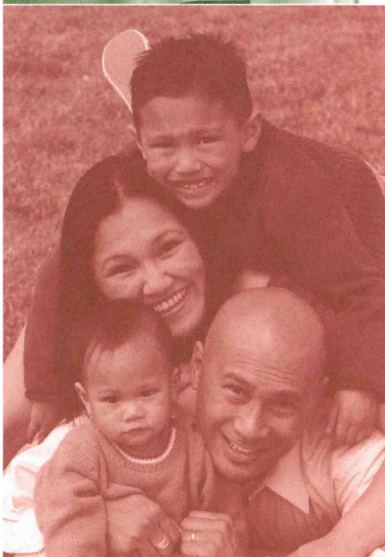


Neighborhood Leadership Programs' Six-month Leadership Training Evaluation

*Summary of Participant
Feedback in 2012*



SEPTEMBER 2012



Neighborhood Leadership Programs' Six-month Leadership Training Evaluation

Summary of Participant Feedback in 2012

September 2012

Prepared by:

Laura Schauben

Wilder Research

451 Lexington Parkway North

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104

651-280-2700

www.wilderresearch.org

Contents

Background.....	1
Neighborhood Leadership Programs overview	1
Six-month leadership training.....	1
Training participant characteristics.....	1
Evaluation design.....	2
Key findings.....	4
Participant outcomes.....	4
Participant satisfaction	6
Participant outcomes.....	7
Self-awareness and perceived readiness	7
Intended and actual community action	8
Interpersonal skills and knowledge.....	11
Social support.....	12
Knowledge of community needs and resources.....	13
History-related outcomes	14
Participant satisfaction	18
Satisfaction with the six-month leadership training.....	18
Helpfulness of specific training sessions	18
Helpfulness of history components.....	20
Helpfulness of trainings with regards to continuing community work.....	21
Suggestions for improvement	21
Recommendations.....	22

Figures

1. Participant demographics.....	2
2. Outcomes: Self-awareness and perceived readiness.....	8
3. Outcomes: Intention to take action in the community.....	9
4. Outcomes: Community action and helpfulness of leadership trainings.....	11
5. Outcomes: Interpersonal knowledge and skills.....	12
6. Outcomes: Social support.....	13
7. Outcomes: Knowledge of community needs and resources.....	14
8. Awareness of Minnesota History Center resources.....	14
9. Use of the Minnesota History Center.....	15
10. Use of history in community work.....	16
11. Satisfaction with NLP.....	18
12. Helpfulness of specific sessions.....	19
13. Helpfulness of individual history lessons.....	20

Background

Neighborhood Leadership Programs overview

The Amherst H. Wilder Foundation's Neighborhood Leadership Programs (NLP) has supported and worked to grow the leadership capacity of those who live, work and/or volunteer in St. Paul's neighborhoods since 1995. NLP reflects a shared, collaborative leadership model and the philosophy that all people can be leaders. NLP's purpose is to develop and sustain a healthy and thriving community.

Six-month leadership training

In the six-month leadership training, participants come together twice per month to build knowledge, skills, and connections for effective neighborhood leadership. Typically, there are 30 people involved in the course. Participants engage with each other throughout the six months and are also paired with coaches. The six-month training is designed for community members who want to: 1) gain greater insight and awareness of themselves; 2) develop additional skills and build working relationships with others; 3) enhance commitment and engagement in meaningful action in the community; and 4) expand knowledge of community history and learn how it can inform actions today.

In 2011, the Arts and Cultural Heritage Partnership Fund provided NLP and the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) the opportunity to work together. MHS and NLP continued this joint effort in 2012. MHS's goal for the collaboration was to build awareness and use of MHS resources among the full diversity of Saint Paul community members. NLP's goal was to teach participants how to more effectively draw on the history and the many strengths inherent in their community – both past and present – in order to successfully engage a diverse range of people to take action on community issues. Sessions integrating the historical resources and lessons took place at both the Wilder Foundation and at the Minnesota History Center.

Training participant characteristics

The 33 participants who attended the six-month training program consisted primarily of women (67%) between the ages of 25 and 49 (70%). In terms of race/ethnicity, 42 percent of participants identified as White, 30 percent as Black or African, 18 percent as Asian, 12 percent as Native American, and 6 percent as Hispanic. One person (3%) identified their race/ethnicity as "unknown."

1. Participant demographics (N=33)

Gender	
Women	67%
Men	33%
Age	
18-24	15%
25-49	70%
50-64	12%
65 or older	3%
Race/ethnicity (more than one response possible)	
White	42%
Black/African	30%
Asian	18%
Native American	12%
Hispanic	6%
Self-identified as "Unknown"	3%

Note. The total varies from 100% for age due to rounding and for "race/ethnicity" due to multiple responses.

Evaluation design

This evaluation was designed to look at the impact of NLP's six-month leadership training on participants' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors. To this end, Wilder Research and NLP staff created three surveys to administer to participants. A paper pre-survey was administered at the beginning of programming and a paper post-survey was administered during the final training session in order to assess changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In addition, a follow-up survey was administered online to assess impact on behavior.

Thirty-two of the 33 participants who started the six-month training completed it. Of the 32 participants who finished the training, 28 completed both a pre-survey and a post-survey for a response rate of 88 percent. Nineteen respondents completed the follow-up survey, for a response rate of 59 percent for this specific component.

Participant pre-survey data was entered into a spreadsheet by NLP staff and the results calculated by the software. Post-survey data was tallied by NLP staff. Data from follow-up surveys were entered online by the respondent and analyzed by the online survey program. For all three components, Wilder Research had responsibility for reporting the results.

This report summarizes the feedback of the 28 participants that completed both a pre-survey and post-survey and the 19 participants that completed a follow-up survey. First, key findings from the evaluation are highlighted. Then, the full results are presented, beginning with outcomes and then satisfaction. Following the results, recommendations are provided.

Key findings

The following are key findings from the feedback of the 28 participants that completed both a pre-survey and post-survey and the 19 participants that completed a follow-up survey.

Participant outcomes

Self-awareness and perceived readiness

- At post-survey, 89 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” they are aware of their own values and leadership style, an increase from 25 percent at pre-survey.
- 86 percent “strongly agreed” at post-survey that they feel better prepared to help their community now than when the training began.
- 82 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” at post-survey that, compared to when they started the training, they are more aware of their potential usefulness as a community leader.
- At post-survey, 79 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” they feel confident to take on leadership roles in their community, compared to 36 percent at pre-survey.

Intended and actual community action

- Over 80 percent of respondents entered the program and graduated from it committed to participating in neighborhood or community projects. At post-survey, 82 percent said they are more committed now than they were prior to the training to work with others to address common issues.
- At follow-up, all respondents that answered the question said that they are more likely to take action on an issue that is affecting their community as a result of the leadership trainings.
- 89 percent of respondents at follow-up said they had been involved in a community activity or event in the two months since the leadership trainings. Of these 16 respondents:
 - 93 percent (representing 74% of all respondents) reported using an approach that allowed them to more effectively work with people from different backgrounds or cultures than their own. When asked to what extent what they

learned in the leadership training helped them use these strategies, 67 percent said the training “helped a lot.”

- All (representing 79% of all respondents) reported building relationships with individuals or organizations in order to more effectively reach diverse communities. When asked to what extent what they learned in the leadership training helped them build these relationships, 80 percent said the training “helped a lot.”

Interpersonal skills and knowledge

- At post-survey, 82 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” that, compared to when they started the training, they are better able to work with people who are different from them and are more aware of other people’s perspectives on community issues.
- At post-survey, 79 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” that they better understand the value of diverse opinions, viewpoints, and approaches now than prior to the training.
- 64 percent “strongly agreed” at post-survey that they have interpersonal communication and conflict resolution skills, an increase from 25 percent at pre-survey.

Social support

- At post-survey, 89 percent “strongly agreed” they have people they can talk with about community and leadership issues, compared to 36 percent at pre-survey.
- At post-survey, 75 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” they are able to ask for and receive support around their community work, compared to 32 percent at pre-survey.
- By follow-up, 94 percent of respondents said they had built relationships or joined organizations or networks that support their community work since the start of the leadership training.

Knowledge of community needs and resources

- At post-survey, 54 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” they are knowledgeable about their community’s needs and challenges, compared to 14 percent at pre-survey.

History-related outcomes

- The percentage of respondents who “strongly agreed” they are familiar with the resources available through the Minnesota History Center increased from 4 percent at pre-survey to 71 percent at post-survey.
- At pre-survey, 21 percent of respondents had been to the Minnesota History Center in the past year. In comparison, 50 percent of participants visited the Minnesota History Center or another history site during the six months of NLP leadership training (not including training-related visits). At follow-up, 71 percent had been to the Minnesota History Center or another history site in the two months since the training ended.
- At pre-survey, 4 percent of respondents had used the Minnesota History Center as a resource for their community work in the past year. The Minnesota History Center was used as a resource for community work by 73 percent of respondents during the six-month leadership training. At follow-up, 12 percent of respondents reported using the Minnesota History Center as a resource in the previous two months.
- The percentage of respondents who believed that understanding a community or cultural group’s history is important to effectively creating change was high at pre-survey and post-survey (89% and 93%).
- Of the 16 respondents who had been engaged in community work since the end of training, 94 percent (representing 79% of all respondents) said they had considered the history of the community in determining what approach to take to the issue. Eighty percent said that what they learned in the training “helped a lot” in considering the community’s history.

Participant satisfaction

All of the following satisfaction ratings were collected at post-survey.

- Over 90 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” that NLP staff were sensitive to the different backgrounds of participants and provided a safe space for group members to participate and share their opinions.
- 93 percent “strongly agreed” that what they learned in NLP will help them to be more effective in their community work.
- 86 percent “strongly agreed” the written materials were useful and 82 percent “strongly agreed” they were satisfied with the quality of the trainings.

Participant outcomes

To assess whether the NLP six-month leadership training achieved its intended outcomes, participants were presented with statements related to the knowledge, skills, behavioral intentions, and supports needed to be a community leader and asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that each statement was true for them. In some cases, the question was asked at both the beginning of programming (pre-survey) and the end of programming (post-survey), so final responses could be compared against a baseline. In other cases, respondents were asked only at the end of programming to consider retrospectively what, if any, change they had experienced. In addition, a follow-up survey was administered to assess longer-term changes two months after the training had ended.

This section summarizes the outcomes of the six-month leadership program from participants' self-reported data. First, outcomes related to self-awareness and perceived readiness in regard to leadership are presented, followed by outcomes related to intended and actual community action, interpersonal knowledge and skills, social support, and knowledge of community needs and resources. In addition, measures of history-related outcomes, participant satisfaction and suggestions for improvement are discussed.

Self-awareness and perceived readiness

NLP's goals include increasing participants' awareness of their leadership style, their personal values, and their potential usefulness as a leader. At post-survey, 89 percent of respondents "strongly agreed" they are aware of their own values and leadership style, an increase from 25 percent at pre-survey (see Figure 2). In addition, 82 percent of respondents at post-survey "strongly agreed" that, compared to when they started the training, they are more aware of their potential usefulness as a community leader. At post-survey, in both cases, the remainder of the respondents "somewhat agreed" each statement is true.

NLP also strives to build participants' confidence in their ability to lead. At pre-survey, 36 percent of respondents "strongly agreed" they feel confident to take on leadership roles in their community (see Figure 2). This increased to 79 percent at post-survey. Similarly, at post-survey, 86 percent of respondents "strongly agreed" they feel better prepared to help their community now than when the training began. In both cases, at post survey, the remaining respondents "somewhat agreed" with both statements.

2. Outcomes: Self-awareness and perceived readiness (N=28)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I am aware of my own personal values and leadership style.				
Pre-survey	25%	68%	7%	0%
Post-survey	89%	11%	0%	0%
I am more aware of my potential usefulness as a community leader.				
Pre-survey	NA	NA	NA	NA
Post-survey	82%	18%	0%	0%
I feel confident to take on leadership roles in my community.				
Pre-survey	36%	43%	21%	0%
Post-survey	79%	21%	0%	0%
I feel better prepared to take action in my community.				
Pre-survey	NA	NA	NA	NA
Post-survey	86%	14%	0%	0%

Note. For items only asked on the post-survey, NA is written in cells in the pre-survey row. The total for each row may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.

Intended and actual community action

Intention to take action in the community

Similar to their pre-survey responses, at post-survey, 82 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” they are committed to participating in neighborhood or community projects and 61 percent “strongly agreed” they are interested in seeking out leadership positions, see Figure 3). In addition, 82 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” that, when they take action, they are more committed to working with others. At post-survey, all or all but one of the remaining respondents “somewhat agreed” with each of these statements. When asked at follow-up if they are more likely to take action on an issue affecting their community as a result of the training, all respondents said, “Yes.”

3. Outcomes: Intention to take action in the community (N=28, unless otherwise indicated)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I am interested in seeking out leadership positions (such as on committees or boards).				
Pre-survey	54%	36%	11%	0%
Post-survey	61%	36%	4%	0%
I am committed to participating in neighborhood or community projects.				
Pre-survey	86%	7%	7%	0%
Post-survey	82%	14%	4%	0%
I am more committed to working with others to address common issues.				
Pre-survey	NA	NA	NA	NA
Post-survey	82%	18%	0%	0%
As a result of the leadership training, I am more likely to take action on an issue that is affecting my community				
	Yes		No	
Follow-up (N=14)	100%		0%	

Note. For items only asked on the post-survey, NA is written in cells in the pre-survey row. The total for each row may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.

At post-survey, respondents were asked to write one thing they learned from the leadership training that they will use in their community work. Individual responses were grouped into categories. Respondents most commonly said they planned to use the meeting facilitation skills they learned in the program. As two respondents wrote,

Participatory meeting facilitation; preparing well for any meeting I facilitate and encouraging others to do the same.

I have learned how to be a good facilitator for a meeting or any organizing event...

Another very common theme was the intention to use new skills and understanding around cultural diversity. Respondents said they would use such things as their greater comfort with local immigrant populations, their new knowledge about the difference between diversity and inclusivity, and their better understanding of the history of communication between specific cultures and the implications of that history. As expressed by two respondents:

I feel much more comfortable with the immigrant populations in our community. I know more about their history and I understand more about what they are experiencing as new immigrants to our city. This is hugely important for me in my work and in the way I see these people as individuals and having a better idea of how they see me.

Understanding cultural difference and how they are perceived and may be misinterpreted causing conflict among diverse groups. Being aware at all times to monitor my interactions to promote ease when working with diverse groups.

Several respondents said they would use new listening and communication skills acquired through the training. Respondents discussed having greater awareness of how they communicate, as well as being more committed both to sharing their own ideas and to listening to the ideas of others. Or in the words of a respondent:

I have thought a lot about my communication style and have been working to be more assertive while maintaining good listening and clear communication...”

Actual community action and helpfulness of trainings

At follow-up, respondents were asked if they had been involved in any community activities or events in the six weeks since the leadership trainings; 89 percent said they had (see Figure 4). Of the respondents who had been engaged in a community activity, 93 percent (representing 74% of all respondents) reported using an approach that allowed them to more effectively work with people from different backgrounds or cultures than their own. When asked to what extent what they learned in the leadership training helped them use these approaches, 71 percent said the training “helped a lot” and 29 percent said it “helped a little.”

In addition, all respondents (representing 79% of all respondents) said they built relationships with individuals or organizations in order to more effectively reach diverse communities. When asked to what extent what they learned in the leadership training helped them build relationships, 80 percent said the training “helped a lot” and 20 percent said it “helped a little.”

4. Outcomes: Community action and helpfulness of leadership trainings

Community action	Percent of respondent who took action (N=18;15)*	For those who took action, how helpful was what they learned in leadership training (N=14-15)**		
		Helped a lot	Helped a little	Did not help
Has been involved in any community activities or events	89%		N/A	
Used approaches that allowed them to more effectively work with people from different backgrounds or cultures than their own.	93%	71%	29%	0%
Built relationships with individuals or organizations in order to more effectively reach diverse communities.	100%	80%	20%	0%

* The N for “involvement in any community activities or events” is 18. The N for the remaining cells in that column is 15 (the number of people who said yes, they have been involved).

** The N represents the number of people who said they took the specific action listed.

Interpersonal skills and knowledge

The ability to work successfully with people is clearly critical to effective leadership. In regard to interpersonal skills, at post-survey, 64 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” they have interpersonal communication and conflict resolutions skills, increasing from 25 percent at pre-survey (see Figure 5). All of the remaining respondents at post-survey “somewhat agreed” they have these skills. Also, 82 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” that, compared to when they started the training, they are better able to work with people who are different from them.

NLP emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and respecting diversity in interpersonal efforts. In line with this focus, 79 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” that, compared to when they started the training, they better understand the value of diverse opinions, viewpoints, and approaches; and 82 percent “strongly agreed” they are more aware of other people’s perspectives on community issues (see Figure 5). The remaining respondents “somewhat agreed” with these statements.

5. Outcomes: Interpersonal knowledge and skills (N=28)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I have interpersonal communication and conflict resolution skills.				
Pre-survey	25%	68%	7%	0%
Post-survey	64%	36%	0%	0%
I am better able to work with people who are different than me.				
Pre-survey	NA	NA	NA	NA
Post-survey	82%	18%	0%	0%
I better understand the value of diverse opinions, viewpoints, and approaches.				
Pre-survey	NA	NA	NA	NA
Post-survey	79%	21%	0%	0%
I am more aware of other people's perspectives on community issues.				
Pre-survey	NA	NA	NA	NA
Post-survey	82%	18%	0%	0%

Note. For items only asked on the post-survey, NA is written in cells in the pre-survey row. The total for each row may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.

Social support

In regard to social support, at post-survey, 75 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” they are able to ask for and receive support around their community work (compared to 32% at pre-survey), with the remaining respondents “somewhat agreeing” this is true (see Figure 6). Almost 90 percent “strongly agreed” they have people they can talk with about community and leadership issues, compared to 36 percent at pre-survey. At post-survey, all but one of the remaining respondents “somewhat agreed” they have people to talk to.

In regard to relationships with people in their neighborhood or community, 44 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” these relationships were stronger at post-survey than at pre-survey (see Figure 6). All but one of the remaining respondents “somewhat agreed” this was the case. By follow-up, 94 percent of respondents said they had built relationships or joined organizations or networks that support their community work since the start of the leadership training.

6. Outcomes: Social support (N=27-28, unless otherwise indicated)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I am able to ask for and receive support around my work or volunteering in the community.				
Pre-survey	32%	54%	14%	0%
Post-survey	75%	25%	0%	0%
I have people I can talk with about community & leadership issues.				
Pre-survey	36%	50%	14%	0%
Post-survey	89%	7%	4%	0%
I have stronger relationships with people in my neighborhood or community.				
Pre-survey	NA	NA	NA	NA
Post-survey	44%	52%	4%	0%
Since the start of the leadership trainings, I have built relationships or joined organizations or networks that support my community work.				
	Yes		No	
Follow-up (N=17)	94%		6%	

Note. For items only asked on the post-survey, NA is written in cells in the pre-survey row. The total for each row may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.

Knowledge of community needs and resources

At post-survey, 54 percent of respondents said they “strongly agree” they are knowledgeable about their community’s needs and challenges, an increase from 14 percent at pre-survey (see Figure 7). Almost 40 percent “strongly agreed” at post-survey that they are familiar with resources available in their community. None of the respondents said this was true at pre-survey. The remaining respondents “somewhat agreed” with these statements at post-survey.

7. Outcomes: Knowledge of community needs and resources (N=28)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I am knowledgeable about my community’s needs and challenges.				
Pre-survey	14%	61%	25%	0%
Post-survey	54%	36%	0%	0%
I am familiar with resources that are available in my community.				
Pre-survey	0%	61%	36%	4%
Post-survey	39%	61%	0%	0%

Note. The total for each row may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.

History-related outcomes

Awareness and use of the Minnesota History Center

A key part of including history in the six-month training was introducing participants to the Minnesota History Center and its resources. The percentage of respondents who “strongly agreed” they are familiar with the resources that are available through the Minnesota History Center increased substantially, from 4 percent at pre-survey to 71 percent at post-survey (see Figure 8). All of the remaining respondents, at post-survey, said they “somewhat agreed” they are familiar with the resources available.

8. Awareness of Minnesota History Center resources (N=28)

I am familiar with the resources that are available through the Minnesota History Center.	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Pre-survey	4%	11%	39%	46%
Post-survey	71%	29%	0%	0%

In regard to visiting the Minnesota History Center or another history site, 21 percent of respondents had done so in the year prior to the start of training, and an additional 46 percent had visited more than a year prior to the training (see Figure 9). Visiting increased during and after the training. Specifically, 50 percent of participants visited the Minnesota History Center or another history site (not including training-related visits) during the six months of training, and 71 percent had visited in the two months between the end of the training and the administration of the follow-up survey.

As to whether respondents used the Minnesota History Center as a resource for their community work, at pre-survey, 4 percent had done so in the past year, and no one had done so before that (see Figure 9). In contrast, the Minnesota History Center was used as a resource for community work by 73 percent of respondents during the six-month leadership training (not including training related visits) and 12 percent used it during the two months between the end of the training and the administration of the follow-up survey.

9. Use of the Minnesota History Center (N=26-28; unless otherwise indicated)

	Yes, in the past year	Yes, more than a year ago	No, never
Pre-survey responses			
Have you ever been to the Minnesota History Center?	21%	46%	32%
Have you ever used the Minnesota History Center as a resource for your community work?	4%	0%	96%
Post-survey responses			
	Yes	No	
Since the start of the program, have you visited the Minnesota History Center or other history sites outside of NLP sessions	50%	50%	
Since the start of the program, have you used the Minnesota History center as a resource for your community work?	73%	27%	
Follow-up survey responses (N=17)			
Since the end of the program, have you visited the Minnesota History Center or other history sites outside of NLP sessions?	71%	29%	
Since the end of the program, have you used the Minnesota History Center as a resource for your community work?	12%	88%	

Note. *The post-survey questions covered the six months of the training, but not any training-related activities Follow-up responses covered the two months period from the conclusion of the training to the administration of the follow-up survey.*

Use of history in community work

The percentage of respondents who believed that understanding a community or cultural group’s history is important to effectively creating change was high at pre-survey and post-survey (89% and 93%, respectively; see Figure 10). At follow up, 94 percent of the 16 respondents who had been involved in community activities since the end of the training said they had considered the history of the community in determining what approach to take to an issue. Eighty percent said that what they learned in the leadership training helped them “a lot” in considering the community’s history and 20 percent said it “helped a little.”

10. Use of history in community work (N=27-28' unless otherwise indicated)

I believe understanding a community or cultural group's history is important to effectively creating change.	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Pre-survey	89%	11%	0%	0%
Post-survey	93%	7%	0%	0%
	Percent of respondent who took action (N=16)*	For those who took action, how helpful was what they learned in leadership training (N=15)**		
Community action at follow-up	Yes	Helped a lot	Helped a little	Did not help
Considered a community's history in determining what approach to take to an issue	89%	80%	20%	0%

* The N represents the number of respondents who had engaged in a community activity or event in the six weeks between post-survey and follow-up survey.

** The N represents the number of respondents who had taken the specific action.

Many respondents stated that knowing a community's history allows one to better understand and appreciate the perspectives of its members. Some noted that learning a community's history can also help one go from being an "outsider" to a "trusted ally." Other respondents said they would be better able to advocate for a community if they know not only what the community wants but why. As one respondent summarized,

Understanding why people do what they do, what's important to them and what they've been through helps me communicate and work with them more efficiently and respectfully.

Another common theme was that an awareness of the past can help one avoid problems and facilitate progress in current community change efforts. Many respondents discussed the importance of not making the same mistake twice. Others stated that what has or has not worked in the past or in another community can help identify what is most likely to work in your community now. As stated by one respondents,

Whether or not people are still alive who experienced historical events, communities have long memories and we can always use lessons learned in the past to influence current and future community work.

Respondents were also asked to name one thing they learned about history or the Minnesota History Center that they will use in their community work. Individual responses were grouped into categories. Responses primarily fell into one or more of three categories: intent to use the resources at the Minnesota History Center, the impact

of a specific Minnesota History Center exhibit, and awareness of the role history plays in current change efforts.

Many respondents said they plan to use Minnesota History Center resources to inform their work. In their comments, respondents primarily emphasized the vast amount of information available. In addition, a few respondents were specifically appreciative of the on-line resources and learning how to do the research. As one respondent stated,

There are so many excellent resources there! The librarians were eager to help us find answers to our research questions.

Another common theme was the impact of a specific exhibit on participants' perspectives or plans. Respondents varied as to what they learned from the exhibits, but underlying most was an increased awareness of the richness and/or difficulties experienced in a particular era or by a particular group and an increased understanding of the influence of history on each of us. As two respondents wrote,

I really enjoyed the Open House exhibit at the Minnesota History Center...I enjoyed realizing what a history Minnesota has – rich with immigration, culture, and a mix of family styles.

The 1968 exhibit and the following discussion helped me realize that we are a product of our generation/time and it helped me realize in my work with youth that the approach I use with them should consider the social, political, and media influences on their attitudes...i.e., to avoid cross generational misunderstanding and improve communication.

Relatedly, learning the effects that history has on people's perspectives and how history can inform community change efforts was also cited by several respondents as something they will apply to their community work. Respondents noted that history can help shape communication and community change strategies and that there are multiple aspects of history to consider. As one respondent noted,

Where to begin!!! Every aspect of history is needed in order to have a better understanding of neighborhood, policies, and communities. Let me tell you [staff person] made me believe the importance of history.

Participant satisfaction

Satisfaction with the six-month leadership training

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the six-month leadership training. Overall, respondents were satisfied with the training. Ninety-six percent of respondents “strongly agreed” NLP staff were sensitive to the different backgrounds of participants (see Figure 11). In addition, 93 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” that NLP staff provided a safe space for group members to participate and share their opinions and that what they learned in NLP will help them to be more effective in their community work. In terms of the written materials, 86 percent of respondents “strongly agreed” they were useful. Slightly over 80 percent said they “strongly agree” they are satisfied with the quality of the training. The remaining respondents “somewhat agreed” these statements were true.

11. Satisfaction with NLP (N=28)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
The staff were sensitive to different backgrounds of people in the group.	96%	4%	0%	0%
NLP provided a safe space to participate and share my opinions.	93%	7%	0%	0%
What I learned in the trainings will help me be more effective in my community work.	93%	7%	0%	0%
The written materials I received in the trainings are useful.	86%	14%	0%	0%
I am satisfied with the quality of the trainings.	82%	18%	0%	0%

Helpfulness of specific training sessions

Along with their overall satisfaction, respondents were asked to rate the helpfulness of each individual training session. The session on navigating city councils and local government and the “Intercultural communication and conflict fluency” session were rated either “very helpful” or “helpful” by all respondents (see Figure 12). All but four of the remaining sessions were reported to be either “very helpful” or “helpful” by between 91 and 97 percent of respondents. Although the majority of people felt each of the sessions were helpful, the sessions with the lowest proportion of respondents identifying them as helpful were “Participatory meeting facilitation” (74%), “Exploring our community’s history” (78%), “Understanding conflict and conflict resolution” (78%), and “Exploring the ways that change affects our community” (81%).

12. Helpfulness of specific sessions

	N	Very helpful	Helpful	A little helpful	Not helpful
Navigating district councils, city, and county government	22	82%	18%	0%	0%
Intercultural communications and conflict fluency	27	78%	22%	0%	0%
Opening retreat	27	89%	7%	4%	0%
Personal values and community work	27	59%	37%	4%	0%
Working inclusively in neighborhoods	27	56%	41%	4%	0%
Orientation session at MHC	25	56%	40%	4%	0%
Leading with others: You can't do it alone	27	67%	26%	7%	0%
Sustaining the journey: Reflecting on lessons learned and preparing for the future	24	54%	38%	8%	0%
Exploring the ways that change affects our community	26	46%	35%	15%	4%
Exploring our community's history (Research library)	23	52%	26%	9%	12%
Understanding conflict and conflict resolution	23	39%	39%	22%	0%
Participatory meeting facilitation	27	33%	41%	15%	11%

Note: The total for each row may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.

Respondents also were asked what they liked best about the leadership training. Individual responses were grouped into themes. The most commonly cited themes were the content and the other participants. The specific content cited as most helpful included: leadership skills, learning about the Minnesota History Center and other community resources, learning more about oneself, and communication skills. Two particular comments summarized this theme well,

[The training offered] a ton of information on a wide variety of topics to help us with our involvement in the community.

While I considered myself a person very motivated for change, I lacked effective tools to express myself in a meaningful way. NLP gave me crucial information to make a positive difference in my community.

Many respondents stated that what they liked most about the training were the other participants in their class. The diversity of people in the class was important to many.

I like the diversity of the participants and the knowledge and experience and talent they bring to NLP and the passion everyone brought to make Saint Paul a better city to live in.

Respondents not only appreciated the diversity of their group, but the dynamics among them as well. Specifically, respondents commented on the groups’ willingness to be honest, openness to listening in a respectful atmosphere, and supportiveness of each other. Relatedly, several respondents said they most like the group discussions. In summary, the theme of participants being the best part of the training is characterized well by one respondent’s comment:

The opportunity to meet, get to know, and engage with a diverse group from my community.

Helpfulness of history components

Respondents were also asked to rate the helpfulness of the individual history lessons. “Uncovering Rondo” and the “Open house” exhibits were rated either “very helpful” or “helpful” by all respondents (see Figure 13). Eighty-eight percent of respondents said the “1968 exhibit” was either “very helpful” or “helpful.” The remaining two sessions were identified as “helpful” or “very helpful” by either 79 or 80 percent of respondents.

13. Helpfulness of individual history lessons

	N	Very helpful	Helpful	A little helpful	Not helpful
<i>Uncovering Rondo</i> (Leading with others: You can’t do it alone!)	26	81%	19%	0%	0%
<i>Open House</i> exhibit (orientation)	27	59%	41%	0%	0%
<i>1968 Exhibit</i> (with Coaches)	25	48%	40%	8%	4%
MHS Research Library (Exploring our Community’s History)	24	54%	25%	4%	17%
They Chose Minnesota-immigrants	26	65%	15%	19%	0%

Note: The total for each row may vary from 100 percent due to rounding.

Helpfulness of trainings with regards to continuing community work

In the follow-up survey, participants were asked to describe how their previous participation in the leadership trainings affected how they work in the community. The most common theme mentioned by respondents was the confidence that the trainings had provided them to more actively engage with their community. Others mentioned the helpfulness of specific sessions they initially may not have found useful and how they have helped them in the time since the program ended (i.e. the sessions on successful meetings and strategies to engage with others). More information on the helpfulness of specific sessions can be found in Figure 12.

Suggestions for improvement

Respondents were asked for one or two suggestions on how to improve the six-month leadership training. Individual responses were grouped into themes. The most common themes were as follows: provide opportunities for more and more helpful practice and allow more time for training and networking, as well as increased follow-up after the program has completed.

Many participants wanted more time to practice the skills and apply the knowledge they learned during the training and/or had suggestions for making the practice opportunities more helpful. One common suggestion was to have participants begin the training with a scenario that they use as the focus of their practice throughout the program. The scenario could be a real situation the person hopes to impact or a situation crafted by the staff or attendee. Other suggestions included having participants plan and facilitate part or all of a session, using more case studies, and providing additional opportunities for group practice.

Another common suggestion for improving the program was to provide more time for training. A few respondents felt that too many topics were covered too quickly. These respondents wanted more time for content to be presented, discussed, and, as noted above, practiced/applied. Respondents differed in their ideas for creating more time. Individual suggestions included holding the same number of sessions over a longer period so there is more time to apply information in between meetings, having more sessions, and having longer sessions. In addition, one respondent suggested having “mini-sessions” in which smaller groups of respondents get together between formal sessions.

In the follow-up survey, some participants also suggested hosting a follow-up event, or creating an online forum to encourage individuals to continue to interact after the program ended.

Recommendations

The following recommendations, based on the findings of this evaluation, are presented for consideration by NLP staff.

- This year, the vast majority of participants came into the program committed to engaging in community work, compared to previous years in which the percentage was lower. Continue to track this through the evaluation and, if the trend continues, consider if there are implications for the curriculum.
- Many respondents appreciated the diversity among the training participants and the opportunities to work with and learn from each other. Continue selecting participants that differ in their backgrounds and in their current situations and consider increasing time for group interaction to help participants build their knowledge and skills.
- Continue, as well, other parts of the program that had a clear impact according to participants, such as the diversity component and the inclusion of historical resources.
- At the end of programming, outcomes related to the participants' own communities, such as building relationships with other community members, understanding the community's needs and challenges, and familiarity with local resources, were achieved by a smaller proportion of respondents than other outcomes. Consider having more assignments and activities focused on these goals.
- Identify strategies for providing more in-depth exploration of topics including more time for discussion and practice, such as making the training longer or providing opportunities between sessions for processing information.
- Consider having respondents select a real or imagined scenario at the beginning of the training that will be the focus of their practice throughout the training.
- Identify and implement ways to improve the sessions considered helpful by the lowest percentage of respondents (i.e., "Participatory meeting facilitation," "Exploring our community's history," and "Understanding conflict and conflict resolution".)