

Neighborhood Leadership Programs' Leadership Skills for Success evaluation

Self-assessments of participants in 2009

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Key findings

Participant outcomes

Participants demonstrated positive outcomes in all three areas: knowledge and skills, social relationships, and attitudes and behavioral intentions.

Most notable, all participants agreed at the end of the program that they are knowledgeable about communicating and working across cultures, and are familiar with resources available in their community. In comparison, 68 percent and 72 percent, respectively, agreed with these statements at the onset. All reported being more committed to working with others to address common issues as a result of the program. Finally, 96 percent agreed to feeling confident to take on leadership roles in their community, and being aware of their own potential usefulness as a community leader, compared with 68 percent and 80 percent, respectively at the onset.

Participant satisfaction

Participants in the Neighborhood Leadership Program’s Leadership Skills for Success program were very satisfied with the program, particularly with the NLP staff. All agreed that the staff was sensitive to cultural differences, and treated them with respect. Almost all (92%) rated the coaching “good” or “excellent.”

In terms of the individual training sessions, “participatory facilitation” session was rated “most helpful” by the largest percentage of participants, whereas “Organizing for action” received the highest percentage (29%) of “least helpful” rating.

Recommendations

The results of this evaluation indicate The Leadership Skills for Success program is having positive impacts for participants, and that participants are satisfied. However, 12 percent of participants disagreed with the following two statements, indicating possible areas for improvement:

- I have knowledge of my community’s issues and systems to address issues.
- I have stronger relationships with people in my neighborhood or community.

Additionally, 40 percent reported they only somewhat agree that the NLP addressed their personal leadership goals, and a slightly higher percentage reported the coaching

experience was “good,” rather than excellent (48% compared with 44%). This indicates components of the program the participants were less satisfied with.

Finally, the following five training sessions were rated as “least helpful” by 20-30 percent of the participants, indicating sessions that may deserve future review and revising by the NLP staff:

- Exploring St Paul Neighborhoods; leadership styles; and self reflection with masks¹
- Working inclusively in neighborhoods
- Personal values and community work and coaching
- Action planning for community work
- Organizing for action in your community

¹ Though 24 percent rated this session as least helpful, it was rated most helpful by 72 percent, so revisions should be made with caution.

Background

Neighborhood Leadership Programs overview

The Neighborhood Leadership Programs (NLP) reflects a shared, collaborative, leadership model and the philosophy that all people can be leaders. NLP believes leadership is inspiring and working effectively with others to accomplish shared goals and that the purpose of it is to develop and sustain a healthy and thriving community.

The Leadership Skills for Success program is a six-month training course where participants come together twice per month to build knowledge, skills and connections for effective neighborhood leadership. It is designed for community members who want to:

- Gain greater insight and awareness of themselves.
- Develop additional skills and build working relationships with others.
- Enhance commitment and engagement in meaningful action in the community.

The Leadership Skills for Success program has the following goals for participants:

- Learn about themselves and how they can effectively contribute to community.
- Learn concrete skills to advance their work in community.
- Be exposed to opportunities for community involvement.
- Meet others from a broad range of backgrounds, ages and cultures.
- Connect with others who are actively involved in strengthening their community.

Evaluation overview

Wilder Research prepared this evaluation using self-assessments completed by participants in NLP's Leadership Skills for Success program. Using pre and post surveys developed by NLP staff, participants rated their knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to different aspects of leadership. Specific leadership-related topics included cross-cultural communication, community concerns and resources, leadership styles and values, and relationships with other community leaders.

Of the 29 participants in NLP's Leadership Skills for Success program in 2009, 25 (86%) completed both a pre-survey and a post-survey. Pre-surveys were administered at the beginning of programming and post-surveys during the final training session. Survey data were tallied by NLP staff and the results given to Wilder Research staff for reporting.

This evaluation describes the extent to which these individuals reported changes in their knowledge, attitudes, and skills as a result of their participation in the program.

Participant outcomes

Knowledge and skills

Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree that they have specific leadership-related skills and knowledge at both the beginning of programming (the pre-survey) and the end (the post-survey). In all cases, the percentage of participants who somewhat or strongly agree that they have the measured knowledge and skills increased at the end of programming (see Figure 1). The largest increases were in the following areas.

- At post-survey, all participants somewhat or strongly agree that they are knowledgeable about communicating and working across cultures and other types of difference, an increase from 68 percent at pre-survey. Notably, the percentage that strongly agreed increased from 8 percent at pre-survey to 52 percent at post-survey.
- At post-survey, all participants somewhat or strongly agree that they are familiar with resources available in their community, an increase from 72 percent at pre-survey. The percentage that strongly agreed increased from 8 percent at pre-survey to 56 percent at post-survey.
- In the pre-survey, 76 percent of participants somewhat or strongly agree that they are aware of their own personal values and leadership style. This increased to 96 percent at the post-survey. The percentage that strongly agreed increased from 16 percent at pre-survey to 60 percent at post-survey.
- At post-survey, 88 percent of participants somewhat or strongly agree that they have knowledge of their community's issues and systems to address these issues, an increase from 64 percent at pre-survey.

At the end of programming, participants were also asked if, as a result of participating in the training, they feel better prepared to help their neighborhood or community. All participants agree that they do. In addition, 92 percent say that they are more aware of other people's perspectives on community issues.

1. Knowledge and skills (N=25)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Missing
I am aware of my own personal values and leadership style.					
Pre-survey	16%	60%	24%	0%	0%
Post-survey	60%	36%	4%	0%	0%
I am familiar with resources that are available in my community.					
Pre-survey	8%	64%	16%	12%	0%
Post-survey	56%	44%	0%	0%	0%
I am knowledgeable about communicating and working across cultures and other types of difference.					
Pre-survey	8%	60%	24%	8%	0%
Post-survey	52%	48%	0%	0%	0%
I have knowledge of my community's issues and systems to address issues.					
Pre-survey	24%	40%	20%	12%	4%
Post-survey	40%	48%	12%	0%	0%
I have strong interpersonal communication and conflict resolution skills.					
Pre-survey	24%	64%	12%	0%	0%
Post-survey	52%	44%	4%	0%	0%
I am able to provide and gain support from other leaders.					
Pre-survey	48%	40%	12%	0%	0%
Post-survey	64%	36%	0%	0%	0%
I am more aware of other people's perspectives on community issues.					
Pre-survey	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Post-survey	68%	24%	8%	0%	0%
I feel better prepared to help my neighborhood or community.					
Pre-survey	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Post-survey	84%	16%	0%	0%	0%

Note. For items only asked on the post-survey, N/A is written in cells in the pre-survey row.

Social relationships

Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree that they have developed relationship with others. In all cases, the participants who somewhat or strongly agree that they have developed relationships with others increased (see Figure 2).

At post-survey, 92 percent of participants strongly agree that they have people they can talk with about community and leadership issues, an increase from 40 percent at pre-survey.

At the end of programming, participants were also asked if, as a result of participating in the training, they feel more committed to working with others to address common issues. All participants agree that they do. In addition, 84 percent say they strongly agree.

2. Social relationships (N=25)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I have people I can talk with about community and leadership issues.				
Pre-survey	40%	52%	0%	8%
Post-survey	92%	8%	0%	0%
I have stronger relationships with people in my neighborhood or community.				
Pre-survey	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Post-survey	52%	36%	8%	4%
I am more committed to working with others to address common issues.				
Pre-survey	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Post-survey	84%	16%	0%	0%

Note. For items only asked on the post-survey, N/A is written in cells in the pre-survey row.

Attitudes and behavioral intentions

Participants were asked to rate the extent to which their attitudes or intentions have changed. In all cases, the participants showed greater awareness, confidence, and intentions to make changes (see Figure 3).

At post-survey, 96 percent of participants somewhat or strongly agree that they feel confident to take on leadership roles in their community, an increase from 68 percent at pre-survey. Notably, the percentage that strongly agreed increased from 28 percent at pre-survey to 64 percent at post-survey.

At the end of programming, participants were also asked if, as a result of participating in the training, they better understand the value of a diverse variety of opinions, viewpoints, and approaches. Ninety-two percent of participants agree that they do. In addition, 92 percent say that they plan on participating in neighborhood or community projects.

3. Attitudes and behavioral intentions (N=25)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I am aware of my own potential usefulness as a community leader.				
Pre-survey	36%	44%	20%	0%
Post-survey	48%	48%	4%	0%
I feel confident to take on leadership roles in my community.				
Pre-survey	28%	40%	28%	4%
Post-survey	64%	32%	4%	0%
I better understand the value of a diverse variety of opinions, viewpoints, and approaches.				
Pre-survey	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Post-survey	84%	8%	8%	0%
I plan on participating in neighborhood or community projects.				
Pre-survey	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Post-survey	76%	16%	8%	0%
I intent to seek out leadership positions (such as on committees and./or boards).				
Pre-survey	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Post-survey	60%	32%	8%	0%

Note. For items only asked on the post-survey, N/A is written in cells in the pre-survey row.

Satisfaction with programming

Satisfaction with NLP

Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the program. In all areas, participants were satisfied. Notably, 96 percent of participants strongly agreed that the NLP staff was sensitive to cultural differences; 96 percent of participants also strongly agreed that the staff treated them respectfully. However, only 60 percent of participants strongly agreed that NLP addressed their personal leadership goals.

4. Satisfaction with NLP (N=25)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
NLP staff was sensitive to cultural differences in the group.	96%	4%	0%	0%
NLP staff treated me respectfully throughout the program.	96%	4%	0%	0%
NLP provided a safe space to participate and share my opinions.	88%	12%	0%	0%
Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the NLP.	72%	28%	0%	0%
Overall, NLP addressed my personal leadership goals.	60%	40%	0%	0%

Satisfaction with coaching

Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the coaching. The largest number of participants (48%) rated the coaching “good,” though a similar percentage (44%) also rated it “excellent.” A few people (8%) rated the coaching as “fair.”

5. Satisfaction with coaching (N=25)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
How would you rate the coaching experience?	44%	48%	8%	0%

Helpfulness of specific training sessions

Finally, participants were asked to rate the helpfulness of the individual training sessions. The “participatory facilitation” session was rated “most helpful” by the largest percentage of participants (73%), followed by “exploring St. Paul neighborhoods (72%). Two others were rated “most helpful” by two-thirds of participants: “intercultural communications,” and “reflections on leadership.” “Organizing for action” received the highest percentage of “least helpful” rates – almost a third (29%). Finally, participants had mixed responses to two sessions – “Exploring St. Paul” and “working inclusively.” In both these cases, over half rated them as “most helpful,” yet almost a quarter rated them “least helpful,” indicating some topics are not as universally helpful. In the case of the “Exploring St. Paul Neighborhoods; leadership styles; and self reflection with masks” session, this was actually three sessions held during a retreat. The mixed responses may be due to the fact that people had different responses to the three separate topics and were not responding the retreat event as a whole.

6. Helpfulness of specific training sessions (N=25)

	Number of participants who attended	Percent who rated session as “most helpful”	Percent who rated session as “least helpful”
Participatory facilitation	22	73%	0%
Exploring St Paul Neighborhoods; leadership styles; and self reflection with masks	25	72%	24%
Intercultural communications and conflict	24	67%	8%
Reflection on leadership and next steps in community leadership	24	67%	8%
Navigating city government	23	65%	4%
Working inclusively in neighborhoods	23	57%	22%
Understanding conflict and conflict resolution and coaching	22	55%	9%
Team building and coaching	24	50%	13%
Personal values and community work and coaching	24	46%	25%
Action planning for community work	25	44%	20%
Organizing for action in your community	24	33%	29%

Note. *Multiple responses were possible as participants were asked to identify the three sessions that were most helpful and the three that were least helpful.*