

# COMMUNITY VOICES

## *LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR COMMUNITY DECISION MAKING*

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**N.C. A&T**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

**COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION**

# Introduction

- Designed to assist communities with building local leadership capacity
- Targets those who often *do not have a voice*, who feel that their *voices are unheard*, or are *unaware that they need a voice* in community decision-making
- Funded by W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- Represents one of our longest training programs (*first implemented in mid-1990s*)

## Program Objectives

- Develop new groups of community leaders who can work together with other citizens to identify, investigate and solve problems in their communities using resources available to them
- Develop a shared group leadership process at the organizational and community level
- Draw from the ideas and experiences of the group using participatory learning strategies

# Locally Driven Process for Building New Leadership

- Designed for groups of 15-20 participants
- Designed to be run by local volunteers and organization partners. Detailed instructions provide guidance for local coordinators
- Self-contained, comprehensive
- Local coordinators recruit participants, create program schedule, facilitate sessions, secure materials and oversee communications
- Groups come up with practical ways to address community issues
- Led by an actionable, self-directed process

## **Unit 1: Building a Community Vision Using a Shared Group Leadership Approach**

- Participants learn how to:
  - work together as a group
  - develop a shared community vision of what they want their community to be in the future
  - connect the vision to community strengths and resources

## **Unit 2: Communicating Our Vision through Working Together**

- Participants understand the:
  - Listen and respect the ideas of others
  - Make group decisions using consensus
  - Communicate their ideas and visions to other groups

## **Unit 3: Working on Our Vision – Step by Step**

- Participants learn how to:
  - solve problems using a six-step problem solving model
  - select three problems from their community vision and learn how to investigate the problems including locating available resources
  - determine appropriate solutions to those problems

## **Unit 4: Building a Community and County Organization to Implement Our Community Action Plan**

- Participants understand the:
  - Importance of having an organizational structure to continue their work and following through with action plans to address community issues they are concerned about

- **First Phase:**

- Introduce the program to an organization and/or community group, which helps to build a structure to support the Community Voices program (*once it is implemented*)

- **Second Phase:**

- Involves selecting community training sites and recruiting members at the community or organizational level who can be trained to serve as co-facilitators for the Community Voices program

- **Final Phase:**

- Involves recruiting members from your community who will participate in the program
- Plan a county-wide ‘kick-off’ event for the first training session
- Provide ongoing support and assistance to the training team who will be co-facilitating the training sessions
- Prepare for an action forum and present their ideas to the wider community

# What Will the Group Sessions Be Like?

- Are usually made up of about 15-20 people from different segments of the community
- Typically meet together once a week for about 8-12 weeks\*
- Led by a facilitator (adult volunteers) whose job is to help the group stay on the topic and work toward shared understanding
- Look at issues from a broad perspective -- explore common concerns and create a shared vision for their community's future
- Come up with practical ways to address the issue or design a community-led project/program
- Work with other resource people in the community to form a strategy to address neighborhood's issues and needs



# What Outcomes Should You Expect

- Improved self esteem
- Attitude conveying ability to positively affect community needs
- Increased knowledge of context, problems/issues, community history
- Build social and critical thinking skills
- Opportunities for diverse groups to emerge as leaders
- Increased engagement in civic issues
- Youth feel more comfortable in participating in scheduled activities and voicing their opinions
- More social interaction

## How Can You Become Involved?

- **Participants:** Participate in the grassroots leadership academy. Help identify and recruit residents with the community to be part of training sessions.
- **Community Facilitators:** Sign up to participate in the train-the-trainer program as a co-facilitator and agree to facilitate training sessions (*as they are being conducted*)
  - » Training Date: TBA (once we have agreement by all parties involved)
- **Supporters:** Spread the word about this upcoming events; help support\* and/or plan the “Kick-off” and subsequent training sessions; recruit participants to the program

\*Support the program through in-kind donations such as providing transportation, childcare, meals, venue space (to host sessions), etc. may be needed

# Any Questions?

*Additional Contact/Follow-Up:*

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