

Blandin Community Leadership Program



Blandin Foundation™
STRENGTHENING RURAL MINNESOTA

Our Mission

Our mission is to be a trusted partner and advocate to strengthen rural Minnesota communities, especially the Grand Rapids area.

Our Vision

Healthy, inclusive rural communities.



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Blandin Community Leadership Program (BCLP)

Rural communities thrive when leaders take on the responsibility for the health of their community's future. BCLP helps emerging and established leaders understand more deeply the dynamics of their communities, the skills of working together effectively, and the critical role shared leadership plays in building a healthy community.

All BCLP participants share one thing in common: a commitment to their community and a willingness to be involved in shaping its future.

BCLP trains community leaders to be more effective at framing community issues, building and sustaining social capital and mobilizing for community action.

Making a Difference

Since its inception in 1985, BCLP has served over 7000 leaders from more than 600 rural Minnesota communities. Across the state, these alumni continue to champion projects that build inclusive communities, create economic development opportunities, and deal creatively with health, housing, and education issues, among others.

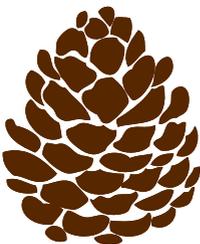
The BCLP Approach

Community leadership is different from organizational leadership. It is more complex, requiring different skill sets. Within this context of leadership, how things get done in community is as important as what gets done. Energy builds as people see new possibilities in themselves, in one another and in their community. BCLP is centered on three core competencies:

- **Framing:** The creation of shared meaning about issues affecting community health that influences action choices.
- **Building social capital:** A network of relationships for getting things done for a healthy community.
- **Mobilizing:** Engaging enough people, resources, and power to get the job done.

Being and working in a retreat environment fosters healthy relationships among participants that enable them to go back to their community and work together more effectively. The action-oriented curriculum covers a full range of topics, including:

- Interpersonal communication
- Conflict management
- Community power analysis
- Community mobilization
- Building social capital across personality differences
- Working effectively in small groups



“There is a certain point in the week when participants begin to say, I see things differently. I see possibility in new ways. I see possibility.”

- Victor Klimoski, BCLP Trainer

Eight Days of Training

Residential Retreat - Five Days

The retreat is held at Sugar Lake Lodge south of Grand Rapids, Minnesota. The retreat is not a workshop or seminar. It is a “break in the action”, a time to step back and look forward, to learn, reflect, and talk candidly in a comfortable, confidential environment about what is happening, or not happening, in community life.

At the start of the retreat, participants are asked challenging questions like these to help them set personal leadership goals and frame community issues in subsequent sessions:

- What difference do I want to make in my community?
- What am I willing to do to make that difference?

Workshops - Three, One-Day Sessions

All the workshops will be held near the cohort’s community and give participants an opportunity to reconnect with the entire group, review the curriculum from the retreat and further their learning on how to be an effective community leader. Each workshop will focus on specific areas of leadership:

- Workshop I: Participants reflect on their leadership plan from retreat and gain a better understanding of the potential impact difference has on themselves and others. In addition, participants learn and practice various tools and skills for working across differences.
- Workshop II: The cohort identifies changes coming to the community and learns critical thinking skills around change to help them navigate what is to come. Participants will also continue to deepen social capital within the cohort.
- Workshop III: Participants learn how to apply a model of evaluation to their leadership projects and how to cultivate resilience as a community leader. The session closes with a graduation ceremony to which local alumni are invited.

Participants are expected to attend the retreat and all workshops.

Who Should Participate

The program is designed for emerging and established community leaders who want to be more effective at developing and sustaining the health of their communities. Other characteristics include:

- Actively involved in community life
- Credible and open-minded
- Open to risk-taking
- Passionate about their community's future
- Willing to work collaboratively to promote healthy community

Anyone that is engaged in the chosen community can apply for BCLP. A recruitment process is used to ensure each community reaches all dimensions of the community. Our nine common dimensions include:

- Life-Long Learning
- Inclusion
- Recreational & Artistic Opportunities
- Environmental Stewardship
- Infrastructure & Services
- Safety & Security
- Community Leadership
- Economic Opportunity
- Spirituality & Wellness

The selected 24-person cohort will represent a cross-section of the community in terms of age (must be at least 21 years of age), gender identity, ethnicity, occupation and involvement.

What Does It Cost

The cost to participants is their time away from work and family as well as any travel expenses. The Blandin Foundation uses \$4,000 to cover the entire cost of each participant's tuition, food, and lodging for the five-day residential retreat training program and the three follow-up workshops located in your local community area.

Once selected, Rural Leadership Access Funds can be applied for through the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation to help provide some support that will enable you to attend the program.

**“Leadership - you have to do it yourself,
but you can’t do it alone.”**



For More Information

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