

# Evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program 2009 Report



Tillamook County Cohort 2

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**Evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program,  
2009 Report**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF 2009 FORD INSTITUTE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

In 2009, The Oregon State University evaluation team focused its evaluation of the impact of the Ford Institute Leadership Program on a sub-set of the evaluation questions that will ultimately gauge the impact of the program on individuals, organizations, and communities. In particular, questions which address the short- and mid-term impacts of the program on individuals were the focus of 2009 evaluation efforts.

## **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program develop effective community leaders who apply what they learned?**

An analysis of the three types of skills taught during the Leadership Development class found that graduates use leadership skills most often in the year after graduating (about once a month); followed by community building skills and project management skills, which are used occasionally. Leadership graduates use their leadership skills in a variety of settings, most often in community settings and within organizations.

The majority of graduates use their leadership, community building, and project management skills more often after the class than they did before, and they feel that the class contributed significantly to their ability to function as leaders in this way. In particular, graduates feel that the class equips them with skills and tools, teaches them to appreciate people with different personalities, gives them self- confidence, provides them an important opportunity to network, and builds their community awareness – all of which help them to be better community leaders in the year after the class.

Graduates who feel highly skilled or likely to do activities at the conclusion of the class actually engage in the activities more often than their classmates who felt less skilled or likely after the class ends.

Some participants describe barriers that prevent fully engaging in community work, including: personal concerns and demands; external challenges faced by the community; being heavily engaged in community work before the class; and feeling burned out from the class project (due to its length/duration or lack of participation by other class members). Many graduates engage in community work and leadership in spite of barriers they encounter.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?**

The positive effects of the Leadership Development class on participants' civic engagement are evident during the first year following the class. Graduates describe their activity in civic life after the class as occasional. They volunteer, vote, work in community groups, fundraise for local causes, and promote local events. The extent of civic engagement activity increased for about half of graduates, and the majority of participants attribute their ability to engage effectively in civic life to the leadership class itself.

The leadership class successfully builds the motivation of participants to engage in civic life, and those who are highly motivated at the end of the training are more active the following year than their less motivated peers. In addition, the larger the Leadership Development class size was and the more organizations an individual is affiliated with, the more frequently participants tend to engage in civic life in the year following the class.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?**

Focus groups in five different hub-communities revealed that the Leadership Program has helped build networks of community leaders in rural communities. Past participants feel that the number, diversity, and intensity of their social networks have increased because of their involvement with the Leadership Program. These networks have helped participants personally, professionally, and in their community work.

## **Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

The capacity of individuals to have an effect on community organizations is being built by the program through the Effective Organizations (EO) training. EO participants feel that their knowledge of strategic planning, operational management, and resource development and management (particularly strategic planning) is increased by the training. In fact, participants who had the least amount of knowledge about these topics before the training felt that it increased their knowledge more than those who had greater knowledge at the onset. Many participants feel the training gave them confidence to use organizational management skills and tools, but also gave them access to a greater network of organizations and individuals to collaborate with or draw on as resources later.

Participants expect to apply the skills and tools they learned to become more effective in their organizations, implement effective organizational strategies including strategic planning and board management, increase the role of their organizations in the community, and discuss what they have learned with others in their organizations. Participants reported that the training results in the greatest increases in their likelihoods of participating in the strategic recruitment of board members and discussing strategies for improving organizational effectiveness with others at their organization.

Effective Organizations participants are optimistic that the training will help their organizations become stronger in the long run. Primarily, they feel their organizations will become more focused, have better functioning boards, be better able to work together as an organization, be more sustainable into the future, and be better at obtaining and managing resources. These findings suggest changes and improvements are likely in organizations, so long as training participants engage in the organizational management process and are able to affect operations. Future evaluation efforts will focus on assessing the changes that are actually made in organizations as a result of the Leadership Program.

## **Suggestions for the future**

Ford Institute Leadership Program participants are overwhelmingly grateful to The Ford Family Foundation for providing educational experiences and fiscal support to their communities. Suggestions for improvements related to class projects, the participant nomination process, and interactions between cohorts. Suggestions for continuing support related to providing opportunities for regional and local collaboration, additional training, scholarships, and all-youth classes or trainings.

## **2010 Evaluation Plan**

The next year of evaluation will assess the impact of the Leadership Program on all past participants (2003-2008). An assessment of trainer effectiveness and the possible relation of trainer to outcomes will be investigated. Case studies of specific communities will untangle the relation of local initiatives, collaboration, and leadership development to community vitality.

# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

In 2003, The Ford Family Foundation initiated a comprehensive training program designed to increase the vitality of rural communities in Oregon and Siskiyou County, California. The core strategy was training to increase the leadership skills of individuals from rural communities, the effectiveness of rural community organizations, and the degree of collaboration in rural communities. From 2003 to 2009, over 2,500 individuals from 56 communities have participated in the Leadership Program.

In 2007, the Ford Family Foundation contracted with a team of evaluators from Oregon State University to design and conduct an outcome evaluation focused on the results of the leadership training program. Specifically the evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program was to examine the extent to which the program builds:

- More effective community leaders,
- Stronger networks of leaders within and across rural communities,
- Stronger community organizations and networks of organizations, and ultimately
- Vital rural communities.

In order to assess these outcomes, the team of evaluators from Oregon State University (OSU) began working collaboratively with the Ford Institute for Community Building to design a robust outcome evaluation. This evaluation began with the review and analysis of all evaluation data that had been collected from 2003 through 2007. The OSU team developed a comprehensive written report summarizing the evaluation findings for 2003-2007<sup>1</sup>. Submitted in January 2008, this 84-page report included extensive recommendations for both future programming and future evaluation of the Leadership Program.

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<sup>1</sup> Clara Pratt, Lena Etuk, Cheryl Peters, Sally Bowman, Denise Rennekamp, and Michaella Sektnan (January 31, 2008) *Evaluation Report Ford Institute Leadership Program, 2003-2007*. Oregon State University, Extension Family and Community Development Program.



Based on the evaluation recommendations contained in the 2007 report, in 2008 the OSU evaluation team established a systematic evaluation structure for the Leadership Program. The system was designed with the input of Ford Institute for Community Building staff and other stakeholders. Logic models and research questions were designed to clarify the desired program outcomes and indicators of the leadership training for individuals, cohorts, organizations, and communities. In addition, reliable and valid data collection tools were designed to assess attributes of and outcomes for individuals. Data collection methods yielded both quantitative (statistical) and qualitative information about the impact of the Leadership Program on individuals. In April 2009, the Ford Institute for Community Building received a report which explained the findings from 2008 and recommendations for future evaluation of the Leadership Program.<sup>2</sup>

### **Major Accomplishments**

Based on the recommendations laid out in the 2008 report, the OSU evaluation team focused its efforts in 2009 on answering a core sub-set of evaluation questions and establishing data collection and analysis systems to answer another sub-set of evaluation questions for 2010.

Although insight into additional questions was also gained, data analysis focused on exploring the following research questions in 2009:

- Does the Leadership Program develop effective community leaders who apply what they learned?
- Does the Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?
- Does the Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?
- Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?
- Does the Leadership Program transform individual participants, organizations, and communities above and beyond the intended outcomes?

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<sup>2</sup> Michaella Sektnan, Lena Etuk, Clara Pratt, Sally Bowman, and Denise Rennekamp. April 2009. "Evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program: 2008 Report"

- Do outcomes vary by aspects/attributes of the program, individual participant, organization, or community?

In order to answer these research questions, data were collected and analyzed from different groups of Leadership Program participants using quantitative and qualitative methodologies:

- Information was collected from Spring and Fall 2009 Leadership Development (LD) and Effective Organizations (EO) training participants using survey instruments designed in 2008.
- A survey instrument was designed, pre-tested, and implemented to follow up with Fall 2008 LD participants 12 months after they completed the training.
- Focus groups with past participants were conducted to assess the impact of the Leadership Program on networking and collaboration.

In 2009, the OSU evaluation team also designed, pre-tested, and implemented a survey of past participants (2003 through Spring 2008) to assess the longer-term impact of the Leadership Program. This dataset will be analyzed in 2010 to answer a number of evaluation questions including:

- When do changes in leadership, community organizations, and/or community vitality occur and are they sustained over time?

In the latter portion of 2009, the team received and assembled a new Leadership Development trainer dataset to assess participants' ratings of trainer effectiveness and explore any association between trainer type and leadership outcomes. The analysis of this Leadership Development trainer dataset will occur in 2010.

Finally, in 2009 the OSU team planned and designed a case study approach of specific communities which will be implemented in 2010 to answer these questions:

- Does local action, collaboration, and/or leadership have an impact on the local economy, society, and environment in rural communities? How has the Leadership Program contributed to these outcomes?

## **METHODS**

The following sections outline the qualitative and quantitative methods used to assess the outcomes of the Leadership Program in 2009. Results are discussed on page 18.

### **Leadership Development 12-Month Follow-Up Survey**

In order to gauge the application of leadership skills over time, a 12-month follow-up survey was created by the OSU evaluation team for distribution to all Fall 2008 cohort participants. This survey contained questions concerning the application of leadership, community building, and project management skills, as well as participation in civic activities, and perceived challenges to community leadership.

#### ***Procedure***

The survey was implemented using a multi-method approach. Starting in late January 2010, the survey was distributed via the internet using SurveyMonkey™ online survey software. All members of the target population were sent an email informing them of their selection for the survey, along with an explanation of the survey, and a link to the SurveyMonkey™ survey. Upon clicking on the SurveyMonkey™ link, respondents were directed to a web-page that again explained the purpose of survey, but also included an informed consent check-box.

Respondents who agreed to participate (by checking the informed consent box) were directed to the first page of the survey, while those who did not agree were directed to a screen with the OSU evaluation team contact information and removed from the survey.

In order to track the survey responses by individuals, each survey respondent was assigned a unique survey number. Individuals who did not complete the survey received specific follow-ups. In particular, two reminder emails were sent to participants – one week and two weeks after the initial email.

Three and a half weeks after the initial email, the target population database was matched to the survey number of the returned surveys. Individuals who returned surveys via SurveyMonkey™ were marked as completed and removed from the population database. Those

who had not returned surveys were sent a survey packet via US mail. The packet contained the following documents:

- A cover letter explaining survey
- 2 copies of the informed consent form (required by OSU Internal Review Board)
- The 12-month follow-up survey
- A stamped and pre-addressed return envelope for the completed survey

One week after the survey was delivered to an individual via mail, a follow-up thank you and reminder postcard was mailed. The postcard served to remind those who had forgotten, to return their survey as soon as possible, and to thank those who had already returned their survey. Three weeks after the initial survey packet was mailed to individuals, the survey number of respondents who had returned the survey were removed from the list. Those remaining in the database received a second follow-up letter and replacement survey packet one week later. The mailed questionnaire contained the exact same questions as the online survey. Any deviations between the two survey forms were merely due to formatting constraints.

Data collection for the 12-month follow-up survey extended from late January to early April 2010. At the completion of the survey implementation, OSU employees entered the information from the completed paper questionnaires into the SurveyMonkey™ database. In addition to the survey number mentioned above, participants were also asked to create a unique identifier that they can recall for future surveys (first and middle initial, date of birth, e.g. JS120367) when completing this survey instrument. This ID code allows the OSU research team to match participant's responses on the 12-month follow-up with previous surveys completed by each individual (LD Outcome Survey and Application).

### ***Response Rate***

The 12-month follow-up survey was sent to all participants from the Fall 2008 Leadership Development classes, for a total population size of 302. At least one source of contact

information (email address) was available for all but one participant. In the first round, 264 were sent invitations to participate via email. Of those, a total of 150 replied online using SurveyMonkey™. Subsequently, 167 participants were sent the survey via US mail, with 57 replying by mail. Nine (3%) participants opted out of participation by either selecting the opt out link in SurveyMonkey™, declining consent on the survey itself, or notifying the OSU evaluation team that they did not wish to participate. Combining both collection methods, a total of 207 participants responded to the survey, for a response rate of 69%.

Data from the 12-month survey were then matched with data previously collected throughout the evaluation, using the individual's unique ID code. This included data from the Leadership Development (LD) class application, the LD 4<sup>th</sup> week-end outcome survey, and FICB databases. By combining the data, the evaluation is able to capture a more comprehensive picture of individuals that participate in the program and what factors are related to program outcomes. A total of 163 Fall 2008 cohort members had data from all sources. Throughout the report, findings related to the leadership development class will be based on this sub-population who had data from all sources.

### ***Data Analysis***

Quantitative data from the Leadership Development 12-month follow-up survey were analyzed to assess a number of outcomes:

- Application of skills and ideas emphasized in the Leadership Program
- Change in activity level
- Settings of skill application
- The relationship between intention to apply skills and actual application
- The contribution of the Leadership Program to the activities of past participants
- Barriers to leadership

In order to evaluate these outcomes, quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive techniques including calculating means, running cross-tabulations, conducting dependent t-tests, running correlations, and doing Ordinary Least Squares regression. Dependent t-tests

were used to calculate whether there was a significant difference between the average frequency of specific skills or activities over the past year. Significant results indicate there is a statistical difference in how often different types of skills or activities were used ( $p < .05$ ).

In order to assess the impact of the individual participant characteristics on leadership outcomes, data on 163 individual participants for whom data from all sources were available was analyzed with correlations and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) methods. Correlation analysis reveals the simple association between two variables, such as being a public official and frequency of public speaking. While this simple association can indicate if within the data, participants with a particular personal attribute tend to have different outcomes than those without the attribute, the correlation does not reveal the size of the effect and may incorrectly lead the researcher to believe that there is a direct relationship between the two variables. For these reasons, OLS regression methods are also used to understand the relationship between individual characteristics and leadership outcomes. OLS regression examines the extent to which a unit increase in an independent variable, like income, affects the outcome variable, net of other factors that vary across individuals. OLS has the power to hold certain factors that vary across individuals constant, in order to isolate a “more pure” effect of an independent variable on the key outcome variable. OLS is useful and necessary if multiple independent variables are correlated with each other to some extent. OLS regression was also used to examine the relationship between participants’ responses to the 4<sup>th</sup> weekend Leadership Development survey regarding their intent to apply skills or do certain activities and the frequency of their activity 12 months later.

Qualitative data from the 12-month follow-up survey were analyzed to identify themes that reinforced the quantitative findings or revealed additional trends. Participant responses to a series of open-ended questions on the survey provided the source of this qualitative data. For each question, the responses that participants made were read by members of the evaluation team and assessed for themes. Themes correspond to ideas or concepts that are raised by more than one respondent. Naturally, one respondent can make a comment that addresses

more than one theme. Thus written responses themselves are the unit of analysis, not individual respondents.

Once the themes were identified and coded from the responses, the number of responses made in reference to each theme was tallied by the researchers. This tally provides a sense of the significance of the theme among the respondents. Themes that are mentioned very often therefore get more weight in the discussion than those that are mentioned only occasionally.

### **Leadership Program Focus Groups**

In order to explore the impact of the Leadership Program on networking among individuals and their communities, focus groups were conducted in rural communities around the state in 2009. Face-to-face focus groups have been a method used in social science over the last 20 years for discovery of patterns and trends that emerge from group interaction.

Networking is a way of describing how people interact with one another in various social settings. The focus groups centered on three types of networks:

- **Social networks** describe personal relationships people have in their personal life, such as friendships or acquaintances.
- **Professional or work networks** describe the relationships people have through their employment, such as with co-workers or acquaintances made through work.
- **Organizational or community work networks** describe the relationships people have with those with whom they volunteer or work on community projects, such as members of community boards.

All of these networks would be expected to overlap and/or intersect with each other. Figure 1 was shown to participants as a visual depiction of the reality that social, professional, and community networks may overlap in smaller communities. For example, sometimes these networks overlap when co-workers become close friends or join each other in volunteering on a community project or when an individual helps connect a friend with a job.

**Figure 1: Overlap of Social Networks**



In 2009, five focus groups were conducted with past Leadership Program participants in these communities: Baker City, Enterprise, Keno, Philomath, and Rainier. Focus group participants could have participated in one or all of the three components of the Leadership Program: Leadership Development, Community Collaborations, or Effective Organizations. In total, thirty-eight community members (16 male; 22 female) participated in the five focus groups. Participants were asked a range of questions regarding their experiences with the Leadership Program. The focus groups asked participants about changes in each area of networking as a result of participation in the leadership program:

- As a result of your participation in FILP, how did your social networks change?
- As a result of your participation in FILP, how did your work, school & professional networks change?
- As a result of your participation in FILP, how did your community networks change?

In each case, a series of follow-up probes were asked:

Can you give examples of how you...

- Formed new relationships with community members (increase in number of relationships)
- Strengthened existing relationships (more frequent interaction, ...)



- Formed relationships with people that are different from you in terms of age, economic status, culture

There were supplementary networking questions that were addressed, to varying degrees, depending on how the group conversation flowed:

- To what extent do your networks overlap and influence each other?
- What benefits have you experienced because of the changes in your networks?
- Have there been any drawbacks to the changes in your networks?
- What did Ford do to facilitate these changes in your social, community, and work networks?
- Have there been changes in your networking with individuals outside of your community?

### ***Data Analysis***

The focus groups were recorded and transcribed. Multiple raters read the transcripts, discussed the coding schemes, and wrote and rewrote the analysis of the focus groups. The flow of questions was the framework for organizing the results. Issues voiced by each focus group were analyzed horizontally, looking for common themes across the groups. An effort was made to discover common themes, but also to look for dissenting opinions.

### **Effective Organizations 2009 Participant Survey**

In 2009, Effective Organizations training participants were asked to complete evaluation surveys on the first and second weekends of the training. On the first weekend, participants were asked to complete a background survey with questions about age, gender, previous leadership or organizational management training, organizational involvement, and other types of personal characteristics. On the second weekend of the training, participants received an outcome survey with questions regarding their knowledge about and behavior concerning organizational planning and management before the training and after the training. These surveys underwent cognitive pretesting in the summer of 2008 and were piloted in two communities in the fall of 2008.

The outcome survey followed a retrospective pretest format, with questions about participants' knowledge and behavior before and after the training. For each item, respondents scored their knowledge on a scale of one to four, where one was "not knowledgeable" and four was "very knowledgeable." In the first section of the survey, participants were asked to rate their knowledge after the training and before the training for 20 organizational management skills.

Examples include:

- Developing a strategic plan for your organization
- Specifying board responsibilities
- Developing and managing budgets
- Establishing human resource management plan (employees & volunteers)
- Maintaining an effective volunteer base
- Helping your organization fulfill its mission

In the second section of the survey, participants were asked to rate their likelihood of engaging in 16 behaviors related to organizational management after the training and before the training. Again, the range of the scale was from one to four, where one was "not likely" and four was "very likely". Examples of items include:

- Participate in fundraising efforts for your organization
- Work with other organizations that have similar goals to your organization
- Promote positive board functioning (e.g. communication and decision making)
- Work to increase the role of your organization in improving the community
- Assist your organization in clarifying its mission, goals, and objectives
- Monitor the fiscal health of your organization

In the final section of the survey, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions to solicit some general thoughts and considerations about the impact of the Effective Organizations training on themselves and their organizations. One question asked participants to explain the specific changes they intend to make in their organizations as a result of the training. Another question asked individuals to consider the impact their participation in the

training will have on their organization in the long term. The last question asked participants to describe the impact the training had on them personally.

### ***Survey Administration***

The Effective Organizations background and outcome surveys were administered by the staff of the training facilitator organizations: Rural Development Initiatives, Inc., Human Systems, and TACS. In the spring of 2009, Effective Organizations training facilitators were provided electronic versions of the background and outcome surveys to be printed by their staff, a script to be used in explaining the survey to participants, and instructions on how to administer the survey. The OSU evaluation team spent about an hour and a half with the facilitators explaining the protocol of the survey. In short, trainers were asked to hand out the EO background survey on the Friday of the first EO training weekend and hand out the outcome survey on the Saturday of the second week-end (the final day) of the training. It was recommended that the background survey be handed out around the time the Ford Institute for Community Building is discussed, and trainers were strongly encouraged to hand out the outcome survey after the last module of the training, but not during lunch, and before participants were formally dismissed for the day. Training participants were to be instructed to place their completed surveys in an envelope addressed to the Ford Institute for Community Building. The surveys were then entered by Institute staff using EpiData open-source data entry software. The electronic EpiData files were then sent to the OSU evaluation team for analysis.

Attendance at both weekends of Effective Organizations training is not mandatory and, according to the trainers with whom OSU faculty consulted before implementing the surveys, there tend to be notable differences in attendance between the first and second weekends of the training. For this reason, training facilitators were also instructed to send a list of absentees to the Ford Institute so that the Institute staff could send surveys to these individuals.

## ***Response Rate***

In the spring and fall of 2009, 11 communities participated in Effective Organizations training:

- Chiloquin
- Grant County
- Harney County
- La Pine
- McKenzie River
- Newberg
- North Curry County
- Sisters
- South Lane
- White City – Upper Rogue
- Wild Rivers Coast

OSU faculty members received survey data from ten of these communities from the Ford Institute, with surveys from South Lane missing. Table 1 displays the total number of people who registered for the EO trainings as well as the number of surveys received from each community.

**Table 1**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Effective Organizations Training Registrants (#)</b>	<b>Background Survey Respondents (#)</b>	<b>Outcome Survey Respondents (#)</b>	<b>Respondents to both the Background &amp; Outcome Surveys (#)</b>
Chiloquin	24	8	15	6
Grant County	43	--	26	--
Harney County	26	19	19	16
La Pine	28	24	22	16
McKenzie River	12	11	9	6
Newberg	21	17	16	14
North Curry County	28	22	16	12
Sisters	30	--	18	--
White City – Upper Rogue	35	23	21	14
Wild Rivers Coast	49	32	26	19
South Lane	36	--	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>103</b>

As Table 1 shows, there were discrepancies between the number of people who registered for the training, the number who completed the background survey, and the number who completed the outcome survey, despite efforts to contact absentees. Also, due to the timing of the implementation of the surveys, the participants in the Grant County and Sisters did not have the opportunity to complete the background survey. Thus, in total, 103 people completed both the background and outcome surveys, while 156 completed the background survey and 187 completed the outcome survey. The response rates varied accordingly as well; 46% completed the background survey, 56% completed the outcome survey, and 31% completed both surveys. Throughout this report, the findings we discuss will relate only to the sub-population of EO participants who completed both surveys (N = 103).

### ***Analysis Variables***

In order to analyze the data in a clear and intuitive way, Effective Organizations outcome survey items were grouped based on their conceptual linkages. In the knowledge section of the survey, 19 of the 20 survey items were grouped into three categories: operational management and leadership, strategic planning, and resource development and management. One survey item encompassed all three of these topics, so it was not included in these three concept groups. In the behavior section of the survey, three survey items were grouped into one category collaboration/networking while the remaining 13 items were kept separate. Using these concept groups, analysis of changes in knowledge can be done without running separate analyses on each individual item. Table 2 describes the three concept groups that were formed from the 19 survey items in the knowledge section.

**Table 2**

<b>Knowledge Concept Groups</b>
<b>Concept Group and Definition</b>
<b>Strategic Planning</b>
Clarifying an organizational vision and mission; Establishing goals and objectives for the organization; Analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the organization; Developing a strategic plan; Helping the organization fulfill its mission
<b>Operational Management &amp; Leadership</b>
Creating effective board nomination and recruitment procedures; Specifying and communicating board responsibilities; Developing and managing budgets; Succession planning
<b>Resource Development &amp; Management</b>
Identifying appropriate grants; Fundraising in the community; Establishing a resource development plan; Establishing a human resource management plan; Maintaining an effective volunteer base

Table 3 describes the collaboration/networking concept group that was formed from items in the behavior section.

**Table 3**

<b>Behavior Concept Group</b>
<b>Concept Group and Definition</b>
<b>Collaboration/Networking</b>
Working with other organizations that have similar organizational goals; Working with other organizations that do not have similar goals; Developing networks and partnerships with other organizations

Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were used to measure the internal reliability of the concept groups. Alphas indicate how well a set of variables or items fit together to represent one dimension or concept. Alpha coefficients range from zero to one; an alpha of .60 to .70 indicates an acceptable level of reliability and .80 or higher indicates good reliability. All knowledge concept groups were found to have an acceptable internal reliability (for alpha statistics, see Appendix 1).

### ***Data Analysis***

Quantitative data from the Effective Organizations background and outcome surveys were analyzed to assess whether participants reported statistically significant changes in knowledge

and behaviors as a result of the training. In addition, further analysis was conducted to see if changes in outcomes varied by attributes of the individual. Qualitative data from the outcome survey were analyzed to identify themes that reinforced the quantitative findings or revealed additional trends in knowledge, behavior, or organizational change.

### *Changes in Knowledge and Behavior*

Outcome data were analyzed for all 103 EO training participants who completed both the outcome and background surveys. Participant scores from the retrospective pre and post were compared for the analysis of change in knowledge and behavior. Dependent t-tests were used to calculate whether there was a significant change in the participant reports before and after the training. Significant results indicate there is a statistical difference between the means for the pretest and posttest ( $p < .05$ ). In addition, a Cohen's  $d$  statistic was used to estimate the size of the impact of the training on this change. Cohen's  $d$  scores less than .40 indicate a small effect, scores from .40 to .74 indicate a moderate effect, scores .75 to 1.44 indicate a large effect, and scores greater than 1.45 indicate a very large effect.

### *Participant Attributes and Effective Organizations Training Outcomes*

In order to assess the impact of the individual participant characteristics on Effective Organizations training outcomes, data on 103 individual participants who completed the background and outcome surveys were analyzed with correlations and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression methods. Correlation analysis reveals the simple association between two variables, such as being a public official and knowledge of organizational strategic planning. OLS regression methods reveal the relationship between individual characteristics and EO training outcomes. Through OLS methods it is possible to examine the extent to which a unit increase in an independent variable, like income, affects the outcome variable, net of other factors that vary across individuals.

For the analysis, outcome variables for each participant were computed using the post-test scores across the survey items that correspond to the outcome concept or overall section. For example, for the participant's overall knowledge level after the training, an average post-test

score was calculated for each individual participant. To create this score, the post-training knowledge scores (that range from 1 to 4) were added together for all 20 questions on the survey that relate to knowledge and divided by 20. Each individual participant then has her own overall average knowledge value. This number is then regressed on the factors hypothesized to explain the variation in overall average change in knowledge across all participants. Average scores were also computed for overall behaviors, as well as the concept group within the behavior section.

### *Open-ended Responses*

In order to gain additional insight into the impact of the Effective Organizations training on participants, a series of open-ended questions were asked on the survey. As on the Leadership Development 12-month follow-up survey, for each question the responses of participants were read by members of the evaluation team and assessed for themes.

Once the themes were identified among the comments, they were given an overarching name and then the number of comments made in reference to each theme was tallied by the researchers. This tally provides a sense of the significance of the theme among the respondents. Themes that are mentioned very often therefore get more weight in the discussion than those that are mentioned only occasionally.



## RESULTS

To understand the impact of the Leadership Program on participants, a series of research questions were employed in 2009. The findings of this examination are discussed in the following sections, organized by question.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program develop effective community leaders?**

In order for leaders to be effective, they must first gain the skills and then apply them in their lives and communities. As effective leadership development follows this sequential pattern, it has been important to structure the evaluation in such a way to reflect this time-order. At the end of the Fall 2008 leadership class, participants completed an outcome survey assessing their competence (as a result of the training) and intent to apply the skills. The 12-month follow-up survey was then implemented one year later to see if and how the skills were indeed applied. Data summarized here is from the 163 participants that completed the leadership development application, the outcome survey at the conclusion of the leadership class, and 12-month follow-up survey.

#### ***Do participants feel more competent as leaders?***

In the 2008 Evaluation Report, Fall 2008 participants were found to be more competent in leadership skills directly after the training. In summary, participants indicated that the training helped increase their knowledge, skills, and motivation. In particular, they reported more confidence to lead and more willingness to work in their communities toward positive change. Participants reported they used these skills to work more effectively on their class projects and in their community organizations, in their workplaces, and with their families. In addition, participants who reported the least amount of competence and leadership behavior at the beginning of the training showed the most improvement. Overall, participants reported significantly higher levels of competence in leadership skills and significantly higher likelihoods of engaging in leadership behavior as a result of the training. To build on these findings, further evaluation was conducted to examine the effectiveness of these community leaders as they moved out of the class and into the community.

### ***How do participants apply what they learned during FILP?***

Application of leadership skills was gauged through responses to the 12-month follow-up survey conducted early in 2010. Fall 2008 participants were asked to report their application of leadership, community building, and project management skills during the first year after the training. Participants were from a total of 13 hub-communities, including Chiloquin, Jefferson County, La Pine, Lake County, Monmouth/Independence, Newberg, North Curry County, Philomath, South Lincoln County, Sutherlin, Union County, Wild Rivers Coast (South Curry County), and Winston/Dillard. Demographic characteristics of this sample did not vary significantly from those reported in the 2008 Report. Table 4 summarizes the demographic and background characteristics of this sample.

**Table 4**

<b>Mean, Standard Deviation, and Percentages of Demographic and Background Characteristics</b>			
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Years in the community	163	14.21	13.56
Years of education completed	163	14.93	2.88
Income <sup>1</sup>	160	\$66,390.00	\$38,521.00
Number of organizations <sup>2</sup>	163	2.74	1.47
Average hours per month work with organizations	144	12.83	13.33
<b>Gender</b>			
Gender	163	67% Female	33% Male
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>			
Race/ethnicity	162	90% White	11% Other
<b>Employed for pay</b>			
Employed for pay	105	89% Yes	11% No
<b>College degree (Associate's or higher)</b>			
College degree (Associate's or higher)	163	58% Yes	42% No
<b>Elected official</b>			
Elected official	163	20% Yes	80% No
<b>Previous leadership experience</b>			
Previous leadership experience	163	58% Yes	42% No
<sup>1</sup> Mean of midpoint of income categories, <sup>2</sup> Number of organizations as reported on the application, limit of 5.			

### **Frequency of Application**

On the 12 month follow-up survey, respondents were asked to report how often they engaged in a variety of leadership skills and behaviors in the past year, since the completion of the

leadership development class. Items on the survey were grouped into three main areas: leadership skills, community building activities, and project management tasks.

### *Leadership Skills*

On the 12-month survey, training participants were asked how often they had applied 11 specific leadership skills since completing the training. For each item, respondents scored their application of leadership skills on a scale of one to six, where one was “never”, two was “1-3 times”, three was “4-6 times”, four was “once a month”, five was “weekly” and six was “daily”. Leadership skills were divided into three sections reflecting the ability of participants to: communicate effectively, work with others, and network. Table 5 lists the means and standard deviations for the frequency of skills application. The higher the mean, the more frequently, on average, participants have been doing the activity.

**Table 5**

<b>Application of Leadership Skills: Means and Standard Deviations</b>			
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Communicate Effectively</b>	162	4.35	0.87
Used “appreciative inquiry” to emphasize the positive aspects of a situation	162	5.30	0.87
Given constructive feedback to another person	161	4.42	1.29
Used active listening skills to understand another person’s ideas	162	4.35	0.87
Given a speech or presentation to a group of people	161	4.20	1.33
<b>Work with Others</b>	162	3.94	1.01
Worked effectively with different personality types	162	5.26	0.88
Worked to build consensus within a group	160	3.83	1.24
Facilitated group discussions	162	3.77	1.36
Used effective meeting techniques to guide a meeting	162	3.49	1.39
Used conflict resolution processes	162	3.38	1.47
<b>Network</b>	162	3.66	1.26
Networked with others to address a community issue or problem	161	3.76	1.35
Networked with others to advance personally or professionally	161	3.58	1.49
<b>Leadership Skills Overall</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>0.85</b>
Scale ranged from 1 to 6, where 1 was “never”, 2 was “1-3 times”, 3 was “4-6 times”, 4 was “once a month”, 5 was “weekly” and 6 was “daily”.			

Overall, participants reported that they had applied leadership skills about once a month over the past year (mean = 4.04). There were significant differences in the frequency of application depending on the type of skill, however. Skills related to communicating effectively were applied the most often, with an overall average of at least once a month. Among these effective communication skills, appreciative inquiry was the most frequently applied, with participants reporting they used it weekly. Giving a speech or public presentation and active listening were the least frequently applied, on average, in this group of leadership skills. Interestingly, while the mean for active listening was among the lowest in the communication skill set, only a very low percentage of participants (2%) reported that they used the skill less than three times over the past year.

Following communication skills, skills for working with others were applied by participants just under once a month (mean = 3.94). Working effectively with different personality types was done significantly more often than the other skills, with the majority of participants reporting that they applied those skills weekly or daily (85%). Skills applied the least often in this skill set included effective meeting techniques and conflict resolution processes. These were only applied an average of four to six times during the past year by Fall 2008 leadership development class participants.

Finally, participants reported networking with others least often of these leadership skill sets; on average, four to six times during the past year (mean = 3.66). There was no significant difference between the level of networking to address community issues and the level of networking for personal or professional gain. Although applied the least often on average, one-third of participants reported networking weekly or daily. For a complete table of the distribution of responses for each leadership skill item, see Appendix 2.

#### *Change in Activity*

Results of the 12-month follow-up clearly indicate that participants are frequently using the skills they learned from the training. Yet, does their activity level reflect changes made as a result of participation in the leadership class? In order to answer this question, participants

were asked if they had done these leadership activities over the past year more often, less often, or about the same compared to before participating in the Ford leadership class. Overall, the majority of participants (67%) reported that they had applied these leadership skills more often during the year since the class. Only one percent of participants reported that they used the skills less frequently over the past year.

While the majority of participants reported increased use of leadership skills as a result of the training, further analysis explored the extent of change for participants who applied the skills very frequently. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to indicate high activity individuals. This was equivalent to applying the skills once a month or more. Of those who were highly active, 70% used the skills more often than before the training, with the remaining 30% using the skills at the same level as before the training. No participants who rated themselves at engaging in leadership skills at high levels stated that this level was less often than before the training. Therefore, for the majority of individuals who were using their leadership skills a lot 12 months after the class, this high outcome resulted from participation in the class.

#### *Settings of Skill Application*

In addition to the frequency of skill application, the 12-month survey also asked participants about settings in which leadership skills were applied. Specifically, the survey asked whether or not the participant had applied leadership skills with family and friends, at work, in school, in community organizations (e.g., non-profits, membership groups, institutions, local government) or in community or volunteer efforts. Table 6 outlines the percentages of participants that reported applying the skills in each setting.

**Table 6**

<b>Settings of Leadership Skill Application</b>				
	<b>N</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
With family or friends	162	86%	10%	4%
At work	161	79%	4%	17%
In school	160	28%	5%	67%
In community organizations (e.g., non-profits, membership groups, institutions, local government)	160	92%	5%	3%
In community or volunteer efforts	159	94%	4%	2%

As Table 6 illustrates, participants reported applying leadership skills in a variety of settings over the past year. The highest proportion of respondents said they used their leadership skills in the community (in organizations and for community or volunteer efforts), followed by family or friends, and at work. Of those participants attending school ( $n = 53$ ), 85% applied leadership skills in their school settings.

Most participants applied leadership skills in multiple settings. While not all settings applied to each participant, the overwhelming majority of participants (91%) reported applying the skills in three or more of the settings. Less than 3% reported applying skills in none of the settings, with 6% reporting that they applied skills in one or two of the settings.

Of the skills applied in work settings, understanding personality differences, running effective meetings, and conflict resolution were specifically noted as helpful. A few students reported that they found the skills for working with others, such as facilitating group discussions, and skills around fundraising as helpful in their school environment.

Community organizations, such as non-profits, membership groups, institutions, and local government, were also locations in which the majority of Leadership Program participants applied their leadership skills in the last year (92%). Based on comments provided by

participants on the survey, skills related to consensus building, facilitating group discussions, conflict resolution, public speaking, active listening, and working with different personality types were especially helpful to their work with community organizations. In addition to applying specific skills, participants also reported that they took on larger leadership roles or more responsibility in their organizations as a result of the training. One participant even noted that participation in the class opened up a greater network of organizations to be involved with.

As Table 6 shows, 94% of participants reported applying leadership skills in their work on community or volunteer efforts. Respondent comments indicated that having more leadership skills as a result of the class encouraged them to be more involved in community efforts and volunteer more in their community. In particular, participants noted that understanding how to work with different personalities and networking with others has been helpful for their work on community projects.

#### *Leadership Skills Summary*

As the previous discussion of findings reveals, participants on average applied leadership skills frequently in the year after the class. Most participants applied these skills more often in the last 12 months than they did before the class. Indeed, among those who used their skills a lot in the previous year, the majority felt that they increased their activity as a result of the leadership class. The data also indicate that leadership skills are applied in many settings, the most popular being in the community.

#### *Community Building Activities*

In addition to leadership skills, the 12-month follow-up survey asked participants how often they did various activities related to community building in the last year. For each item, respondents scored their application of community building skills on a scale of one to four, where one was “never”, two was “rarely”, three was “occasionally”, and four was “frequently.” Table 7 outlines the types of activities related to community building asked on the survey as well as the means, standard deviations, and percentages of participants who reported doing these activities in various amounts.

**Table 7**

<b>Participation in Community Building Activities: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages</b>						
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>Never to Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally /Frequently</b>
Encouraged others to participate in community issues and/or projects	162	3.36	0.75		12%	88%
Educated yourself about social, economic, or environmental issues in your community	163	3.35	0.79		15%	85%
Worked to improve the social, economic, and/or environmental conditions of your community	163	3.21	0.82		17%	83%
Helped build public awareness of a community issue or problem	163	3.08	0.84		22%	78%
Helped investigate possible solutions to a community issue or problem	162	3.08	0.80		21%	79%
Identified assets in your community	163	2.96	0.82		23%	77%
Sought information about how community decisions would impact the local social, economic, and/or environmental conditions	162	2.87	0.98		32%	68%
Helped define goals or a vision for your community	163	2.84	0.96		35%	65%
Sought opportunities to learn more about community leadership	163	2.82	0.90		23%	77%
<b>Community Building Activities Overall</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>0.68</b>		--	--
Scale ranged from 1 to 4, where 1 was "never", 2 was "rarely", 3 was "occasionally", and 4 was "frequently."						

As Table 7 shows, on average, participants reported that they had participated in community building activities occasionally over the past year (mean = 3.06). Among these community building activities, participants reported that they encouraged others to participate in community issues or projects and educated themselves about the issues in their community the most often. Identifying assets, seeking out information about the impact of community decisions, defining a goal or vision for the community, and seeking out opportunities to learn more about community leadership were the least frequently done in the last year. The relatively low frequency of these activities being done by participants may be due to the infrequency with which opportunities to do these activities arise. While there were significant differences in the frequency with which respondents participated in these activities, on the whole, most (65-88%) did each activity occasionally or frequently over the past year. For a



complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each community building activity, see Appendix 3.

### *Change in Activity*

As the data discussed above illustrate, participants have been engaging occasionally in community building activities since the leadership class ended. In order to gauge whether this activity level in the last year is representative of participants' level of activity before the class, participants were asked if they had done these community building activities over the past year more often, less often, or about the same compared to before they participated in the Ford leadership class. Overall, the majority of participants (60%) reported that they had done these community building activities more often in the year since the class than before. Thirty-three percent reported that their community building activity level did not change as a result of the program and only 7% of participants reported that they participated in these activities less frequently over the past year.

While the majority of participants reported an increase in the number of times they did community building activities since the training, further analysis explored the extent of change for individuals that did the activities very frequently. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to identify highly active individuals, which was equivalent to doing activities frequently in the last year. Of those who were highly active, 65% did community building activities more often in the last year than they did before the training, and 32% reported they were just as highly active before the training. Only 3% of participants who rated themselves as frequently engaging in community building activities in the last year stated that this level was less often than before the training. Therefore, for the majority of individuals who were doing a lot of community building activities in the 12 months after the class, this high outcome resulted from participation in the class.

### *Community Building Summary*

This examination of data from the 12-month follow-up survey reveals that, with respect to community building activities, Fall 2008 leadership class participants have only occasionally

taken on these types of endeavors in the year following the class. Of those who have engaged in these activities very frequently, it is encouraging to note, that the majority report doing so because of their participation in the class.

The lower average level of activity observed among Fall 2008 leadership class participants for community building activities, as opposed to leadership skill application, is possibly due to limited opportunity to do the activities. Many of these community building activities do not present themselves often; therefore it may not be possible for the majority of participants to do them frequently. Opportunities to apply leadership skills related to effective communication, working well with others, and networking are much more likely to present themselves more often for many people.

### *Project Management Skills*

On the 12-month follow-up survey, participants were asked how often they had done various project management tasks in community efforts or projects in the last year. Community efforts or projects were explained as including: organizing a community event, fundraising for community organizations, working with a community non-profit, serving on a non-profit board, participating in a community improvement effort, or building a community facility. Project management tasks were rated on the same scale as community building skills, where one was “never” and four was “frequently”. Table 8 lists the project management tasks as well as the mean and standard deviation for how often participants reported doing these activities.

**Table 8**

<b>Participation in Project Management Tasks: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages</b>						
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>Never to Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally /Frequently</b>
Helped to publicize or promote some community effort or project	162	3.07	0.95		25%	75%
Helped set goals for a community effort or project	162	3.01	0.88		26%	74%
Helped develop tasks, timelines, and assignments for a community effort or project	162	2.86	0.99		32%	68%
Helped plan a community fundraising effort	162	2.77	1.02		35%	65%
Helped seek outside support for a community effort or project	162	2.76	1.01		39%	61%
Helped involve stakeholders in a community project or effort	162	2.70	1.04		36%	64%
Helped to recruit and retain volunteers	161	2.68	1.01		43%	57%
Participated in developing the budget for a community effort or project	162	2.62	1.05		44%	56%
<b>Project Management Tasks Overall</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>2.81</b>	<b>0.84</b>		<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
Scale ranged from 1 to 4, where 1 was “never”, 2 was “rarely”, 3 was “occasionally”, and 4 was “frequently.”						

As Table 8 illustrates, in general, participants reported that they had done these project management tasks rarely to occasionally over the past year (mean = 2.81). Of all project management tasks listed, participants reported that they most often helped to publicize, promote, and set goals for community effort or project. Three-quarters of participants did these activities occasionally or frequently over the past year. There were no significant differences in the frequencies with which participants reported engaging in the other project management tasks. Participants reported that they developed tasks, timelines, and assignments; planned fundraising, sought outside support; involved stakeholders; recruited and retained volunteers, and developed budgets for community efforts or projects with about the same frequency during the past year, namely, rarely to occasionally. In contrast to publicizing and setting goals for community efforts or projects, only between 56% and 68% of participants reported doing all other project management activities occasionally or frequently in the last year. For a complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each project management item, see Appendix 4.

It is notable that Fall 2008 participants reported such infrequent project management activity in the last year, given that for many, the year after the leadership class is when cohort projects are completed. Ideally, the cohort project is the setting in which these project management skills would be applied. Most likely, this finding is due to the way the question was worded. Respondents were instructed to indicate how often they had done these project management activities for generic community efforts or projects. No specific mention of cohort projects was made in the list of examples on the survey. Respondents were therefore unlikely to include the cohort project as an example of a community effort or project. Analysis of the open-ended comments made on this section of the survey provides evidence for this conclusion; respondents were predominantly not including their cohort project when answering this set of questions. It is not surprising then that participants indicated infrequent project management activity in the last year. For many, the cohort project was the arena in which project management occurred, and it likely took much of participants' time and effort. Without much additional time to spend on other community efforts in the last year, the activity of participants in project management appears low based on the survey data.

It is also possible that the low frequency with which participants engaged in project management activities in the last year is due to the limited number of opportunities that presented themselves. Project management tasks are often applied in a limited setting, such as on specific community efforts or projects or within an organization. Also, the opportunity to do some of the project management tasks is dependent on the participant holding a certain role in the effort or project. Though the data indicate low project management activity among Fall 2008 participants in the last 12 months, it is important to bear these potential explanations in mind when interpreting results.

#### *Change in Activity*

Results of the 12 month follow-up survey indicate that participants are engaging in project management tasks on an occasional basis. In order to explore whether this level of activity is representative of participants' levels of activity before the leadership class, participants were

asked whether the number of times they have done project management tasks over the past year was more often, less often, or about the same compared to before they participated in the Ford leadership class. Overall, approximately half of participants (53%) reported that they had done these project management tasks more often during the year since the class. Forty-one percent reported that their project management activity level did not change as a result of the program and 6% of participants reported that they participated in these activities less frequently over the past year. A few participants noted their reasons for doing the tasks less frequently, such as illness that required resignation from a board and having other commitments that took up time.

Further analysis also explored the extent of change for individuals that did project management tasks very frequently. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to indicate high activity levels, which is equivalent to participating in the activities occasionally to frequently. Of those participants who occasionally or frequently did project management activities in the last year, 58% reported that this was more often than they had done before the training and 42% reported that this was the same frequency with which they did the activities before the training. No participants who rated themselves as participating in project management tasks with high frequency in the year after the class stated that this level was less often than before the class. Therefore, of those who were above average in their project management skill application over the last year, the majority were this active as a result of participation in the class.

#### *Project Management Summary*

These data reveal that in the year following the leadership class, participants on average are only doing project management activities rarely to occasionally in community efforts or projects. This may be due to the cohort project taking too much of their time, as it also requires project management tasks be done, but other explanations are likely as well such as limited community efforts or projects being available to work on in a given year.

Of those Fall 2008 leadership class participants who were doing project management activities in the last year more frequently than average participants, many felt they were doing so more often than they did before the class. This finding suggests that the leadership class is having a positive influence on participants, which is carrying through beyond the last day of the class itself.

**Contribution of Leadership Class**

In addition to the frequency of skill application, the 12-month follow-up survey asked participants how much they felt the Ford leadership class contributed to their ability to do the skills, activities, and tasks. For each section of the survey, participants were asked to rate the leadership class’ contribution on a scale from 1 to 5 with one for “not at all”, two for “a little”, three for “a moderate amount”, four for “A good deal”, and five for a “great deal”. Table 9 outlines the distribution of responses for each section of the survey.

**Table 9**

<b>Contribution of Leadership Class</b>					
	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>A Little</b>	<b>A Moderate Amount</b>	<b>A Good Deal</b>	<b>A Great Deal</b>
Leadership Skills	2%	19%	40%	27%	12%
Communicate effectively	2%	15%	31%	36%	16%
Work with others	1%	14%	24%	38%	23%
Network	1%	19%	32%	28%	20%
Community Building Activities	1%	13%	27%	37%	22%
Project Management Tasks	3%	15%	33%	32%	17%

On average, participants reported that the leadership class contributed a moderate to great deal to their ability to do leadership skills, community building activities, and project management tasks (mean = 3.47 to 3.70). As the results in Table 9 show, approximately 40-60% of Fall 2008 participants felt that the class contributed a good or great deal to their skill ability in these areas. On average, about one-third of participants thought the class contributed a moderate amount, and only 15-20% felt like the class did not contribute to their ability at all or

only a little. One participant comment that represented the majority opinion on how the leadership class contributed:

*“Before the FILP class I was just beginning to become involved as a volunteer in various ways in the my community, but as a direct result of the FILP’s educational resources and the belief in my ability as an individual to make a difference, I have stepped up as a leader”*

### Qualitative Results

On the 12-month follow-up survey, respondents had the opportunity to explain how the training affected their ability to be a community leader in an open-ended question format. Approximately 140 individuals responded to the question to describe many ways they felt the leadership training affected them personally. From the many responses to the question provided, participants tended to indicate that they:

- Felt better equipped with skills and tools,
- Had a new appreciation for different personalities,
- Gained confidence in their ability to make a difference,
- Networked more with others, and
- Had a greater awareness of their community.

Overall, participants reported feeling better equipped to address issues in their community. Participants described a number of skills they gained through the training, that have helped them to be a better community leader. Of these, skills in communication and working with others were mentioned most frequently. These included active listening, public speaking, building consensus, and conflict resolution. Overall, many participants reported that they communicate more effectively and work better with others as a result of skills learned in the training. Being better equipped helped participants contribute in many areas and settings, including in their work, volunteer efforts, and participation in community projects. As two participants described:

*“The skills I learned through the appreciative inquiry process have helped me lead group discussions in a positive direction. I also am using skills I developed in conflict management. Our current fiscal climate has left many partners feeling as if they need to complete for resources and some are hesitant to collaborate.”*

*“When I am volunteered for things like student planning commissioner or to help fundraise for my school play, it makes not only me, but everyone on my team more effective. By using the fundraising skills we were able to step out of our normal donor box and surprise more people into giving.”*

In line with the quantitative results, many participants also mentioned a new appreciation for and ability to work with people of different personality types. Participants reported that the training helped them to see other’s points of view and be more willing to look at both sides of an issue or project. They also gained greater appreciation and respect for those that have differing opinions from their own and were more willing to work with others to accomplish a common goal. As one participant said:

*“The leadership class showed me that it is possible to work with many different kinds of people... even if most of us were fairly strong personalities we were shown how to come to a consensus while respecting and validating everyone’s ideas and goals.”*

By learning and refining their skills, many participants wrote that the leadership class increased their self-confidence. Some noted that the training validated their gifts and abilities, giving them confidence to get involved in their community. Others mentioned that they were more confident in public speaking and more willing to speak up on issues than they were before the training. Several respondents said that it increased their confidence to encourage others to become involved in community activities. Participants reported that the training gave them the skills to bring people together and encourage others to get involved in the community.

*“Primarily, the class improved my self-confidence in what I was doing. It let me know that I was on the right track, and that confidence is palpable to those I’m in contact with”*

Although participants did not report high frequency of networking on the quantitative portion of the survey, they found great value in the networking they did do. In the open-ended section, many respondents mentioned that the leadership class increased the size of their community networks and their ability to network better. It helped them get to know community leaders



and the structure of the community and provided contacts for accomplishing a specific task in a community. Participants also mentioned that networking with other community members and leaders was rewarding.

*“It connected me with an amazing group of community leaders, broadening my network base and giving me new hope for the future of our community”.*

Participants also commented on how the training helped them to better identify aspects of the community and have a better awareness of community issues. Several participants indicated that better knowledge of their community encouraged them to get involved. By gaining this knowledge, they also felt a greater responsibility to the community. As one participant noted,

*“The class gave me a sense of how I can personally impact my community and help shape the direction of it. I acknowledge that everyone has skills to contribute. Combining and harnessing that power to make positive changes for all, not just the current generation, but future generations as well, is a very real possibility.”*

Even those with previous leadership experience reported that they benefited from the class in some way. Through the class they were able to refresh their skills, practice using their skills, learn a different technique, and network with others. A few noted that they had gotten better at using the skills because they were refreshed in the training. As one participant stated:

*“Most of these items I did before. [But] I have been able to do them more effectively because of tools in the class”*

### *Do Outcomes Vary By Attributes of Participants or the Class?*

Previous sections of this report reveal that participants in the Ford leadership classes applied many of the leadership, community building, and project management tools gained through the training. While most participants applied the skills and activities occasionally to frequently, there was some variation in outcomes across individuals. In order to explore this further, correlation and regression analyses were completed to determine whether any of this variability in activity level in the year following the leadership class could be accounted for by

participants' intentions to apply the skills in Fall 2008, participants' demographic or background characteristics, or characteristics of the classes in which they participated.

### *Fall 2008 Outcomes*

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions were used to explore the relation between participants' intentions to apply skills at the end of the leadership class and the frequency with which skills were actually applied in the 12 months after the class. Twenty-six leadership skill, community building, and project management items appeared on both the 12-month follow-up survey and the outcome survey completed on the 4<sup>th</sup> weekend of the leadership class series. OLS regressions were run to see if participants' reported levels of competence in leadership skills and likelihoods of engaging in leadership behaviors at the end of the training predicted the actual level of engagement in these skills one year later.

Table 10 lists the standardized coefficients for 12-month follow-up survey items that were significantly predicted by the leadership outcome survey at the end of the training. For each standard deviation increase in the Fall 2008 item (competence or intention to apply a skill), the 12-month frequency of activity increased by the fraction of a standard deviation listed under beta ( $\beta$ ).

**Table 10**

<b>Standardized (<math>\beta</math>) Coefficient Effects of Fall 2008 Competence &amp; Intentions on Activity Level in Following Year</b>		
	<b>N</b>	<b>Beta (<math>\beta</math>)</b>
<b>Leadership Skills</b>		
Using active listening skills to understand another person's ideas	160	0.21
Giving a speech or presentation to a group of people	160	0.26
Facilitating group discussions	160	0.20
Networking with others to address a community issue or problem	161	0.29
<b>Community Building Activities</b>		
Educating yourself about social, economic, or environmental issues in your community	160	0.22
Helping build public awareness of a community issue or problem	161	0.26
Helping investigate possible solutions to a community issue or problem	159	0.18
Working to improve the social, economic, and/or environmental conditions of your community	162	0.28
Seeking information about how community decisions would impact the local social, economic, and/or environmental conditions	162	0.28
Seeking opportunities to learn more about community leadership	162	0.27
<b>Project Management Tasks</b>		
Helping set goals for a community effort or project	160	0.19
Helping develop tasks, timelines, and assignments for a community effort or project	159	0.20
Participating in developing the budget for a community effort or project	160	0.32
Helping to publicize or promote some community effort or project	160	0.31
Helping involve stakeholders in a community project or effort	160	0.33
Helping to recruit and retain volunteers	158	0.31
Helping seek outside support for a community effort or project	162	0.23
OLS regression analysis used to determine if Fall 2008 outcomes predicted 12-month activity level. Only items that were significant at $p < .05$ are included. Beta ( $\beta$ ) is the standardized coefficient (expressed in standard deviation units).		

Apparent from Table 10 is that of the 26 items that matched between the Fall 2008 outcome survey and the 12-month follow-up survey, 18 were found to be significantly related to each other. Also clear from Table 10 is that for each standard deviation increase in participants' competency or intention to apply a skill in the fall of 2008 there was approximately a .25 standard deviation increase in the frequency with which activities were done in the last year. As a specific example: for each standard deviation increase in participants' perceived competence in using active listening skills at the end of the leadership class, participants' reported frequency of using active listening skills in the year following the class increased .21 standard deviations. The results in Table 10 indicate that participants who felt more competent at using leadership skills at the end of the leadership class applied these leadership skills more often than those

that reported being less competent at the end of the training. This was also true for items related to project management and community building, some of which related to competence and some of which related to intention to apply the skill or do the activity. By and large, participants who reported being more competent or more likely to engage in leadership behaviors at the end of the leadership class did the activities more in the year after the class.

### *Individual and Class Characteristics*

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions were also run to understand the relationship of individual participant and class characteristics on the application of skills. Factors related to individual participants themselves that were included in the analysis were race/ethnicity, employment status (including whether retired or self-employed), education (associate's degree or higher), income, and previous leadership experience. The number of organizations participants listed on the application was also included as was the average hours involved with these organizations per month and whether the position within the organization was paid. Factors related to the class that were included in the analysis were hub-community, cohort number, number of females, number of males, number of youth, number of participants, whether the class had a community trainer, and the number of community trainers.

OLS regression of 12-month follow-up survey outcomes on individual and class attributes revealed one individual-level and one class-level factor as significant predictors of community building and project management outcomes, net of all other factors.<sup>3</sup> The number of organizations individuals reported being involved with on the application and the size of the leadership class both predicted the frequency with which participants engaged in community building and project management activities in the 12 months after the training.

According to the regression model, as the number of organizations increases so do participants' reports of their activity level in project management and community building. For

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<sup>3</sup> Only the regression models and the independent variables that were significant at the  $p < .05$  level are reported. This indicated that one can be 95% confident that the true population value indeed differs from zero as the model indicates. Regressions coefficients were standardized to put them on the same scale for comparisons of effect size.

each standard deviation increase in the number of organizations with which a participant was affiliated in 2008, there was a .28 standard deviation increase in the application of community building activities and a .37 standard deviation increase in application of project management tasks. It is not surprising that participants who are involved in more organizations apply their skills more frequently, as involvement in more organizations increases the opportunity to apply skills in various settings.

The regression model also indicates that as class size increases participant engagement in community building and project management after the class also increase. For each standard deviation increase in class size (about 5 people), there was a .36 standard deviation increase in the frequency of community building activities and a .40 standard deviation increase in the frequency of project management tasks being done in the year after the class. Perhaps larger leadership classes provide participants more opportunities for community building and projects as the number of fellow residents with whom to work or hear about opportunities increases.

### *Community*

OLS regression was also used to explore whether communities differed in application of skills and activities.<sup>4</sup> On average, participants in La Pine, North Curry, South Lincoln County, and Wild Rivers Coast had slightly higher activity levels (approximately half a point) in project management and community building, compared to participants in other communities. Participants in La Pine, Union County, and Wild Rivers Coast also scored slightly higher in networking activity. It appears that participants in these communities used their community building and project management skills more frequently than participants in other communities. It is unclear why this may be, though it may have something to do with the composition of the classes, their status as cohort 1 and cohort 2 classes, or the communities themselves.

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<sup>4</sup> Regressions for communities did not include other background variables.

### Barriers to Community Leadership

On the 12-month follow-up survey, training participants were asked about barriers or circumstances that limited their engagement in community work. For each item, respondents scored each barrier on a scale of one to four, where one was “strongly disagree”, two was “disagree”, three was “agree”, and four was “strongly agree.” Table 11 lists the means, standard deviations, and percentages of participants who indicated they had experienced each specific barrier.

**Table 11**

Barriers to Engagement in Community Work: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages						
	N	Mean	SD		Disagree	Agree
Personal concerns and demands (health, family, work) limited my time for community leadership activities	160	2.62	0.86		42%	58%
My community has been overwhelmed by economic, social, or environmental challenges that are out of our control	161	2.35	0.82		62%	38%
I was heavily engaged in community work before the Ford Leadership class and couldn't take on more afterwards	160	2.23	0.76		68%	32%
I felt “burned out” or discouraged by the class project	160	2.19	0.87		65%	35%
I felt overwhelmed by all there is to do in my community	160	2.16	0.73		73%	27%
I felt “closed out” of the leadership structure in my community	159	1.87	0.76		85%	15%
Community work has been too frustrating for me	158	1.84	0.69		86%	14%
I have not been personally interested in the specific efforts or issues facing my community	161	1.6	0.63		93%	7%
Scale ranged from 1-4, where 1 was “strongly disagree”, 2 was “disagree”, 3 was “agree”, and 4 was “strongly agree.”						

Table 11 demonstrates that the greatest barrier to taking on community work in the year after the class was competing personal concerns and demands. The majority of participants (58%) indicated that personal concerns and demands limited their engagement by agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. A minority of participants identified the remaining barriers as limiting their engagement in community work. Just over a third of participants felt that their community has been overwhelmed with economic, social, or environmental challenges and that limited their engagement in the community. About a third of participants felt that they were already too heavily engaged in community work to take on more, and a similar percentage indicated that cohort project “burn out” represented a barrier to their taking

on work in their communities. Just below 30% of participants reported that feeling overwhelmed by all there is to do in the community limited their engagement in community work. Very few participants indicated feeling the remaining three barriers had limited the extent to which they engaged in community work in the year after the leadership class. The least significant barrier was lack of personal interest in the specific issues facing the community. For a complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each barrier, see Appendix 5.

In terms of the numbers of barriers experienced by participants, about 50% of participants identified one to two barriers, and 28% identified three to four barriers to engaging in community work. (Barriers were counted as those with which participants strongly agreed or agreed). An analysis was conducted to determine if the number of barriers experienced by participants affected their leadership activity levels in the 12 months after the training. Most participants who indicated the same or increased activity levels identified 2 to 3 barriers, so barriers apparently did not prevent leadership activities.

Respondents also had an opportunity to comment on specific barriers on the 12-month follow-up survey. Participants comments are helpful in understanding how these barriers impacted their ability to be involved the class project and community leadership efforts in their community. Overall participants commented mostly on barriers related to personal demands, feeling burned out, and being closed out of leadership.

Personal concerns and demands that limited participants' involvement in community leadership included health issues of family members or themselves, caring for aging family, changes in the family (such as a new baby), and work responsibilities. Several participants reported that despite the desire to be more involved, balancing family life, work, and community engagement was challenging.

In the qualitative comments, participants noted specific aspects about the cohort project that resulted in their feeling of “burn out.” Most often mentioned was the length of the project and lack of participation among cohort members. One participant noted that the project was just too big and required “many many hours of fundraising.” A few participants also commented that the project grew more than they expected. As one participant noted:

*“I tend to feel that our project has gotten bogged down and the longer we pursued it the more details and loops appeared making it hard to get a sense of forward progress. This tended to diminish interest and eventually slow the whole project down.”*

Other participants noted that class involvement in the project decreased over time. Participants commented on being frustrated by the lack of participation, especially of individuals who pushed for the project initially only to drop out of the process once the class was over. Reasons cited for people dropping out included scheduling difficulties among class members who are trying to balance the leadership class commitment with other responsibilities as well as participants being closed out of the process.

Being “closed out” of community leadership was a strong theme in the comments regarding barriers. Several participants specifically mentioned that work on their community project was limited because they felt closed out of the decision-making or felt isolated from the group due to strong personalities. Participants noted that when the project was championed by one or a few class members with strong personalities, opportunities for others to get involved were limited and participants tended to stop coming as a result. As one participant stated:

*“These characteristics ended up hurting the group as a whole because they wanted and took control away from others, thus hurting the dynamics of the group and relationships in the community”*

In addition to the project, participants also felt closed out of community leadership due to the dynamics of their community. One participant spoke of an “inner circle” of leadership in her community that was resistant to change. Another noted that there is a “local county-wide lack of cooperation and collaboration” that limits the community work that can be accomplished.



In addition to the barriers rated quantitatively, a few individuals mentioned additional barriers that limited their community engagement. One participant noted that stressed finances due to the downturn in the economy extremely limited his time to participate in community efforts. Another noted that combining two communities for the Ford leadership class and project was challenging.

*“Two different communities, two different counties, two different states, 30 miles traveling between was too much and took the enjoyment out of the great project.”*

Another respondent mentioned that the long commute from the county to the city for the class was a barrier to their participation. In addition, a few participants noted that they work within the local governance structure and must remain neutral on certain topics, which limited their ability to be involved in community issues. Alternatively, a few noted that by doing community work as part of their job, they did not have time to be involved in other issues outside the scope of their work.

### ***Summary***

The findings discussed above reveal that Leadership Program participants apply their leadership skills and engage in leadership activities to varying degrees and in various settings in the year after the training. Most participants do leadership activities and use leadership skills more often than they did before the training and many attribute this increase to the Leadership class itself. Not surprisingly, participants' intentions to apply their skills or do particular activities at the end of the class (Fall 2008) predict their frequency of application or activity in the year following the class. Interestingly, so does class size and the number of organizations with which participants were affiliated. Despite the barriers many individuals faced in their engagement in community work, these barriers only somewhat limited their amount of leadership activity in the last year.

In the year following the leadership development class, participants reported applying their communication skills almost weekly, working with others about once a month, and networking slightly less frequently. These three types of leadership skills overall were applied about once a month by participants. Similarly, participants reported engaging in community building

activities occasionally in the year following the leadership class, with some activities being done more often than others. Project management tasks in community efforts or projects were done slightly less than community building activities, with participant's engaging in these tasks slightly less than occasionally. The vast majority of participants reported applying their leadership skills related to communication, working with others, and networking in community settings, and more than ninety percent applied these skills in more than one setting.

For all types of leadership activities, the majority of participants reported that in the year following the class they did the activities more often than they did before the class. In each case (leadership skills, community building, and project management), the majority of participants who reported high activity indicated that this level of activity was greater than before. This implies that the leadership class is fostering high engagement among participants, and participant responses to the question of the class' contribution solidify this connection. Again, for each form of effective community leadership, forty to sixty percent of participants indicated that the leadership class contributed a good to a great deal to their ability to do the activities or use the skills. Qualitative findings corroborated the statistics. Participants left the class better equipped to address issues in their community, with the confidence to make a difference, and with expanded networks of people to work with.

The data also revealed that participant expectations for the level of leadership activity at the end of the class were associated with their actual activity level in the following year. Those who felt highly competent at the end of the class used leadership skills more after the class. Participants who said they were highly likely to do particular activities at the end of the class actually did the activities more after the class than their classmates. Based on these findings, the immediate outcomes of the class appear to be following participants as they move out into the community, despite the barriers often encountered like personal concerns and demands, cohort project "burn out," and community challenges.

## **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?**

Civic engagement refers to the involvement of residents of a community in formal and informal government and non-governmental affairs. Examples include voting, participating in voluntary associations, or advocating for an issue.

### **Increased Civic Engagement**

On the 12-month follow-up survey, participants were asked how often they participated in various activities related to civic engagement in the year since the class. For each item, respondents scored their participation on a scale of one to four, where one was “never”, two was “rarely”, three was “occasionally”, and four was “frequently.” Table 12 lists the range of civic activities asked on the survey as well as the means, standard deviations, and percentages of participants who participated in civic activities with various frequencies.

**Table 12**

<b>Participation in Civic Activities: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages</b>						
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>Never to Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally/ Frequently</b>
Voted in elections	161	3.58	0.88		10%	90%
Volunteered in your community	161	3.47	0.72		10%	90%
Donated money, services, materials, or food to support a community effort, project or program	161	3.35	0.79		13%	87%
Worked informally with others to address community issues	160	3.09	0.82		20%	79%
Helped raise money and collect materials to support a community effort, project, or program	159	3.08	0.86		22%	78%
Worked as a member in a formal group or organization that addresses community issues	160	3.04	1.04		28%	72%
Attended any public hearings, town hall meetings, community forums, or city council meetings	161	3.00	0.97		26%	74%
Participated on the board of any local service agency or organization	160	2.88	1.20		35%	65%
Helped mobilize community members to work on a common goal	160	2.86	0.97		33%	67%
Advocated for a policy or issue in your community	160	2.77	1.06		37%	63%
Participated in long-term community decision-making or governance processes	160	2.58	1.12		45%	55%
<b>Civic Activities Overall</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>0.68</b>		<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
Scale ranged from 1-4, where 1 was "never", 2 was "rarely", 3 was "occasionally", and 4 was "frequently."						

As Table 12 shows, in the last year, Fall 2008 leadership class participants occasionally did civic activities (mean = 3.07). The highest levels of participation were found in voting in elections, volunteering in communities, and donating money services, materials, or food. On average, participants reported doing these activities almost frequently and the vast majority (around 90%) of participants reported doing these activities occasionally or frequently in the last year. In the year following the leadership class, participants reported engaging in the remaining activities with similar frequency (occasionally), except for participating in long-term community decision-making processes. On average, participants reported rarely engaging in this form of civic engagement, though just over 50% reported participating in long-term community processes occasionally or frequently.

Participants reported that the Ford leadership class contributed moderately to a great deal towards their ability to engage in these civic activities. Approximately 50% felt that the class contributed a good or great deal to their ability, whereas 31% indicated a moderate amount, and 19% a little or not at all. For a complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each civic engagement item, see Appendix 6.

### *Change in Activity*

Results of the 12-month follow-up survey clearly indicate that participants are engaging in civic activities, albeit occasionally. Next, we investigated whether participants' activity levels in the 12 months after the class reflect changes made as a result of participation. In order to answer this question, participants were asked whether the number of times they have done civic activities over the past year was more often, less often, or about the same than the number of times they did them before they participated in the Ford leadership class. Overall, the majority of participants (52%) reported that they had engaged in civic activities more often in the year after the class than they did before the class. Forty-seven percent reported that their civic activity did not change after the class and only 1% of participants reported that they participated in these activities less frequently over the past year than they used to.

While the majority of participants reported an increase in the frequency of civic activities as a result of the training, further analysis explored the extent of change for individuals who were very active. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to identify individuals who were highly engaged in civic activities, which was equivalent to participating in the activities frequently. Of those who were highly active in civic life, 58% participated in civic activities more often in the last 12 months than they did before the training and 42% reported participating at the same high level as before the training. No participants who rated themselves as engaging in civic activities at high levels stated that this level was less often than before the training. Therefore, for the majority of participants who engaged frequently in civic activities in the year after the training that level of activity was higher than before they took the class, and likely had to do with their participation.

### Qualitative Results

In response to the question on the 12-month follow-up survey, “Please give one to two examples of how the leadership class has affected you as a community leader”, respondents indicated that participation in the leadership class resulted in greater civic engagement. This was evident in the responses of those who increased their volunteerism and those who agreed to serve on committees or run for office. Participants volunteered more and joined more community groups. Participants became involved in the Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Commission, and nonprofit boards. One participant facilitates public forums now for United Way agencies. One participant said she gained “*passion to help move community issues forward.*” Increased involvement with organizations was typified by these statements:

*“I have taken on more responsibilities within the groups I have been a part of for the last 6 years. I am currently putting together a group within a group to [supply] artists in schools as a public service, as well as for publicity for our artisan group.”*

*“I have been able to take on new roles in the organizations I presently am involved in and take on roles that I would never have considered before in new community efforts.”*

*“My experience with the Ford class, as well as my experience with Rotary, pushed me away from working locally, but led me to a greater level of involvement at the district level. “*

Youth reported being more active on youth leadership committees in school and in the community and one student mentioned voting in student elections.

Participants increased efforts to promote events in their communities. Participants reported working or leading several fundraising efforts (e.g., for schools, for holiday programs). One participant learned about grants and raised considerable funds for a local foundation. Another participant said:

*“We were able to work with a donor to acquire a school facility and occupy the space over the summer. The school has been without a permanent home for over 25 years.”*

A few participants commented on their increased political activity, such as gathering signatures on an initiative for the city ballot, involvement in a political party, or running for office. One

participant reported his increased “*confidence to enter the County Commissioners office as a person concerned with an issue and know that I can add value to the process and solve a problem.*” More than one participant mentioned attending more city council meetings. One participant said she became motivated to become more involved in city and county government issues.

### *Do Outcomes Vary By Attributes of Participants or the Class?*

Overall, many participants reported engaging in civic activities as a result of the Ford leadership training and more than they used to. While most participants engaged in civic activities occasionally to frequently, there was some variation in outcomes across individuals. In order to explore this further, correlation and regression analyses were completed to determine whether any of this variability in 12-month activity level could be accounted for by participants’ intentions of applying the skills in Fall 2008, participants’ demographic or background characteristics, or characteristics of the classes in which they participated.

### *Fall 2008 Outcomes*

Ordinary Least Squared (OLS) regressions were used to explore the relation between participants’ motivations to engage in civic activities at the end of the leadership class and the frequency with which they did civic activities in the following year. Eight civic activity items appeared on both the 12-month follow-up survey and the outcome survey completed on the 4<sup>th</sup> weekend of the leadership class series. Table 13 lists the standardized coefficients for 12-month follow-up items that were significantly predicted by the leadership outcome survey at the end of the training. For each standard deviation increase in the motivation reported for the Fall 2008 item, the 12-month frequency of civic activity increased by the fraction of a standard deviation listed under beta ( $\beta$ ). Overall, participants who reported being more motivated to engage in civic activities at the end of the leadership class had higher civic activity levels in the 12 months following the class.

**Table 13**

Standardized ( $\beta$ ) Coefficient Effects of Fall 2008 Motivation on Civic Activity Level in Following Year		
	N	Beta ( $\beta$ )
<b>Civic Activities</b>		
Working informally with others to address community issues	159	0.17
Helping to mobilize community members to work on a common goal	159	0.40
Advocating for a policy or issue in your community	158	0.38
Participating in long-term community decision-making or governance processes	159	0.31
Participating on the board of any local service agency or organization	158	0.27
Volunteering in your community	160	0.36
Voting in elections	155	0.38
Helping raise money and collect materials to support a community effort, project, or program	158	0.24
OLS regression analysis used to determine if Fall 2008 outcomes predicted 12-month activity level. Only items that were significant at $p < .05$ are included. Beta ( $\beta$ ) is the standardized coefficient (expressed in standard deviation units).		

As Table 13 illustrates, out of eight matched survey items, all eight were found to be significantly related. Participants who were more motivated to engage in civic activities, such as volunteering in their community, serving on a board, or advocating for a policy or issues, at the end of the leadership training were likely to be doing these activities more than other participants who reported being less motivated at the end of the training. For example, for each standard deviation increase in participants' motivation to work informally with others to address a community issue at the end of the leadership class, participants' reported frequency of working informally with others to address a community issue in the year following the class increased .17 standard deviations.

*Individual and Class Characteristics*

According to OLS regressions, civic engagement outcomes were also found to vary by the number of organizations a person was involved with as well as the size of the leadership class. Patterns were the same as those found for community building and project management outcomes. For a one standard deviation increase in the number of organizations, there was a .45 standard deviation increase in civic activities. For a one standard deviation increase in class



size (about 5 people), there was a .29 standard deviation increase in participation in civic activities.

### ***Summary***

The findings discussed above indicate that in the year after the leadership development class, participants are engaging occasionally in overall civic life, but more frequently in particular activities like volunteering, voting, working in community groups, fundraising for local causes, and promoting local events. About half of participants reported that since the leadership class, their level of civic engagement has increased, and the majority of participants attribute their ability to engage effectively in civic life to the leadership class.

Results also point to participants' motivation to be engaged in civic activities at the end of the class as a significant predictor of participants' levels of civic activity in the year after the class. Those who said they were highly motivated at the end of the class to do particular civic activities did the civic activities more often in the following year than leadership class participants who indicated lower motivation. Interestingly, class size and the number of organization affiliations were also positively associated with levels of civic activity after the class. Despite some variation by these individual and class attributes, these results indicate that the immediate positive effects of the class on participants are carrying through a year later. The leadership class successfully increases the motivation of participants to engage in civic life and those who are highly motivated at the end of the training are more active the following year.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?**

One of the goals of the Ford Institute Leadership Program is for participants to experience expanded and strengthened networks of social relationships, both inside and outside their communities. This goal is consistent with the Ford Institute's theory of change that suggests networking among community members and across rural communities helps build the vitality of rural communities. As community residents participate in the Ford Institute Leadership Program's Leadership Development, Effective Organizations, and/or Community Collaborations

trainings, it is important to investigate the extent to which participants report that these trainings contributed to their networking with other individuals socially, professionally, and in their rural communities.

This section explains the findings from focus groups that were conducted in five rural communities in 2009. The purpose of these focus groups was to explore the impact of the Leadership Program on networking among individuals and their communities. Three types of networks were described to participants:

- **Social networks** describe personal relationships people have in their personal life, such as friendships or acquaintances.
- **Professional or work networks** describe the relationships people have through their employment, such as with co-workers or acquaintances made through work.
- **Organizational or community work networks** describe the relationships people have with those with whom they volunteer or work on community projects, such as members of community boards.

### ***Social Networks***

Focus group participants indicated that their social networks changed significantly as a direct result of their involvement in the Ford Institute Leadership Program. There were several ways in which their networks changed: the size of social networks increased, the diversity of their social networks changed, and distant social relationships became closer. Indeed, participants said that the opportunity for social networking was one of the most important aspects of the program.

*“I actually think that the networking aspect of the Ford program is probably the best part for me. You can go to a book and find out about strategic planning and gphant charts. But you can’t meet people. You can’t get to know them. You can’t do a project with them.”*

Some focus group participants who were lifelong or long-term residents in their communities commented that the size of their social networks increased greatly as a result of their participation in the Leadership Program. One long-term resident said:

*“I’ve been here for the past 20 years. Since I’ve been to the cohort training my interconnectivity and knowing people in the community has probably quadrupled in that short amount of time.”*

From the perspective of a relative new-comer to a community, the Leadership Program provided the opportunity for relationships with fellow community members to form outside the realms of family and work.

*“I relocated here before taking the class. So before I took the class, my relationships were my family and my work, I was pretty limited.”*

Based on the focus group findings, the Leadership Program clearly succeeded at providing new opportunities for newcomers and long-term residents to get to know one another in a community context. In fact, these new opportunities for community members, who may not have worked with one another before, affected the size of their social networks in communities.

Involvement with the Leadership Program also brought about a change in the types of people with which participants networked. As one focus group participant said:

*“I used to always kind of stick to the kind of people that thought like I did. [But I learned] it’s more fun to be around people that don’t think like I do. Get their ideas.”*

Focus group participants also talked about the new-found diversity in their social networks. For some, participating in the Leadership Program led them to form social relationships with people of different ages, while for others the diversity took the form of interactions with people with personalities different from their own.

*“The training and our togetherness really bridged so many gaps. I mean age gaps, political gaps, you name it any gap that there is. It really is that common thread.”*

Finally, many focus group participants indicated that their participation helped to strengthen their social relationships, transforming acquaintances into friendships. As one youth respondent indicated, this transformation occurred simply due to the prolonged exposure to old acquaintances in a new setting:

*“People knew me from my Dad, but I never had my own personal relationships with people in the community. I kind of knew them because I was like my Dad’s shadow everywhere, but now I have my own relationships. I’m able to talk with people, have my own ties with people instead of just always having someone else’s ties.”*

For others, this transformation in the quality of social relationships with community members came about because of the intensity of interaction required for completion of the cohort project. As one focus group respondent put so clearly,

*“I had some people that I sort of knew before, but through implementing the project I got to know more about their personal lives and we did something on a personal level. I think we probably would have gotten to that point, but it just happened more quickly because we spent a lot more time together.”*

The environment of the cohort project provided the opportunity for fellow community members to share an experience that could serve to deepen personal relationships by forming social bonds. These bonds led them to trust the other members of their cohort, to feel more confident in their interactions outside of the program, and to help mitigate discord among individuals.

*“[I liked] getting to know the people in the community that I previously haven’t known or only saw in passing. I got to know them on a more personal level. So therefore when I saw them in another group, I felt there was some kind of a bond that we’ve had or some history together.”*

*“We build relationships socially, then when the things get tight, when we have conflict, there’s this relationship in place that will hold when the stress happens.”*

As shown by the focus group findings in these five communities, individuals who participated in the Leadership Program increased their number of social relationships, diversified the types of people with whom they socialized, and strengthened existing relationships.

### ***Work, School, and Professional Networks***

Focus group participants were also asked about any changes in their relationships with co-workers or work-related acquaintances as a result of the Leadership Program. Many participants reported that the leadership program intersected with their work environment. A few participants volunteered that participation in the program resulted in a new career for them. The most significant impact indicated by participants was that the Leadership Program opened up a pool of human resources for people to call on for the improvement of their individual careers.

*“I think my career here throughout this county was really jump started because of the networking.”*

*“I got a chance to meet a really strong cross-section of the community and it was extremely helpful in ramping up some of the [professional] work I’ve been doing.”*

One participant mentioned that involvement of work associates in successive cohorts of the leadership classes was improving the work environment. Some said that the Ford Leadership Program helped in the development and formation of non-profit organizations.

Other focus group respondents explicitly noted that their newly expanded networks had an impact on the ability of their organizations to succeed. This finding reveals that relationships formed in the Leadership Program not only positively affect individuals’ ability to perform within their work environment, but also positively affect their organizations.

*“We’ve (the organization) been collaborating with four or five different organizations to put on three different workshops. I don’t think that would have ever happened if it weren’t for the leadership class.”*

## ***Organizational and Community Networks***

Organizational and community networks refer to relationships with individuals on community projects or in other organizations. Participants reported that their community networks changed – new relationships were formed, existing relationships became stronger, and relationships with people not typically in their social networks were established.

*“It’s not just about making specific networking connections, but actually learning how to connect with people who don’t necessarily share the same interests and values other than perhaps we all agree that we want a better community to live in.”*

In one focus group, a participant referred to dropping a rock in a quiet pool and watching the ripples. The program “splashes” onto other community residents, such as spouses or family members. Individuals are drawn into community relationships and activities by Leadership Program participants that would not have happened without the program in their community. As a result of engaging community members, participants reported an overall increase in civic engagement and the capacity of the community to address issues.

*“Now if something comes up, a project needs to be done, you know the avenues to take, you know the people that might be supportive or they can help you find people. So you develop this network and it just moves throughout the whole community.”*

*“I think since Ford started their classes... there’s been a definite improvement to our city and interrelations between people and being more active.”*

The increase in community networks brought more diversity to community relationships. Participants saw community members come together for a common purpose regardless of who participated or who benefited. As focus group participant stated:

*“Now we’re seeing people from different backgrounds that have that common need or want to see something happen in this community coming together. They are willing to put some work into it and no matter what the outcome is, they’re going to feel good. I hadn’t seen that before. It’s very refreshing.”*

Focus group participants credited the Leadership Program with giving individuals the skills to work collaboratively in the community. Having many members of the community involved in the Leadership Program has helped to build a common language for community work.

*“People who have been in the Ford Family Leadership are really much easier to collaborate with, I think because of the training. We feel like we belong to the same tribe. We talk the same lingo. We all speak Ford.”*

*“There are people here I’ve had conflicts with, and [now] what I know is we all enrich our community and we’re doing our best. And so we work together and Ford helps us connect in really healthy ways.”*

New community ventures also emerged as a result of networking between Leadership Program participants. Participants were able to connect with others around a common purpose. In some cases, new organizations or non-profits were formed.

*“The Business Enterprise Resource Alliance that we have put together would probably not have formed if we had not gone through the Ford Family training.”*

*“I formed a small non-profit that’s to support the performing arts, and we have a studio theatre that we operate. Three of the founding members were members of the leadership class. These are people I would have never had a conversation with before Ford.”*

Networks can also be formed with others outside of a participant’s community. Some focus group participants reported that their networks had expanded beyond their community of residence. Being part of the “Ford experience” means that when meeting residents of other communities, they share a common experience. They viewed these enlarged networks as positive outcomes of their leadership experience. In a few cases, these larger networks related to economic development efforts.

*“Ford Family has allowed me to realize that it’s not just a community of Baker City. Specifically when we are talking about economic development. I’ve been able to talk to Huntington and Sumter about economic development. It wouldn’t have happened without Ford Family.”*

## **Summary**

The main goal of the focus groups was to explore the impact of the Leadership Program on individuals, their social relationships, and their communities. Networking, as expressed by Ford participants, is about being connected to and collaborating with others to benefit the community. Participants gained confidence in improved communication skills, helping them to cope with conflict and different styles of interaction. This in turn helped them connect and collaborate, and move forward into new leadership roles.

*“It strengthened my commitment to community by reinforcing the connections that are already there.”*

Participants in the five focus groups also gave many examples of ways in which the Ford Leadership Program increased their social, work, and community networks. Individuals increased the number of social relationships and formed new relationships with individuals who differed demographically from themselves. Some individuals were able to form relationships with individuals in other Ford hub-communities. Other benefits included increased business contacts and strengthening bonds of individuals to their rural communities. Increased networks, new community ventures, and increased abilities to collaborate were reported and linked to an overall improvement in the community’s capacity to address issues.

### **Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

The intention of the Ford Institute Leadership Program is to have a positive impact on individuals, organizations, and communities. In order to influence the trajectory of organizations, the Effective Organizations training is offered in communities during the second year of the Leadership Program. The training focuses on teaching skills in strategic planning, organizational leadership and governance, as well as resource development and management. The logic of the program is that if participants in the Effective Organizations training successfully increase their skills in these areas, then the organizations in which they work or volunteer will improve along these dimensions as well. Given this logic, it is important first to



understand the extent to which Effective Organizations participants improve their skills and knowledge in the areas targeted by the training. In subsequent analyses, it will be appropriate to ascertain the extent to which these participants (if they have improved their skills in these areas) have influenced their organizations.

In order to understand the extent to which participants in the Effective Organizations training increase their knowledge and skill in organizational strategic planning, organizational leadership and governance, and organizational resource development and management, we rely on data collected from Fall and Spring 2009 Effective Organizations participants. The methods used for collecting these data via the Effective Organizations background and outcome surveys were described on pages 10-17.

### ***Descriptive Characteristics of 2009 Effective Organizations Participants***

Before discussing the findings from the 2009 EO survey that relate to knowledge and behavior change, it is important to understand the characteristics of Effective Organizations participants. In this description of participant characteristics we focus on the individuals who completed both the background and outcome surveys.<sup>5</sup>

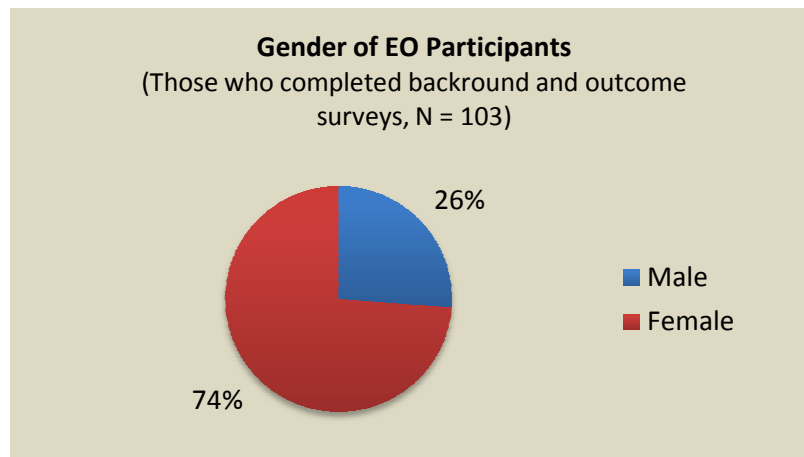
#### ***Gender***

According to the survey findings, the vast majority of 2009 Effective Organizations participants were female. As Figure 2 illustrates, only a quarter of Effective Organizations participants were male.

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<sup>5</sup> There were no significant differences between the composition of people who filled out the background survey and those who filled out both surveys, though the total number of individuals did differ (there were 156 respondents to the background survey and 103 respondents to both surveys).

**Figure 2**



Of the eight Effective Organizations training groups for which we had complete background and outcome survey data, only three had equal proportions of women and men, namely North Curry County, McKenzie River, and Chiloquin.

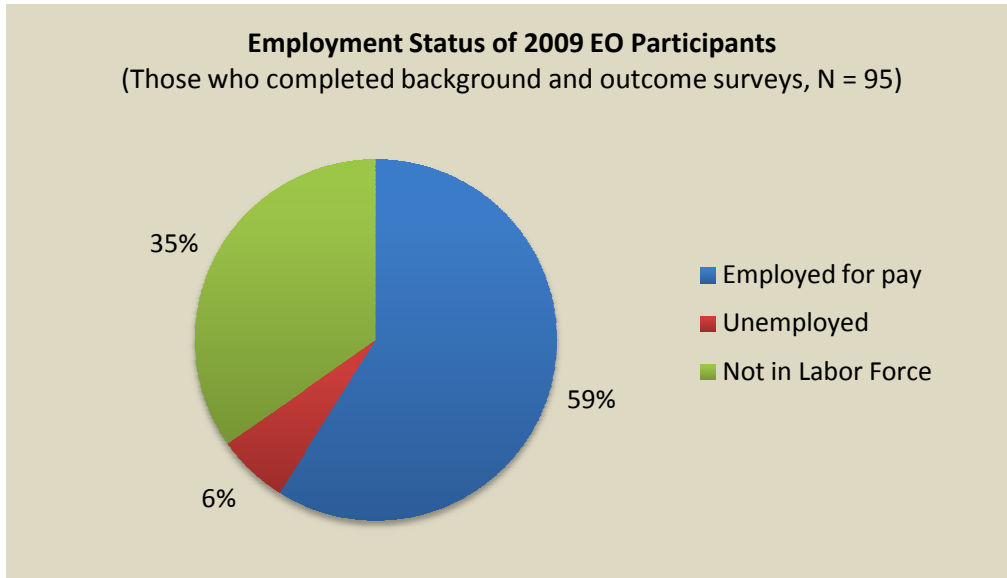
### *Age*

On the Effective Organizations background survey, respondents were asked how old they were on their last birthday. The average age of participants at the time of the training was 55, while the median was 57, and the range of ages was quite broad: from 16 to 82. Women tended to be younger than men, however, with an average age of 52 compared to the average age of men around 60.

### *Employment Status*

In 2009, while the majority of EO participants were employed for pay (59%), a full 35% were not employed or seeking employment at the time of the training. As Figure 3 illustrates, only a small proportion of respondents were unemployed, but seeking work at the time (referred to as “not in labor force”).

**Figure 3**



The large proportion of EO participants who were not in the labor force echoes the proportion of participants who indicated they were retired at the time of the training (35%), although not all retired people have exited the labor force and not all people who are not in the labor force are retired. As Table 14 shows, however, the majority of people who were not in the labor force at the time of the EO training were retired. Other reasons for not being in the labor force at the time of the training were not asked on the survey, but often include personal desire, discouragement from the job hunt, the need to care for family members, and other reasons.

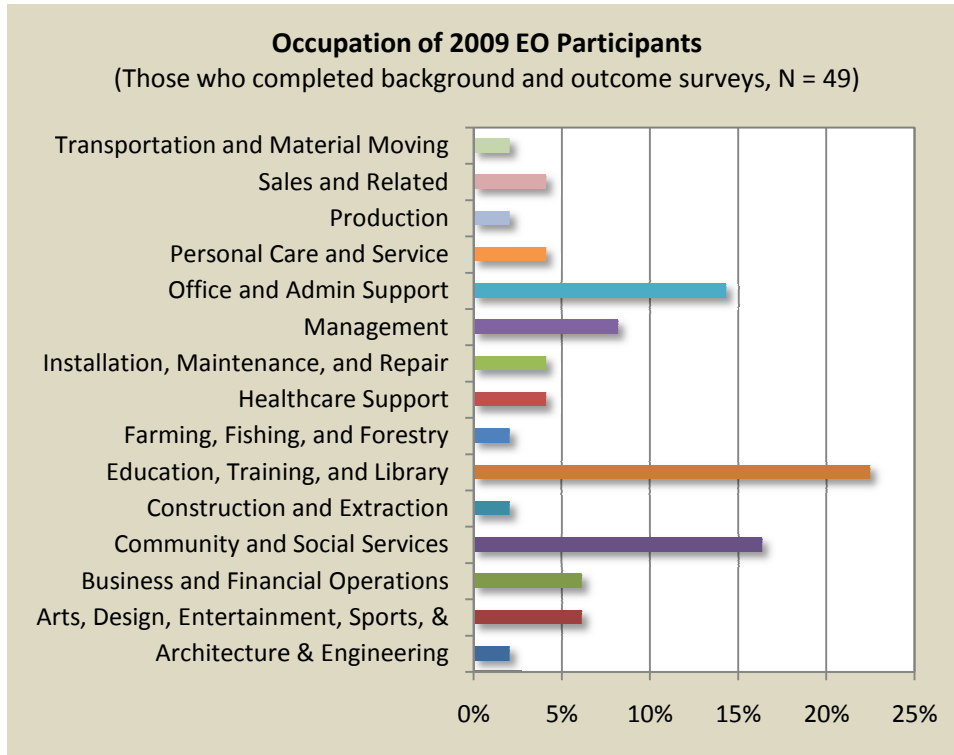
**Table 14**

	Not in Labor Force	In Labor Force
Retired	84%	3%
Not Retired	16%	97%
Total	100%	100%

Among the EO participants who were employed for pay at the time of the training, four occupations stood out as the most prevalent, namely Education, Training, and Library; Community and Social Services; Office and Administrative Support; and Management. It is important to note, however, that only 49 EO participants who answered this question also completed an outcome survey. Figure 4 illustrates that the representation of other occupations

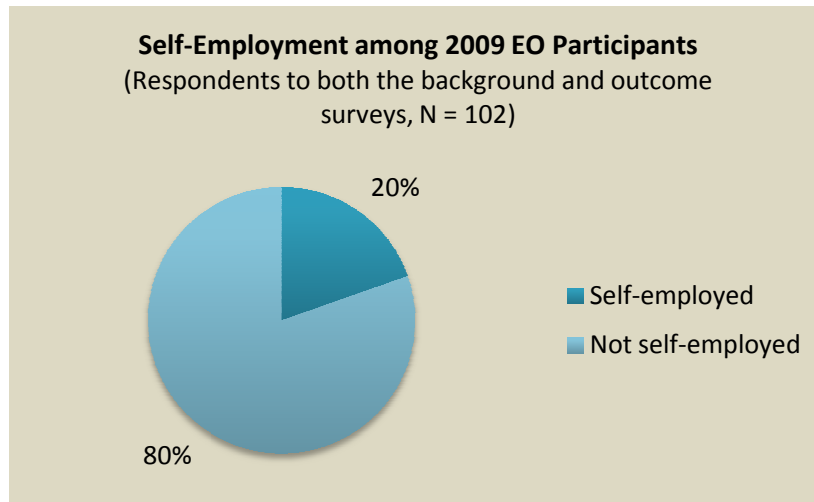
among EO participants was relatively diverse; 15 occupations were represented among participants, albeit to varying degrees.

**Figure 4**



A fair proportion of Effective Organizations participants indicated that they were self-employed at the time of the training. As Figure 5 reveals, approximately one out of five participants was self-employed, although these individuals could also be working for pay with another employer.

**Figure 5**

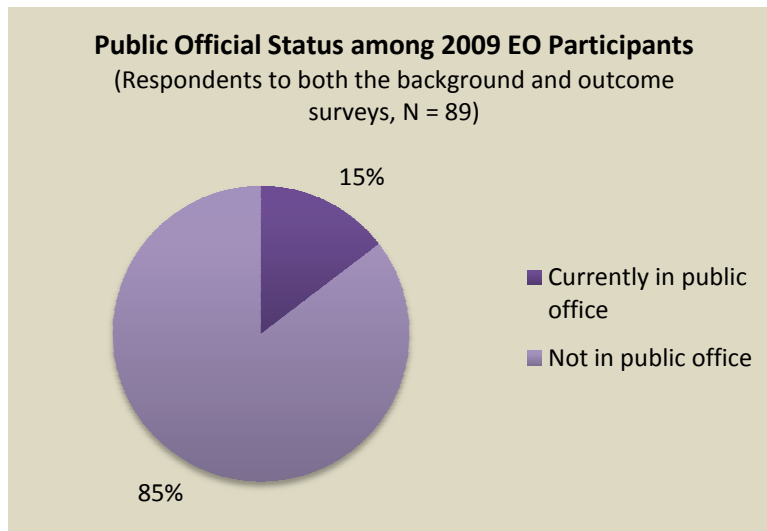


In sum, the EO survey data indicate that 41% of participants were not in the labor force at the time of the training, and that the majority of those individuals were retired. Of those who were employed for pay, nearly half worked in four occupations and 20% were self-employed.

*Public Office*

Effective Organizations participants were also asked if they held public office as elected or appointed officials. As Figure 6 illustrates, 15% of participants indicated that they held public office at the time of the training.

**Figure 6**

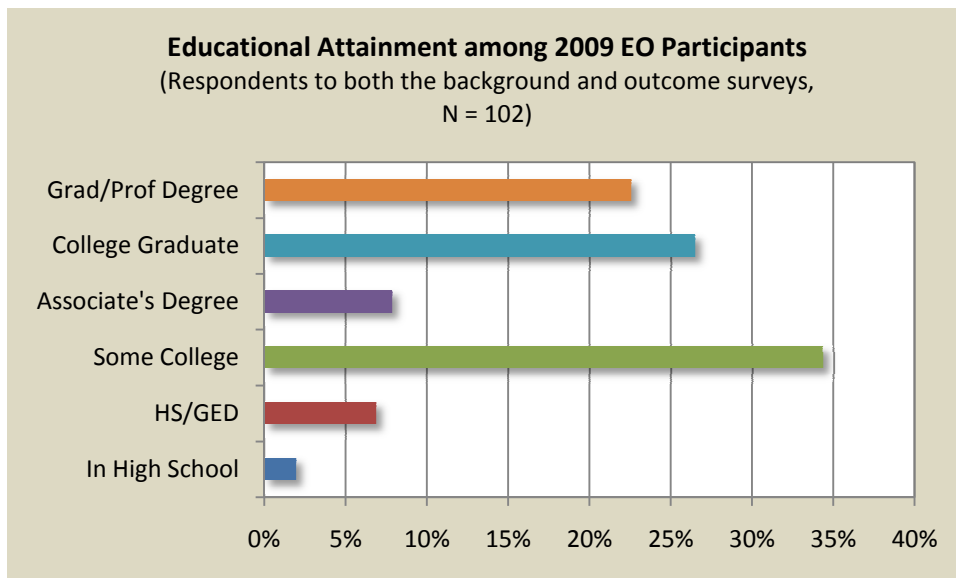


Among EO participants who held public office at the time of the training, the majority were men (54%) and their average age was 61.

### *Education*

The majority (59%) of Effective Organizations participants in 2009 had an Associate's degree or higher at the time of the training. As Figure 7 shows, the majority of people with less than an Associate's degree had some college education.

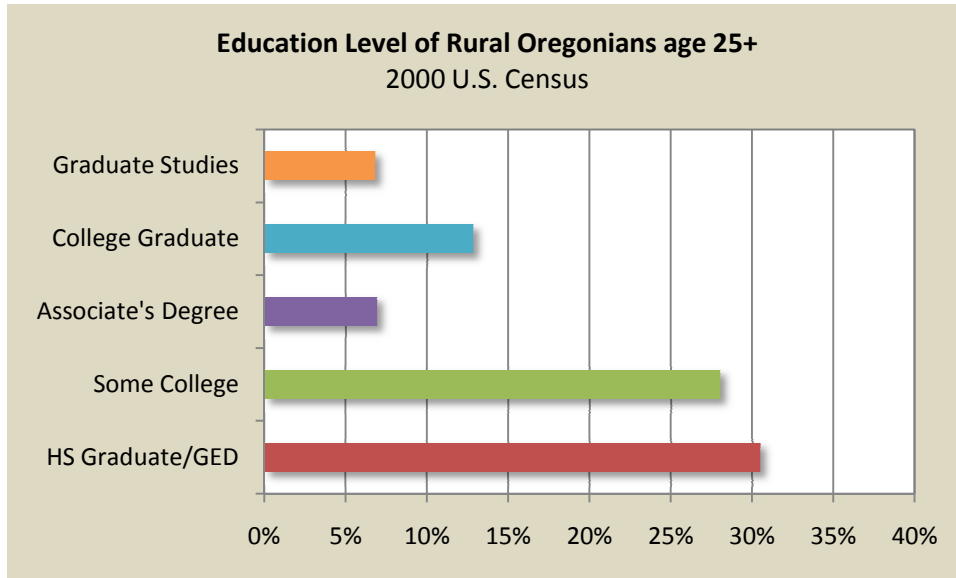
**Figure 7**



Not surprisingly, as the EO training is not targeted to young people, only a very small percentage of participants were in high school at the time of the Effective Organizations training (2%).

Compared to the educational levels of rural Oregonians from the US Census Bureau in 2000, Effective Organizations participants appear to be skewed toward the more highly educated. As Figure 8 indicates, the majority of rural Oregonians in 2000 had less than an Associate's Degree.

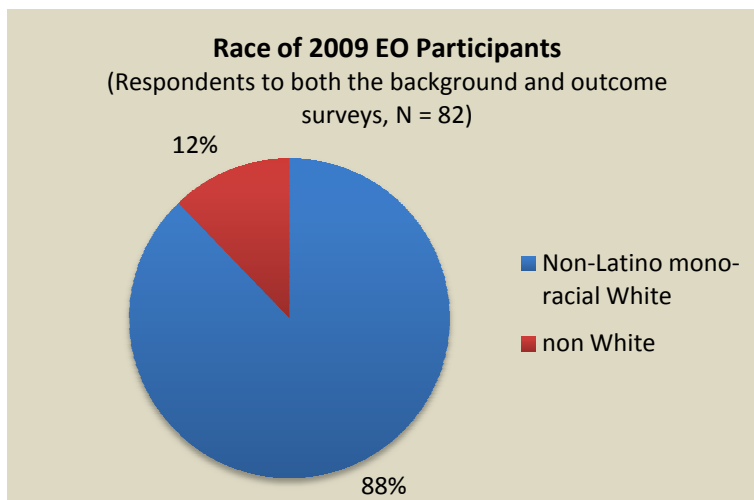
**Figure 8**



*Race*

In 2009, the majority of Effective Organizations participants were non-Latino, mono-racial whites (88%), as Figure 9 depicts. The remaining 12 percent of participants were Asian, Native American, Latino, and multi-racial. No EO participants in 2009 were African American.

**Figure 9**



Compared to rural Oregon in 2000, according to the US Census Bureau, the racial composition of the Effective Organizations trainings in 2009 were representative of the population. In 2000, 87% of rural Oregonians were mono-racial, non-Latino whites.

Among Effective Organizations participants, non-whites tended to be younger and slightly less educated. Thirty percent of non-whites had an Associate's degree or higher, compared to 64% of non-Latino, mono-racial whites; a statistically significant difference.<sup>6</sup> On average, non-whites were ten years younger than whites; 55 was the average age of non-Latino, mono-racial whites, while 45 was the average age of non-whites.

### *Income*

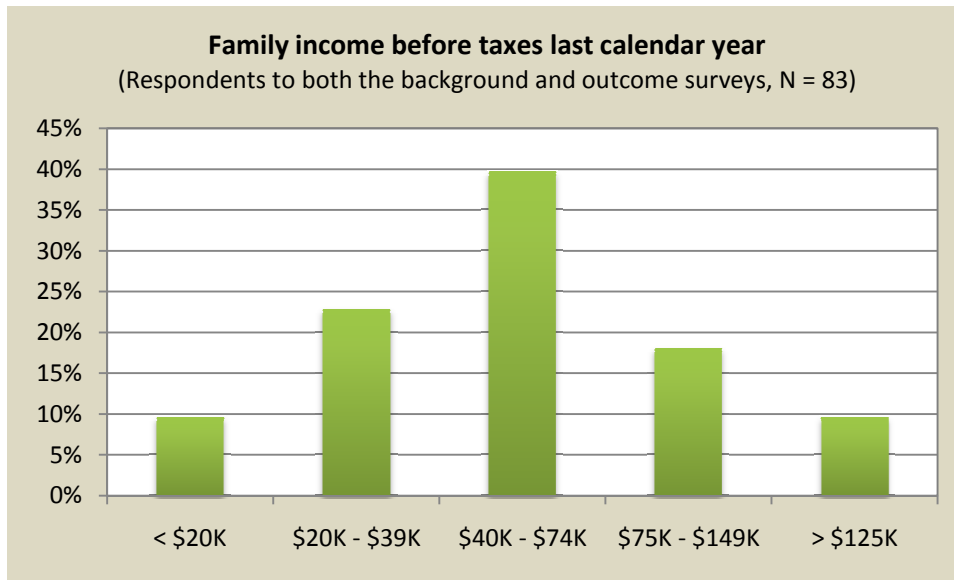
Of the 103 Effective Organizations participants reported on in this section, 83 provided information about their incomes (80%). The responses of these 83 people provide some insight into the economic status of EO participants. As Figure 10 shows, the greatest percentage of participants reported a family income between \$40,000 and \$74,999 (36%). Nearly equal percentages of participants reported income in the next highest and next lowest income categories (approximately 17% and 23% respectively). At the tails of the income categories, 9% reported income less than \$19,999 and 9% reported income greater than \$125,000.

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<sup>6</sup> Chi-squared tests of the equality of proportions revealed that these proportions were significantly different at the  $p < .01$  level.



**Figure 10**

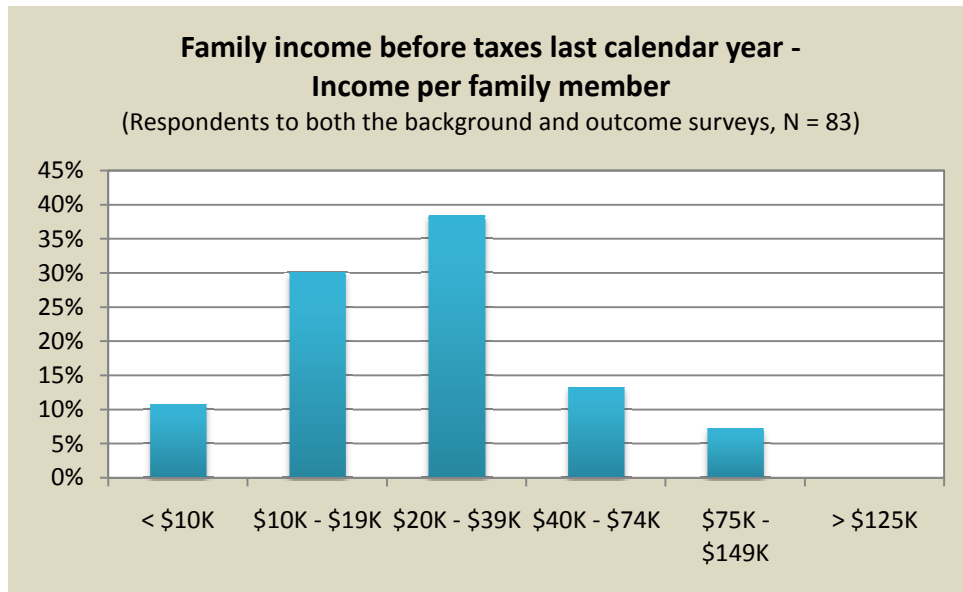


Respondents to the background survey were also asked to list the number of people in their families, which, in combination with income data, can provide a more nuanced view of the family economic status of EO participants. Dividing the midpoint of the income categories by the total number of people in the participant’s family yields a measure of income per person in the family. As Figure 11 reveals, for approximately 10% of EO participants the income available to each family member is less than \$10,000 per year, which is poverty level for a family of one person.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> US Department of Health & Human Services. 2009 Federal Poverty Guidelines. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/09poverty.shtml>

Figure 11



Almost a third of participants are in families in which the per capita income is between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per year, and almost 40% of participants are in families in which per capita income is \$20,000-\$39,000. Taking family size into consideration reveals that the vast majority of EO participants in 2009 were financially well off, though some families appear to struggle somewhat to make ends meet.

*Previous Leadership & Organizational Management Training.*

Respondents to the Effective Organizations background survey were asked if they had any leadership training experience *or* education in organizational development or non-profit administration prior to the EO training. If so, they were asked to list that prior training or education. In 2009, as Figure 12 shows, the majority of participants (58%) said they had participated in some form of leadership training or organizational management prior to the Effective Organizations training.

**Figure 12**



Among those with previous leadership experience, 70% had an Associate's degree or higher at the time of the EO training, compared to only 38% of those without previous leadership training or organizational development education. This difference was statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). In addition, a quarter of those with prior leadership training or organizational development education held public office at the time of the training. Conversely all of those who held public office, and who completed the background and outcome surveys, reported past leadership training or organizational development education.

The predominant past leadership training experience of EO participants was the Ford Institute's leadership development class. With respect to past organizational development education, however, no particular venue or type dominated. 2009 Effective Organizations participants listed a variety of different experiences with organizational development training, such as:

- Board Training for a charter school
- Grant writing class
- MPA w/Emphasis in Non-Profit
- TACS Training/Centro Latino Americano Board

- Credit Union National Administration Supervisory Program

As the survey findings indicate, the majority of Effective Organizations training participants enter the training with some prior exposure to training in leadership or organizational management. In addition, the people who have this previous exposure share some characteristics, namely educational background and positions in public office.

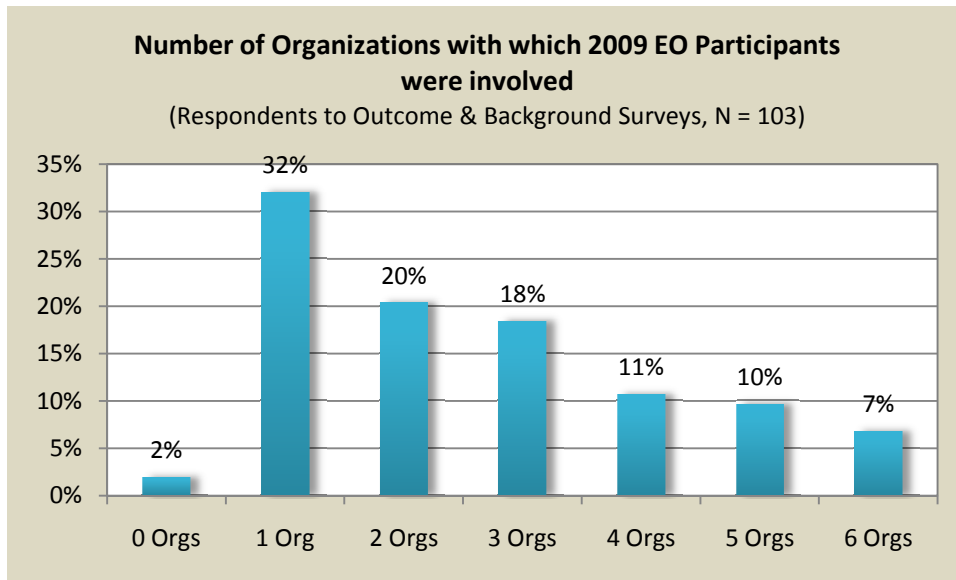
### *Organizational Involvement*

The Effective Organizations training focuses on providing participants with skills in strategic planning, operational leadership, and resource development and management that they can take back to their organizations. For this reason it is important to understand how these participants are involved with organizations. For example, if the intention of the Leadership Program is to have an effect on organizations it would be beneficial to know if participants in EO training indeed are part of organizations and if their roles permit such influence.

On the EO background survey, respondents were asked to complete a series of questions about the organizations or groups (at the time of the training) in which they were currently a member or actively volunteered on a regular basis for at least one hour a month (a minimum of 12 hours per year). Respondents were asked to provide each organization's name and its location. In addition, the respondent was to list her role in the organization and information about whether the position was paid, the number of years she has been involved in the organization, and the number of hours per month she works with the organization. This information was summarized to provide an overview of the involvement of EO participants in a variety of organizations.

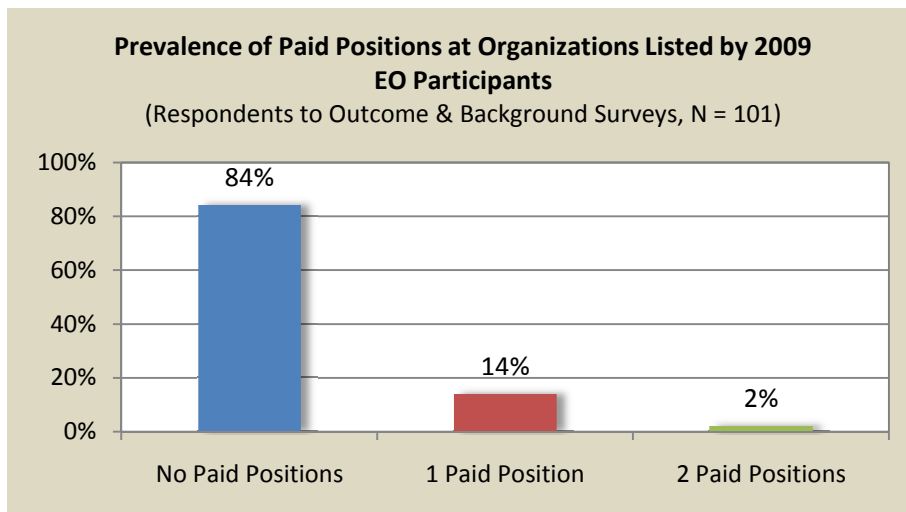
According to the background survey data, 98% of EO participants in 2009 were part of one or more organizations at the time of the training. As Figure 13 reveals, about a third of participants were actively involved with only one organization, and around 40% were involved with two or three organizations. About 30% of training participants indicated they were involved with a total of four to six organizations at the time.

**Figure 13**



These results imply that indeed, the vast majority of EO participants are involved with organizations in some way. In fact, as Figure 14 indicates, the vast majority of people who said they were involved with one or more organizations were not getting paid and were therefore volunteers or simply members.

**Figure 14**



Of Effective Organizations participants who were involved with one or more organizations at the time of the training, only 14% said they held a paid position at one of those organizations,

while only 2% held two paid positions at those organizations. Unfortunately, examined in combination with data collected on the EO outcome survey, it appears that this question about the number of paid positions in organizations was misinterpreted by respondents. This is apparent because on the outcome survey respondents were asked to think about one organization in which they were most likely to use what they gained from the training. They were then asked to list the name of the organization and their current role in the organization.

The roles from which they could choose were:

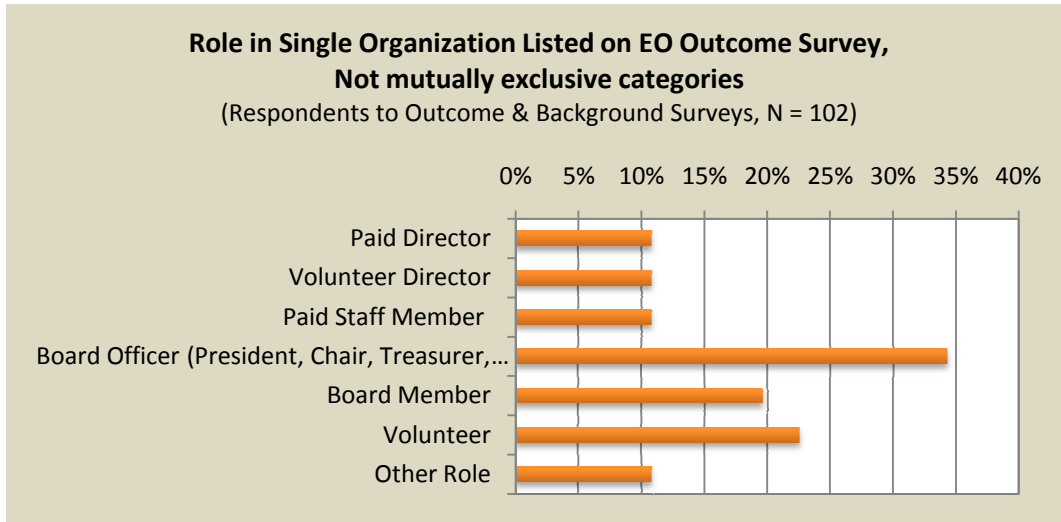
- Paid director
- Volunteer director
- Paid staff member (other than Director)
- Board officer (i.e. President, Chair, Treasurer, etc.)
- Board member
- Volunteer
- Other

Of those who listed their involvement with the one organization on the outcome survey as a paid director, 63% indicated on the background survey that they held no paid positions at any of the organizations with which they were involved. Also, of those who said they were a paid staff member at their organization on the outcome survey, 72% had indicated on their background survey not being paid at any of their organizations. Clearly the background survey question about organizational involvement was picking up different information than the outcome survey question about organizational involvement. In all likelihood, the background survey question was eliciting information about volunteer organizations and the outcome survey question was making people think about the organization(s) in which they worked. This is evinced by the fact that only 20% of outcome survey respondents listed an organization in which they were a volunteer (volunteer director or volunteer).

Given the disconnect between the results from EO background and outcome surveys with respect to organizational involvement, we will rely more heavily on the outcome survey data to tell the story about the ways in which EO participants are involved with organizations that may be impacted by the training.

According to the EO outcome survey data displayed in Figure 15, 34% of participants were board officers in the organization where they intended to apply their EO training knowledge. The next most prevalent role of EO participants in their organizations was as volunteers, followed by board members. That said, around 20% of participants indicated they were either a paid or unpaid director (separate analysis).

**Figure 15**



As the survey data indicate, a fair number of Effective Organizations training participants held powerful positions in their organizations. Indeed, more than half (58%) of participants held positions that had some say over the trajectory of an organization. Specifically, these positions were paid or unpaid directors, board officers, and board members. People who were paid staff members, volunteers, or were in other roles were not included as having significant power in the organization they listed on the outcome survey.

The organizations EO participants listed on the outcome survey as the ones in which they were most likely to apply the skills they learned in the training varied widely from churches, to schools, to specific city or county departments. Other participants listed community organizations with specific missions such as the arts, child care, animal rescue, or wetland education. Other examples of organizations included:

- Port Orford Revitalization Association

- Boys & Girls Club
- Community Emergency Response Team
- Oregon Society of Tax Consultants
- Providence Newberg Medical Center
- Chetco Activity Center

The survey data also indicate that in any given training, the number of people who represented the same organization varied from one to five. In Table 15 the numbers of members from unique organizations who attended the training are displayed, clarifying the depth of EO training infiltration into organizations in the community.

**Table 15**

Hub-Community	# of Organizations Represented at EO	# of Orgs with 1 member at EO	# of Orgs with 2 members at EO	# of Orgs with 3 members at EO	# of Orgs with 4 members at EO	# of Orgs with 5 members at EO
Chiloquin	9	6	1	1	1	0
Grant County	19	15	3	1	0	0
Harney County	12	9	2	0	0	1
La Pine	12	8	2	1	0	1
McKenzie River	9	9	0	0	0	0
Newberg	12	11	0	0	1	0
North Curry County	14	12	2	0	0	0
Sisters	13	11	0	1	1	0
White City-Upper Rogue	12	6	5	0	1	0
Wild Rivers Coast	13	8	2	1	1	1
South Lane	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Total</b>	125	95	17	5	5	3
<b>% of Total Organizations</b>		76%	14%	4%	4%	2%

**Source: 2009 Effective Organizations Outcome Survey, total number of respondents: 180**

As Table 15 shows, just over three-quarters of the 125 organizations that were represented at the Effective Organizations trainings in 2009 had only one member who participated in the



training. The next greatest proportion of organizations had two members who participated in the EO training, but these were only 17 out of 125 organizations (14%). Very few organizations that were represented in the EO training had three, four, or five members who were in attendance. These data indicate that the EO training is pulling in a large number of organizations, but not saturating any single organization. Although it is unclear at this point how the number of organization members who participate in the EO training will affect the organizational outcomes desired by the Ford Institute, these statistics suggest that some intended outcomes may be influenced by this broad but shallow penetration of organizations represented in the training.

In sum, the vast majority of 2009 Effective Organizations participants were involved with one or more organizations as members or volunteers. In addition, most participants held some position of authority in the organization in which they were most likely to apply any new skills learned in EO training. The prevalence of positions of organizational authority among EO participants suggests there is likely to be ample opportunity for EO concepts to be applied in these organizations by EO participants, as many of them can have an influence on the way the organization operates. It appears, however, that very few members of any particular organization attend the training, meaning that the impact of the training on organizations may indeed be lessened. For the tools or approaches taught in the training to be implemented in an organization, EO participants will likely have to be very deliberate in their attempts to get the organization to change. This may be more difficult for some than others.

### *Summary*

This examination of the background characteristics of 2009 Effective Organizations participants reveals some diversity and some commonalities among individuals:

- The majority of participants were female
- The average age of participants was 55
- The majority of participants were employed for pay, but over a third were not employed and not seeking work
- Four occupations dominated: Education, Training, and Library, Community and Social Services, Office and Administrative Support, and Management

- One out of five participants was self-employed at the time
- The majority of participants had an Associate's degree or higher
- 15% of participants held public office as appointed or elected officials
- The racial and ethnic composition of the training matched that observed in rural Oregon
- The majority of participants had some prior leadership training or organizational management education experience
- The majority of 2009 Effective Organizations participants were involved with one or more organizations as members or volunteers
- Most participants held some position of authority in the organization in which they were most likely to apply any new skills learned in EO training

### ***Outcomes of 2009 Effective Organizations Participants***

The intent of the Ford Institute Leadership Program is to influence individuals, organizations, and communities. Specifically with respect to organizations, the goals of the program are to help them improve their capacity to accomplish their mission, increase their contributions to the community, and increase their collaboration with other organizations. To develop this capacity, the Effective Organizations training focuses on increasing the capacity of individual members of organizations who can then apply their skills in their organizations. Specifically, participants are exposed to information about strategic planning, resource management and development, and operational leadership. The Effective Organizations outcome survey is designed to gauge the extent to which knowledge is gained by participants as a result of the training, but also to learn about the behavior changes participants intend to make as a result of the training in order to gain some preliminary insight into the changes participants think will occur in their organizations as a result of the training. In the following sections, the three aspects of the training's intended immediate impact are explored:

- Increased individual capacity to accomplish organizational mission
- Anticipated individual application of skills (behaviors)
- Anticipated effects on organizations

*Do Effective Organizations participants improve their capacity to accomplish their organizational mission?*

The capacity of individuals to accomplish the missions of their organizations depends on their knowledge, capacity, location in the organization, and other factors. Those who lack knowledge in organizational management, regardless of their desire to affect change in this area, will not have the capacity to help an organization accomplish its mission. The Effective Organizations outcome survey provides insight into the extent to which participating in the training increases the knowledge of individuals to accomplish organizational goals through closed- and open-ended survey questions.

*Increased Organizational Knowledge*

On the Effective Organizations outcome survey, training participants were asked a series of closed-ended questions about how knowledgeable they felt on 20 skills related to organizational management after completing the training as well as how knowledgeable they felt on those skills before the training. Comparing pre-training knowledge scores with post-training knowledge scores reveals whether or not knowledge was gained and the extent thereof. Dependent t-tests of equal means were conducted on participants’ pre-training and post-training knowledge for each of the three organizational management knowledge concepts in addition to the Cohen’s *d* statistic. Findings are displayed in Table 16.

**Table 16**

Pre to Post Change in Knowledge Concept Groups							
	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen’s <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Strategic Planning	103	2.31	0.63	3.41	0.51	1.10	0.74
Operational Management	102	2.10	0.74	3.15	0.57	1.05	0.68
Resource Development & Management	103	2.04	0.64	3.12	0.57	1.08	0.68
Knowledge Overall	103	2.15	0.61	3.23	0.49	1.08	0.74

Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. **All results were significant at  $p < .05$** , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen’s *d* statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect.

As Table 16 indicates, comparing pre-training means to post-training means, participants reported increased knowledge in all three concept areas and overall gains in organizational management knowledge (all 20 items) as a result of the Effective Organizations training. The differences in means pre to post were very similar for each concept group, therefore, participants indicated that their knowledge increased about equally across concept groups as a result of the training.

With respect to knowledge levels at the end of the training, however, participants felt their knowledge of strategic planning was the highest of the three areas (mean = 3.41) and felt their post-training level of knowledge in operational management and resource development and management were about the same (based on dependent t-tests, significance at  $p < .05$ ). Given that the difference in means pre to post were about equal, the higher post-training level of knowledge in strategic planning is driven largely by the higher pre-training level of knowledge reported on average (statistically significant at  $p < .05$ ). It appears that participants came into the training with more knowledge in strategic planning than the other concept groups, which resulted in them remaining more knowledgeable in this area at the end of the training. According to the Cohen's  $d$  statistic, the effect of the training on the knowledge of participants was moderate. See Appendix 7 for the pre to post means and Cohen's  $d$  statistics for each individual knowledge item.

The survey data also reveal that those who had the lowest pre-training knowledge reported the greatest gains in knowledge as a result of the training. For example, participants who rated themselves moderately knowledgeable in overall organizational management before the training (greater than 3) reported a .41 point increase from pre to post, whereas participants who rated themselves as somewhat knowledgeable (between a 2 and a 3, inclusive) before the training reported a .87 point increase in knowledge pre to post. By contrast, those who rated themselves as not knowledgeable in organizational management before the training (less than 2) reported a 1.5 point increase from pre to post. Therefore, participants who reported the least amount of knowledge at the beginning of the training showed the most improvement. The

Effective Organizations training was able to bring all participants to similarly high levels of knowledge.

In the correlation and Ordinary Least Squares regression analyses, pre-training knowledge emerged as the only factor associated with post-training knowledge for any of the concepts or for overall knowledge of organizational management.

### *Qualitative Results*

On the Effective Organizations outcome survey, respondents had the opportunity to express in their own words the impact the training may have had on them. Approximately 180 individuals responded to this question and described many ways they felt the EO training affected them personally. From the many responses to the question provided, participants tended to indicate that changes they experienced fell into a few categories. Participants felt they had:

- A greater understanding and knowledge of skills and tools
- Increased their confidence to use skills and tools
- Increased the size of their individual and organizational networks
- Grown on a personal level

The most frequently cited personal impacts participants mentioned were that the EO training increased their knowledge about skills and tools to use in their organizations and increased their confidence to use those skills and tools. Over 100 comments related to increased knowledge and 34 related to increased confidence. Participants also made references to specific types of skills and tools.

Overwhelmingly, these skills and tools mapped onto the three concept groups of the survey: strategic planning, operational management, and resource development/management. This finding in the open-ended responses corroborates the quantitative data findings regarding the impact of the training on participants' knowledge of organizational management. While many comments stopped simply at acknowledging an increase in knowledge, others drew the link between personal impact and broader changes. As one respondent put it, the training gave

him: *“new and exciting information to make me a better, more effective board member.”* With the information from the EO training in hand, many participants said they felt they would be able to influence their organization either with direct action or by sharing their knowledge with others in the organization.

Less frequently mentioned, though often-cited (about 30 times), was that the training affected people’s personal connections to individuals and organizations in their community. Participants indicated that the opportunity to network with other individuals and organizations was valuable for various reasons. For some, the networking opportunity gave them the chance to learn about new organizations with whom to collaborate in the future:

*“There was some “mixing-up” time allowed so that we could meet others in the group and talk about how we might connect and work with one another. This time for mixing is very important in a small community like ours.”*

For many more, networking with others in the community revealed that there were fellow residents they could turn to for advice. As one respondent put it:

*“[The training] connected me with valuable resources and introduced me to other members in my community who extended their support.”*

Others simply acknowledged the value of networking for its own sake in a rural environment.

Finally, a few respondents indicated that the training contributed to their personal development (approximately 11 comments). Sometimes this took the form of improved communication styles, like for one participant:

*“It [the training] made me reconsider some of the ways I interact with others. Sometimes I think I’m right and I just want to force an issue. Now I’m more likely to recognize that I have to be more than right. I have to be more diplomatic. I am more likely to say thanks, especially to people who I need to get more cooperation from.”*

For other participants the training helped them hone in on their life goals, and for yet others the training helped them realize what their strengths and weaknesses were so they could focus on developing them or recognizing them as assets. These comments indicate that the EO

training was able to expand the horizons of participants on a personal level to help them re-shape their personalities and lives.

### *Summary*

The results discussed above indicate that, on average, Effective Organizations participants' knowledge increased moderately as a result of the training. On average, participants increased their knowledge of operational management, strategic planning, and resource development and management equally as a result of the training, though knowledge of strategic planning was highest at the conclusion of the training. Many participants expect this increased knowledge to translate into being more effective in their organizations, and some plan to share what they learned at the training with others in their organizations.

For those with limited knowledge of organizational management before the training, the training increased their knowledge greatly. Important to note is that a fair number of Effective Organizations participants come to the training with knowledge of organizational management. For these individuals, the training increased their knowledge only a small amount.

The data analyzed here also point to benefits of the training beyond knowledge gain. Effective Organizations training participants reported gaining confidence to use organizational management tools, which will doubtless have a positive impact on future application of skills. In addition, training participants gained access to new people and organizations at the training with whom they can collaborate in the future. Finally, the training appeared to help some individuals grow on a personal level, revealing assets to be capitalized and weaknesses to be developed using tools or insights gleaned from the training.

### *Do Leadership Program participants plan to apply their knowledge of organizational management?*

Insight into the actions EO participants plan to make as a result of their participation in the training was gained by examining responses to the second section of the outcome survey and responses to the open-ended question: "As a result of the training, what specific changes do

you intend to make in your organization?” In the second section of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate how likely they were to do 16 activities after the training as well as how likely they were to do so before the training.

*Intention to Apply Organizational Knowledge*

Comparing pre-training likelihood to post-training likelihood scores using dependent t-tests and Cohen’s *d* statistics reveal the extent to which participants expect to change their behavior in their organizations as a result of the EO training. Unlike the knowledge portion of the survey, survey items in the behavior section were not grouped into concepts except for one: collaboration/networking. Thus, the majority of findings will be examined for each survey item individually. Results are displayed in Table 17 and Table 18.

**Table 17**

Pre to Post Change in Behavior Concept Groups– Collaboration Concept							
	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen’s <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>2.32</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>0.65</b>
Develop networks and partnerships with other organizations	100	2.55	1.03	3.66	0.55	1.11	0.54
Work with other organizations that have similar goals to your organization	101	2.48	0.94	3.54	0.59	1.06	0.58
Work with organizations that do NOT have similar goals to your organization	98	1.89	0.93	2.92	0.81	1.03	0.56
<b>Behavior Overall</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>2.42</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>0.72</b>
Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. <b>All results were significant at <math>p &lt; .05</math></b> , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen’s <i>d</i> statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect. Behavior Overall includes single items from Table 18.							

Overall, participants reported increased likelihood of engaging in organizational management behaviors as a result of the EO training, as seen in Table 17. On average, participants reported that before the training they were mid-way between somewhat likely and likely to engage in the 16 behaviors (mean = 2.42), but after the training they were between likely and very likely to engage in the behaviors (3.51). The Cohen’s *d* value of .72 implies that the effect of the training on participant outcomes was moderate.



Within the area of collaboration, participants' average post-training likelihood of collaborating in any way increased from somewhat likely to likely. Of the various forms of collaborating listed on the survey, the average post-training likelihood of working with dissimilar organizations was significantly lower (2.92) than participants' average post-training likelihood of working with similar organizations or simply developing networks with other organizations (difference significant at  $p < .05$ ). Participants increased their likelihood of working with dissimilar organizations (difference was 1.03), but the average likelihood of participants doing so before the training was quite low (1.89).

**Table 18**

Pre to Post Change in Behavior Concept Groups – Single Items							
	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen's <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Single Items</b>							
Work to increase the role of your organization in improving the community	101	2.69	0.86	3.73	0.47	1.04	0.60
Assist your organization in clarifying its mission, goals, and objectives	101	2.58	0.95	3.71	0.57	1.12	0.57
Discuss strategies for improving organizational effectiveness with others in your organizations	101	2.37	0.96	3.65	0.57	1.28	0.64
Promote positive board functioning (e.g. communication and decision making)	99	2.45	0.92	3.63	0.61	1.18	0.61
See yourself as a catalyst for change within your organization	101	2.59	0.92	3.60	0.57	1.00	0.55
Communicate clearly with the community about your organization and its purpose	101	2.64	0.92	3.58	0.62	0.93	0.54
Participate in fundraising efforts for your organization	100	2.87	0.99	3.57	0.68	0.70	0.35
Develop strategies to acquire resources for your organization	101	2.37	0.94	3.56	0.61	1.19	0.61
Work with your board to develop policies/procedures	99	2.43	1.00	3.51	0.75	1.08	0.56
Monitor the fiscal health of your organization	100	2.40	1.07	3.47	0.67	1.07	0.56
Adopt strategies in your organization to sustain activities/programs at the end of a funding cycle	100	2.25	0.93	3.43	0.74	1.18	0.60
Participate in the strategic recruitment of board members	99	2.03	0.97	3.34	0.82	1.31	0.65
Create specific job descriptions for board members or volunteers	100	2.14	0.95	3.31	0.84	1.17	0.61
Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. <b>All results were significant at <math>p &lt; .05</math></b> , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen's <i>d</i> statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect. Overall means reported in Table 17.							

Among the single item behaviors in Table 18, post-training scores varied from 3.31 to 3.73, indicating that after the EO training participants thought they were likely to engage in these organizational management behaviors. The highest post-training scores were observed for working to increase the role of the organization in improving the community, assisting the organization to clarify its mission, discussing strategies for improving the effectiveness of the organization with others, promoting positive board functioning, and seeing oneself as a catalyst for change. By contrast, participants felt they were the least likely to create job descriptions for board members or volunteers, participate in the strategic recruitment of board members, and adopt strategies to sustain organizational activities at the end of a funding cycle after completing the EO training.

The greatest changes in the likelihood of performing particular activities were seen for participating in the strategic recruitment of board members and discussing strategies for improving organizational effectiveness with others in the organization. The area in which participants anticipated seeing the least change to their behavior was participation in fundraising efforts for their organization. Looking at the pre-training average likelihood of doing this activity, however, reveals that before the training participants were likely to participate in fundraising efforts for their organizations (mean of 2.87).

The quantitative data regarding behaviors of Effective Organizations participants indicate that the EO training increased participants' likelihoods of engaging in all organizational management behaviors although some activities appear more likely to happen than others. Correlation and regression analyses revealed that no individual level characteristics were associated with these increased likelihoods, therefore, any variation in outcomes was not due to participant characteristics.

### *Qualitative Results*

In order to gain deeper insight into how the Leadership Program has affected individuals in their organizations, two data sources were relied upon. Open-ended responses from the Effective Organizations outcome survey, in addition to open-ended responses from the 12-

month follow-up were used to understand how Leadership Program participants have applied their skills in organizations.

### *Effective Organizations Outcome Survey*

Approximately 175 Effective Organizations participants provided written comments to the question: “As a result of this training, what specific changes do you intend to make in your organization?” Examination of the responses to this question reveals some repetition of the quantitative findings discussed above and some new insights. Participants most often mentioned intentions to improve the ways in which their boards function (approximately 50 comments) and intentions to improve the development and management of resources (approximately 50 comments). Intentions to implement strategic planning or update elements of the organization’s strategic plan emerged as the third most often cited theme (approximately 40 comments). These were followed by intentions to:

- Improve the operational management of the organization by doing things like improving the management of meetings, developing written policies and bylaws, and improving financial record keeping (30 comments)
- Improve communication channels within the organization and with others outside the organization (20 comments)
- Improve the connection of the organization to the community through activities that expand the commitment of the organization to the community and improve the quality of information about the organization shared within the community (12 comments)
- Improve the collaboration between organizations (9 comments)
- Share the training materials or new knowledge gained with others in the organization (8 comments)
- Continue learning about organizational management topics (6 comments)
- Increase individual involvement in the organization (3 comments)
- Make no change (3 comments)

With respect to improving the ways in which boards operate, participants noted intentions to create job descriptions for board members, do more strategic recruitment for members, clarify the responsibilities of the board, do board self-assessments, and plan for smooth board

member successions. One respondent noted the need to comprehensively integrate the board into the organization by stating she would,

*“Train and orient the potential board members. Give new board members the history of our organization. Train all board members in how to tell our story.”*

Clearly, participants felt it was both necessary and possible for them to help the boards of their organizations become more efficient, more effective, and more solidly grounded in the mission of the organization as a result of the training. The frequency of comments regarding improving board functioning correspond to the high likelihood participants expressed on the closed-ended portion of the survey to do the same activities.

In the arena of resource development and management, participants put fairly equal weight on improving financial and human resources. Respondents often mentioned plans to implement new fundraising ideas gleaned from the training as well as pursue grant opportunities. With respect to developing and managing human resources, participants focused most of their intentions on volunteers, such as recruiting more of them, retaining them for longer, tracking their contributions, and making sure their responsibilities were clear. One respondent clearly noted the importance of both financial and human resource development and management in this comment:

*“I intend to suggest that we concentrate more on volunteer recruitment and develop more diversity in our fundraising activities. I intend to propose that we write job descriptions for all board members and volunteers.”*

Intentions to implement or improve strategic planning also came up frequently in the open-ended comments. Most participants indicated they were planning on updating, redoing, or creating a strategic plan as a result of the training, while others said they planned to create a vision or mission statement or implement some form of a SWOT analysis or needs assessment. Often, participants situated the need to update their strategic plan in a desire to improve their chances of receiving funding or to better communicate with others about the organization. As one participant said:

*“We will review our mission, vision, and goals to enhance a quality program and communicate this effectively.”*

As the quantitative data revealed, a fair number of participants intend to go back to their organizations equipped to help clarify visions and missions and strategically plan for the future.

Though sharing the training resources and methods was not often mentioned as a specific change participants intended to make in their organizations on the open-ended portion of the survey, the majority of respondents to the closed-ended portion of the survey indicated they were likely to share the training tools and skills with their organizations. Despite this inconsistency between the open- and closed-ended portions of the survey, it is likely that participants will share what they learned at the training with others. An open-ended comment illustrated the idea well. This participant plans to:

*“Share this training resource and knowledge with others in my organization that were unable to attend. Promote continuing education and actual utilization of methods taught at this training.”*

Perhaps implicit to most people’s comments about changes they intend to make was the additional action of sharing new-found knowledge of the EO training with members of their organization. Unfortunately, we cannot be sure of this, due to the limited number of explicit statements to that effect, but it is likely given the quantitative data findings.

#### *Leadership Development 12-Month Follow-Up Survey*

On the Leadership Development 12-month follow-up survey, participants were asked to provide one to two examples of how the leadership class has affected them in their community organizations. One hundred thirty-eight leadership development class graduates answered the question and shared how they felt the leadership class had affected them in their organizations. Ten respondents indicated no change, in some cases due to personal constraints. Of the other 128 responses, a few individuals said that they had stepped back from leadership roles due to over-commitment, and one individual said she had not been successful in applying what she learned to her organizational work. The vast majority of responses, however, did indicate application of leadership skills in their organizations. The types of organizations in which LD

participants mentioned using their skills included: church, school, service organizations, planning commission, historic commission, downtown association, fair event association, Chamber of Commerce, welcome center, nonprofit organizations, community boards, and community committees.

Overall, three themes emerged from the data. Leadership Development participants, in the 12 months since taking the class, said they had:

- increased the number of skills they applied in organizational settings
- increased their activity in organizations
- increased organizational collaboration

In terms of increased skills, respondents said the Leadership Development class gave them tools that have helped in group settings. For example,

*“Not only do I have better tools for helping our groups to get things done, but I also have greater awareness of potential outside resources to help us accomplish our goals and have lost any feeling of intimidation when it's time to make the ask. And while I'm far more willing to step up to fill needed roles, I'm also confident enough to encourage others to adopt their own roles and "run with them" with the support and confidence they need as well.”*

Specifically, in the last 12 months, graduates mentioned using active listening skills, facilitation skills, conflict resolution skills, communication tools, consensus-building tools, asset inventory, and project management skills in their organizations. Some respondents mentioned increasing their activity in community organizations. For most, this increased activity meant doing things like contributing more volunteer hours at schools, becoming an officer in an organization, becoming more active in a political party, promoting a community event, and taking on roles in new community organizations. In the words of one participant,

*“I assumed leadership of a crew maintaining hiking trails in and near my town. I [also] took on more responsibility for the health of a non-profit on whose board I sat.”*

Increasing the level of activity in their community organizations was one way in which the leadership program affected the relationship between graduates and organizations, and for some, the skills learned in the class helped them be more effective at the same time. Nine respondents reported that it helped them function more effectively as board members. Increased organizational collaboration was another theme that emerged from these responses, though not mentioned as frequently as the previous themes. Respondents indicated that by increasing their awareness of the many organizations in their community and by giving them the tools to work well with others, the leadership development class encouraged them to work towards organizational collaboration. As one participant said, the leadership class helped her:

*“think creatively about how to work with different organizations in the community to build partnerships and move forward toward a common goal.”*

Participants also mentioned an increased capacity to collaborate with other organizations to pool resources toward a community goal.

### *Summary*

The quantitative and qualitative data illustrate that Leadership Program participants leave their respective trainings highly likely to implement many of the strategies and activities discussed in the training in organizations. While some activities emerged as more likely to occur than others, such as making improvements to the functioning of boards, updating strategic plans, and improving the way in which human and financial resources are developed and managed, overall, training participants plan to implement many elements of organizational management taught in the Effective Organizations training.

### **Does Effective Organizations build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

In order to truly understand the impact of the Leadership Program on community organizations it will be important to talk with various members of organizations. In future years of the evaluation, a case study approach should be used to gain deeper insight into the organizational impacts of the Leadership Program. At this point, however, preliminary results can be gleaned

from responses to the EO outcome survey open-ended question: “What effects do you think the Effective Organization training will have on your organization over the longer term?”

Approximately 170 Effective Organizations training participants responded to the open-ended question regarding anticipated effects of the training on their organization. Most often, participants made general statements that their organization would be stronger, healthier, more successful, or just more effective:

*“I think [the training] will really help us become a more viable organization.”*

*“We will become stronger.”*

*“If the rest of the board is receptive, this should be very beneficial for the organization.”*

Unfortunately, comments like these do not reveal much with respect to how community organizations will be affected, although anticipation of general improvements is a positive outcome. About forty-five comments were recorded as belonging to this “generally better” category or theme. When participants mentioned specific improvements they expected to make in their organizations, certain themes emerged. In particular, participants thought their organizations would become:

- More focused, with improved strategic plans
- Stronger with respect to board functioning
- Better able to work together as an organization
- More sustainable into the future
- Better at obtaining and managing volunteers and financial resources
- Better connected with the community
- More collaborative with other organizations

The responses to the open-ended question indicate that participants easily expect the overall strength of their organizations to increase. They will be better at managing day to day operations, better at strategic planning, and better at developing and managing resources. Some participants felt that their organizations would become more connected to the



community and yet others felt their organizations would become more collaborative, but changes in these two arenas were least mentioned of the themes.

With respect to participants' expectations that the strength of their organizations would increase as a result of their participation in the training, the majority of comments related to an increased focus within organization (approximately 30 comments). One participant said that because of the training,

*"Our organization will have a clearer idea of where we are going and what we need to get there."*

The second most often cited improvement to the overall management of the organization related to board functioning (approximately 28 comments). Considering the number of board members in attendance at the EO training, it is not surprising that many comments might relate to ways in which this aspect of operations may improve. As these participants noted,

*"It has brought our board together and thinking along the same target. We're ready to move forward."*

*"By clarifying the personality types, work styles, needs, communication, etc., those board members who have never taken an RDI course had visible light bulbs going off over their heads! This realization, if nothing else, will greatly improve our organization."*

*"We will start to recruit people who want to help because they have a passion, not because we have a 'board position open.'"*

Evident from these comments is that the training was able give participants the tools they needed to either help construct a strong and effective board for their organization or become better members of boards themselves. In the long run, these changes will contribute strongly to the viability of the organization, as many participants indicated.

Strong organizational management includes additional components that participants felt would occur in their organizations. Approximately 26 comments were made pertaining to future improvements in the way the organization manages operations. Primarily, respondents indicated that their organizations would streamline their functions, operate smoother, manage

meetings better, foster better staff relations, improve their internal leadership, and clarify responsibilities as a result of the training. As one participant put it, the organization will:

*“Operate smoother by [having] ideas about what needs to be done and having a knowledge base to support why there is a reason for change.”*

Another participant mentioned,

*“I think our meetings will be more productive and shorter. I think we’ll start developing some better relationships with staff – more affirmative and less negative.”*

After improvements to operational management, around 20 comments were made pertaining to the increased sustainability participants thought would occur in their organizations.

Participants referred to sustainability as financial stability and leadership succession or stability of human resources. One participant said that as a result of the training *“I feel that we will become financially stable and sound.”* With respect to stability of human resources, issues of leadership succession often arose. According to one participant, because of the training: *“Our organization will develop ways of sustaining itself when I am no longer able to guide them.”* Often, new organizations are created by one or two charismatic and passionate people, and when they leave, if they have not established a good succession plan, the organization deteriorates. As many of these participants indicate, they felt the EO training prepared them to help make that transition smoother.

Improving the development and management of resources was mentioned about sixteen times by participants as an expected impact of the EO training on their organization. Comments were split evenly between improving financial resources and improving human resources in the form of volunteers. Of these comments, however, a majority anticipated improvements in their organizations’ development rather than the management of these resources: *“Your training will help equip us to function at a higher level in fund seeking...”* Some participants mentioned that the training will help their organization manage resources better, which will help them be more sustainable in the long run.

As mentioned above, the majority of participant comments referred to the impact the EO training would have on the way in which their organizations manage day to day activities. Less apparent from the open-ended responses was much anticipation that the EO training would affect the community orientation or the collaborative nature of the organization.

Approximately nine comments were made that indicated participants expected their organizations to become more community-oriented. For example, participants said:

*“We will become more clearly focused on our role in the community.”*

*“I see our group growing and becoming a force for our community and our youth.”*

With respect to organizations becoming more collaborative as a result of the training, around eight comments were made to this effect. Though individual participants indicated they would be likely to partner and network with organizations after the EO training, given the infrequency of these comments, it seems that few saw that their individual actions would have a significant impact on the collaborative nature of their organization.

### ***Summary***

These responses about the anticipated impact of the Effective Organizations training on organizations indicate that overall, organizations are likely to become stronger because of their members’ exposure to the training materials. These data also suggest that as a result of the training, organizations are not as likely to become more community oriented or collaborate more with other organizations. It is very important to note at this point that any organizational change occurring as a result of the training depends heavily on the organization accepting any new information an EO participant brings to the table. In many cases this will not be an issue given the size of the organization the participant belongs to. In other cases, this may turn out to be an impediment to the EO training having a deeper effect on organizations in these communities. As one participant put it,

*“I think [the training] will be helpful, if the organization’s leaders will listen to suggestions.”*

While these qualitative findings begin to shed some light on the question of organizational impact of the training, further study is needed to fully gauge the extent to which organizations are affected by their members participating in the EO training.

### **Does the Leadership Program contribute to vital rural communities?**

Vital rural communities, for the purpose of this report, are those that possess the capacity to work together and realize a balance of positive social, economic, and environmental outcomes. When looking at vital rural communities, it is important to note that both capacity and outcomes are influenced by conditions outside the direct influence of the community. Community capacity includes a cadre of committed and skillful leaders, who are actively engaged in community organizations and affairs that are aimed at improving their communities' social, economic, and environmental circumstances. Thus, capacity implies empowerment to create change in the community.

Evidence of the initial stages of capacity building were seen in 2008 data from the Leadership Development Outcome Survey, Community Trainer Interviews, and South Lane Class Project Interviews (2008 Evaluation Report). At that time, participants reported that the Leadership Program had already had positive impacts on their rural communities through the increased number of trained, actively engaged leaders and successful completion of class projects. Moreover, they were confident that the momentum would continue into the future due to a new sense of hope, the feeling of cohesiveness within the community, and the increased capacity of the community as a whole to embrace and facilitate change. They believed they could make a difference in their community and were committed to community change.

Following up on participant's initial thoughts about how the program would impact their community, Fall 2008 Leadership Development class participants were asked one year later to provide one or two examples of how the leadership class has affected their community. On the 12-month follow-up survey, 140 respondents gave examples of how the program has impacted their community. Common themes included pride in community, increased collaboration and

relationships among community members, increased awareness of community needs, and an increase in the number of trained leaders in the community.

Participants reported that the class has affected the level of community pride among residents in their communities. One respondent said,

*“One of the identified issues with our community, in the first cohort, was a lack of community pride. ‘If it came from here, it can’t be that good’....Several of us from the program have stepped up and invested in new businesses or been involved in projects that are beginning to have a positive effect on that attitude.”*

Although many participants continue to provide suggestions for revising the class project methodology, successful class projects were a source of pride, and potentially, unity. Specific examples of projects cited were physical improvements: signs, tennis courts, trails, gardens, playgrounds, bioswales, lights, kiosks, and handicap access at fairgrounds.

Participants reported that increased collaboration, a shared vision, increased cooperation between groups, working together better than before, all describe increased community capacity due to the leadership program. *“More people understand community is all ‘our’ responsibility.”* Groups of people who did not know each other worked to become a team with a common goal for the good of their communities. In some cases, the leadership program involved all ages, a variety of ethnic groups, and/or multiple communities.

*“It brought my community of many ethnicities to work and collaborate on a common goal together. We worked to think of a project, and together we completed it within the community, even with the help of people who weren’t in the leadership class.”*

Participants also reported that the Ford leadership program raised awareness of community needs as well as roadblocks to change. As one participant stated, *“It opened people’s eyes to see what needs to be done.”* As participants better understood community needs, they could design a project and contact local board members and community members in ways they had not before.

A widespread perception was that the program built new relationships among community residents. It provided the tools to empower community residents to become leaders. Those residents now have a common vocabulary. Individuals who were not previously involved in community organizations became volunteers and leaders. One participant suggested that the program transformed volunteers into “community-minded” volunteers, who reached out to people. Respondents were very positive about the benefits of community networking, and some thought it was the most important result of the Leadership Program. The class became a network that could be tapped for a variety of projects. One respondent reported:

*“The social networking was invaluable and will continue to be far-reaching. I think this aspect is still undervalued by some classmates, but we are really there for others to call on and to help make contacts and referrals – even if a specific project isn’t for us.”*

There were a few comments about a critical mass of leaders being formed as a result of the program. However, feelings were mixed among these participants about the extent to which the critical mass could affect change in the community. One respondent indicated that one result of the Leadership Program was a larger base of new leaders who could foster the development of other leaders “for a very long time to come.” Another respondent thought new collaborations had occurred, but the number of leadership graduates was not sufficient to make effective changes in the community yet. By contrast, a few respondents were positive about the capacity of their communities since the Leadership Program came to their town:

*“Our town can work together to accomplish what we could not accomplish before.”*

Only 16 respondents (11%) reported that they were not sure that the Leadership Program made a difference in their community or felt it was unable to increase vitality. Two respondents spoke of community or leadership divisions, with one reporting that the first cohort did not stay connected or mentor the next classes. Another said that the leadership class had a positive effect in the past, but not in the present: “The community just doesn’t care.” One respondent indicated that when the class ended, the interest in continuing the new relationships faded. She thought a new class would be helpful, but said that some community residents are reluctant to

shed old prejudices and embrace the concepts of leadership training, so that benefits might be limited. The other comments related to class projects, such as the inability of the class to complete a class project. One participant said that it has gotten people to talk about things, but put some parts of the community on edge because you end up with factions that do and do not like what is being done.

### **Suggestions for the Future**

Suggestions for improvement to the Ford Institute Leadership Program came from two sources: the five focus groups held around the state and the 12-month follow-up survey of Fall 2008 leadership class participants. Although not the purpose of the focus groups, focus group participants nevertheless shared some suggestions for change. The 12-month survey asked a specific question about what The Ford Family Foundation could do in the future to support participants, organizations, and communities.

One area mentioned for possible improvement was the participant nomination process. In one focus group, participants were concerned that those individuals who were nominated were already viewed as leaders in the community and were over committed. The class is sometimes perceived as

*“just another place where people of power come together and get more powerful.”*

Finding people who were not already too busy, but who had leadership potential, was a suggestion for improving the nomination process. Despite the fact that the Leadership Program intends to identify these people for nomination, it was apparent from focus group participants that this goal had not been reached in some communities.

Focus group participants shared their admiration for the youth who had participated in the Leadership Program. In some communities, informal mentoring relationships between youth and adults were established as a result of the class. However, in two focus groups, concerns were expressed that youth who participated in the training were not involved beyond the class

or left the community for higher education following the class. One suggestion was to have an all-youth leadership class.

Cohorts and cohort experiences were another focal point for suggested improvements that emerged from the focus groups. Some felt their experiences were different depending on their participation within a particular cohort. One focus group thought greater connections between the different cohorts within their communities would have been beneficial. Another community that had experienced more interactions between the cohorts saw these interactions as valuable.

*“There were a lot of things that happened in the first [cohort] that never happened in the second one.”*

*“I’d like to see more ties of the three classes together. Some type of training or event that ties us together.”*

Some participants credited the projects with helping their class to bond and giving them an opportunity to put their newly acquired skills to use. Other participants discussed their frustration with the class projects. Some projects became overwhelming and went over budget. Perhaps the greatest frustration was the attrition of class participants during the project process.

*“Halfway through our project, out of thirty people in our class we were down to eight or nine who were involved. People go back to their lives; they have a job and responsibilities.”*

Many respondents to the 12-month follow-up survey brought up the community projects as an area of concern and suggested changes as well. For example, making the time commitment clearer, making sure the community project is actually desired by the whole community, or having the class in the middle of the year to help the group with the logistics of the project were all mentioned. More than one participant mentioned helping participants pick easier-to-accomplish projects. This comment was representative of that sentiment:



*“The format of the class made it difficult to realistically evaluate potential projects in the given time frame – and in the context of the class, there is confusion about who’s in charge, the facilitators or us. We did succeed.....but I think some of us felt that we were in for more than we’d signed up for.”*

One respondent suggested:

*“I would re-think using the project model. I think [the project] becomes the object of the class rather than learning and practicing the skills.”*

Another respondent concurred, saying that the project was too much about the process and not enough about the skills – it felt more like meeting requirements of a grant, rather than supporting class members working on a cause. Another respondent commented:

*“The entire process of the class project seemed very limiting. The diverse voices were shut down and we were left with the same power players at the table. People who had divergent views or processes were slowly shut out.”*

One respondent suggested that a helpline for leadership class graduates might be good. He found that the group processes broke down during the project and a call to the facilitator helped him get the group back on track. Although the cohort project is designed to provide leadership class participants the opportunity to apply the skills of the class, it seems apparent that this notion was lost on some classes.

On the 12-month follow-up survey, 136 leadership class participants responded to the question about what The Ford Family Foundation could do to support them as community leaders, their organizations, and/or their communities. Respondents focused on both the educational and fiscal functions of the Foundation. Forty-two percent of respondents wrote that they wanted the Foundation to continue existing programs. Many participants (32%) mentioned the educational classes, while others (17%) mentioned the importance of financing community projects, but many spoke of both:

*“Continue matching grant opportunities and availability of additional leadership classes within our struggling community.”*

Seven participants (5%) had no specific suggestions.

Other respondents suggested other types of support including sponsoring a day or weekend where neighboring cohorts could get together. One suggestion was a regional collaboration conference. Another was to hold a statewide conference for all class members to gather. Another idea was providing education about social networking to help *“many more of us to be resources for each other.”* A recurrent suggestion for continued support was offering refresher classes, although the specifics varied – after 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, etc. Five participants recommended offering grant writing workshops. Other ideas included offering scholarships to high school students in another part of the county, providing leadership seminars for student government classes in high school, or offering youth intervention projects for youth only. One participant suggested that the Foundation have a regional coordinator who could be available to speak to groups about projects, grants, and programs.

In sum, participants suggested that improvements might be made in the class projects, the selection process, cohort experiences, and to a lesser extent, designing programs specifically for youth. However, participants were overwhelmingly grateful to The Ford Family Foundation for providing educational experiences and fiscal support to their communities. Many participants commented:

*“You are already doing a great job!”*

*“FILP and FFF are exceptionally good community partners and neighbors.”*

## CONCLUSION

### Conclusions

The 2009 evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program concentrated on answering a sub-set of the research questions that were established in 2008. This focused the research effort on understanding if:

- leadership development class participants are effective community leaders and increase their civic engagement after completion of the class,
- strong networks of community leaders develop as a result of the program,
- the Leadership Program builds strong, collaborative, community-oriented organizations.

In order to answer these research questions, quantitative and qualitative methodologies were employed and data were collected from different sub-populations of Leadership Program participants, improving the reliability of findings. Although not a focus of the 2009 evaluation efforts, insights were also gained on the extent to which the Leadership Program contributes to the vitality of rural communities and on how participants think the program could be improved.

### **Does the Leadership Program develop effective community leaders who apply what they learned?**

Overall, participants reported that they had applied leadership skills frequently over the past year. In the year following the leadership development class, participants reported applying their communication skills almost weekly, working with others about once a month, and networking slightly less frequently. These three types of leadership skills overall were applied about once a month by participants. Similarly, participants reported engaging in community building activities occasionally in the year following the leadership class, with some activities being done more often than others. Project management tasks in community efforts or projects were done slightly less than community building activities, with participants engaging in these tasks slightly less than occasionally. Overall, participants left the class better equipped to address issues in their community, with the confidence to make a difference, and with expanded networks of people to work with.

Participants' intentions to apply their skills or engage in particular activities at the end of the class (Fall 2008) also predicted their frequency of application or activity in the year following the class. Interestingly, so does class size and the number of organizations with which participants were affiliated. Although participants reported barriers to their engagement in community work, these barriers only somewhat limited their amount of leadership activity in the last year.

For the majority of individuals who were applying these skills at relatively high levels, this level was higher than before the class, implying that the leadership class had a positive effect on participants. When asked how much the Ford leadership class contributed to their ability to do the skills, activities, and tasks associated with leadership training, 80% of respondents said that a moderate to a great deal of their capacity was directly attributable to participation in the leadership class. Overall, the immediate outcomes of the class appear to be following participants as they move out into the community.

### **Does the Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?**

Participation in the leadership class resulted in greater civic engagement in the year after the class for about half of the Fall 2008 leadership class participants. On average, in the year after the class, participants engaged occasionally in civic activities, but for most this was more than they had engaged in civic activities before the class. The most popular forms of civic engagement for Fall 2008 leadership class participants after the class were voting, volunteering, working in community groups, fundraising for local causes, and promoting local events. The data indicate that the Leadership Program is encouraging rural community residents to be active in community life.

Also clear from the evaluation data collected and analyzed this year is that the positive outcomes of the Leadership Program at the conclusion of the leadership class stick with participants in the year following the class. Those who left the class highly motivated to engage in civic activities engage in more civic activities than those who left the class not very

motivated. Class size and the number of organization affiliations were also positively associated with levels of civic activity after the class. Despite some variation by these individual and class attributes, these results indicate that the leadership class successfully increases the motivation of participants to engage in civic life, thereby affecting the level of civic activity of participants the following year.

**Does the Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?**

Networking, as expressed by Ford participants, is about being connected to and collaborating with others to benefit the community. Participants reported that both their social networks and their organizational and community networks expanded: new relationships were built, existing relationships became stronger and relationships with people not typically in their social networks were established. Respondents also reported some impacts on work, social, and professional networks, but to a lesser extent.

**Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

Effective Organizations participants reported increased knowledge in strategic planning, operational management, and resource development and management as a result of the training. Participants who reported the least amount of knowledge at the beginning of the training showed the most improvement. At the conclusion of the training, participants felt quite knowledgeable in all aspects of organizational management, reported increased confidence to use the skills and tools they learned about in the training, and had a new network of organizations to collaborate with or draw on as resources. All of these outcomes are important as they represent the foundation of individual capacity to work effectively in organizations.

In addition to these outcomes of the Effective Organizations training, participants expect to apply the skills and tools taught in the training in their organizations. In order for the Leadership Program to have an impact on rural community organizations, it is very important that training participants apply the skills learned in the EO training and Leadership Development class in their organizations. Results of the 2009 study give cause for optimism; Leadership Program

participants plan to apply what they have learned to become more effective as individuals in their organizations, to help re-design or implement effective organizational strategies, and to share what they have learned with others in their organizations. One reason organizations may not change, despite the increased knowledge of training participants, is that only a limited number of organizational members tend to attend the training. Without organization-wide buy-in to the intent of the EO training and without developing the skills of a critical mass of organizational members, the Leadership Program may fall short of realizing significant impact on organizations as a whole. Although further research is needed to determine if organizations will change as a result of the Leadership Program, preliminary evidence indicates individuals are equipped to realize this change.

Effective Organizations participants are optimistic that the training will help their organizations become stronger. Indeed, this is the primary way in which training participants anticipate their organizations changing as a result of the Leadership Program. While participants were quick to envision ways in which their organizations will become better at strategic planning, resource development and management, and operational management as a result of the training, fewer participants anticipated their organizations would become more community-oriented and collaborative as a result.

### **Does the Leadership Program contribute to vital rural communities?**

Although data to answer this research question were limited to open-ended responses to the 12-month follow-up survey, findings confirm results discussed in the 2008 report. Greater community pride, increased collaboration, and increased community networks were the ways in which Fall 2008 leadership class participants saw that their communities have been affected by the Leadership Program. In future years it will be necessary to engage in a more in-depth study of rural communities to understand how the Leadership Program affects not only the capacity of communities, but also economic, environmental, and social outcomes.

## **Suggestions for the future**

Although Ford Institute Leadership Program participants are overwhelmingly grateful to The Ford Family Foundation for providing educational experiences and fiscal support to their communities, they do have some suggestions for improvements and continued support in the future. These seem to be areas where there were concerns expressed, even though no question directly addressed suggestions for improvement. Suggestions for improvements were related to class projects, the participant nomination process, and interactions between cohorts.

Suggestions for continuing support related to providing opportunities for regional and local collaboration, additional training, scholarships, and all-youth classes or trainings.

## **Recommendations**

Based on evidence from the 2009 evaluation, the OSU evaluation team continues to suggest that evaluations:

- Assess the impacts of the training using current measures, tools, and methods. Doing so will yield robust evidence as to the impact of the Leadership Program on the target populations.
- Follow participants as they move out of the class and into the community. Some impacts on individuals, organizations, and communities may not be realized for many years to come.
- Use qualitative and quantitative methods to examine factors that relate to longer term impacts of the training including trajectories of individual leadership development, networking, and community engagement.
- Use qualitative and quantitative methods to ascertain community-level impacts of the Leadership Program, emphasizing changes to community capacity.
- Track the immediate outcomes of the Effective Organizations training using valid tools and measures
- Examine changes in actual participant behavior in organizations following Effective Organizations training and subsequent changes in organizational operations and collaborations.
- Work with the Institute and trainers as Community Collaborations Training evolves in order to design and assess appropriate outcomes for later evaluation.

## **2010 Evaluation Plan**

The next evaluation report will contain information about all past participants (2003 – 2008) to assess the longer-term impact of the Leadership Program. In addition, an assessment of trainer effectiveness and the possible relation of trainer to outcomes will be investigated. A case study approach of specific communities will examine the relation of local actions, collaboration, and leadership to the local economic, social, and environmental context.

### Data Collection

- Collect survey information from LD and EO participants in the Spring and Fall 2010.
- Implement the 12-month follow-up survey of Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 LD participants.
- Implement the 12-month follow-up survey of 2009 EO participants.
- Administer the population survey to all past Leadership Program participants who graduated prior to Spring 2008.
- Conduct focus groups with past participants to assess the longer term impact of FILP on themes to be determined.

### Case Studies

- Finalize design and begin to implement the case study approach of specific communities, including collecting community information. Personal interviews will be conducted with key informants in 2-4 rural communities.

### Data Analysis

- Analysis will be based on the evaluation questions, guided by feedback from the Institute, and utilize data from:
  - LD and EO participant surveys from Spring and Fall 2010
  - follow-up surveys with Fall 2008/Spring 2009 LD participants
  - surveys from past Leadership Program participants
  - interviews and/or focus groups with past participants
  - data from community case studies



## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: *Cronbach's Alpha* Coefficients for Pre and Post Effective Organizations Training Concept Groups

Appendix 2: Distribution of Responses for Application of Leadership Skills

Appendix 3: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Community Building Activities

Appendix 4: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Project Management Tasks

Appendix 5: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Civic Activities

Appendix 6: Distribution of Responses for Barriers to Skill Application

Appendix 7: Means, Standard Deviations, and Cohen's *d* for Organizational Knowledge Concept Groups

Appendix 1: *Cronbach's Alpha* Coefficients for Pre and Post Effective Organizations Training  
 Concept Groups

Concept Groups	Number of Items	Alpha Pre/ Before	Alpha Post/ After
<b>Knowledge</b>			
Strategic Planning	6	0.87	0.86
Operational Management	7	0.91	0.85
Resource Development & Management	6	0.85	0.84
<b>Behavior</b>			
Collaboration/Networking	3	0.77	0.6
Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to measure the internal reliability of the concept groups. An alpha of .60 to .70 indicates an acceptable reliability and .80 or higher indicates a good reliability. All concepts were found to have an acceptable internal consistency.			

## Appendix 2: Distribution of Responses for Application of Leadership Skills

Application of Leadership Skills						
	Never	1-3 Times	4-6 Times	Once a Month	Weekly	Daily
<b>Communicate Effectively</b>						
Used active listening skills to understand another person's ideas	0%	1%	3%	10%	35%	51%
Used "appreciative inquiry" to emphasize the positive aspects of a situation	2%	14%	11%	21%	38%	14%
Given a speech or presentation to a group of people	7%	24%	16%	29%	17%	7%
Given constructive feedback to another person	2%	10%	10%	17%	43%	18%
<b>Work with Others</b>						
Worked effectively with different personality types	0%	1%	4%	10%	37%	48%
Facilitated group discussions	5%	17%	17%	23%	33%	5%
Worked to build consensus within a group	2%	16%	21%	28%	26%	7%
Used effective meeting techniques to guide a meeting	10%	19%	15%	30%	22%	4%
Used conflict resolution processes	7%	30%	17%	16%	23%	7%
<b>Network</b>						
Networked with others to address a community issue or problem	4%	18%	19%	26%	25%	9%
Networked with others to advance personally or professionally	9%	20%	17%	24%	19%	11%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.						

### Appendix 3: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Community Building Activities

Participation in Community Building Activities				
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Identified assets in your community	6%	17%	52%	25%
Educated yourself about social, economic, or environmental issues in your community	2%	13%	33%	52%
Helped build public awareness of a community issue or problem	5%	17%	44%	34%
Helped investigate possible solutions to a community issue or problem	4%	17%	47%	32%
Worked to improve the social, economic, and/or environmental conditions of your community	5%	12%	41%	42%
Helped define goals or a vision for your community	10%	25%	36%	29%
Encouraged others to participate in community issues and/or projects	3%	9%	38%	50%
Sought information about how community decisions would impact the local social, economic, and/or environmental conditions	12%	20%	38%	30%
Sought opportunities to learn more about community leadership	10%	21%	46%	23%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

Appendix 4: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Project Management Tasks

Participation in Project Management Tasks				
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Helped set goals for a community effort or project	6%	20%	41%	33%
Helped develop tasks, timelines, and assignments for a community effort or project	12%	20%	37%	31%
Participated in developing the budget for a community effort or project	19%	25%	31%	25%
Helped to publicize or promote some community effort or project	9%	16%	35%	40%
Helped plan a community fundraising effort	15%	20%	37%	28%
Helped involve stakeholders in a community project or effort	19%	17%	39%	25%
Helped to recruit and retain volunteers	14%	29%	32%	25%
Helped seek outside support for a community effort or project	14%	25%	33%	28%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

Appendix 5: Distribution of Responses for Barriers to Skill Application

<b>Barriers to Skill Application</b>				
	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
I felt “burned out” or discouraged by the class project	23%	42%	28%	7%
Personal concerns and demands (health, family, work) limited my time for community leadership activities	11%	31%	44%	14%
My community has been overwhelmed by economic, social, or environmental challenges that are out of our control	12%	50%	28%	10%
I felt overwhelmed by all there is to do in my community	15%	58%	23%	4%
Community work has been too frustrating for me	32%	54%	13%	1%
I was heavily engaged in community work before the Ford Leadership class and couldn’t take on more afterwards	15%	53%	27%	5%
I felt “closed out” of the leadership structure in my community	32%	53%	11%	4%
I have not been personally interested in the specific efforts or issues facing my community	47%	46%	6%	1%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

## Appendix 6: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Civic Activities

Participation in Civic Activities				
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Worked informally with others to address community issues	4%	16%	45%	34%
Worked as a member in a formal group or organization that addresses community issues	12%	16%	28%	44%
Helped mobilize community members to work on a common goal	10%	23%	37%	30%
Advocated for a policy or issue in your community	16%	21%	32%	31%
Participated in long-term community decision-making or governance processes	23%	22%	28%	27%
Participated on the board of any local service agency or organization	22%	13%	21%	44%
Volunteered in your community	2%	8%	32%	58%
Voted in elections	9%	1%	14%	76%
Attended any public hearings, town hall meetings, community forums, or city council meetings	10%	16%	37%	37%
Donated money, services, materials, or food to support a community effort, project or program	3%	10%	35%	52%
Helped raise money and collect materials to support a community effort, project, or program	6%	16%	42%	36%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

## Appendix 7: Means, Standard Deviations, and Cohen's *d* for Organizational Knowledge Concept Groups

Knowledge Concept Groups and Items	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen's <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Strategic Planning</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2.31</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.74</b>
Clarifying your organization's vision and mission	103	2.52	0.80	3.54	0.67	1.01	0.58
Establishing organizational goals and objectives	103	2.44	0.74	3.43	0.69	0.99	0.57
Effectively communicating your organization's message and mission	103	2.45	0.79	3.53	0.66	1.08	0.65
Analyzing the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats facing your organization (SWOT analysis)	103	1.94	0.85	3.31	0.64	1.37	0.70
Developing a strategic plan for your organization	102	2.01	0.83	3.21	0.72	1.20	0.64
Helping your organization fulfill its mission	102	2.47	0.77	3.47	0.64	1.00	0.58
<b>Operational Management</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>0.68</b>
Specifying board responsibilities	102	2.12	0.87	3.29	0.77	1.18	0.60
Creating effective board nomination and recruitment procedures	101	1.91	0.85	3.08	0.74	1.17	0.61
Communicating board responsibilities to board members	101	2.06	0.88	3.29	0.73	1.23	0.63
Understanding the purpose and use of bylaws and governing documents	102	2.30	1.01	3.31	0.78	1.00	0.51
Improving financial management systems	101	2.16	0.90	3.02	0.84	0.86	0.51
Developing and managing budgets	101	2.38	0.91	3.09	0.76	0.71	0.42
Planning for future leadership (succession planning)	101	1.85	0.86	3.02	0.80	1.17	0.60
<b>Resource Development &amp; Management</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2.04</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>3.12</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>0.68</b>
Establishing human resource management plan (employees & volunteers)	98	1.95	0.84	3.06	0.73	1.11	0.65
Establishing a resource development plan	100	1.86	0.75	3.06	0.75	1.20	0.62
Planning for future sustainability of an organization	101	2.06	0.82	3.03	0.79	0.98	0.55
Knowing how to fundraise in the community	103	2.20	0.83	3.33	0.69	1.12	0.61
Identifying grants appropriate for your organization's mission	98	2.10	0.95	3.14	0.87	1.04	0.50
Maintaining an effective volunteer base	100	2.01	0.81	3.11	0.79	1.10	0.58
<b>Single Item</b>							
Understanding the core competencies (i.e. strategic planning, organizational leadership, resource development, resource management) of effective organizational management	102	2.10	0.80	3.36	0.73	1.26	0.62
<b>Organizational Management Knowledge Overall</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2.15</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>3.23</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>0.74</b>

Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. **All results were significant at  $p < .05$** , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen's *d* statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect.



# Evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program 2009 Report



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**Evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program,  
2009 Report**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF 2009 FORD INSTITUTE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

In 2009, The Oregon State University evaluation team focused its evaluation of the impact of the Ford Institute Leadership Program on a sub-set of the evaluation questions that will ultimately gauge the impact of the program on individuals, organizations, and communities. In particular, questions which address the short- and mid-term impacts of the program on individuals were the focus of 2009 evaluation efforts.

## **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program develop effective community leaders who apply what they learned?**

An analysis of the three types of skills taught during the Leadership Development class found that graduates use leadership skills most often in the year after graduating (about once a month); followed by community building skills and project management skills, which are used occasionally. Leadership graduates use their leadership skills in a variety of settings, most often in community settings and within organizations.

The majority of graduates use their leadership, community building, and project management skills more often after the class than they did before, and they feel that the class contributed significantly to their ability to function as leaders in this way. In particular, graduates feel that the class equips them with skills and tools, teaches them to appreciate people with different personalities, gives them self- confidence, provides them an important opportunity to network, and builds their community awareness – all of which help them to be better community leaders in the year after the class.

Graduates who feel highly skilled or likely to do activities at the conclusion of the class actually engage in the activities more often than their classmates who felt less skilled or likely after the class ends.

Some participants describe barriers that prevent fully engaging in community work, including: personal concerns and demands; external challenges faced by the community; being heavily engaged in community work before the class; and feeling burned out from the class project (due to its length/duration or lack of participation by other class members). Many graduates engage in community work and leadership in spite of barriers they encounter.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?**

The positive effects of the Leadership Development class on participants' civic engagement are evident during the first year following the class. Graduates describe their activity in civic life after the class as occasional. They volunteer, vote, work in community groups, fundraise for local causes, and promote local events. The extent of civic engagement activity increased for about half of graduates, and the majority of participants attribute their ability to engage effectively in civic life to the leadership class itself.

The leadership class successfully builds the motivation of participants to engage in civic life, and those who are highly motivated at the end of the training are more active the following year than their less motivated peers. In addition, the larger the Leadership Development class size was and the more organizations an individual is affiliated with, the more frequently participants tend to engage in civic life in the year following the class.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?**

Focus groups in five different hub-communities revealed that the Leadership Program has helped build networks of community leaders in rural communities. Past participants feel that the number, diversity, and intensity of their social networks have increased because of their involvement with the Leadership Program. These networks have helped participants personally, professionally, and in their community work.

## **Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

The capacity of individuals to have an effect on community organizations is being built by the program through the Effective Organizations (EO) training. EO participants feel that their knowledge of strategic planning, operational management, and resource development and management (particularly strategic planning) is increased by the training. In fact, participants who had the least amount of knowledge about these topics before the training felt that it increased their knowledge more than those who had greater knowledge at the onset. Many participants feel the training gave them confidence to use organizational management skills and tools, but also gave them access to a greater network of organizations and individuals to collaborate with or draw on as resources later.

Participants expect to apply the skills and tools they learned to become more effective in their organizations, implement effective organizational strategies including strategic planning and board management, increase the role of their organizations in the community, and discuss what they have learned with others in their organizations. Participants reported that the training results in the greatest increases in their likelihoods of participating in the strategic recruitment of board members and discussing strategies for improving organizational effectiveness with others at their organization.

Effective Organizations participants are optimistic that the training will help their organizations become stronger in the long run. Primarily, they feel their organizations will become more focused, have better functioning boards, be better able to work together as an organization, be more sustainable into the future, and be better at obtaining and managing resources. These findings suggest changes and improvements are likely in organizations, so long as training participants engage in the organizational management process and are able to affect operations. Future evaluation efforts will focus on assessing the changes that are actually made in organizations as a result of the Leadership Program.

## **Suggestions for the future**

Ford Institute Leadership Program participants are overwhelmingly grateful to The Ford Family Foundation for providing educational experiences and fiscal support to their communities. Suggestions for improvements related to class projects, the participant nomination process, and interactions between cohorts. Suggestions for continuing support related to providing opportunities for regional and local collaboration, additional training, scholarships, and all-youth classes or trainings.

## **2010 Evaluation Plan**

The next year of evaluation will assess the impact of the Leadership Program on all past participants (2003-2008). An assessment of trainer effectiveness and the possible relation of trainer to outcomes will be investigated. Case studies of specific communities will untangle the relation of local initiatives, collaboration, and leadership development to community vitality.

# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

In 2003, The Ford Family Foundation initiated a comprehensive training program designed to increase the vitality of rural communities in Oregon and Siskiyou County, California. The core strategy was training to increase the leadership skills of individuals from rural communities, the effectiveness of rural community organizations, and the degree of collaboration in rural communities. From 2003 to 2009, over 2,500 individuals from 56 communities have participated in the Leadership Program.

In 2007, the Ford Family Foundation contracted with a team of evaluators from Oregon State University to design and conduct an outcome evaluation focused on the results of the leadership training program. Specifically the evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program was to examine the extent to which the program builds:

- More effective community leaders,
- Stronger networks of leaders within and across rural communities,
- Stronger community organizations and networks of organizations, and ultimately
- Vital rural communities.

In order to assess these outcomes, the team of evaluators from Oregon State University (OSU) began working collaboratively with the Ford Institute for Community Building to design a robust outcome evaluation. This evaluation began with the review and analysis of all evaluation data that had been collected from 2003 through 2007. The OSU team developed a comprehensive written report summarizing the evaluation findings for 2003-2007<sup>1</sup>. Submitted in January 2008, this 84-page report included extensive recommendations for both future programming and future evaluation of the Leadership Program.

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<sup>1</sup> Clara Pratt, Lena Etuk, Cheryl Peters, Sally Bowman, Denise Rennekamp, and Michaella Sektnan (January 31, 2008) *Evaluation Report Ford Institute Leadership Program, 2003-2007*. Oregon State University, Extension Family and Community Development Program.



Based on the evaluation recommendations contained in the 2007 report, in 2008 the OSU evaluation team established a systematic evaluation structure for the Leadership Program. The system was designed with the input of Ford Institute for Community Building staff and other stakeholders. Logic models and research questions were designed to clarify the desired program outcomes and indicators of the leadership training for individuals, cohorts, organizations, and communities. In addition, reliable and valid data collection tools were designed to assess attributes of and outcomes for individuals. Data collection methods yielded both quantitative (statistical) and qualitative information about the impact of the Leadership Program on individuals. In April 2009, the Ford Institute for Community Building received a report which explained the findings from 2008 and recommendations for future evaluation of the Leadership Program.<sup>2</sup>

### **Major Accomplishments**

Based on the recommendations laid out in the 2008 report, the OSU evaluation team focused its efforts in 2009 on answering a core sub-set of evaluation questions and establishing data collection and analysis systems to answer another sub-set of evaluation questions for 2010.

Although insight into additional questions was also gained, data analysis focused on exploring the following research questions in 2009:

- Does the Leadership Program develop effective community leaders who apply what they learned?
- Does the Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?
- Does the Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?
- Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?
- Does the Leadership Program transform individual participants, organizations, and communities above and beyond the intended outcomes?

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<sup>2</sup> Michaella Sektnan, Lena Etuk, Clara Pratt, Sally Bowman, and Denise Rennekamp. April 2009. "Evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program: 2008 Report"

- Do outcomes vary by aspects/attributes of the program, individual participant, organization, or community?

In order to answer these research questions, data were collected and analyzed from different groups of Leadership Program participants using quantitative and qualitative methodologies:

- Information was collected from Spring and Fall 2009 Leadership Development (LD) and Effective Organizations (EO) training participants using survey instruments designed in 2008.
- A survey instrument was designed, pre-tested, and implemented to follow up with Fall 2008 LD participants 12 months after they completed the training.
- Focus groups with past participants were conducted to assess the impact of the Leadership Program on networking and collaboration.

In 2009, the OSU evaluation team also designed, pre-tested, and implemented a survey of past participants (2003 through Spring 2008) to assess the longer-term impact of the Leadership Program. This dataset will be analyzed in 2010 to answer a number of evaluation questions including:

- When do changes in leadership, community organizations, and/or community vitality occur and are they sustained over time?

In the latter portion of 2009, the team received and assembled a new Leadership Development trainer dataset to assess participants' ratings of trainer effectiveness and explore any association between trainer type and leadership outcomes. The analysis of this Leadership Development trainer dataset will occur in 2010.

Finally, in 2009 the OSU team planned and designed a case study approach of specific communities which will be implemented in 2010 to answer these questions:

- Does local action, collaboration, and/or leadership have an impact on the local economy, society, and environment in rural communities? How has the Leadership Program contributed to these outcomes?

## **METHODS**

The following sections outline the qualitative and quantitative methods used to assess the outcomes of the Leadership Program in 2009. Results are discussed on page 18.

### **Leadership Development 12-Month Follow-Up Survey**

In order to gauge the application of leadership skills over time, a 12-month follow-up survey was created by the OSU evaluation team for distribution to all Fall 2008 cohort participants. This survey contained questions concerning the application of leadership, community building, and project management skills, as well as participation in civic activities, and perceived challenges to community leadership.

#### ***Procedure***

The survey was implemented using a multi-method approach. Starting in late January 2010, the survey was distributed via the internet using SurveyMonkey™ online survey software. All members of the target population were sent an email informing them of their selection for the survey, along with an explanation of the survey, and a link to the SurveyMonkey™ survey. Upon clicking on the SurveyMonkey™ link, respondents were directed to a web-page that again explained the purpose of survey, but also included an informed consent check-box.

Respondents who agreed to participate (by checking the informed consent box) were directed to the first page of the survey, while those who did not agree were directed to a screen with the OSU evaluation team contact information and removed from the survey.

In order to track the survey responses by individuals, each survey respondent was assigned a unique survey number. Individuals who did not complete the survey received specific follow-ups. In particular, two reminder emails were sent to participants – one week and two weeks after the initial email.

Three and a half weeks after the initial email, the target population database was matched to the survey number of the returned surveys. Individuals who returned surveys via SurveyMonkey™ were marked as completed and removed from the population database. Those

who had not returned surveys were sent a survey packet via US mail. The packet contained the following documents:

- A cover letter explaining survey
- 2 copies of the informed consent form (required by OSU Internal Review Board)
- The 12-month follow-up survey
- A stamped and pre-addressed return envelope for the completed survey

One week after the survey was delivered to an individual via mail, a follow-up thank you and reminder postcard was mailed. The postcard served to remind those who had forgotten, to return their survey as soon as possible, and to thank those who had already returned their survey. Three weeks after the initial survey packet was mailed to individuals, the survey number of respondents who had returned the survey were removed from the list. Those remaining in the database received a second follow-up letter and replacement survey packet one week later. The mailed questionnaire contained the exact same questions as the online survey. Any deviations between the two survey forms were merely due to formatting constraints.

Data collection for the 12-month follow-up survey extended from late January to early April 2010. At the completion of the survey implementation, OSU employees entered the information from the completed paper questionnaires into the SurveyMonkey™ database. In addition to the survey number mentioned above, participants were also asked to create a unique identifier that they can recall for future surveys (first and middle initial, date of birth, e.g. JS120367) when completing this survey instrument. This ID code allows the OSU research team to match participant's responses on the 12-month follow-up with previous surveys completed by each individual (LD Outcome Survey and Application).

### ***Response Rate***

The 12-month follow-up survey was sent to all participants from the Fall 2008 Leadership Development classes, for a total population size of 302. At least one source of contact

information (email address) was available for all but one participant. In the first round, 264 were sent invitations to participate via email. Of those, a total of 150 replied online using SurveyMonkey™. Subsequently, 167 participants were sent the survey via US mail, with 57 replying by mail. Nine (3%) participants opted out of participation by either selecting the opt out link in SurveyMonkey™, declining consent on the survey itself, or notifying the OSU evaluation team that they did not wish to participate. Combining both collection methods, a total of 207 participants responded to the survey, for a response rate of 69%.

Data from the 12-month survey were then matched with data previously collected throughout the evaluation, using the individual's unique ID code. This included data from the Leadership Development (LD) class application, the LD 4<sup>th</sup> week-end outcome survey, and FICB databases. By combining the data, the evaluation is able to capture a more comprehensive picture of individuals that participate in the program and what factors are related to program outcomes. A total of 163 Fall 2008 cohort members had data from all sources. Throughout the report, findings related to the leadership development class will be based on this sub-population who had data from all sources.

### ***Data Analysis***

Quantitative data from the Leadership Development 12-month follow-up survey were analyzed to assess a number of outcomes:

- Application of skills and ideas emphasized in the Leadership Program
- Change in activity level
- Settings of skill application
- The relationship between intention to apply skills and actual application
- The contribution of the Leadership Program to the activities of past participants
- Barriers to leadership

In order to evaluate these outcomes, quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive techniques including calculating means, running cross-tabulations, conducting dependent t-tests, running correlations, and doing Ordinary Least Squares regression. Dependent t-tests

were used to calculate whether there was a significant difference between the average frequency of specific skills or activities over the past year. Significant results indicate there is a statistical difference in how often different types of skills or activities were used ( $p < .05$ ).

In order to assess the impact of the individual participant characteristics on leadership outcomes, data on 163 individual participants for whom data from all sources were available was analyzed with correlations and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) methods. Correlation analysis reveals the simple association between two variables, such as being a public official and frequency of public speaking. While this simple association can indicate if within the data, participants with a particular personal attribute tend to have different outcomes than those without the attribute, the correlation does not reveal the size of the effect and may incorrectly lead the researcher to believe that there is a direct relationship between the two variables. For these reasons, OLS regression methods are also used to understand the relationship between individual characteristics and leadership outcomes. OLS regression examines the extent to which a unit increase in an independent variable, like income, affects the outcome variable, net of other factors that vary across individuals. OLS has the power to hold certain factors that vary across individuals constant, in order to isolate a “more pure” effect of an independent variable on the key outcome variable. OLS is useful and necessary if multiple independent variables are correlated with each other to some extent. OLS regression was also used to examine the relationship between participants’ responses to the 4<sup>th</sup> weekend Leadership Development survey regarding their intent to apply skills or do certain activities and the frequency of their activity 12 months later.

Qualitative data from the 12-month follow-up survey were analyzed to identify themes that reinforced the quantitative findings or revealed additional trends. Participant responses to a series of open-ended questions on the survey provided the source of this qualitative data. For each question, the responses that participants made were read by members of the evaluation team and assessed for themes. Themes correspond to ideas or concepts that are raised by more than one respondent. Naturally, one respondent can make a comment that addresses

more than one theme. Thus written responses themselves are the unit of analysis, not individual respondents.

Once the themes were identified and coded from the responses, the number of responses made in reference to each theme was tallied by the researchers. This tally provides a sense of the significance of the theme among the respondents. Themes that are mentioned very often therefore get more weight in the discussion than those that are mentioned only occasionally.

### **Leadership Program Focus Groups**

In order to explore the impact of the Leadership Program on networking among individuals and their communities, focus groups were conducted in rural communities around the state in 2009. Face-to-face focus groups have been a method used in social science over the last 20 years for discovery of patterns and trends that emerge from group interaction.

Networking is a way of describing how people interact with one another in various social settings. The focus groups centered on three types of networks:

- **Social networks** describe personal relationships people have in their personal life, such as friendships or acquaintances.
- **Professional or work networks** describe the relationships people have through their employment, such as with co-workers or acquaintances made through work.
- **Organizational or community work networks** describe the relationships people have with those with whom they volunteer or work on community projects, such as members of community boards.

All of these networks would be expected to overlap and/or intersect with each other. Figure 1 was shown to participants as a visual depiction of the reality that social, professional, and community networks may overlap in smaller communities. For example, sometimes these networks overlap when co-workers become close friends or join each other in volunteering on a community project or when an individual helps connect a friend with a job.

**Figure 1: Overlap of Social Networks**



In 2009, five focus groups were conducted with past Leadership Program participants in these communities: Baker City, Enterprise, Keno, Philomath, and Rainier. Focus group participants could have participated in one or all of the three components of the Leadership Program: Leadership Development, Community Collaborations, or Effective Organizations. In total, thirty-eight community members (16 male; 22 female) participated in the five focus groups. Participants were asked a range of questions regarding their experiences with the Leadership Program. The focus groups asked participants about changes in each area of networking as a result of participation in the leadership program:

- As a result of your participation in FILP, how did your social networks change?
- As a result of your participation in FILP, how did your work, school & professional networks change?
- As a result of your participation in FILP, how did your community networks change?

In each case, a series of follow-up probes were asked:

Can you give examples of how you...

- Formed new relationships with community members (increase in number of relationships)
- Strengthened existing relationships (more frequent interaction, ...)



- Formed relationships with people that are different from you in terms of age, economic status, culture

There were supplementary networking questions that were addressed, to varying degrees, depending on how the group conversation flowed:

- To what extent do your networks overlap and influence each other?
- What benefits have you experienced because of the changes in your networks?
- Have there been any drawbacks to the changes in your networks?
- What did Ford do to facilitate these changes in your social, community, and work networks?
- Have there been changes in your networking with individuals outside of your community?

### ***Data Analysis***

The focus groups were recorded and transcribed. Multiple raters read the transcripts, discussed the coding schemes, and wrote and rewrote the analysis of the focus groups. The flow of questions was the framework for organizing the results. Issues voiced by each focus group were analyzed horizontally, looking for common themes across the groups. An effort was made to discover common themes, but also to look for dissenting opinions.

### **Effective Organizations 2009 Participant Survey**

In 2009, Effective Organizations training participants were asked to complete evaluation surveys on the first and second weekends of the training. On the first weekend, participants were asked to complete a background survey with questions about age, gender, previous leadership or organizational management training, organizational involvement, and other types of personal characteristics. On the second weekend of the training, participants received an outcome survey with questions regarding their knowledge about and behavior concerning organizational planning and management before the training and after the training. These surveys underwent cognitive pretesting in the summer of 2008 and were piloted in two communities in the fall of 2008.

The outcome survey followed a retrospective pretest format, with questions about participants' knowledge and behavior before and after the training. For each item, respondents scored their knowledge on a scale of one to four, where one was "not knowledgeable" and four was "very knowledgeable." In the first section of the survey, participants were asked to rate their knowledge after the training and before the training for 20 organizational management skills.

Examples include:

- Developing a strategic plan for your organization
- Specifying board responsibilities
- Developing and managing budgets
- Establishing human resource management plan (employees & volunteers)
- Maintaining an effective volunteer base
- Helping your organization fulfill its mission

In the second section of the survey, participants were asked to rate their likelihood of engaging in 16 behaviors related to organizational management after the training and before the training. Again, the range of the scale was from one to four, where one was "not likely" and four was "very likely". Examples of items include:

- Participate in fundraising efforts for your organization
- Work with other organizations that have similar goals to your organization
- Promote positive board functioning (e.g. communication and decision making)
- Work to increase the role of your organization in improving the community
- Assist your organization in clarifying its mission, goals, and objectives
- Monitor the fiscal health of your organization

In the final section of the survey, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions to solicit some general thoughts and considerations about the impact of the Effective Organizations training on themselves and their organizations. One question asked participants to explain the specific changes they intend to make in their organizations as a result of the training. Another question asked individuals to consider the impact their participation in the

training will have on their organization in the long term. The last question asked participants to describe the impact the training had on them personally.

### ***Survey Administration***

The Effective Organizations background and outcome surveys were administered by the staff of the training facilitator organizations: Rural Development Initiatives, Inc., Human Systems, and TACS. In the spring of 2009, Effective Organizations training facilitators were provided electronic versions of the background and outcome surveys to be printed by their staff, a script to be used in explaining the survey to participants, and instructions on how to administer the survey. The OSU evaluation team spent about an hour and a half with the facilitators explaining the protocol of the survey. In short, trainers were asked to hand out the EO background survey on the Friday of the first EO training weekend and hand out the outcome survey on the Saturday of the second week-end (the final day) of the training. It was recommended that the background survey be handed out around the time the Ford Institute for Community Building is discussed, and trainers were strongly encouraged to hand out the outcome survey after the last module of the training, but not during lunch, and before participants were formally dismissed for the day. Training participants were to be instructed to place their completed surveys in an envelope addressed to the Ford Institute for Community Building. The surveys were then entered by Institute staff using EpiData open-source data entry software. The electronic EpiData files were then sent to the OSU evaluation team for analysis.

Attendance at both weekends of Effective Organizations training is not mandatory and, according to the trainers with whom OSU faculty consulted before implementing the surveys, there tend to be notable differences in attendance between the first and second weekends of the training. For this reason, training facilitators were also instructed to send a list of absentees to the Ford Institute so that the Institute staff could send surveys to these individuals.

## ***Response Rate***

In the spring and fall of 2009, 11 communities participated in Effective Organizations training:

- Chiloquin
- Grant County
- Harney County
- La Pine
- McKenzie River
- Newberg
- North Curry County
- Sisters
- South Lane
- White City – Upper Rogue
- Wild Rivers Coast

OSU faculty members received survey data from ten of these communities from the Ford Institute, with surveys from South Lane missing. Table 1 displays the total number of people who registered for the EO trainings as well as the number of surveys received from each community.

**Table 1**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Effective Organizations Training Registrants (#)</b>	<b>Background Survey Respondents (#)</b>	<b>Outcome Survey Respondents (#)</b>	<b>Respondents to both the Background &amp; Outcome Surveys (#)</b>
Chiloquin	24	8	15	6
Grant County	43	--	26	--
Harney County	26	19	19	16
La Pine	28	24	22	16
McKenzie River	12	11	9	6
Newberg	21	17	16	14
North Curry County	28	22	16	12
Sisters	30	--	18	--
White City – Upper Rogue	35	23	21	14
Wild Rivers Coast	49	32	26	19
South Lane	36	--	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>103</b>

As Table 1 shows, there were discrepancies between the number of people who registered for the training, the number who completed the background survey, and the number who completed the outcome survey, despite efforts to contact absentees. Also, due to the timing of the implementation of the surveys, the participants in the Grant County and Sisters did not have the opportunity to complete the background survey. Thus, in total, 103 people completed both the background and outcome surveys, while 156 completed the background survey and 187 completed the outcome survey. The response rates varied accordingly as well; 46% completed the background survey, 56% completed the outcome survey, and 31% completed both surveys. Throughout this report, the findings we discuss will relate only to the sub-population of EO participants who completed both surveys (N = 103).

### ***Analysis Variables***

In order to analyze the data in a clear and intuitive way, Effective Organizations outcome survey items were grouped based on their conceptual linkages. In the knowledge section of the survey, 19 of the 20 survey items were grouped into three categories: operational management and leadership, strategic planning, and resource development and management. One survey item encompassed all three of these topics, so it was not included in these three concept groups. In the behavior section of the survey, three survey items were grouped into one category collaboration/networking while the remaining 13 items were kept separate. Using these concept groups, analysis of changes in knowledge can be done without running separate analyses on each individual item. Table 2 describes the three concept groups that were formed from the 19 survey items in the knowledge section.

**Table 2**

<b>Knowledge Concept Groups</b>
<b>Concept Group and Definition</b>
<b>Strategic Planning</b>
Clarifying an organizational vision and mission; Establishing goals and objectives for the organization; Analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the organization; Developing a strategic plan; Helping the organization fulfill its mission
<b>Operational Management &amp; Leadership</b>
Creating effective board nomination and recruitment procedures; Specifying and communicating board responsibilities; Developing and managing budgets; Succession planning
<b>Resource Development &amp; Management</b>
Identifying appropriate grants; Fundraising in the community; Establishing a resource development plan; Establishing a human resource management plan; Maintaining an effective volunteer base

Table 3 describes the collaboration/networking concept group that was formed from items in the behavior section.

**Table 3**

<b>Behavior Concept Group</b>
<b>Concept Group and Definition</b>
<b>Collaboration/Networking</b>
Working with other organizations that have similar organizational goals; Working with other organizations that do not have similar goals; Developing networks and partnerships with other organizations

Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were used to measure the internal reliability of the concept groups. Alphas indicate how well a set of variables or items fit together to represent one dimension or concept. Alpha coefficients range from zero to one; an alpha of .60 to .70 indicates an acceptable level of reliability and .80 or higher indicates good reliability. All knowledge concept groups were found to have an acceptable internal reliability (for alpha statistics, see Appendix 1).

### ***Data Analysis***

Quantitative data from the Effective Organizations background and outcome surveys were analyzed to assess whether participants reported statistically significant changes in knowledge

and behaviors as a result of the training. In addition, further analysis was conducted to see if changes in outcomes varied by attributes of the individual. Qualitative data from the outcome survey were analyzed to identify themes that reinforced the quantitative findings or revealed additional trends in knowledge, behavior, or organizational change.

### *Changes in Knowledge and Behavior*

Outcome data were analyzed for all 103 EO training participants who completed both the outcome and background surveys. Participant scores from the retrospective pre and post were compared for the analysis of change in knowledge and behavior. Dependent t-tests were used to calculate whether there was a significant change in the participant reports before and after the training. Significant results indicate there is a statistical difference between the means for the pretest and posttest ( $p < .05$ ). In addition, a Cohen's  $d$  statistic was used to estimate the size of the impact of the training on this change. Cohen's  $d$  scores less than .40 indicate a small effect, scores from .40 to .74 indicate a moderate effect, scores .75 to 1.44 indicate a large effect, and scores greater than 1.45 indicate a very large effect.

### *Participant Attributes and Effective Organizations Training Outcomes*

In order to assess the impact of the individual participant characteristics on Effective Organizations training outcomes, data on 103 individual participants who completed the background and outcome surveys were analyzed with correlations and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression methods. Correlation analysis reveals the simple association between two variables, such as being a public official and knowledge of organizational strategic planning. OLS regression methods reveal the relationship between individual characteristics and EO training outcomes. Through OLS methods it is possible to examine the extent to which a unit increase in an independent variable, like income, affects the outcome variable, net of other factors that vary across individuals.

For the analysis, outcome variables for each participant were computed using the post-test scores across the survey items that correspond to the outcome concept or overall section. For example, for the participant's overall knowledge level after the training, an average post-test

score was calculated for each individual participant. To create this score, the post-training knowledge scores (that range from 1 to 4) were added together for all 20 questions on the survey that relate to knowledge and divided by 20. Each individual participant then has her own overall average knowledge value. This number is then regressed on the factors hypothesized to explain the variation in overall average change in knowledge across all participants. Average scores were also computed for overall behaviors, as well as the concept group within the behavior section.

### *Open-ended Responses*

In order to gain additional insight into the impact of the Effective Organizations training on participants, a series of open-ended questions were asked on the survey. As on the Leadership Development 12-month follow-up survey, for each question the responses of participants were read by members of the evaluation team and assessed for themes.

Once the themes were identified among the comments, they were given an overarching name and then the number of comments made in reference to each theme was tallied by the researchers. This tally provides a sense of the significance of the theme among the respondents. Themes that are mentioned very often therefore get more weight in the discussion than those that are mentioned only occasionally.



## RESULTS

To understand the impact of the Leadership Program on participants, a series of research questions were employed in 2009. The findings of this examination are discussed in the following sections, organized by question.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program develop effective community leaders?**

In order for leaders to be effective, they must first gain the skills and then apply them in their lives and communities. As effective leadership development follows this sequential pattern, it has been important to structure the evaluation in such a way to reflect this time-order. At the end of the Fall 2008 leadership class, participants completed an outcome survey assessing their competence (as a result of the training) and intent to apply the skills. The 12-month follow-up survey was then implemented one year later to see if and how the skills were indeed applied. Data summarized here is from the 163 participants that completed the leadership development application, the outcome survey at the conclusion of the leadership class, and 12-month follow-up survey.

#### ***Do participants feel more competent as leaders?***

In the 2008 Evaluation Report, Fall 2008 participants were found to be more competent in leadership skills directly after the training. In summary, participants indicated that the training helped increase their knowledge, skills, and motivation. In particular, they reported more confidence to lead and more willingness to work in their communities toward positive change. Participants reported they used these skills to work more effectively on their class projects and in their community organizations, in their workplaces, and with their families. In addition, participants who reported the least amount of competence and leadership behavior at the beginning of the training showed the most improvement. Overall, participants reported significantly higher levels of competence in leadership skills and significantly higher likelihoods of engaging in leadership behavior as a result of the training. To build on these findings, further evaluation was conducted to examine the effectiveness of these community leaders as they moved out of the class and into the community.

### ***How do participants apply what they learned during FILP?***

Application of leadership skills was gauged through responses to the 12-month follow-up survey conducted early in 2010. Fall 2008 participants were asked to report their application of leadership, community building, and project management skills during the first year after the training. Participants were from a total of 13 hub-communities, including Chiloquin, Jefferson County, La Pine, Lake County, Monmouth/Independence, Newberg, North Curry County, Philomath, South Lincoln County, Sutherlin, Union County, Wild Rivers Coast (South Curry County), and Winston/Dillard. Demographic characteristics of this sample did not vary significantly from those reported in the 2008 Report. Table 4 summarizes the demographic and background characteristics of this sample.

**Table 4**

<b>Mean, Standard Deviation, and Percentages of Demographic and Background Characteristics</b>			
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Years in the community	163	14.21	13.56
Years of education completed	163	14.93	2.88
Income <sup>1</sup>	160	\$66,390.00	\$38,521.00
Number of organizations <sup>2</sup>	163	2.74	1.47
Average hours per month work with organizations	144	12.83	13.33
<b>Gender</b>			
Gender	163	67% Female	33% Male
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>			
Race/ethnicity	162	90% White	11% Other
<b>Employed for pay</b>			
Employed for pay	105	89% Yes	11% No
<b>College degree (Associate's or higher)</b>			
College degree (Associate's or higher)	163	58% Yes	42% No
<b>Elected official</b>			
Elected official	163	20% Yes	80% No
<b>Previous leadership experience</b>			
Previous leadership experience	163	58% Yes	42% No
<sup>1</sup> Mean of midpoint of income categories, <sup>2</sup> Number of organizations as reported on the application, limit of 5.			

### **Frequency of Application**

On the 12 month follow-up survey, respondents were asked to report how often they engaged in a variety of leadership skills and behaviors in the past year, since the completion of the

leadership development class. Items on the survey were grouped into three main areas: leadership skills, community building activities, and project management tasks.

### *Leadership Skills*

On the 12-month survey, training participants were asked how often they had applied 11 specific leadership skills since completing the training. For each item, respondents scored their application of leadership skills on a scale of one to six, where one was “never”, two was “1-3 times”, three was “4-6 times”, four was “once a month”, five was “weekly” and six was “daily”. Leadership skills were divided into three sections reflecting the ability of participants to: communicate effectively, work with others, and network. Table 5 lists the means and standard deviations for the frequency of skills application. The higher the mean, the more frequently, on average, participants have been doing the activity.

**Table 5**

<b>Application of Leadership Skills: Means and Standard Deviations</b>			
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Communicate Effectively</b>	162	4.35	0.87
Used “appreciative inquiry” to emphasize the positive aspects of a situation	162	5.30	0.87
Given constructive feedback to another person	161	4.42	1.29
Used active listening skills to understand another person’s ideas	162	4.35	0.87
Given a speech or presentation to a group of people	161	4.20	1.33
<b>Work with Others</b>	162	3.94	1.01
Worked effectively with different personality types	162	5.26	0.88
Worked to build consensus within a group	160	3.83	1.24
Facilitated group discussions	162	3.77	1.36
Used effective meeting techniques to guide a meeting	162	3.49	1.39
Used conflict resolution processes	162	3.38	1.47
<b>Network</b>	162	3.66	1.26
Networked with others to address a community issue or problem	161	3.76	1.35
Networked with others to advance personally or professionally	161	3.58	1.49
<b>Leadership Skills Overall</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>0.85</b>
Scale ranged from 1 to 6, where 1 was “never”, 2 was “1-3 times”, 3 was “4-6 times”, 4 was “once a month”, 5 was “weekly” and 6 was “daily”.			

Overall, participants reported that they had applied leadership skills about once a month over the past year (mean = 4.04). There were significant differences in the frequency of application depending on the type of skill, however. Skills related to communicating effectively were applied the most often, with an overall average of at least once a month. Among these effective communication skills, appreciative inquiry was the most frequently applied, with participants reporting they used it weekly. Giving a speech or public presentation and active listening were the least frequently applied, on average, in this group of leadership skills. Interestingly, while the mean for active listening was among the lowest in the communication skill set, only a very low percentage of participants (2%) reported that they used the skill less than three times over the past year.

Following communication skills, skills for working with others were applied by participants just under once a month (mean = 3.94). Working effectively with different personality types was done significantly more often than the other skills, with the majority of participants reporting that they applied those skills weekly or daily (85%). Skills applied the least often in this skill set included effective meeting techniques and conflict resolution processes. These were only applied an average of four to six times during the past year by Fall 2008 leadership development class participants.

Finally, participants reported networking with others least often of these leadership skill sets; on average, four to six times during the past year (mean = 3.66). There was no significant difference between the level of networking to address community issues and the level of networking for personal or professional gain. Although applied the least often on average, one-third of participants reported networking weekly or daily. For a complete table of the distribution of responses for each leadership skill item, see Appendix 2.

#### *Change in Activity*

Results of the 12-month follow-up clearly indicate that participants are frequently using the skills they learned from the training. Yet, does their activity level reflect changes made as a result of participation in the leadership class? In order to answer this question, participants

were asked if they had done these leadership activities over the past year more often, less often, or about the same compared to before participating in the Ford leadership class. Overall, the majority of participants (67%) reported that they had applied these leadership skills more often during the year since the class. Only one percent of participants reported that they used the skills less frequently over the past year.

While the majority of participants reported increased use of leadership skills as a result of the training, further analysis explored the extent of change for participants who applied the skills very frequently. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to indicate high activity individuals. This was equivalent to applying the skills once a month or more. Of those who were highly active, 70% used the skills more often than before the training, with the remaining 30% using the skills at the same level as before the training. No participants who rated themselves at engaging in leadership skills at high levels stated that this level was less often than before the training. Therefore, for the majority of individuals who were using their leadership skills a lot 12 months after the class, this high outcome resulted from participation in the class.

#### *Settings of Skill Application*

In addition to the frequency of skill application, the 12-month survey also asked participants about settings in which leadership skills were applied. Specifically, the survey asked whether or not the participant had applied leadership skills with family and friends, at work, in school, in community organizations (e.g., non-profits, membership groups, institutions, local government) or in community or volunteer efforts. Table 6 outlines the percentages of participants that reported applying the skills in each setting.

**Table 6**

<b>Settings of Leadership Skill Application</b>				
	<b>N</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
With family or friends	162	86%	10%	4%
At work	161	79%	4%	17%
In school	160	28%	5%	67%
In community organizations (e.g., non-profits, membership groups, institutions, local government)	160	92%	5%	3%
In community or volunteer efforts	159	94%	4%	2%

As Table 6 illustrates, participants reported applying leadership skills in a variety of settings over the past year. The highest proportion of respondents said they used their leadership skills in the community (in organizations and for community or volunteer efforts), followed by family or friends, and at work. Of those participants attending school (n = 53), 85% applied leadership skills in their school settings.

Most participants applied leadership skills in multiple settings. While not all settings applied to each participant, the overwhelming majority of participants (91%) reported applying the skills in three or more of the settings. Less than 3% reported applying skills in none of the settings, with 6% reporting that they applied skills in one or two of the settings.

Of the skills applied in work settings, understanding personality differences, running effective meetings, and conflict resolution were specifically noted as helpful. A few students reported that they found the skills for working with others, such as facilitating group discussions, and skills around fundraising as helpful in their school environment.

Community organizations, such as non-profits, membership groups, institutions, and local government, were also locations in which the majority of Leadership Program participants applied their leadership skills in the last year (92%). Based on comments provided by

participants on the survey, skills related to consensus building, facilitating group discussions, conflict resolution, public speaking, active listening, and working with different personality types were especially helpful to their work with community organizations. In addition to applying specific skills, participants also reported that they took on larger leadership roles or more responsibility in their organizations as a result of the training. One participant even noted that participation in the class opened up a greater network of organizations to be involved with.

As Table 6 shows, 94% of participants reported applying leadership skills in their work on community or volunteer efforts. Respondent comments indicated that having more leadership skills as a result of the class encouraged them to be more involved in community efforts and volunteer more in their community. In particular, participants noted that understanding how to work with different personalities and networking with others has been helpful for their work on community projects.

#### *Leadership Skills Summary*

As the previous discussion of findings reveals, participants on average applied leadership skills frequently in the year after the class. Most participants applied these skills more often in the last 12 months than they did before the class. Indeed, among those who used their skills a lot in the previous year, the majority felt that they increased their activity as a result of the leadership class. The data also indicate that leadership skills are applied in many settings, the most popular being in the community.

#### *Community Building Activities*

In addition to leadership skills, the 12-month follow-up survey asked participants how often they did various activities related to community building in the last year. For each item, respondents scored their application of community building skills on a scale of one to four, where one was “never”, two was “rarely”, three was “occasionally”, and four was “frequently.” Table 7 outlines the types of activities related to community building asked on the survey as well as the means, standard deviations, and percentages of participants who reported doing these activities in various amounts.

**Table 7**

<b>Participation in Community Building Activities: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages</b>						
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>Never to Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally /Frequently</b>
Encouraged others to participate in community issues and/or projects	162	3.36	0.75		12%	88%
Educated yourself about social, economic, or environmental issues in your community	163	3.35	0.79		15%	85%
Worked to improve the social, economic, and/or environmental conditions of your community	163	3.21	0.82		17%	83%
Helped build public awareness of a community issue or problem	163	3.08	0.84		22%	78%
Helped investigate possible solutions to a community issue or problem	162	3.08	0.80		21%	79%
Identified assets in your community	163	2.96	0.82		23%	77%
Sought information about how community decisions would impact the local social, economic, and/or environmental conditions	162	2.87	0.98		32%	68%
Helped define goals or a vision for your community	163	2.84	0.96		35%	65%
Sought opportunities to learn more about community leadership	163	2.82	0.90		23%	77%
<b>Community Building Activities Overall</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>0.68</b>		--	--
Scale ranged from 1 to 4, where 1 was "never", 2 was "rarely", 3 was "occasionally", and 4 was "frequently."						

As Table 7 shows, on average, participants reported that they had participated in community building activities occasionally over the past year (mean = 3.06). Among these community building activities, participants reported that they encouraged others to participate in community issues or projects and educated themselves about the issues in their community the most often. Identifying assets, seeking out information about the impact of community decisions, defining a goal or vision for the community, and seeking out opportunities to learn more about community leadership were the least frequently done in the last year. The relatively low frequency of these activities being done by participants may be due to the infrequency with which opportunities to do these activities arise. While there were significant differences in the frequency with which respondents participated in these activities, on the whole, most (65-88%) did each activity occasionally or frequently over the past year. For a



complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each community building activity, see Appendix 3.

### *Change in Activity*

As the data discussed above illustrate, participants have been engaging occasionally in community building activities since the leadership class ended. In order to gauge whether this activity level in the last year is representative of participants' level of activity before the class, participants were asked if they had done these community building activities over the past year more often, less often, or about the same compared to before they participated in the Ford leadership class. Overall, the majority of participants (60%) reported that they had done these community building activities more often in the year since the class than before. Thirty-three percent reported that their community building activity level did not change as a result of the program and only 7% of participants reported that they participated in these activities less frequently over the past year.

While the majority of participants reported an increase in the number of times they did community building activities since the training, further analysis explored the extent of change for individuals that did the activities very frequently. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to identify highly active individuals, which was equivalent to doing activities frequently in the last year. Of those who were highly active, 65% did community building activities more often in the last year than they did before the training, and 32% reported they were just as highly active before the training. Only 3% of participants who rated themselves as frequently engaging in community building activities in the last year stated that this level was less often than before the training. Therefore, for the majority of individuals who were doing a lot of community building activities in the 12 months after the class, this high outcome resulted from participation in the class.

### *Community Building Summary*

This examination of data from the 12-month follow-up survey reveals that, with respect to community building activities, Fall 2008 leadership class participants have only occasionally

taken on these types of endeavors in the year following the class. Of those who have engaged in these activities very frequently, it is encouraging to note, that the majority report doing so because of their participation in the class.

The lower average level of activity observed among Fall 2008 leadership class participants for community building activities, as opposed to leadership skill application, is possibly due to limited opportunity to do the activities. Many of these community building activities do not present themselves often; therefore it may not be possible for the majority of participants to do them frequently. Opportunities to apply leadership skills related to effective communication, working well with others, and networking are much more likely to present themselves more often for many people.

### *Project Management Skills*

On the 12-month follow-up survey, participants were asked how often they had done various project management tasks in community efforts or projects in the last year. Community efforts or projects were explained as including: organizing a community event, fundraising for community organizations, working with a community non-profit, serving on a non-profit board, participating in a community improvement effort, or building a community facility. Project management tasks were rated on the same scale as community building skills, where one was “never” and four was “frequently”. Table 8 lists the project management tasks as well as the mean and standard deviation for how often participants reported doing these activities.

**Table 8**

<b>Participation in Project Management Tasks: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages</b>						
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>Never to Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally /Frequently</b>
Helped to publicize or promote some community effort or project	162	3.07	0.95		25%	75%
Helped set goals for a community effort or project	162	3.01	0.88		26%	74%
Helped develop tasks, timelines, and assignments for a community effort or project	162	2.86	0.99		32%	68%
Helped plan a community fundraising effort	162	2.77	1.02		35%	65%
Helped seek outside support for a community effort or project	162	2.76	1.01		39%	61%
Helped involve stakeholders in a community project or effort	162	2.70	1.04		36%	64%
Helped to recruit and retain volunteers	161	2.68	1.01		43%	57%
Participated in developing the budget for a community effort or project	162	2.62	1.05		44%	56%
<b>Project Management Tasks Overall</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>2.81</b>	<b>0.84</b>		<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
Scale ranged from 1 to 4, where 1 was “never”, 2 was “rarely”, 3 was “occasionally”, and 4 was “frequently.”						

As Table 8 illustrates, in general, participants reported that they had done these project management tasks rarely to occasionally over the past year (mean = 2.81). Of all project management tasks listed, participants reported that they most often helped to publicize, promote, and set goals for community effort or project. Three-quarters of participants did these activities occasionally or frequently over the past year. There were no significant differences in the frequencies with which participants reported engaging in the other project management tasks. Participants reported that they developed tasks, timelines, and assignments; planned fundraising, sought outside support; involved stakeholders; recruited and retained volunteers, and developed budgets for community efforts or projects with about the same frequency during the past year, namely, rarely to occasionally. In contrast to publicizing and setting goals for community efforts or projects, only between 56% and 68% of participants reported doing all other project management activities occasionally or frequently in the last year. For a complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each project management item, see Appendix 4.

It is notable that Fall 2008 participants reported such infrequent project management activity in the last year, given that for many, the year after the leadership class is when cohort projects are completed. Ideally, the cohort project is the setting in which these project management skills would be applied. Most likely, this finding is due to the way the question was worded. Respondents were instructed to indicate how often they had done these project management activities for generic community efforts or projects. No specific mention of cohort projects was made in the list of examples on the survey. Respondents were therefore unlikely to include the cohort project as an example of a community effort or project. Analysis of the open-ended comments made on this section of the survey provides evidence for this conclusion; respondents were predominantly not including their cohort project when answering this set of questions. It is not surprising then that participants indicated infrequent project management activity in the last year. For many, the cohort project was the arena in which project management occurred, and it likely took much of participants' time and effort. Without much additional time to spend on other community efforts in the last year, the activity of participants in project management appears low based on the survey data.

It is also possible that the low frequency with which participants engaged in project management activities in the last year is due to the limited number of opportunities that presented themselves. Project management tasks are often applied in a limited setting, such as on specific community efforts or projects or within an organization. Also, the opportunity to do some of the project management tasks is dependent on the participant holding a certain role in the effort or project. Though the data indicate low project management activity among Fall 2008 participants in the last 12 months, it is important to bear these potential explanations in mind when interpreting results.

#### *Change in Activity*

Results of the 12 month follow-up survey indicate that participants are engaging in project management tasks on an occasional basis. In order to explore whether this level of activity is representative of participants' levels of activity before the leadership class, participants were

asked whether the number of times they have done project management tasks over the past year was more often, less often, or about the same compared to before they participated in the Ford leadership class. Overall, approximately half of participants (53%) reported that they had done these project management tasks more often during the year since the class. Forty-one percent reported that their project management activity level did not change as a result of the program and 6% of participants reported that they participated in these activities less frequently over the past year. A few participants noted their reasons for doing the tasks less frequently, such as illness that required resignation from a board and having other commitments that took up time.

Further analysis also explored the extent of change for individuals that did project management tasks very frequently. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to indicate high activity levels, which is equivalent to participating in the activities occasionally to frequently. Of those participants who occasionally or frequently did project management activities in the last year, 58% reported that this was more often than they had done before the training and 42% reported that this was the same frequency with which they did the activities before the training. No participants who rated themselves as participating in project management tasks with high frequency in the year after the class stated that this level was less often than before the class. Therefore, of those who were above average in their project management skill application over the last year, the majority were this active as a result of participation in the class.

#### *Project Management Summary*

These data reveal that in the year following the leadership class, participants on average are only doing project management activities rarely to occasionally in community efforts or projects. This may be due to the cohort project taking too much of their time, as it also requires project management tasks be done, but other explanations are likely as well such as limited community efforts or projects being available to work on in a given year.

Of those Fall 2008 leadership class participants who were doing project management activities in the last year more frequently than average participants, many felt they were doing so more often than they did before the class. This finding suggests that the leadership class is having a positive influence on participants, which is carrying through beyond the last day of the class itself.

**Contribution of Leadership Class**

In addition to the frequency of skill application, the 12-month follow-up survey asked participants how much they felt the Ford leadership class contributed to their ability to do the skills, activities, and tasks. For each section of the survey, participants were asked to rate the leadership class’ contribution on a scale from 1 to 5 with one for “not at all”, two for “a little”, three for “a moderate amount”, four for “A good deal”, and five for a “great deal”. Table 9 outlines the distribution of responses for each section of the survey.

**Table 9**

<b>Contribution of Leadership Class</b>					
	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>A Little</b>	<b>A Moderate Amount</b>	<b>A Good Deal</b>	<b>A Great Deal</b>
Leadership Skills	2%	19%	40%	27%	12%
Communicate effectively	2%	15%	31%	36%	16%
Work with others	1%	14%	24%	38%	23%
Network	1%	19%	32%	28%	20%
Community Building Activities	1%	13%	27%	37%	22%
Project Management Tasks	3%	15%	33%	32%	17%

On average, participants reported that the leadership class contributed a moderate to great deal to their ability to do leadership skills, community building activities, and project management tasks (mean = 3.47 to 3.70). As the results in Table 9 show, approximately 40-60% of Fall 2008 participants felt that the class contributed a good or great deal to their skill ability in these areas. On average, about one-third of participants thought the class contributed a moderate amount, and only 15-20% felt like the class did not contribute to their ability at all or

only a little. One participant comment that represented the majority opinion on how the leadership class contributed:

*“Before the FILP class I was just beginning to become involved as a volunteer in various ways in the my community, but as a direct result of the FILP’s educational resources and the belief in my ability as an individual to make a difference, I have stepped up as a leader”*

### Qualitative Results

On the 12-month follow-up survey, respondents had the opportunity to explain how the training affected their ability to be a community leader in an open-ended question format. Approximately 140 individuals responded to the question to describe many ways they felt the leadership training affected them personally. From the many responses to the question provided, participants tended to indicate that they:

- Felt better equipped with skills and tools,
- Had a new appreciation for different personalities,
- Gained confidence in their ability to make a difference,
- Networked more with others, and
- Had a greater awareness of their community.

Overall, participants reported feeling better equipped to address issues in their community. Participants described a number of skills they gained through the training, that have helped them to be a better community leader. Of these, skills in communication and working with others were mentioned most frequently. These included active listening, public speaking, building consensus, and conflict resolution. Overall, many participants reported that they communicate more effectively and work better with others as a result of skills learned in the training. Being better equipped helped participants contribute in many areas and settings, including in their work, volunteer efforts, and participation in community projects. As two participants described:

*“The skills I learned through the appreciative inquiry process have helped me lead group discussions in a positive direction. I also am using skills I developed in conflict management. Our current fiscal climate has left many partners feeling as if they need to complete for resources and some are hesitant to collaborate.”*

*“When I am volunteered for things like student planning commissioner or to help fundraise for my school play, it makes not only me, but everyone on my team more effective. By using the fundraising skills we were able to step out of our normal donor box and surprise more people into giving.”*

In line with the quantitative results, many participants also mentioned a new appreciation for and ability to work with people of different personality types. Participants reported that the training helped them to see other’s points of view and be more willing to look at both sides of an issue or project. They also gained greater appreciation and respect for those that have differing opinions from their own and were more willing to work with others to accomplish a common goal. As one participant said:

*“The leadership class showed me that it is possible to work with many different kinds of people... even if most of us were fairly strong personalities we were shown how to come to a consensus while respecting and validating everyone’s ideas and goals.”*

By learning and refining their skills, many participants wrote that the leadership class increased their self-confidence. Some noted that the training validated their gifts and abilities, giving them confidence to get involved in their community. Others mentioned that they were more confident in public speaking and more willing to speak up on issues than they were before the training. Several respondents said that it increased their confidence to encourage others to become involved in community activities. Participants reported that the training gave them the skills to bring people together and encourage others to get involved in the community.

*“Primarily, the class improved my self-confidence in what I was doing. It let me know that I was on the right track, and that confidence is palpable to those I’m in contact with”*

Although participants did not report high frequency of networking on the quantitative portion of the survey, they found great value in the networking they did do. In the open-ended section, many respondents mentioned that the leadership class increased the size of their community networks and their ability to network better. It helped them get to know community leaders



and the structure of the community and provided contacts for accomplishing a specific task in a community. Participants also mentioned that networking with other community members and leaders was rewarding.

*“It connected me with an amazing group of community leaders, broadening my network base and giving me new hope for the future of our community”.*

Participants also commented on how the training helped them to better identify aspects of the community and have a better awareness of community issues. Several participants indicated that better knowledge of their community encouraged them to get involved. By gaining this knowledge, they also felt a greater responsibility to the community. As one participant noted,

*“The class gave me a sense of how I can personally impact my community and help shape the direction of it. I acknowledge that everyone has skills to contribute. Combining and harnessing that power to make positive changes for all, not just the current generation, but future generations as well, is a very real possibility.”*

Even those with previous leadership experience reported that they benefited from the class in some way. Through the class they were able to refresh their skills, practice using their skills, learn a different technique, and network with others. A few noted that they had gotten better at using the skills because they were refreshed in the training. As one participant stated:

*“Most of these items I did before. [But] I have been able to do them more effectively because of tools in the class”*

### *Do Outcomes Vary By Attributes of Participants or the Class?*

Previous sections of this report reveal that participants in the Ford leadership classes applied many of the leadership, community building, and project management tools gained through the training. While most participants applied the skills and activities occasionally to frequently, there was some variation in outcomes across individuals. In order to explore this further, correlation and regression analyses were completed to determine whether any of this variability in activity level in the year following the leadership class could be accounted for by

participants' intentions to apply the skills in Fall 2008, participants' demographic or background characteristics, or characteristics of the classes in which they participated.

### *Fall 2008 Outcomes*

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions were used to explore the relation between participants' intentions to apply skills at the end of the leadership class and the frequency with which skills were actually applied in the 12 months after the class. Twenty-six leadership skill, community building, and project management items appeared on both the 12-month follow-up survey and the outcome survey completed on the 4<sup>th</sup> weekend of the leadership class series. OLS regressions were run to see if participants' reported levels of competence in leadership skills and likelihoods of engaging in leadership behaviors at the end of the training predicted the actual level of engagement in these skills one year later.

Table 10 lists the standardized coefficients for 12-month follow-up survey items that were significantly predicted by the leadership outcome survey at the end of the training. For each standard deviation increase in the Fall 2008 item (competence or intention to apply a skill), the 12-month frequency of activity increased by the fraction of a standard deviation listed under beta ( $\beta$ ).

**Table 10**

<b>Standardized (<math>\beta</math>) Coefficient Effects of Fall 2008 Competence &amp; Intentions on Activity Level in Following Year</b>		
	<b>N</b>	<b>Beta (<math>\beta</math>)</b>
<b>Leadership Skills</b>		
Using active listening skills to understand another person's ideas	160	0.21
Giving a speech or presentation to a group of people	160	0.26
Facilitating group discussions	160	0.20
Networking with others to address a community issue or problem	161	0.29
<b>Community Building Activities</b>		
Educating yourself about social, economic, or environmental issues in your community	160	0.22
Helping build public awareness of a community issue or problem	161	0.26
Helping investigate possible solutions to a community issue or problem	159	0.18
Working to improve the social, economic, and/or environmental conditions of your community	162	0.28
Seeking information about how community decisions would impact the local social, economic, and/or environmental conditions	162	0.28
Seeking opportunities to learn more about community leadership	162	0.27
<b>Project Management Tasks</b>		
Helping set goals for a community effort or project	160	0.19
Helping develop tasks, timelines, and assignments for a community effort or project	159	0.20
Participating in developing the budget for a community effort or project	160	0.32
Helping to publicize or promote some community effort or project	160	0.31
Helping involve stakeholders in a community project or effort	160	0.33
Helping to recruit and retain volunteers	158	0.31
Helping seek outside support for a community effort or project	162	0.23
OLS regression analysis used to determine if Fall 2008 outcomes predicted 12-month activity level. Only items that were significant at $p < .05$ are included. Beta ( $\beta$ ) is the standardized coefficient (expressed in standard deviation units).		

Apparent from Table 10 is that of the 26 items that matched between the Fall 2008 outcome survey and the 12-month follow-up survey, 18 were found to be significantly related to each other. Also clear from Table 10 is that for each standard deviation increase in participants' competency or intention to apply a skill in the fall of 2008 there was approximately a .25 standard deviation increase in the frequency with which activities were done in the last year. As a specific example: for each standard deviation increase in participants' perceived competence in using active listening skills at the end of the leadership class, participants' reported frequency of using active listening skills in the year following the class increased .21 standard deviations. The results in Table 10 indicate that participants who felt more competent at using leadership skills at the end of the leadership class applied these leadership skills more often than those

that reported being less competent at the end of the training. This was also true for items related to project management and community building, some of which related to competence and some of which related to intention to apply the skill or do the activity. By and large, participants who reported being more competent or more likely to engage in leadership behaviors at the end of the leadership class did the activities more in the year after the class.

### *Individual and Class Characteristics*

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions were also run to understand the relationship of individual participant and class characteristics on the application of skills. Factors related to individual participants themselves that were included in the analysis were race/ethnicity, employment status (including whether retired or self-employed), education (associate's degree or higher), income, and previous leadership experience. The number of organizations participants listed on the application was also included as was the average hours involved with these organizations per month and whether the position within the organization was paid. Factors related to the class that were included in the analysis were hub-community, cohort number, number of females, number of males, number of youth, number of participants, whether the class had a community trainer, and the number of community trainers.

OLS regression of 12-month follow-up survey outcomes on individual and class attributes revealed one individual-level and one class-level factor as significant predictors of community building and project management outcomes, net of all other factors.<sup>3</sup> The number of organizations individuals reported being involved with on the application and the size of the leadership class both predicted the frequency with which participants engaged in community building and project management activities in the 12 months after the training.

According to the regression model, as the number of organizations increases so do participants' reports of their activity level in project management and community building. For

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<sup>3</sup> Only the regression models and the independent variables that were significant at the  $p < .05$  level are reported. This indicated that one can be 95% confident that the true population value indeed differs from zero as the model indicates. Regressions coefficients were standardized to put them on the same scale for comparisons of effect size.

each standard deviation increase in the number of organizations with which a participant was affiliated in 2008, there was a .28 standard deviation increase in the application of community building activities and a .37 standard deviation increase in application of project management tasks. It is not surprising that participants who are involved in more organizations apply their skills more frequently, as involvement in more organizations increases the opportunity to apply skills in various settings.

The regression model also indicates that as class size increases participant engagement in community building and project management after the class also increase. For each standard deviation increase in class size (about 5 people), there was a .36 standard deviation increase in the frequency of community building activities and a .40 standard deviation increase in the frequency of project management tasks being done in the year after the class. Perhaps larger leadership classes provide participants more opportunities for community building and projects as the number of fellow residents with whom to work or hear about opportunities increases.

### *Community*

OLS regression was also used to explore whether communities differed in application of skills and activities.<sup>4</sup> On average, participants in La Pine, North Curry, South Lincoln County, and Wild Rivers Coast had slightly higher activity levels (approximately half a point) in project management and community building, compared to participants in other communities. Participants in La Pine, Union County, and Wild Rivers Coast also scored slightly higher in networking activity. It appears that participants in these communities used their community building and project management skills more frequently than participants in other communities. It is unclear why this may be, though it may have something to do with the composition of the classes, their status as cohort 1 and cohort 2 classes, or the communities themselves.

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<sup>4</sup> Regressions for communities did not include other background variables.

### Barriers to Community Leadership

On the 12-month follow-up survey, training participants were asked about barriers or circumstances that limited their engagement in community work. For each item, respondents scored each barrier on a scale of one to four, where one was “strongly disagree”, two was “disagree”, three was “agree”, and four was “strongly agree.” Table 11 lists the means, standard deviations, and percentages of participants who indicated they had experienced each specific barrier.

**Table 11**

Barriers to Engagement in Community Work: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages						
	N	Mean	SD		Disagree	Agree
Personal concerns and demands (health, family, work) limited my time for community leadership activities	160	2.62	0.86		42%	58%
My community has been overwhelmed by economic, social, or environmental challenges that are out of our control	161	2.35	0.82		62%	38%
I was heavily engaged in community work before the Ford Leadership class and couldn't take on more afterwards	160	2.23	0.76		68%	32%
I felt “burned out” or discouraged by the class project	160	2.19	0.87		65%	35%
I felt overwhelmed by all there is to do in my community	160	2.16	0.73		73%	27%
I felt “closed out” of the leadership structure in my community	159	1.87	0.76		85%	15%
Community work has been too frustrating for me	158	1.84	0.69		86%	14%
I have not been personally interested in the specific efforts or issues facing my community	161	1.6	0.63		93%	7%
Scale ranged from 1-4, where 1 was “strongly disagree”, 2 was “disagree”, 3 was “agree”, and 4 was “strongly agree.”						

Table 11 demonstrates that the greatest barrier to taking on community work in the year after the class was competing personal concerns and demands. The majority of participants (58%) indicated that personal concerns and demands limited their engagement by agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. A minority of participants identified the remaining barriers as limiting their engagement in community work. Just over a third of participants felt that their community has been overwhelmed with economic, social, or environmental challenges and that limited their engagement in the community. About a third of participants felt that they were already too heavily engaged in community work to take on more, and a similar percentage indicated that cohort project “burn out” represented a barrier to their taking

on work in their communities. Just below 30% of participants reported that feeling overwhelmed by all there is to do in the community limited their engagement in community work. Very few participants indicated feeling the remaining three barriers had limited the extent to which they engaged in community work in the year after the leadership class. The least significant barrier was lack of personal interest in the specific issues facing the community. For a complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each barrier, see Appendix 5.

In terms of the numbers of barriers experienced by participants, about 50% of participants identified one to two barriers, and 28% identified three to four barriers to engaging in community work. (Barriers were counted as those with which participants strongly agreed or agreed). An analysis was conducted to determine if the number of barriers experienced by participants affected their leadership activity levels in the 12 months after the training. Most participants who indicated the same or increased activity levels identified 2 to 3 barriers, so barriers apparently did not prevent leadership activities.

Respondents also had an opportunity to comment on specific barriers on the 12-month follow-up survey. Participants comments are helpful in understanding how these barriers impacted their ability to be involved the class project and community leadership efforts in their community. Overall participants commented mostly on barriers related to personal demands, feeling burned out, and being closed out of leadership.

Personal concerns and demands that limited participants' involvement in community leadership included health issues of family members or themselves, caring for aging family, changes in the family (such as a new baby), and work responsibilities. Several participants reported that despite the desire to be more involved, balancing family life, work, and community engagement was challenging.

In the qualitative comments, participants noted specific aspects about the cohort project that resulted in their feeling of “burn out.” Most often mentioned was the length of the project and lack of participation among cohort members. One participant noted that the project was just too big and required “many many hours of fundraising.” A few participants also commented that the project grew more than they expected. As one participant noted:

*“I tend to feel that our project has gotten bogged down and the longer we pursued it the more details and loops appeared making it hard to get a sense of forward progress. This tended to diminish interest and eventually slow the whole project down.”*

Other participants noted that class involvement in the project decreased over time. Participants commented on being frustrated by the lack of participation, especially of individuals who pushed for the project initially only to drop out of the process once the class was over. Reasons cited for people dropping out included scheduling difficulties among class members who are trying to balance the leadership class commitment with other responsibilities as well as participants being closed out of the process.

Being “closed out” of community leadership was a strong theme in the comments regarding barriers. Several participants specifically mentioned that work on their community project was limited because they felt closed out of the decision-making or felt isolated from the group due to strong personalities. Participants noted that when the project was championed by one or a few class members with strong personalities, opportunities for others to get involved were limited and participants tended to stop coming as a result. As one participant stated:

*“These characteristics ended up hurting the group as a whole because they wanted and took control away from others, thus hurting the dynamics of the group and relationships in the community”*

In addition to the project, participants also felt closed out of community leadership due to the dynamics of their community. One participant spoke of an “inner circle” of leadership in her community that was resistant to change. Another noted that there is a “local county-wide lack of cooperation and collaboration” that limits the community work that can be accomplished.



In addition to the barriers rated quantitatively, a few individuals mentioned additional barriers that limited their community engagement. One participant noted that stressed finances due to the downturn in the economy extremely limited his time to participate in community efforts. Another noted that combining two communities for the Ford leadership class and project was challenging.

*“Two different communities, two different counties, two different states, 30 miles traveling between was too much and took the enjoyment out of the great project.”*

Another respondent mentioned that the long commute from the county to the city for the class was a barrier to their participation. In addition, a few participants noted that they work within the local governance structure and must remain neutral on certain topics, which limited their ability to be involved in community issues. Alternatively, a few noted that by doing community work as part of their job, they did not have time to be involved in other issues outside the scope of their work.

### ***Summary***

The findings discussed above reveal that Leadership Program participants apply their leadership skills and engage in leadership activities to varying degrees and in various settings in the year after the training. Most participants do leadership activities and use leadership skills more often than they did before the training and many attribute this increase to the Leadership class itself. Not surprisingly, participants' intentions to apply their skills or do particular activities at the end of the class (Fall 2008) predict their frequency of application or activity in the year following the class. Interestingly, so does class size and the number of organizations with which participants were affiliated. Despite the barriers many individuals faced in their engagement in community work, these barriers only somewhat limited their amount of leadership activity in the last year.

In the year following the leadership development class, participants reported applying their communication skills almost weekly, working with others about once a month, and networking slightly less frequently. These three types of leadership skills overall were applied about once a month by participants. Similarly, participants reported engaging in community building

activities occasionally in the year following the leadership class, with some activities being done more often than others. Project management tasks in community efforts or projects were done slightly less than community building activities, with participant's engaging in these tasks slightly less than occasionally. The vast majority of participants reported applying their leadership skills related to communication, working with others, and networking in community settings, and more than ninety percent applied these skills in more than one setting.

For all types of leadership activities, the majority of participants reported that in the year following the class they did the activities more often than they did before the class. In each case (leadership skills, community building, and project management), the majority of participants who reported high activity indicated that this level of activity was greater than before. This implies that the leadership class is fostering high engagement among participants, and participant responses to the question of the class' contribution solidify this connection. Again, for each form of effective community leadership, forty to sixty percent of participants indicated that the leadership class contributed a good to a great deal to their ability to do the activities or use the skills. Qualitative findings corroborated the statistics. Participants left the class better equipped to address issues in their community, with the confidence to make a difference, and with expanded networks of people to work with.

The data also revealed that participant expectations for the level of leadership activity at the end of the class were associated with their actual activity level in the following year. Those who felt highly competent at the end of the class used leadership skills more after the class. Participants who said they were highly likely to do particular activities at the end of the class actually did the activities more after the class than their classmates. Based on these findings, the immediate outcomes of the class appear to be following participants as they move out into the community, despite the barriers often encountered like personal concerns and demands, cohort project "burn out," and community challenges.

## **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?**

Civic engagement refers to the involvement of residents of a community in formal and informal government and non-governmental affairs. Examples include voting, participating in voluntary associations, or advocating for an issue.

### **Increased Civic Engagement**

On the 12-month follow-up survey, participants were asked how often they participated in various activities related to civic engagement in the year since the class. For each item, respondents scored their participation on a scale of one to four, where one was “never”, two was “rarely”, three was “occasionally”, and four was “frequently.” Table 12 lists the range of civic activities asked on the survey as well as the means, standard deviations, and percentages of participants who participated in civic activities with various frequencies.

**Table 12**

<b>Participation in Civic Activities: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages</b>						
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>Never to Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally/ Frequently</b>
Voted in elections	161	3.58	0.88		10%	90%
Volunteered in your community	161	3.47	0.72		10%	90%
Donated money, services, materials, or food to support a community effort, project or program	161	3.35	0.79		13%	87%
Worked informally with others to address community issues	160	3.09	0.82		20%	79%
Helped raise money and collect materials to support a community effort, project, or program	159	3.08	0.86		22%	78%
Worked as a member in a formal group or organization that addresses community issues	160	3.04	1.04		28%	72%
Attended any public hearings, town hall meetings, community forums, or city council meetings	161	3.00	0.97		26%	74%
Participated on the board of any local service agency or organization	160	2.88	1.20		35%	65%
Helped mobilize community members to work on a common goal	160	2.86	0.97		33%	67%
Advocated for a policy or issue in your community	160	2.77	1.06		37%	63%
Participated in long-term community decision-making or governance processes	160	2.58	1.12		45%	55%
<b>Civic Activities Overall</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>0.68</b>		<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
Scale ranged from 1-4, where 1 was "never", 2 was "rarely", 3 was "occasionally", and 4 was "frequently."						

As Table 12 shows, in the last year, Fall 2008 leadership class participants occasionally did civic activities (mean = 3.07). The highest levels of participation were found in voting in elections, volunteering in communities, and donating money services, materials, or food. On average, participants reported doing these activities almost frequently and the vast majority (around 90%) of participants reported doing these activities occasionally or frequently in the last year. In the year following the leadership class, participants reported engaging in the remaining activities with similar frequency (occasionally), except for participating in long-term community decision-making processes. On average, participants reported rarely engaging in this form of civic engagement, though just over 50% reported participating in long-term community processes occasionally or frequently.

Participants reported that the Ford leadership class contributed moderately to a great deal towards their ability to engage in these civic activities. Approximately 50% felt that the class contributed a good or great deal to their ability, whereas 31% indicated a moderate amount, and 19% a little or not at all. For a complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each civic engagement item, see Appendix 6.

### *Change in Activity*

Results of the 12-month follow-up survey clearly indicate that participants are engaging in civic activities, albeit occasionally. Next, we investigated whether participants' activity levels in the 12 months after the class reflect changes made as a result of participation. In order to answer this question, participants were asked whether the number of times they have done civic activities over the past year was more often, less often, or about the same than the number of times they did them before they participated in the Ford leadership class. Overall, the majority of participants (52%) reported that they had engaged in civic activities more often in the year after the class than they did before the class. Forty-seven percent reported that their civic activity did not change after the class and only 1% of participants reported that they participated in these activities less frequently over the past year than they used to.

While the majority of participants reported an increase in the frequency of civic activities as a result of the training, further analysis explored the extent of change for individuals who were very active. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to identify individuals who were highly engaged in civic activities, which was equivalent to participating in the activities frequently. Of those who were highly active in civic life, 58% participated in civic activities more often in the last 12 months than they did before the training and 42% reported participating at the same high level as before the training. No participants who rated themselves as engaging in civic activities at high levels stated that this level was less often than before the training. Therefore, for the majority of participants who engaged frequently in civic activities in the year after the training that level of activity was higher than before they took the class, and likely had to do with their participation.

### Qualitative Results

In response to the question on the 12-month follow-up survey, “Please give one to two examples of how the leadership class has affected you as a community leader”, respondents indicated that participation in the leadership class resulted in greater civic engagement. This was evident in the responses of those who increased their volunteerism and those who agreed to serve on committees or run for office. Participants volunteered more and joined more community groups. Participants became involved in the Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Commission, and nonprofit boards. One participant facilitates public forums now for United Way agencies. One participant said she gained “*passion to help move community issues forward.*” Increased involvement with organizations was typified by these statements:

*“I have taken on more responsibilities within the groups I have been a part of for the last 6 years. I am currently putting together a group within a group to [supply] artists in schools as a public service, as well as for publicity for our artisan group.”*

*“I have been able to take on new roles in the organizations I presently am involved in and take on roles that I would never have considered before in new community efforts.”*

*“My experience with the Ford class, as well as my experience with Rotary, pushed me away from working locally, but led me to a greater level of involvement at the district level. “*

Youth reported being more active on youth leadership committees in school and in the community and one student mentioned voting in student elections.

Participants increased efforts to promote events in their communities. Participants reported working or leading several fundraising efforts (e.g., for schools, for holiday programs). One participant learned about grants and raised considerable funds for a local foundation. Another participant said:

*“We were able to work with a donor to acquire a school facility and occupy the space over the summer. The school has been without a permanent home for over 25 years.”*

A few participants commented on their increased political activity, such as gathering signatures on an initiative for the city ballot, involvement in a political party, or running for office. One

participant reported his increased “*confidence to enter the County Commissioners office as a person concerned with an issue and know that I can add value to the process and solve a problem.*” More than one participant mentioned attending more city council meetings. One participant said she became motivated to become more involved in city and county government issues.

### *Do Outcomes Vary By Attributes of Participants or the Class?*

Overall, many participants reported engaging in civic activities as a result of the Ford leadership training and more than they used to. While most participants engaged in civic activities occasionally to frequently, there was some variation in outcomes across individuals. In order to explore this further, correlation and regression analyses were completed to determine whether any of this variability in 12-month activity level could be accounted for by participants’ intentions of applying the skills in Fall 2008, participants’ demographic or background characteristics, or characteristics of the classes in which they participated.

### *Fall 2008 Outcomes*

Ordinary Least Squared (OLS) regressions were used to explore the relation between participants’ motivations to engage in civic activities at the end of the leadership class and the frequency with which they did civic activities in the following year. Eight civic activity items appeared on both the 12-month follow-up survey and the outcome survey completed on the 4<sup>th</sup> weekend of the leadership class series. Table 13 lists the standardized coefficients for 12-month follow-up items that were significantly predicted by the leadership outcome survey at the end of the training. For each standard deviation increase in the motivation reported for the Fall 2008 item, the 12-month frequency of civic activity increased by the fraction of a standard deviation listed under beta ( $\beta$ ). Overall, participants who reported being more motivated to engage in civic activities at the end of the leadership class had higher civic activity levels in the 12 months following the class.

**Table 13**

Standardized ( $\beta$ ) Coefficient Effects of Fall 2008 Motivation on Civic Activity Level in Following Year		
	N	Beta ( $\beta$ )
<b>Civic Activities</b>		
Working informally with others to address community issues	159	0.17
Helping to mobilize community members to work on a common goal	159	0.40
Advocating for a policy or issue in your community	158	0.38
Participating in long-term community decision-making or governance processes	159	0.31
Participating on the board of any local service agency or organization	158	0.27
Volunteering in your community	160	0.36
Voting in elections	155	0.38
Helping raise money and collect materials to support a community effort, project, or program	158	0.24
OLS regression analysis used to determine if Fall 2008 outcomes predicted 12-month activity level. Only items that were significant at $p < .05$ are included. Beta ( $\beta$ ) is the standardized coefficient (expressed in standard deviation units).		

As Table 13 illustrates, out of eight matched survey items, all eight were found to be significantly related. Participants who were more motivated to engage in civic activities, such as volunteering in their community, serving on a board, or advocating for a policy or issues, at the end of the leadership training were likely to be doing these activities more than other participants who reported being less motivated at the end of the training. For example, for each standard deviation increase in participants' motivation to work informally with others to address a community issue at the end of the leadership class, participants' reported frequency of working informally with others to address a community issue in the year following the class increased .17 standard deviations.

### *Individual and Class Characteristics*

According to OLS regressions, civic engagement outcomes were also found to vary by the number of organizations a person was involved with as well as the size of the leadership class. Patterns were the same as those found for community building and project management outcomes. For a one standard deviation increase in the number of organizations, there was a .45 standard deviation increase in civic activities. For a one standard deviation increase in class



size (about 5 people), there was a .29 standard deviation increase in participation in civic activities.

### ***Summary***

The findings discussed above indicate that in the year after the leadership development class, participants are engaging occasionally in overall civic life, but more frequently in particular activities like volunteering, voting, working in community groups, fundraising for local causes, and promoting local events. About half of participants reported that since the leadership class, their level of civic engagement has increased, and the majority of participants attribute their ability to engage effectively in civic life to the leadership class.

Results also point to participants' motivation to be engaged in civic activities at the end of the class as a significant predictor of participants' levels of civic activity in the year after the class. Those who said they were highly motivated at the end of the class to do particular civic activities did the civic activities more often in the following year than leadership class participants who indicated lower motivation. Interestingly, class size and the number of organization affiliations were also positively associated with levels of civic activity after the class. Despite some variation by these individual and class attributes, these results indicate that the immediate positive effects of the class on participants are carrying through a year later. The leadership class successfully increases the motivation of participants to engage in civic life and those who are highly motivated at the end of the training are more active the following year.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?**

One of the goals of the Ford Institute Leadership Program is for participants to experience expanded and strengthened networks of social relationships, both inside and outside their communities. This goal is consistent with the Ford Institute's theory of change that suggests networking among community members and across rural communities helps build the vitality of rural communities. As community residents participate in the Ford Institute Leadership Program's Leadership Development, Effective Organizations, and/or Community Collaborations

trainings, it is important to investigate the extent to which participants report that these trainings contributed to their networking with other individuals socially, professionally, and in their rural communities.

This section explains the findings from focus groups that were conducted in five rural communities in 2009. The purpose of these focus groups was to explore the impact of the Leadership Program on networking among individuals and their communities. Three types of networks were described to participants:

- **Social networks** describe personal relationships people have in their personal life, such as friendships or acquaintances.
- **Professional or work networks** describe the relationships people have through their employment, such as with co-workers or acquaintances made through work.
- **Organizational or community work networks** describe the relationships people have with those with whom they volunteer or work on community projects, such as members of community boards.

### ***Social Networks***

Focus group participants indicated that their social networks changed significantly as a direct result of their involvement in the Ford Institute Leadership Program. There were several ways in which their networks changed: the size of social networks increased, the diversity of their social networks changed, and distant social relationships became closer. Indeed, participants said that the opportunity for social networking was one of the most important aspects of the program.

*“I actually think that the networking aspect of the Ford program is probably the best part for me. You can go to a book and find out about strategic planning and gphant charts. But you can’t meet people. You can’t get to know them. You can’t do a project with them.”*

Some focus group participants who were lifelong or long-term residents in their communities commented that the size of their social networks increased greatly as a result of their participation in the Leadership Program. One long-term resident said:

*“I’ve been here for the past 20 years. Since I’ve been to the cohort training my interconnectivity and knowing people in the community has probably quadrupled in that short amount of time.”*

From the perspective of a relative new-comer to a community, the Leadership Program provided the opportunity for relationships with fellow community members to form outside the realms of family and work.

*“I relocated here before taking the class. So before I took the class, my relationships were my family and my work, I was pretty limited.”*

Based on the focus group findings, the Leadership Program clearly succeeded at providing new opportunities for newcomers and long-term residents to get to know one another in a community context. In fact, these new opportunities for community members, who may not have worked with one another before, affected the size of their social networks in communities.

Involvement with the Leadership Program also brought about a change in the types of people with which participants networked. As one focus group participant said:

*“I used to always kind of stick to the kind of people that thought like I did. [But I learned] it’s more fun to be around people that don’t think like I do. Get their ideas.”*

Focus group participants also talked about the new-found diversity in their social networks. For some, participating in the Leadership Program led them to form social relationships with people of different ages, while for others the diversity took the form of interactions with people with personalities different from their own.

*“The training and our togetherness really bridged so many gaps. I mean age gaps, political gaps, you name it any gap that there is. It really is that common thread.”*

Finally, many focus group participants indicated that their participation helped to strengthen their social relationships, transforming acquaintances into friendships. As one youth respondent indicated, this transformation occurred simply due to the prolonged exposure to old acquaintances in a new setting:

*“People knew me from my Dad, but I never had my own personal relationships with people in the community. I kind of knew them because I was like my Dad’s shadow everywhere, but now I have my own relationships. I’m able to talk with people, have my own ties with people instead of just always having someone else’s ties.”*

For others, this transformation in the quality of social relationships with community members came about because of the intensity of interaction required for completion of the cohort project. As one focus group respondent put so clearly,

*“I had some people that I sort of knew before, but through implementing the project I got to know more about their personal lives and we did something on a personal level. I think we probably would have gotten to that point, but it just happened more quickly because we spent a lot more time together.”*

The environment of the cohort project provided the opportunity for fellow community members to share an experience that could serve to deepen personal relationships by forming social bonds. These bonds led them to trust the other members of their cohort, to feel more confident in their interactions outside of the program, and to help mitigate discord among individuals.

*“[I liked] getting to know the people in the community that I previously haven’t known or only saw in passing. I got to know them on a more personal level. So therefore when I saw them in another group, I felt there was some kind of a bond that we’ve had or some history together.”*

*“We build relationships socially, then when the things get tight, when we have conflict, there’s this relationship in place that will hold when the stress happens.”*

As shown by the focus group findings in these five communities, individuals who participated in the Leadership Program increased their number of social relationships, diversified the types of people with whom they socialized, and strengthened existing relationships.

### ***Work, School, and Professional Networks***

Focus group participants were also asked about any changes in their relationships with co-workers or work-related acquaintances as a result of the Leadership Program. Many participants reported that the leadership program intersected with their work environment. A few participants volunteered that participation in the program resulted in a new career for them. The most significant impact indicated by participants was that the Leadership Program opened up a pool of human resources for people to call on for the improvement of their individual careers.

*“I think my career here throughout this county was really jump started because of the networking.”*

*“I got a chance to meet a really strong cross-section of the community and it was extremely helpful in ramping up some of the [professional] work I’ve been doing.”*

One participant mentioned that involvement of work associates in successive cohorts of the leadership classes was improving the work environment. Some said that the Ford Leadership Program helped in the development and formation of non-profit organizations.

Other focus group respondents explicitly noted that their newly expanded networks had an impact on the ability of their organizations to succeed. This finding reveals that relationships formed in the Leadership Program not only positively affect individuals’ ability to perform within their work environment, but also positively affect their organizations.

*“We’ve (the organization) been collaborating with four or five different organizations to put on three different workshops. I don’t think that would have ever happened if it weren’t for the leadership class.”*

## ***Organizational and Community Networks***

Organizational and community networks refer to relationships with individuals on community projects or in other organizations. Participants reported that their community networks changed – new relationships were formed, existing relationships became stronger, and relationships with people not typically in their social networks were established.

*“It’s not just about making specific networking connections, but actually learning how to connect with people who don’t necessarily share the same interests and values other than perhaps we all agree that we want a better community to live in.”*

In one focus group, a participant referred to dropping a rock in a quiet pool and watching the ripples. The program “splashes” onto other community residents, such as spouses or family members. Individuals are drawn into community relationships and activities by Leadership Program participants that would not have happened without the program in their community. As a result of engaging community members, participants reported an overall increase in civic engagement and the capacity of the community to address issues.

*“Now if something comes up, a project needs to be done, you know the avenues to take, you know the people that might be supportive or they can help you find people. So you develop this network and it just moves throughout the whole community.”*

*“I think since Ford started their classes... there’s been a definite improvement to our city and interrelations between people and being more active.”*

The increase in community networks brought more diversity to community relationships. Participants saw community members come together for a common purpose regardless of who participated or who benefited. As focus group participant stated:

*“Now we’re seeing people from different backgrounds that have that common need or want to see something happen in this community coming together. They are willing to put some work into it and no matter what the outcome is, they’re going to feel good. I hadn’t seen that before. It’s very refreshing.”*

Focus group participants credited the Leadership Program with giving individuals the skills to work collaboratively in the community. Having many members of the community involved in the Leadership Program has helped to build a common language for community work.

*“People who have been in the Ford Family Leadership are really much easier to collaborate with, I think because of the training. We feel like we belong to the same tribe. We talk the same lingo. We all speak Ford.”*

*“There are people here I’ve had conflicts with, and [now] what I know is we all enrich our community and we’re doing our best. And so we work together and Ford helps us connect in really healthy ways.”*

New community ventures also emerged as a result of networking between Leadership Program participants. Participants were able to connect with others around a common purpose. In some cases, new organizations or non-profits were formed.

*“The Business Enterprise Resource Alliance that we have put together would probably not have formed if we had not gone through the Ford Family training.”*

*“I formed a small non-profit that’s to support the performing arts, and we have a studio theatre that we operate. Three of the founding members were members of the leadership class. These are people I would have never had a conversation with before Ford.”*

Networks can also be formed with others outside of a participant’s community. Some focus group participants reported that their networks had expanded beyond their community of residence. Being part of the “Ford experience” means that when meeting residents of other communities, they share a common experience. They viewed these enlarged networks as positive outcomes of their leadership experience. In a few cases, these larger networks related to economic development efforts.

*“Ford Family has allowed me to realize that it’s not just a community of Baker City. Specifically when we are talking about economic development. I’ve been able to talk to Huntington and Sumter about economic development. It wouldn’t have happened without Ford Family.”*

## **Summary**

The main goal of the focus groups was to explore the impact of the Leadership Program on individuals, their social relationships, and their communities. Networking, as expressed by Ford participants, is about being connected to and collaborating with others to benefit the community. Participants gained confidence in improved communication skills, helping them to cope with conflict and different styles of interaction. This in turn helped them connect and collaborate, and move forward into new leadership roles.

*“It strengthened my commitment to community by reinforcing the connections that are already there.”*

Participants in the five focus groups also gave many examples of ways in which the Ford Leadership Program increased their social, work, and community networks. Individuals increased the number of social relationships and formed new relationships with individuals who differed demographically from themselves. Some individuals were able to form relationships with individuals in other Ford hub-communities. Other benefits included increased business contacts and strengthening bonds of individuals to their rural communities. Increased networks, new community ventures, and increased abilities to collaborate were reported and linked to an overall improvement in the community’s capacity to address issues.

### **Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

The intention of the Ford Institute Leadership Program is to have a positive impact on individuals, organizations, and communities. In order to influence the trajectory of organizations, the Effective Organizations training is offered in communities during the second year of the Leadership Program. The training focuses on teaching skills in strategic planning, organizational leadership and governance, as well as resource development and management. The logic of the program is that if participants in the Effective Organizations training successfully increase their skills in these areas, then the organizations in which they work or volunteer will improve along these dimensions as well. Given this logic, it is important first to



understand the extent to which Effective Organizations participants improve their skills and knowledge in the areas targeted by the training. In subsequent analyses, it will be appropriate to ascertain the extent to which these participants (if they have improved their skills in these areas) have influenced their organizations.

In order to understand the extent to which participants in the Effective Organizations training increase their knowledge and skill in organizational strategic planning, organizational leadership and governance, and organizational resource development and management, we rely on data collected from Fall and Spring 2009 Effective Organizations participants. The methods used for collecting these data via the Effective Organizations background and outcome surveys were described on pages 10-17.

### ***Descriptive Characteristics of 2009 Effective Organizations Participants***

Before discussing the findings from the 2009 EO survey that relate to knowledge and behavior change, it is important to understand the characteristics of Effective Organizations participants. In this description of participant characteristics we focus on the individuals who completed both the background and outcome surveys.<sup>5</sup>

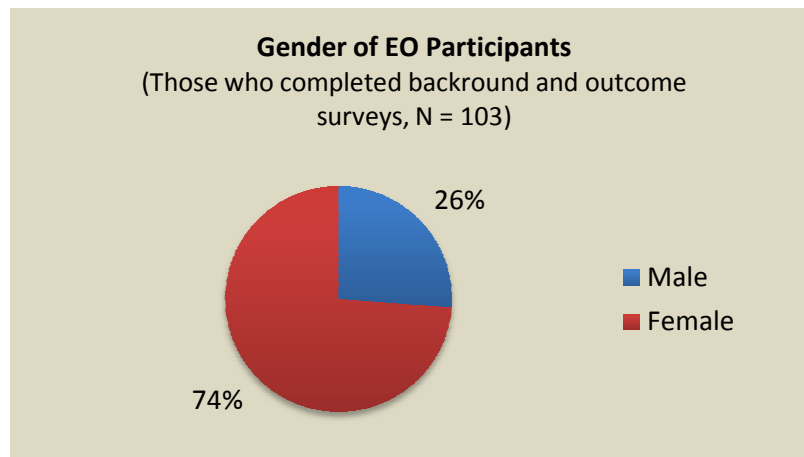
#### ***Gender***

According to the survey findings, the vast majority of 2009 Effective Organizations participants were female. As Figure 2 illustrates, only a quarter of Effective Organizations participants were male.

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<sup>5</sup> There were no significant differences between the composition of people who filled out the background survey and those who filled out both surveys, though the total number of individuals did differ (there were 156 respondents to the background survey and 103 respondents to both surveys).

**Figure 2**



Of the eight Effective Organizations training groups for which we had complete background and outcome survey data, only three had equal proportions of women and men, namely North Curry County, McKenzie River, and Chiloquin.

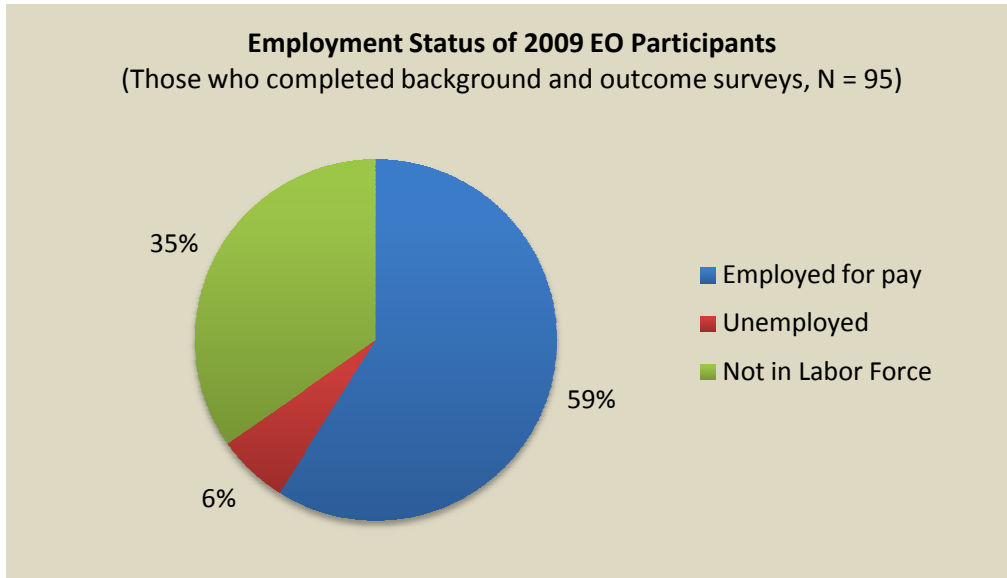
### *Age*

On the Effective Organizations background survey, respondents were asked how old they were on their last birthday. The average age of participants at the time of the training was 55, while the median was 57, and the range of ages was quite broad: from 16 to 82. Women tended to be younger than men, however, with an average age of 52 compared to the average age of men around 60.

### *Employment Status*

In 2009, while the majority of EO participants were employed for pay (59%), a full 35% were not employed or seeking employment at the time of the training. As Figure 3 illustrates, only a small proportion of respondents were unemployed, but seeking work at the time (referred to as “not in labor force”).

**Figure 3**



The large proportion of EO participants who were not in the labor force echoes the proportion of participants who indicated they were retired at the time of the training (35%), although not all retired people have exited the labor force and not all people who are not in the labor force are retired. As Table 14 shows, however, the majority of people who were not in the labor force at the time of the EO training were retired. Other reasons for not being in the labor force at the time of the training were not asked on the survey, but often include personal desire, discouragement from the job hunt, the need to care for family members, and other reasons.

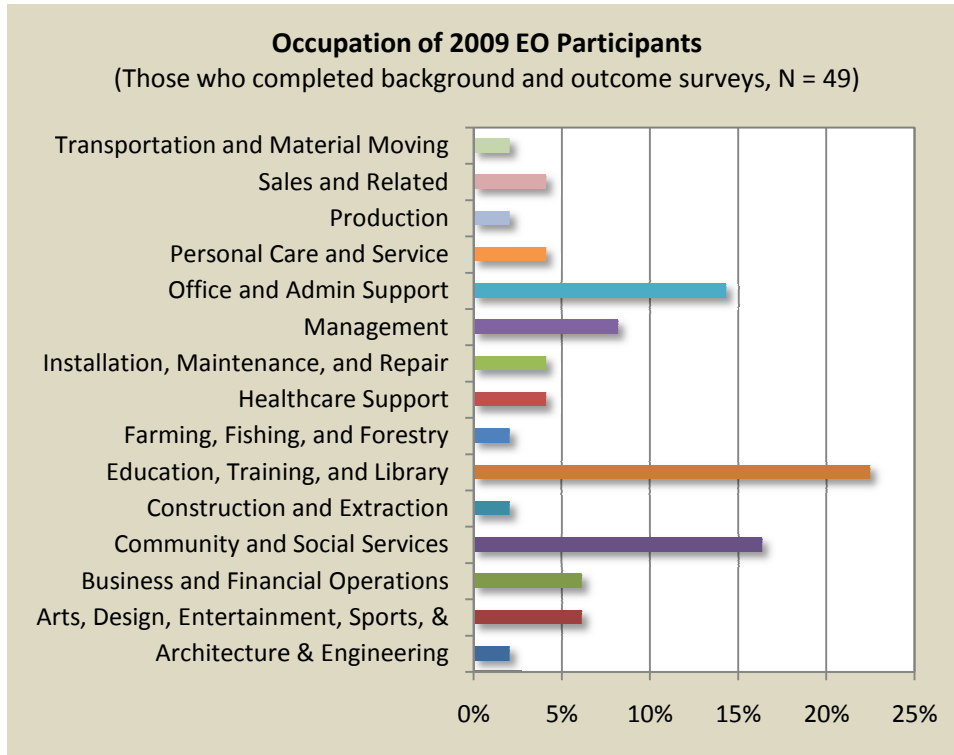
**Table 14**

	Not in Labor Force	In Labor Force
Retired	84%	3%
Not Retired	16%	97%
Total	100%	100%

Among the EO participants who were employed for pay at the time of the training, four occupations stood out as the most prevalent, namely Education, Training, and Library; Community and Social Services; Office and Administrative Support; and Management. It is important to note, however, that only 49 EO participants who answered this question also completed an outcome survey. Figure 4 illustrates that the representation of other occupations

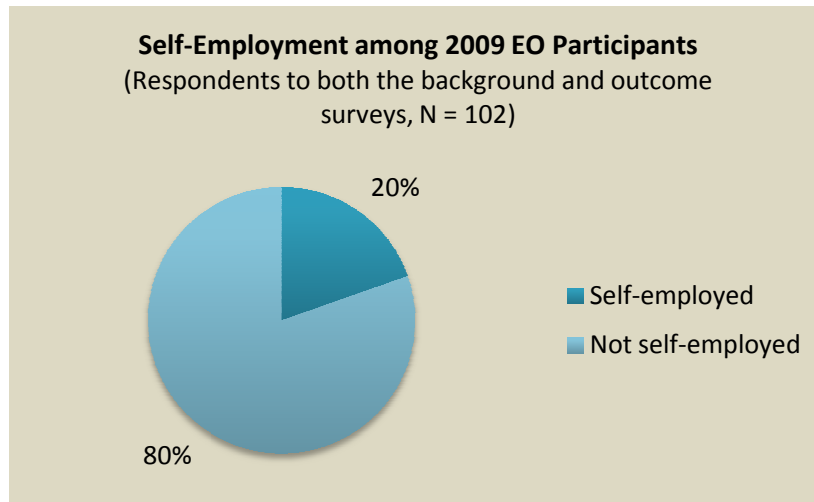
among EO participants was relatively diverse; 15 occupations were represented among participants, albeit to varying degrees.

**Figure 4**



A fair proportion of Effective Organizations participants indicated that they were self-employed at the time of the training. As Figure 5 reveals, approximately one out of five participants was self-employed, although these individuals could also be working for pay with another employer.

**Figure 5**

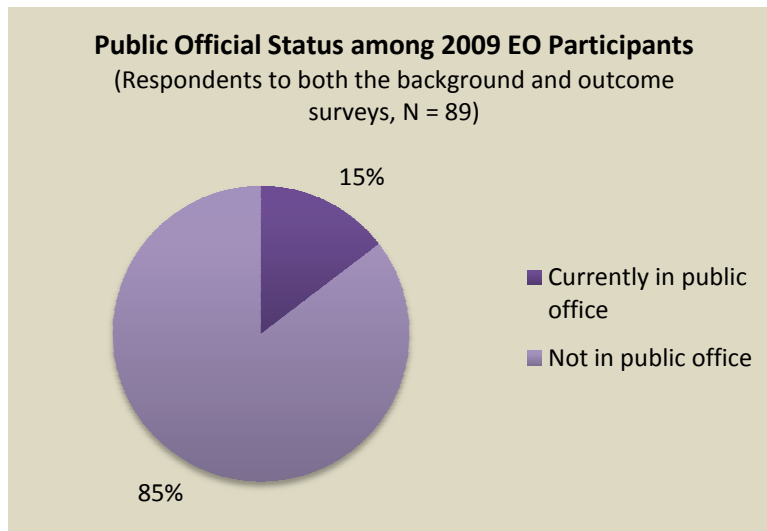


In sum, the EO survey data indicate that 41% of participants were not in the labor force at the time of the training, and that the majority of those individuals were retired. Of those who were employed for pay, nearly half worked in four occupations and 20% were self-employed.

*Public Office*

Effective Organizations participants were also asked if they held public office as elected or appointed officials. As Figure 6 illustrates, 15% of participants indicated that they held public office at the time of the training.

**Figure 6**

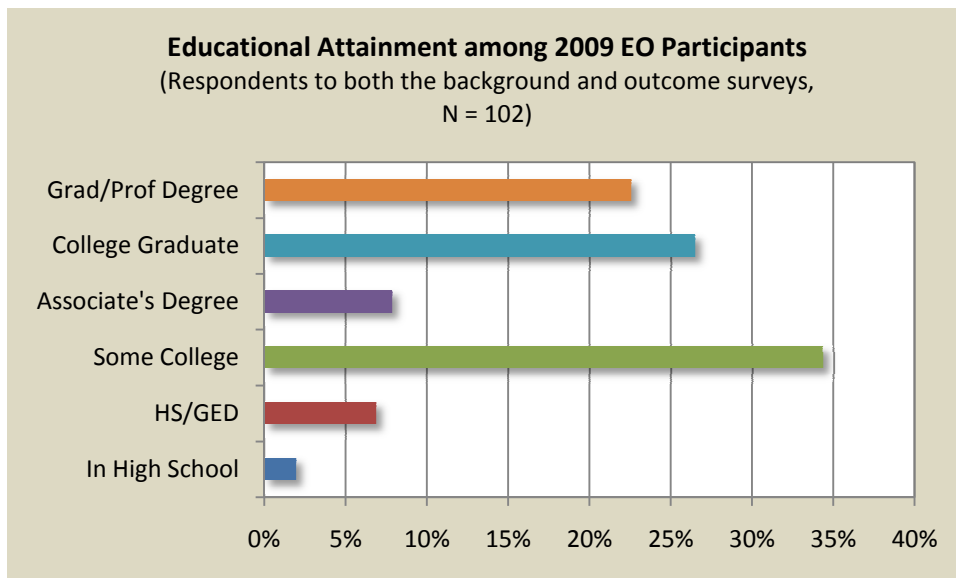


Among EO participants who held public office at the time of the training, the majority were men (54%) and their average age was 61.

### *Education*

The majority (59%) of Effective Organizations participants in 2009 had an Associate's degree or higher at the time of the training. As Figure 7 shows, the majority of people with less than an Associate's degree had some college education.

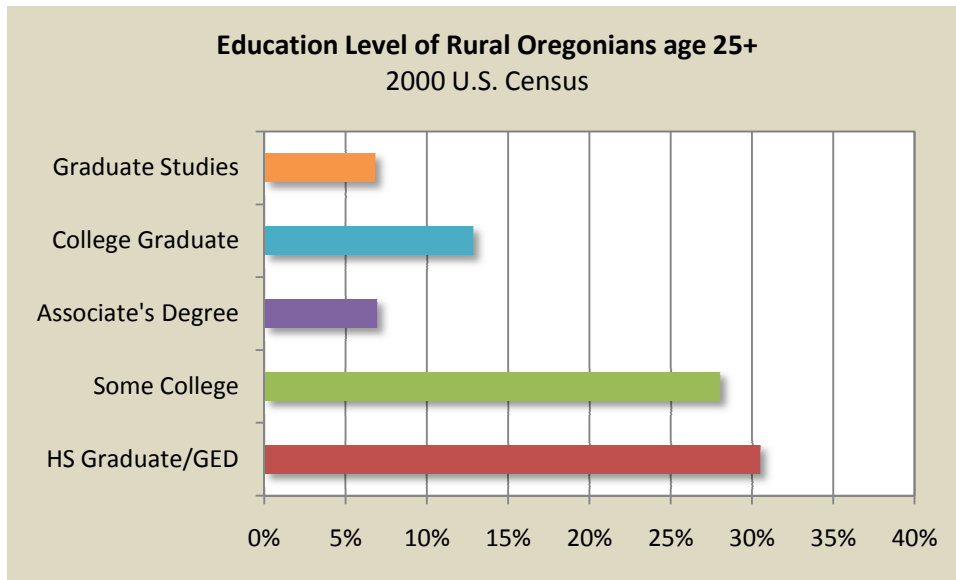
**Figure 7**



Not surprisingly, as the EO training is not targeted to young people, only a very small percentage of participants were in high school at the time of the Effective Organizations training (2%).

Compared to the educational levels of rural Oregonians from the US Census Bureau in 2000, Effective Organizations participants appear to be skewed toward the more highly educated. As Figure 8 indicates, the majority of rural Oregonians in 2000 had less than an Associate's Degree.

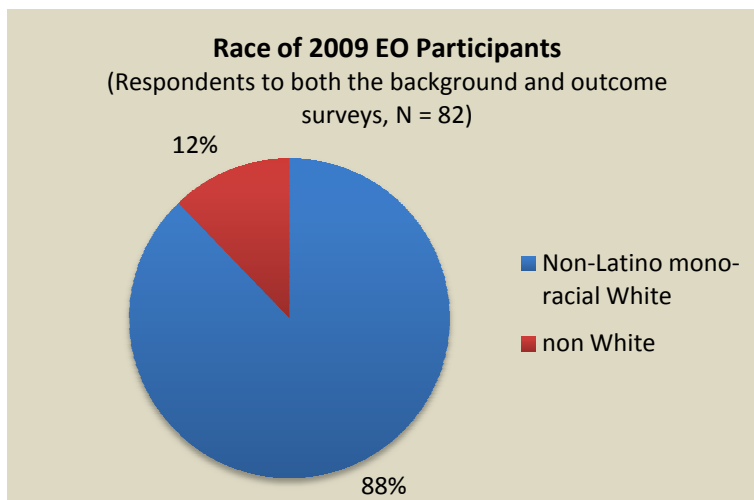
**Figure 8**



*Race*

In 2009, the majority of Effective Organizations participants were non-Latino, mono-racial whites (88%), as Figure 9 depicts. The remaining 12 percent of participants were Asian, Native American, Latino, and multi-racial. No EO participants in 2009 were African American.

**Figure 9**



Compared to rural Oregon in 2000, according to the US Census Bureau, the racial composition of the Effective Organizations trainings in 2009 were representative of the population. In 2000, 87% of rural Oregonians were mono-racial, non-Latino whites.

Among Effective Organizations participants, non-whites tended to be younger and slightly less educated. Thirty percent of non-whites had an Associate's degree or higher, compared to 64% of non-Latino, mono-racial whites; a statistically significant difference.<sup>6</sup> On average, non-whites were ten years younger than whites; 55 was the average age of non-Latino, mono-racial whites, while 45 was the average age of non-whites.

### *Income*

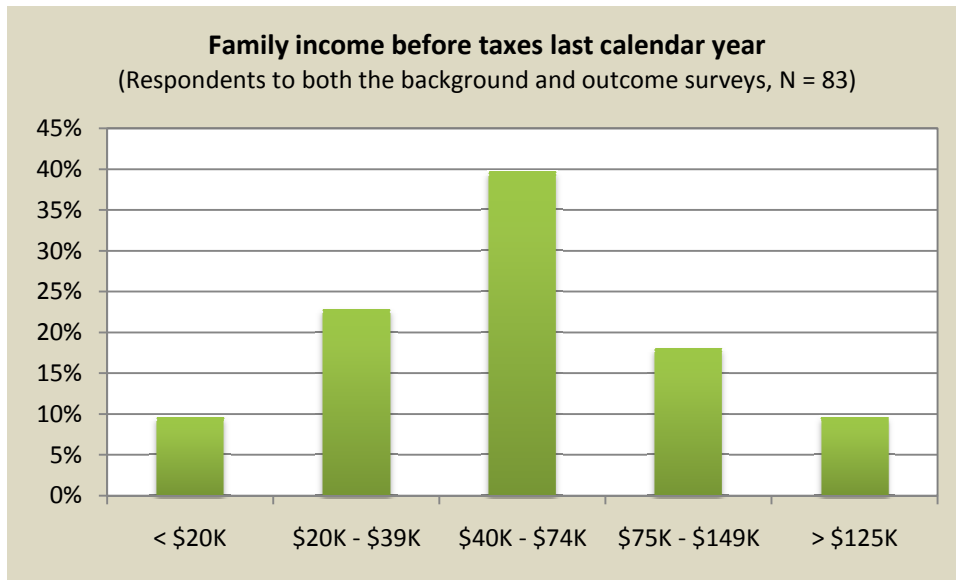
Of the 103 Effective Organizations participants reported on in this section, 83 provided information about their incomes (80%). The responses of these 83 people provide some insight into the economic status of EO participants. As Figure 10 shows, the greatest percentage of participants reported a family income between \$40,000 and \$74,999 (36%). Nearly equal percentages of participants reported income in the next highest and next lowest income categories (approximately 17% and 23% respectively). At the tails of the income categories, 9% reported income less than \$19,999 and 9% reported income greater than \$125,000.

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<sup>6</sup> Chi-squared tests of the equality of proportions revealed that these proportions were significantly different at the  $p < .01$  level.



**Figure 10**

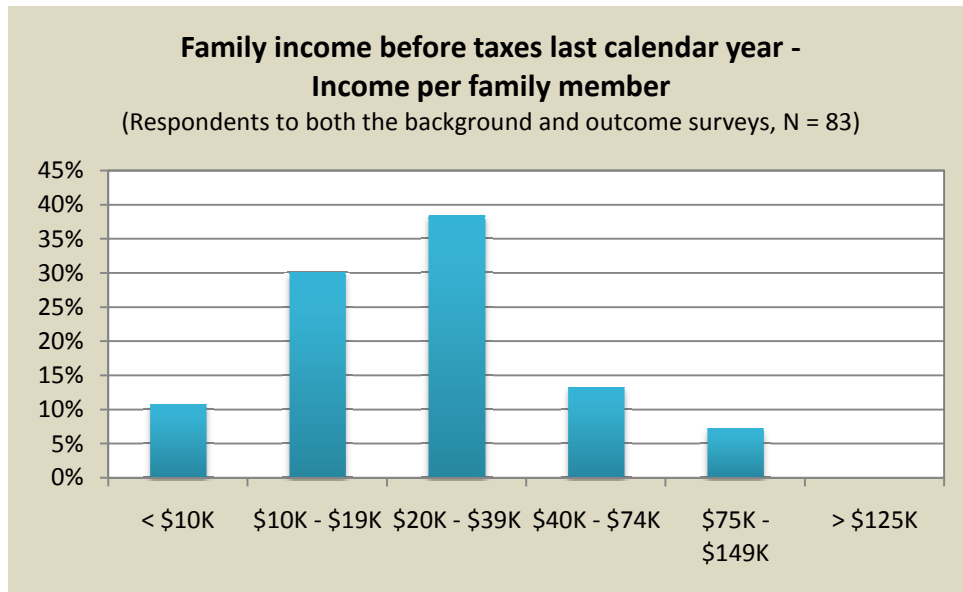


Respondents to the background survey were also asked to list the number of people in their families, which, in combination with income data, can provide a more nuanced view of the family economic status of EO participants. Dividing the midpoint of the income categories by the total number of people in the participant’s family yields a measure of income per person in the family. As Figure 11 reveals, for approximately 10% of EO participants the income available to each family member is less than \$10,000 per year, which is poverty level for a family of one person.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> US Department of Health & Human Services. 2009 Federal Poverty Guidelines. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/09poverty.shtml>

**Figure 11**



Almost a third of participants are in families in which the per capita income is between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per year, and almost 40% of participants are in families in which per capita income is \$20,000-\$39,000. Taking family size into consideration reveals that the vast majority of EO participants in 2009 were financially well off, though some families appear to struggle somewhat to make ends meet.

*Previous Leadership & Organizational Management Training.*

Respondents to the Effective Organizations background survey were asked if they had any leadership training experience *or* education in organizational development or non-profit administration prior to the EO training. If so, they were asked to list that prior training or education. In 2009, as Figure 12 shows, the majority of participants (58%) said they had participated in some form of leadership training or organizational management prior to the Effective Organizations training.

**Figure 12**



Among those with previous leadership experience, 70% had an Associate's degree or higher at the time of the EO training, compared to only 38% of those without previous leadership training or organizational development education. This difference was statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). In addition, a quarter of those with prior leadership training or organizational development education held public office at the time of the training. Conversely all of those who held public office, and who completed the background and outcome surveys, reported past leadership training or organizational development education.

The predominant past leadership training experience of EO participants was the Ford Institute's leadership development class. With respect to past organizational development education, however, no particular venue or type dominated. 2009 Effective Organizations participants listed a variety of different experiences with organizational development training, such as:

- Board Training for a charter school
- Grant writing class
- MPA w/Emphasis in Non-Profit
- TACS Training/Centro Latino Americano Board

- Credit Union National Administration Supervisory Program

As the survey findings indicate, the majority of Effective Organizations training participants enter the training with some prior exposure to training in leadership or organizational management. In addition, the people who have this previous exposure share some characteristics, namely educational background and positions in public office.

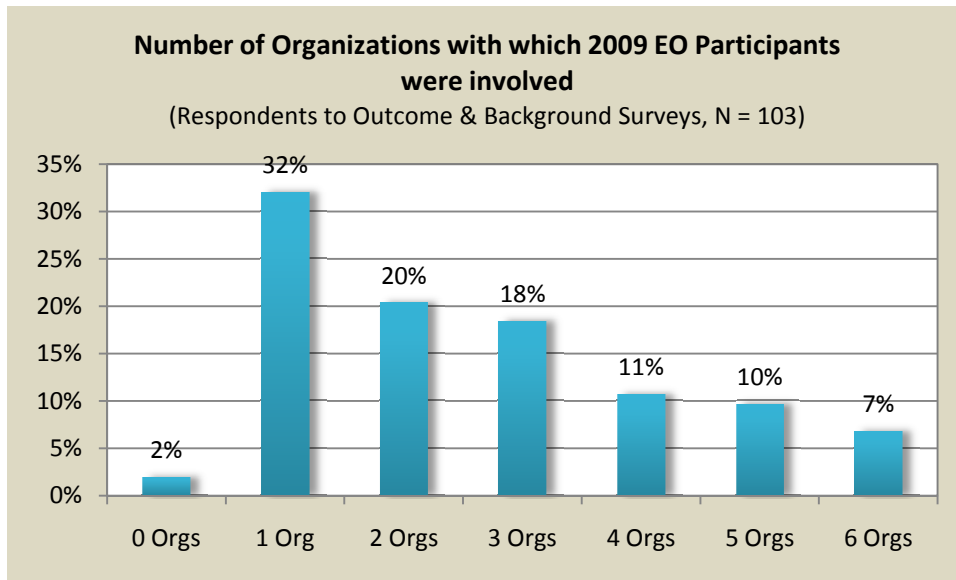
### *Organizational Involvement*

The Effective Organizations training focuses on providing participants with skills in strategic planning, operational leadership, and resource development and management that they can take back to their organizations. For this reason it is important to understand how these participants are involved with organizations. For example, if the intention of the Leadership Program is to have an effect on organizations it would be beneficial to know if participants in EO training indeed are part of organizations and if their roles permit such influence.

On the EO background survey, respondents were asked to complete a series of questions about the organizations or groups (at the time of the training) in which they were currently a member or actively volunteered on a regular basis for at least one hour a month (a minimum of 12 hours per year). Respondents were asked to provide each organization's name and its location. In addition, the respondent was to list her role in the organization and information about whether the position was paid, the number of years she has been involved in the organization, and the number of hours per month she works with the organization. This information was summarized to provide an overview of the involvement of EO participants in a variety of organizations.

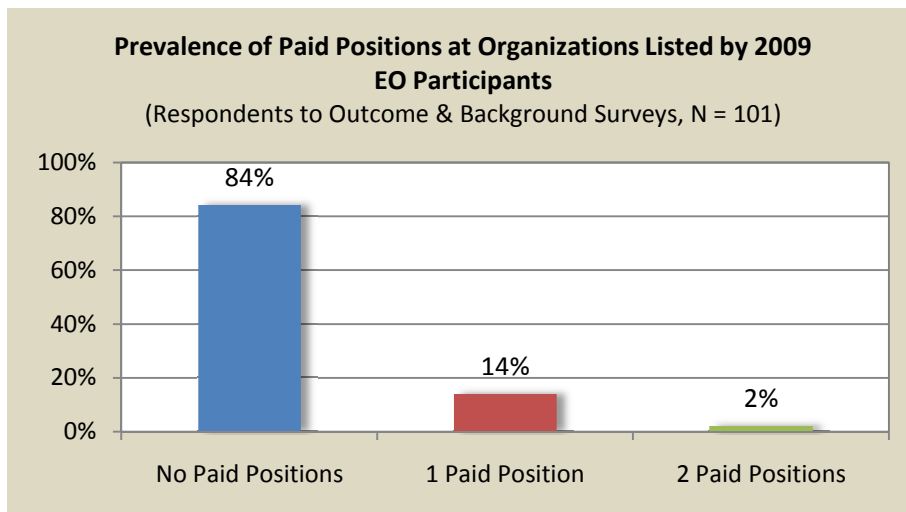
According to the background survey data, 98% of EO participants in 2009 were part of one or more organizations at the time of the training. As Figure 13 reveals, about a third of participants were actively involved with only one organization, and around 40% were involved with two or three organizations. About 30% of training participants indicated they were involved with a total of four to six organizations at the time.

**Figure 13**



These results imply that indeed, the vast majority of EO participants are involved with organizations in some way. In fact, as Figure 14 indicates, the vast majority of people who said they were involved with one or more organizations were not getting paid and were therefore volunteers or simply members.

**Figure 14**



Of Effective Organizations participants who were involved with one or more organizations at the time of the training, only 14% said they held a paid position at one of those organizations,

while only 2% held two paid positions at those organizations. Unfortunately, examined in combination with data collected on the EO outcome survey, it appears that this question about the number of paid positions in organizations was misinterpreted by respondents. This is apparent because on the outcome survey respondents were asked to think about one organization in which they were most likely to use what they gained from the training. They were then asked to list the name of the organization and their current role in the organization.

The roles from which they could choose were:

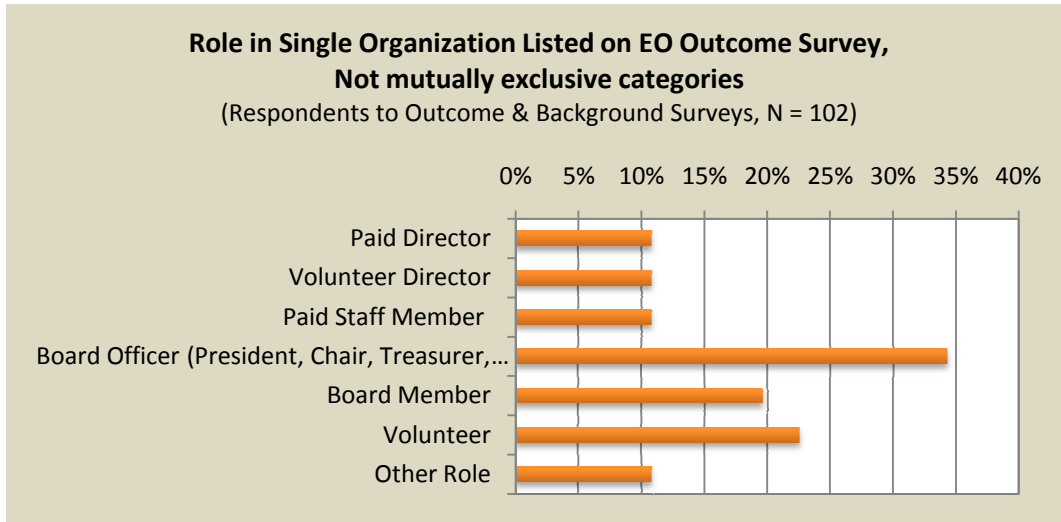
- Paid director
- Volunteer director
- Paid staff member (other than Director)
- Board officer (i.e. President, Chair, Treasurer, etc.)
- Board member
- Volunteer
- Other

Of those who listed their involvement with the one organization on the outcome survey as a paid director, 63% indicated on the background survey that they held no paid positions at any of the organizations with which they were involved. Also, of those who said they were a paid staff member at their organization on the outcome survey, 72% had indicated on their background survey not being paid at any of their organizations. Clearly the background survey question about organizational involvement was picking up different information than the outcome survey question about organizational involvement. In all likelihood, the background survey question was eliciting information about volunteer organizations and the outcome survey question was making people think about the organization(s) in which they worked. This is evinced by the fact that only 20% of outcome survey respondents listed an organization in which they were a volunteer (volunteer director or volunteer).

Given the disconnect between the results from EO background and outcome surveys with respect to organizational involvement, we will rely more heavily on the outcome survey data to tell the story about the ways in which EO participants are involved with organizations that may be impacted by the training.

According to the EO outcome survey data displayed in Figure 15, 34% of participants were board officers in the organization where they intended to apply their EO training knowledge. The next most prevalent role of EO participants in their organizations was as volunteers, followed by board members. That said, around 20% of participants indicated they were either a paid or unpaid director (separate analysis).

**Figure 15**



As the survey data indicate, a fair number of Effective Organizations training participants held powerful positions in their organizations. Indeed, more than half (58%) of participants held positions that had some say over the trajectory of an organization. Specifically, these positions were paid or unpaid directors, board officers, and board members. People who were paid staff members, volunteers, or were in other roles were not included as having significant power in the organization they listed on the outcome survey.

The organizations EO participants listed on the outcome survey as the ones in which they were most likely to apply the skills they learned in the training varied widely from churches, to schools, to specific city or county departments. Other participants listed community organizations with specific missions such as the arts, child care, animal rescue, or wetland education. Other examples of organizations included:

- Port Orford Revitalization Association

- Boys & Girls Club
- Community Emergency Response Team
- Oregon Society of Tax Consultants
- Providence Newberg Medical Center
- Chetco Activity Center

The survey data also indicate that in any given training, the number of people who represented the same organization varied from one to five. In Table 15 the numbers of members from unique organizations who attended the training are displayed, clarifying the depth of EO training infiltration into organizations in the community.

**Table 15**

Hub-Community	# of Organizations Represented at EO	# of Orgs with 1 member at EO	# of Orgs with 2 members at EO	# of Orgs with 3 members at EO	# of Orgs with 4 members at EO	# of Orgs with 5 members at EO
Chiloquin	9	6	1	1	1	0
Grant County	19	15	3	1	0	0
Harney County	12	9	2	0	0	1
La Pine	12	8	2	1	0	1
McKenzie River	9	9	0	0	0	0
Newberg	12	11	0	0	1	0
North Curry County	14	12	2	0	0	0
Sisters	13	11	0	1	1	0
White City-Upper Rogue	12	6	5	0	1	0
Wild Rivers Coast	13	8	2	1	1	1
South Lane	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Total</b>	125	95	17	5	5	3
<b>% of Total Organizations</b>		76%	14%	4%	4%	2%

**Source: 2009 Effective Organizations Outcome Survey, total number of respondents: 180**

As Table 15 shows, just over three-quarters of the 125 organizations that were represented at the Effective Organizations trainings in 2009 had only one member who participated in the



training. The next greatest proportion of organizations had two members who participated in the EO training, but these were only 17 out of 125 organizations (14%). Very few organizations that were represented in the EO training had three, four, or five members who were in attendance. These data indicate that the EO training is pulling in a large number of organizations, but not saturating any single organization. Although it is unclear at this point how the number of organization members who participate in the EO training will affect the organizational outcomes desired by the Ford Institute, these statistics suggest that some intended outcomes may be influenced by this broad but shallow penetration of organizations represented in the training.

In sum, the vast majority of 2009 Effective Organizations participants were involved with one or more organizations as members or volunteers. In addition, most participants held some position of authority in the organization in which they were most likely to apply any new skills learned in EO training. The prevalence of positions of organizational authority among EO participants suggests there is likely to be ample opportunity for EO concepts to be applied in these organizations by EO participants, as many of them can have an influence on the way the organization operates. It appears, however, that very few members of any particular organization attend the training, meaning that the impact of the training on organizations may indeed be lessened. For the tools or approaches taught in the training to be implemented in an organization, EO participants will likely have to be very deliberate in their attempts to get the organization to change. This may be more difficult for some than others.

### *Summary*

This examination of the background characteristics of 2009 Effective Organizations participants reveals some diversity and some commonalities among individuals:

- The majority of participants were female
- The average age of participants was 55
- The majority of participants were employed for pay, but over a third were not employed and not seeking work
- Four occupations dominated: Education, Training, and Library, Community and Social Services, Office and Administrative Support, and Management

- One out of five participants was self-employed at the time
- The majority of participants had an Associate's degree or higher
- 15% of participants held public office as appointed or elected officials
- The racial and ethnic composition of the training matched that observed in rural Oregon
- The majority of participants had some prior leadership training or organizational management education experience
- The majority of 2009 Effective Organizations participants were involved with one or more organizations as members or volunteers
- Most participants held some position of authority in the organization in which they were most likely to apply any new skills learned in EO training

### ***Outcomes of 2009 Effective Organizations Participants***

The intent of the Ford Institute Leadership Program is to influence individuals, organizations, and communities. Specifically with respect to organizations, the goals of the program are to help them improve their capacity to accomplish their mission, increase their contributions to the community, and increase their collaboration with other organizations. To develop this capacity, the Effective Organizations training focuses on increasing the capacity of individual members of organizations who can then apply their skills in their organizations. Specifically, participants are exposed to information about strategic planning, resource management and development, and operational leadership. The Effective Organizations outcome survey is designed to gauge the extent to which knowledge is gained by participants as a result of the training, but also to learn about the behavior changes participants intend to make as a result of the training in order to gain some preliminary insight into the changes participants think will occur in their organizations as a result of the training. In the following sections, the three aspects of the training's intended immediate impact are explored:

- Increased individual capacity to accomplish organizational mission
- Anticipated individual application of skills (behaviors)
- Anticipated effects on organizations

*Do Effective Organizations participants improve their capacity to accomplish their organizational mission?*

The capacity of individuals to accomplish the missions of their organizations depends on their knowledge, capacity, location in the organization, and other factors. Those who lack knowledge in organizational management, regardless of their desire to affect change in this area, will not have the capacity to help an organization accomplish its mission. The Effective Organizations outcome survey provides insight into the extent to which participating in the training increases the knowledge of individuals to accomplish organizational goals through closed- and open-ended survey questions.

*Increased Organizational Knowledge*

On the Effective Organizations outcome survey, training participants were asked a series of closed-ended questions about how knowledgeable they felt on 20 skills related to organizational management after completing the training as well as how knowledgeable they felt on those skills before the training. Comparing pre-training knowledge scores with post-training knowledge scores reveals whether or not knowledge was gained and the extent thereof. Dependent t-tests of equal means were conducted on participants’ pre-training and post-training knowledge for each of the three organizational management knowledge concepts in addition to the Cohen’s *d* statistic. Findings are displayed in Table 16.

**Table 16**

Pre to Post Change in Knowledge Concept Groups							
	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen’s <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Strategic Planning	103	2.31	0.63	3.41	0.51	1.10	0.74
Operational Management	102	2.10	0.74	3.15	0.57	1.05	0.68
Resource Development & Management	103	2.04	0.64	3.12	0.57	1.08	0.68
Knowledge Overall	103	2.15	0.61	3.23	0.49	1.08	0.74

Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. **All results were significant at  $p < .05$** , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen’s *d* statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect.

As Table 16 indicates, comparing pre-training means to post-training means, participants reported increased knowledge in all three concept areas and overall gains in organizational management knowledge (all 20 items) as a result of the Effective Organizations training. The differences in means pre to post were very similar for each concept group, therefore, participants indicated that their knowledge increased about equally across concept groups as a result of the training.

With respect to knowledge levels at the end of the training, however, participants felt their knowledge of strategic planning was the highest of the three areas (mean = 3.41) and felt their post-training level of knowledge in operational management and resource development and management were about the same (based on dependent t-tests, significance at  $p < .05$ ). Given that the difference in means pre to post were about equal, the higher post-training level of knowledge in strategic planning is driven largely by the higher pre-training level of knowledge reported on average (statistically significant at  $p < .05$ ). It appears that participants came into the training with more knowledge in strategic planning than the other concept groups, which resulted in them remaining more knowledgeable in this area at the end of the training. According to the Cohen's  $d$  statistic, the effect of the training on the knowledge of participants was moderate. See Appendix 7 for the pre to post means and Cohen's  $d$  statistics for each individual knowledge item.

The survey data also reveal that those who had the lowest pre-training knowledge reported the greatest gains in knowledge as a result of the training. For example, participants who rated themselves moderately knowledgeable in overall organizational management before the training (greater than 3) reported a .41 point increase from pre to post, whereas participants who rated themselves as somewhat knowledgeable (between a 2 and a 3, inclusive) before the training reported a .87 point increase in knowledge pre to post. By contrast, those who rated themselves as not knowledgeable in organizational management before the training (less than 2) reported a 1.5 point increase from pre to post. Therefore, participants who reported the least amount of knowledge at the beginning of the training showed the most improvement. The

Effective Organizations training was able to bring all participants to similarly high levels of knowledge.

In the correlation and Ordinary Least Squares regression analyses, pre-training knowledge emerged as the only factor associated with post-training knowledge for any of the concepts or for overall knowledge of organizational management.

### *Qualitative Results*

On the Effective Organizations outcome survey, respondents had the opportunity to express in their own words the impact the training may have had on them. Approximately 180 individuals responded to this question and described many ways they felt the EO training affected them personally. From the many responses to the question provided, participants tended to indicate that changes they experienced fell into a few categories. Participants felt they had:

- A greater understanding and knowledge of skills and tools
- Increased their confidence to use skills and tools
- Increased the size of their individual and organizational networks
- Grown on a personal level

The most frequently cited personal impacts participants mentioned were that the EO training increased their knowledge about skills and tools to use in their organizations and increased their confidence to use those skills and tools. Over 100 comments related to increased knowledge and 34 related to increased confidence. Participants also made references to specific types of skills and tools.

Overwhelmingly, these skills and tools mapped onto the three concept groups of the survey: strategic planning, operational management, and resource development/management. This finding in the open-ended responses corroborates the quantitative data findings regarding the impact of the training on participants' knowledge of organizational management. While many comments stopped simply at acknowledging an increase in knowledge, others drew the link between personal impact and broader changes. As one respondent put it, the training gave

him: *“new and exciting information to make me a better, more effective board member.”* With the information from the EO training in hand, many participants said they felt they would be able to influence their organization either with direct action or by sharing their knowledge with others in the organization.

Less frequently mentioned, though often-cited (about 30 times), was that the training affected people’s personal connections to individuals and organizations in their community. Participants indicated that the opportunity to network with other individuals and organizations was valuable for various reasons. For some, the networking opportunity gave them the chance to learn about new organizations with whom to collaborate in the future:

*“There was some “mixing-up” time allowed so that we could meet others in the group and talk about how we might connect and work with one another. This time for mixing is very important in a small community like ours.”*

For many more, networking with others in the community revealed that there were fellow residents they could turn to for advice. As one respondent put it:

*“[The training] connected me with valuable resources and introduced me to other members in my community who extended their support.”*

Others simply acknowledged the value of networking for its own sake in a rural environment.

Finally, a few respondents indicated that the training contributed to their personal development (approximately 11 comments). Sometimes this took the form of improved communication styles, like for one participant:

*“It [the training] made me reconsider some of the ways I interact with others. Sometimes I think I’m right and I just want to force an issue. Now I’m more likely to recognize that I have to be more than right. I have to be more diplomatic. I am more likely to say thanks, especially to people who I need to get more cooperation from.”*

For other participants the training helped them hone in on their life goals, and for yet others the training helped them realize what their strengths and weaknesses were so they could focus on developing them or recognizing them as assets. These comments indicate that the EO

training was able to expand the horizons of participants on a personal level to help them re-shape their personalities and lives.

### *Summary*

The results discussed above indicate that, on average, Effective Organizations participants' knowledge increased moderately as a result of the training. On average, participants increased their knowledge of operational management, strategic planning, and resource development and management equally as a result of the training, though knowledge of strategic planning was highest at the conclusion of the training. Many participants expect this increased knowledge to translate into being more effective in their organizations, and some plan to share what they learned at the training with others in their organizations.

For those with limited knowledge of organizational management before the training, the training increased their knowledge greatly. Important to note is that a fair number of Effective Organizations participants come to the training with knowledge of organizational management. For these individuals, the training increased their knowledge only a small amount.

The data analyzed here also point to benefits of the training beyond knowledge gain. Effective Organizations training participants reported gaining confidence to use organizational management tools, which will doubtless have a positive impact on future application of skills. In addition, training participants gained access to new people and organizations at the training with whom they can collaborate in the future. Finally, the training appeared to help some individuals grow on a personal level, revealing assets to be capitalized and weaknesses to be developed using tools or insights gleaned from the training.

### *Do Leadership Program participants plan to apply their knowledge of organizational management?*

Insight into the actions EO participants plan to make as a result of their participation in the training was gained by examining responses to the second section of the outcome survey and responses to the open-ended question: "As a result of the training, what specific changes do

you intend to make in your organization?” In the second section of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate how likely they were to do 16 activities after the training as well as how likely they were to do so before the training.

*Intention to Apply Organizational Knowledge*

Comparing pre-training likelihood to post-training likelihood scores using dependent t-tests and Cohen’s *d* statistics reveal the extent to which participants expect to change their behavior in their organizations as a result of the EO training. Unlike the knowledge portion of the survey, survey items in the behavior section were not grouped into concepts except for one: collaboration/networking. Thus, the majority of findings will be examined for each survey item individually. Results are displayed in Table 17 and Table 18.

**Table 17**

Pre to Post Change in Behavior Concept Groups– Collaboration Concept							
	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen’s <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>2.32</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>0.65</b>
Develop networks and partnerships with other organizations	100	2.55	1.03	3.66	0.55	1.11	0.54
Work with other organizations that have similar goals to your organization	101	2.48	0.94	3.54	0.59	1.06	0.58
Work with organizations that do NOT have similar goals to your organization	98	1.89	0.93	2.92	0.81	1.03	0.56
<b>Behavior Overall</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>2.42</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>0.72</b>
Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. <b>All results were significant at <math>p &lt; .05</math></b> , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen’s <i>d</i> statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect. Behavior Overall includes single items from Table 18.							

Overall, participants reported increased likelihood of engaging in organizational management behaviors as a result of the EO training, as seen in Table 17. On average, participants reported that before the training they were mid-way between somewhat likely and likely to engage in the 16 behaviors (mean = 2.42), but after the training they were between likely and very likely to engage in the behaviors (3.51). The Cohen’s *d* value of .72 implies that the effect of the training on participant outcomes was moderate.



Within the area of collaboration, participants' average post-training likelihood of collaborating in any way increased from somewhat likely to likely. Of the various forms of collaborating listed on the survey, the average post-training likelihood of working with dissimilar organizations was significantly lower (2.92) than participants' average post-training likelihood of working with similar organizations or simply developing networks with other organizations (difference significant at  $p < .05$ ). Participants increased their likelihood of working with dissimilar organizations (difference was 1.03), but the average likelihood of participants doing so before the training was quite low (1.89).

**Table 18**

Pre to Post Change in Behavior Concept Groups – Single Items							
	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen's <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Single Items</b>							
Work to increase the role of your organization in improving the community	101	2.69	0.86	3.73	0.47	1.04	0.60
Assist your organization in clarifying its mission, goals, and objectives	101	2.58	0.95	3.71	0.57	1.12	0.57
Discuss strategies for improving organizational effectiveness with others in your organizations	101	2.37	0.96	3.65	0.57	1.28	0.64
Promote positive board functioning (e.g. communication and decision making)	99	2.45	0.92	3.63	0.61	1.18	0.61
See yourself as a catalyst for change within your organization	101	2.59	0.92	3.60	0.57	1.00	0.55
Communicate clearly with the community about your organization and its purpose	101	2.64	0.92	3.58	0.62	0.93	0.54
Participate in fundraising efforts for your organization	100	2.87	0.99	3.57	0.68	0.70	0.35
Develop strategies to acquire resources for your organization	101	2.37	0.94	3.56	0.61	1.19	0.61
Work with your board to develop policies/procedures	99	2.43	1.00	3.51	0.75	1.08	0.56
Monitor the fiscal health of your organization	100	2.40	1.07	3.47	0.67	1.07	0.56
Adopt strategies in your organization to sustain activities/programs at the end of a funding cycle	100	2.25	0.93	3.43	0.74	1.18	0.60
Participate in the strategic recruitment of board members	99	2.03	0.97	3.34	0.82	1.31	0.65
Create specific job descriptions for board members or volunteers	100	2.14	0.95	3.31	0.84	1.17	0.61
Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. <b>All results were significant at <math>p &lt; .05</math></b> , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen's <i>d</i> statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect. Overall means reported in Table 17.							

Among the single item behaviors in Table 18, post-training scores varied from 3.31 to 3.73, indicating that after the EO training participants thought they were likely to engage in these organizational management behaviors. The highest post-training scores were observed for working to increase the role of the organization in improving the community, assisting the organization to clarify its mission, discussing strategies for improving the effectiveness of the organization with others, promoting positive board functioning, and seeing oneself as a catalyst for change. By contrast, participants felt they were the least likely to create job descriptions for board members or volunteers, participate in the strategic recruitment of board members, and adopt strategies to sustain organizational activities at the end of a funding cycle after completing the EO training.

The greatest changes in the likelihood of performing particular activities were seen for participating in the strategic recruitment of board members and discussing strategies for improving organizational effectiveness with others in the organization. The area in which participants anticipated seeing the least change to their behavior was participation in fundraising efforts for their organization. Looking at the pre-training average likelihood of doing this activity, however, reveals that before the training participants were likely to participate in fundraising efforts for their organizations (mean of 2.87).

The quantitative data regarding behaviors of Effective Organizations participants indicate that the EO training increased participants' likelihoods of engaging in all organizational management behaviors although some activities appear more likely to happen than others. Correlation and regression analyses revealed that no individual level characteristics were associated with these increased likelihoods, therefore, any variation in outcomes was not due to participant characteristics.

### *Qualitative Results*

In order to gain deeper insight into how the Leadership Program has affected individuals in their organizations, two data sources were relied upon. Open-ended responses from the Effective Organizations outcome survey, in addition to open-ended responses from the 12-

month follow-up were used to understand how Leadership Program participants have applied their skills in organizations.

### *Effective Organizations Outcome Survey*

Approximately 175 Effective Organizations participants provided written comments to the question: “As a result of this training, what specific changes do you intend to make in your organization?” Examination of the responses to this question reveals some repetition of the quantitative findings discussed above and some new insights. Participants most often mentioned intentions to improve the ways in which their boards function (approximately 50 comments) and intentions to improve the development and management of resources (approximately 50 comments). Intentions to implement strategic planning or update elements of the organization’s strategic plan emerged as the third most often cited theme (approximately 40 comments). These were followed by intentions to:

- Improve the operational management of the organization by doing things like improving the management of meetings, developing written policies and bylaws, and improving financial record keeping (30 comments)
- Improve communication channels within the organization and with others outside the organization (20 comments)
- Improve the connection of the organization to the community through activities that expand the commitment of the organization to the community and improve the quality of information about the organization shared within the community (12 comments)
- Improve the collaboration between organizations (9 comments)
- Share the training materials or new knowledge gained with others in the organization (8 comments)
- Continue learning about organizational management topics (6 comments)
- Increase individual involvement in the organization (3 comments)
- Make no change (3 comments)

With respect to improving the ways in which boards operate, participants noted intentions to create job descriptions for board members, do more strategic recruitment for members, clarify the responsibilities of the board, do board self-assessments, and plan for smooth board

member successions. One respondent noted the need to comprehensively integrate the board into the organization by stating she would,

*“Train and orient the potential board members. Give new board members the history of our organization. Train all board members in how to tell our story.”*

Clearly, participants felt it was both necessary and possible for them to help the boards of their organizations become more efficient, more effective, and more solidly grounded in the mission of the organization as a result of the training. The frequency of comments regarding improving board functioning correspond to the high likelihood participants expressed on the closed-ended portion of the survey to do the same activities.

In the arena of resource development and management, participants put fairly equal weight on improving financial and human resources. Respondents often mentioned plans to implement new fundraising ideas gleaned from the training as well as pursue grant opportunities. With respect to developing and managing human resources, participants focused most of their intentions on volunteers, such as recruiting more of them, retaining them for longer, tracking their contributions, and making sure their responsibilities were clear. One respondent clearly noted the importance of both financial and human resource development and management in this comment:

*“I intend to suggest that we concentrate more on volunteer recruitment and develop more diversity in our fundraising activities. I intend to propose that we write job descriptions for all board members and volunteers.”*

Intentions to implement or improve strategic planning also came up frequently in the open-ended comments. Most participants indicated they were planning on updating, redoing, or creating a strategic plan as a result of the training, while others said they planned to create a vision or mission statement or implement some form of a SWOT analysis or needs assessment. Often, participants situated the need to update their strategic plan in a desire to improve their chances of receiving funding or to better communicate with others about the organization. As one participant said:

*“We will review our mission, vision, and goals to enhance a quality program and communicate this effectively.”*

As the quantitative data revealed, a fair number of participants intend to go back to their organizations equipped to help clarify visions and missions and strategically plan for the future.

Though sharing the training resources and methods was not often mentioned as a specific change participants intended to make in their organizations on the open-ended portion of the survey, the majority of respondents to the closed-ended portion of the survey indicated they were likely to share the training tools and skills with their organizations. Despite this inconsistency between the open- and closed-ended portions of the survey, it is likely that participants will share what they learned at the training with others. An open-ended comment illustrated the idea well. This participant plans to:

*“Share this training resource and knowledge with others in my organization that were unable to attend. Promote continuing education and actual utilization of methods taught at this training.”*

Perhaps implicit to most people’s comments about changes they intend to make was the additional action of sharing new-found knowledge of the EO training with members of their organization. Unfortunately, we cannot be sure of this, due to the limited number of explicit statements to that effect, but it is likely given the quantitative data findings.

#### *Leadership Development 12-Month Follow-Up Survey*

On the Leadership Development 12-month follow-up survey, participants were asked to provide one to two examples of how the leadership class has affected them in their community organizations. One hundred thirty-eight leadership development class graduates answered the question and shared how they felt the leadership class had affected them in their organizations. Ten respondents indicated no change, in some cases due to personal constraints. Of the other 128 responses, a few individuals said that they had stepped back from leadership roles due to over-commitment, and one individual said she had not been successful in applying what she learned to her organizational work. The vast majority of responses, however, did indicate application of leadership skills in their organizations. The types of organizations in which LD

participants mentioned using their skills included: church, school, service organizations, planning commission, historic commission, downtown association, fair event association, Chamber of Commerce, welcome center, nonprofit organizations, community boards, and community committees.

Overall, three themes emerged from the data. Leadership Development participants, in the 12 months since taking the class, said they had:

- increased the number of skills they applied in organizational settings
- increased their activity in organizations
- increased organizational collaboration

In terms of increased skills, respondents said the Leadership Development class gave them tools that have helped in group settings. For example,

*“Not only do I have better tools for helping our groups to get things done, but I also have greater awareness of potential outside resources to help us accomplish our goals and have lost any feeling of intimidation when it's time to make the ask. And while I'm far more willing to step up to fill needed roles, I'm also confident enough to encourage others to adopt their own roles and "run with them" with the support and confidence they need as well.”*

Specifically, in the last 12 months, graduates mentioned using active listening skills, facilitation skills, conflict resolution skills, communication tools, consensus-building tools, asset inventory, and project management skills in their organizations. Some respondents mentioned increasing their activity in community organizations. For most, this increased activity meant doing things like contributing more volunteer hours at schools, becoming an officer in an organization, becoming more active in a political party, promoting a community event, and taking on roles in new community organizations. In the words of one participant,

*“I assumed leadership of a crew maintaining hiking trails in and near my town. I [also] took on more responsibility for the health of a non-profit on whose board I sat.”*

Increasing the level of activity in their community organizations was one way in which the leadership program affected the relationship between graduates and organizations, and for some, the skills learned in the class helped them be more effective at the same time. Nine respondents reported that it helped them function more effectively as board members. Increased organizational collaboration was another theme that emerged from these responses, though not mentioned as frequently as the previous themes. Respondents indicated that by increasing their awareness of the many organizations in their community and by giving them the tools to work well with others, the leadership development class encouraged them to work towards organizational collaboration. As one participant said, the leadership class helped her:

*“think creatively about how to work with different organizations in the community to build partnerships and move forward toward a common goal.”*

Participants also mentioned an increased capacity to collaborate with other organizations to pool resources toward a community goal.

### *Summary*

The quantitative and qualitative data illustrate that Leadership Program participants leave their respective trainings highly likely to implement many of the strategies and activities discussed in the training in organizations. While some activities emerged as more likely to occur than others, such as making improvements to the functioning of boards, updating strategic plans, and improving the way in which human and financial resources are developed and managed, overall, training participants plan to implement many elements of organizational management taught in the Effective Organizations training.

### **Does Effective Organizations build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

In order to truly understand the impact of the Leadership Program on community organizations it will be important to talk with various members of organizations. In future years of the evaluation, a case study approach should be used to gain deeper insight into the organizational impacts of the Leadership Program. At this point, however, preliminary results can be gleaned

from responses to the EO outcome survey open-ended question: “What effects do you think the Effective Organization training will have on your organization over the longer term?”

Approximately 170 Effective Organizations training participants responded to the open-ended question regarding anticipated effects of the training on their organization. Most often, participants made general statements that their organization would be stronger, healthier, more successful, or just more effective:

*“I think [the training] will really help us become a more viable organization.”*

*“We will become stronger.”*

*“If the rest of the board is receptive, this should be very beneficial for the organization.”*

Unfortunately, comments like these do not reveal much with respect to how community organizations will be affected, although anticipation of general improvements is a positive outcome. About forty-five comments were recorded as belonging to this “generally better” category or theme. When participants mentioned specific improvements they expected to make in their organizations, certain themes emerged. In particular, participants thought their organizations would become:

- More focused, with improved strategic plans
- Stronger with respect to board functioning
- Better able to work together as an organization
- More sustainable into the future
- Better at obtaining and managing volunteers and financial resources
- Better connected with the community
- More collaborative with other organizations

The responses to the open-ended question indicate that participants easily expect the overall strength of their organizations to increase. They will be better at managing day to day operations, better at strategic planning, and better at developing and managing resources. Some participants felt that their organizations would become more connected to the



community and yet others felt their organizations would become more collaborative, but changes in these two arenas were least mentioned of the themes.

With respect to participants' expectations that the strength of their organizations would increase as a result of their participation in the training, the majority of comments related to an increased focus within organization (approximately 30 comments). One participant said that because of the training,

*"Our organization will have a clearer idea of where we are going and what we need to get there."*

The second most often cited improvement to the overall management of the organization related to board functioning (approximately 28 comments). Considering the number of board members in attendance at the EO training, it is not surprising that many comments might relate to ways in which this aspect of operations may improve. As these participants noted,

*"It has brought our board together and thinking along the same target. We're ready to move forward."*

*"By clarifying the personality types, work styles, needs, communication, etc., those board members who have never taken an RDI course had visible light bulbs going off over their heads! This realization, if nothing else, will greatly improve our organization."*

*"We will start to recruit people who want to help because they have a passion, not because we have a 'board position open.'"*

Evident from these comments is that the training was able give participants the tools they needed to either help construct a strong and effective board for their organization or become better members of boards themselves. In the long run, these changes will contribute strongly to the viability of the organization, as many participants indicated.

Strong organizational management includes additional components that participants felt would occur in their organizations. Approximately 26 comments were made pertaining to future improvements in the way the organization manages operations. Primarily, respondents indicated that their organizations would streamline their functions, operate smoother, manage

meetings better, foster better staff relations, improve their internal leadership, and clarify responsibilities as a result of the training. As one participant put it, the organization will:

*“Operate smoother by [having] ideas about what needs to be done and having a knowledge base to support why there is a reason for change.”*

Another participant mentioned,

*“I think our meetings will be more productive and shorter. I think we’ll start developing some better relationships with staff – more affirmative and less negative.”*

After improvements to operational management, around 20 comments were made pertaining to the increased sustainability participants thought would occur in their organizations.

Participants referred to sustainability as financial stability and leadership succession or stability of human resources. One participant said that as a result of the training *“I feel that we will become financially stable and sound.”* With respect to stability of human resources, issues of leadership succession often arose. According to one participant, because of the training: *“Our organization will develop ways of sustaining itself when I am no longer able to guide them.”* Often, new organizations are created by one or two charismatic and passionate people, and when they leave, if they have not established a good succession plan, the organization deteriorates. As many of these participants indicate, they felt the EO training prepared them to help make that transition smoother.

Improving the development and management of resources was mentioned about sixteen times by participants as an expected impact of the EO training on their organization. Comments were split evenly between improving financial resources and improving human resources in the form of volunteers. Of these comments, however, a majority anticipated improvements in their organizations’ development rather than the management of these resources: *“Your training will help equip us to function at a higher level in fund seeking...”* Some participants mentioned that the training will help their organization manage resources better, which will help them be more sustainable in the long run.

As mentioned above, the majority of participant comments referred to the impact the EO training would have on the way in which their organizations manage day to day activities. Less apparent from the open-ended responses was much anticipation that the EO training would affect the community orientation or the collaborative nature of the organization.

Approximately nine comments were made that indicated participants expected their organizations to become more community-oriented. For example, participants said:

*“We will become more clearly focused on our role in the community.”*

*“I see our group growing and becoming a force for our community and our youth.”*

With respect to organizations becoming more collaborative as a result of the training, around eight comments were made to this effect. Though individual participants indicated they would be likely to partner and network with organizations after the EO training, given the infrequency of these comments, it seems that few saw that their individual actions would have a significant impact on the collaborative nature of their organization.

### **Summary**

These responses about the anticipated impact of the Effective Organizations training on organizations indicate that overall, organizations are likely to become stronger because of their members' exposure to the training materials. These data also suggest that as a result of the training, organizations are not as likely to become more community oriented or collaborate more with other organizations. It is very important to note at this point that any organizational change occurring as a result of the training depends heavily on the organization accepting any new information an EO participant brings to the table. In many cases this will not be an issue given the size of the organization the participant belongs to. In other cases, this may turn out to be an impediment to the EO training having a deeper effect on organizations in these communities. As one participant put it,

*“I think [the training] will be helpful, if the organization's leaders will listen to suggestions.”*

While these qualitative findings begin to shed some light on the question of organizational impact of the training, further study is needed to fully gauge the extent to which organizations are affected by their members participating in the EO training.

### **Does the Leadership Program contribute to vital rural communities?**

Vital rural communities, for the purpose of this report, are those that possess the capacity to work together and realize a balance of positive social, economic, and environmental outcomes. When looking at vital rural communities, it is important to note that both capacity and outcomes are influenced by conditions outside the direct influence of the community. Community capacity includes a cadre of committed and skillful leaders, who are actively engaged in community organizations and affairs that are aimed at improving their communities' social, economic, and environmental circumstances. Thus, capacity implies empowerment to create change in the community.

Evidence of the initial stages of capacity building were seen in 2008 data from the Leadership Development Outcome Survey, Community Trainer Interviews, and South Lane Class Project Interviews (2008 Evaluation Report). At that time, participants reported that the Leadership Program had already had positive impacts on their rural communities through the increased number of trained, actively engaged leaders and successful completion of class projects. Moreover, they were confident that the momentum would continue into the future due to a new sense of hope, the feeling of cohesiveness within the community, and the increased capacity of the community as a whole to embrace and facilitate change. They believed they could make a difference in their community and were committed to community change.

Following up on participant's initial thoughts about how the program would impact their community, Fall 2008 Leadership Development class participants were asked one year later to provide one or two examples of how the leadership class has affected their community. On the 12-month follow-up survey, 140 respondents gave examples of how the program has impacted their community. Common themes included pride in community, increased collaboration and

relationships among community members, increased awareness of community needs, and an increase in the number of trained leaders in the community.

Participants reported that the class has affected the level of community pride among residents in their communities. One respondent said,

*“One of the identified issues with our community, in the first cohort, was a lack of community pride. ‘If it came from here, it can’t be that good’....Several of us from the program have stepped up and invested in new businesses or been involved in projects that are beginning to have a positive effect on that attitude.”*

Although many participants continue to provide suggestions for revising the class project methodology, successful class projects were a source of pride, and potentially, unity. Specific examples of projects cited were physical improvements: signs, tennis courts, trails, gardens, playgrounds, bioswales, lights, kiosks, and handicap access at fairgrounds.

Participants reported that increased collaboration, a shared vision, increased cooperation between groups, working together better than before, all describe increased community capacity due to the leadership program. *“More people understand community is all ‘our’ responsibility.”* Groups of people who did not know each other worked to become a team with a common goal for the good of their communities. In some cases, the leadership program involved all ages, a variety of ethnic groups, and/or multiple communities.

*“It brought my community of many ethnicities to work and collaborate on a common goal together. We worked to think of a project, and together we completed it within the community, even with the help of people who weren’t in the leadership class.”*

Participants also reported that the Ford leadership program raised awareness of community needs as well as roadblocks to change. As one participant stated, *“It opened people’s eyes to see what needs to be done.”* As participants better understood community needs, they could design a project and contact local board members and community members in ways they had not before.

A widespread perception was that the program built new relationships among community residents. It provided the tools to empower community residents to become leaders. Those residents now have a common vocabulary. Individuals who were not previously involved in community organizations became volunteers and leaders. One participant suggested that the program transformed volunteers into “community-minded” volunteers, who reached out to people. Respondents were very positive about the benefits of community networking, and some thought it was the most important result of the Leadership Program. The class became a network that could be tapped for a variety of projects. One respondent reported:

*“The social networking was invaluable and will continue to be far-reaching. I think this aspect is still undervalued by some classmates, but we are really there for others to call on and to help make contacts and referrals – even if a specific project isn’t for us.”*

There were a few comments about a critical mass of leaders being formed as a result of the program. However, feelings were mixed among these participants about the extent to which the critical mass could affect change in the community. One respondent indicated that one result of the Leadership Program was a larger base of new leaders who could foster the development of other leaders “for a very long time to come.” Another respondent thought new collaborations had occurred, but the number of leadership graduates was not sufficient to make effective changes in the community yet. By contrast, a few respondents were positive about the capacity of their communities since the Leadership Program came to their town:

*“Our town can work together to accomplish what we could not accomplish before.”*

Only 16 respondents (11%) reported that they were not sure that the Leadership Program made a difference in their community or felt it was unable to increase vitality. Two respondents spoke of community or leadership divisions, with one reporting that the first cohort did not stay connected or mentor the next classes. Another said that the leadership class had a positive effect in the past, but not in the present: “The community just doesn’t care.” One respondent indicated that when the class ended, the interest in continuing the new relationships faded. She thought a new class would be helpful, but said that some community residents are reluctant to

shed old prejudices and embrace the concepts of leadership training, so that benefits might be limited. The other comments related to class projects, such as the inability of the class to complete a class project. One participant said that it has gotten people to talk about things, but put some parts of the community on edge because you end up with factions that do and do not like what is being done.

### **Suggestions for the Future**

Suggestions for improvement to the Ford Institute Leadership Program came from two sources: the five focus groups held around the state and the 12-month follow-up survey of Fall 2008 leadership class participants. Although not the purpose of the focus groups, focus group participants nevertheless shared some suggestions for change. The 12-month survey asked a specific question about what The Ford Family Foundation could do in the future to support participants, organizations, and communities.

One area mentioned for possible improvement was the participant nomination process. In one focus group, participants were concerned that those individuals who were nominated were already viewed as leaders in the community and were over committed. The class is sometimes perceived as

*“just another place where people of power come together and get more powerful.”*

Finding people who were not already too busy, but who had leadership potential, was a suggestion for improving the nomination process. Despite the fact that the Leadership Program intends to identify these people for nomination, it was apparent from focus group participants that this goal had not been reached in some communities.

Focus group participants shared their admiration for the youth who had participated in the Leadership Program. In some communities, informal mentoring relationships between youth and adults were established as a result of the class. However, in two focus groups, concerns were expressed that youth who participated in the training were not involved beyond the class

or left the community for higher education following the class. One suggestion was to have an all-youth leadership class.

Cohorts and cohort experiences were another focal point for suggested improvements that emerged from the focus groups. Some felt their experiences were different depending on their participation within a particular cohort. One focus group thought greater connections between the different cohorts within their communities would have been beneficial. Another community that had experienced more interactions between the cohorts saw these interactions as valuable.

*“There were a lot of things that happened in the first [cohort] that never happened in the second one.”*

*“I’d like to see more ties of the three classes together. Some type of training or event that ties us together.”*

Some participants credited the projects with helping their class to bond and giving them an opportunity to put their newly acquired skills to use. Other participants discussed their frustration with the class projects. Some projects became overwhelming and went over budget. Perhaps the greatest frustration was the attrition of class participants during the project process.

*“Halfway through our project, out of thirty people in our class we were down to eight or nine who were involved. People go back to their lives; they have a job and responsibilities.”*

Many respondents to the 12-month follow-up survey brought up the community projects as an area of concern and suggested changes as well. For example, making the time commitment clearer, making sure the community project is actually desired by the whole community, or having the class in the middle of the year to help the group with the logistics of the project were all mentioned. More than one participant mentioned helping participants pick easier-to-accomplish projects. This comment was representative of that sentiment:



*“The format of the class made it difficult to realistically evaluate potential projects in the given time frame – and in the context of the class, there is confusion about who’s in charge, the facilitators or us. We did succeed.....but I think some of us felt that we were in for more than we’d signed up for.”*

One respondent suggested:

*“I would re-think using the project model. I think [the project] becomes the object of the class rather than learning and practicing the skills.”*

Another respondent concurred, saying that the project was too much about the process and not enough about the skills – it felt more like meeting requirements of a grant, rather than supporting class members working on a cause. Another respondent commented:

*“The entire process of the class project seemed very limiting. The diverse voices were shut down and we were left with the same power players at the table. People who had divergent views or processes were slowly shut out.”*

One respondent suggested that a helpline for leadership class graduates might be good. He found that the group processes broke down during the project and a call to the facilitator helped him get the group back on track. Although the cohort project is designed to provide leadership class participants the opportunity to apply the skills of the class, it seems apparent that this notion was lost on some classes.

On the 12-month follow-up survey, 136 leadership class participants responded to the question about what The Ford Family Foundation could do to support them as community leaders, their organizations, and/or their communities. Respondents focused on both the educational and fiscal functions of the Foundation. Forty-two percent of respondents wrote that they wanted the Foundation to continue existing programs. Many participants (32%) mentioned the educational classes, while others (17%) mentioned the importance of financing community projects, but many spoke of both:

*“Continue matching grant opportunities and availability of additional leadership classes within our struggling community.”*

Seven participants (5%) had no specific suggestions.

Other respondents suggested other types of support including sponsoring a day or weekend where neighboring cohorts could get together. One suggestion was a regional collaboration conference. Another was to hold a statewide conference for all class members to gather. Another idea was providing education about social networking to help *“many more of us to be resources for each other.”* A recurrent suggestion for continued support was offering refresher classes, although the specifics varied – after 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, etc. Five participants recommended offering grant writing workshops. Other ideas included offering scholarships to high school students in another part of the county, providing leadership seminars for student government classes in high school, or offering youth intervention projects for youth only. One participant suggested that the Foundation have a regional coordinator who could be available to speak to groups about projects, grants, and programs.

In sum, participants suggested that improvements might be made in the class projects, the selection process, cohort experiences, and to a lesser extent, designing programs specifically for youth. However, participants were overwhelmingly grateful to The Ford Family Foundation for providing educational experiences and fiscal support to their communities. Many participants commented:

*“You are already doing a great job!”*

*“FILP and FFF are exceptionally good community partners and neighbors.”*

## CONCLUSION

### Conclusions

The 2009 evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program concentrated on answering a sub-set of the research questions that were established in 2008. This focused the research effort on understanding if:

- leadership development class participants are effective community leaders and increase their civic engagement after completion of the class,
- strong networks of community leaders develop as a result of the program,
- the Leadership Program builds strong, collaborative, community-oriented organizations.

In order to answer these research questions, quantitative and qualitative methodologies were employed and data were collected from different sub-populations of Leadership Program participants, improving the reliability of findings. Although not a focus of the 2009 evaluation efforts, insights were also gained on the extent to which the Leadership Program contributes to the vitality of rural communities and on how participants think the program could be improved.

### **Does the Leadership Program develop effective community leaders who apply what they learned?**

Overall, participants reported that they had applied leadership skills frequently over the past year. In the year following the leadership development class, participants reported applying their communication skills almost weekly, working with others about once a month, and networking slightly less frequently. These three types of leadership skills overall were applied about once a month by participants. Similarly, participants reported engaging in community building activities occasionally in the year following the leadership class, with some activities being done more often than others. Project management tasks in community efforts or projects were done slightly less than community building activities, with participants engaging in these tasks slightly less than occasionally. Overall, participants left the class better equipped to address issues in their community, with the confidence to make a difference, and with expanded networks of people to work with.

Participants' intentions to apply their skills or engage in particular activities at the end of the class (Fall 2008) also predicted their frequency of application or activity in the year following the class. Interestingly, so does class size and the number of organizations with which participants were affiliated. Although participants reported barriers to their engagement in community work, these barriers only somewhat limited their amount of leadership activity in the last year.

For the majority of individuals who were applying these skills at relatively high levels, this level was higher than before the class, implying that the leadership class had a positive effect on participants. When asked how much the Ford leadership class contributed to their ability to do the skills, activities, and tasks associated with leadership training, 80% of respondents said that a moderate to a great deal of their capacity was directly attributable to participation in the leadership class. Overall, the immediate outcomes of the class appear to be following participants as they move out into the community.

### **Does the Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?**

Participation in the leadership class resulted in greater civic engagement in the year after the class for about half of the Fall 2008 leadership class participants. On average, in the year after the class, participants engaged occasionally in civic activities, but for most this was more than they had engaged in civic activities before the class. The most popular forms of civic engagement for Fall 2008 leadership class participants after the class were voting, volunteering, working in community groups, fundraising for local causes, and promoting local events. The data indicate that the Leadership Program is encouraging rural community residents to be active in community life.

Also clear from the evaluation data collected and analyzed this year is that the positive outcomes of the Leadership Program at the conclusion of the leadership class stick with participants in the year following the class. Those who left the class highly motivated to engage in civic activities engage in more civic activities than those who left the class not very

motivated. Class size and the number of organization affiliations were also positively associated with levels of civic activity after the class. Despite some variation by these individual and class attributes, these results indicate that the leadership class successfully increases the motivation of participants to engage in civic life, thereby affecting the level of civic activity of participants the following year.

**Does the Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?**

Networking, as expressed by Ford participants, is about being connected to and collaborating with others to benefit the community. Participants reported that both their social networks and their organizational and community networks expanded: new relationships were built, existing relationships became stronger and relationships with people not typically in their social networks were established. Respondents also reported some impacts on work, social, and professional networks, but to a lesser extent.

**Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

Effective Organizations participants reported increased knowledge in strategic planning, operational management, and resource development and management as a result of the training. Participants who reported the least amount of knowledge at the beginning of the training showed the most improvement. At the conclusion of the training, participants felt quite knowledgeable in all aspects of organizational management, reported increased confidence to use the skills and tools they learned about in the training, and had a new network of organizations to collaborate with or draw on as resources. All of these outcomes are important as they represent the foundation of individual capacity to work effectively in organizations.

In addition to these outcomes of the Effective Organizations training, participants expect to apply the skills and tools taught in the training in their organizations. In order for the Leadership Program to have an impact on rural community organizations, it is very important that training participants apply the skills learned in the EO training and Leadership Development class in their organizations. Results of the 2009 study give cause for optimism; Leadership Program

participants plan to apply what they have learned to become more effective as individuals in their organizations, to help re-design or implement effective organizational strategies, and to share what they have learned with others in their organizations. One reason organizations may not change, despite the increased knowledge of training participants, is that only a limited number of organizational members tend to attend the training. Without organization-wide buy-in to the intent of the EO training and without developing the skills of a critical mass of organizational members, the Leadership Program may fall short of realizing significant impact on organizations as a whole. Although further research is needed to determine if organizations will change as a result of the Leadership Program, preliminary evidence indicates individuals are equipped to realize this change.

Effective Organizations participants are optimistic that the training will help their organizations become stronger. Indeed, this is the primary way in which training participants anticipate their organizations changing as a result of the Leadership Program. While participants were quick to envision ways in which their organizations will become better at strategic planning, resource development and management, and operational management as a result of the training, fewer participants anticipated their organizations would become more community-oriented and collaborative as a result.

### **Does the Leadership Program contribute to vital rural communities?**

Although data to answer this research question were limited to open-ended responses to the 12-month follow-up survey, findings confirm results discussed in the 2008 report. Greater community pride, increased collaboration, and increased community networks were the ways in which Fall 2008 leadership class participants saw that their communities have been affected by the Leadership Program. In future years it will be necessary to engage in a more in-depth study of rural communities to understand how the Leadership Program affects not only the capacity of communities, but also economic, environmental, and social outcomes.

## **Suggestions for the future**

Although Ford Institute Leadership Program participants are overwhelmingly grateful to The Ford Family Foundation for providing educational experiences and fiscal support to their communities, they do have some suggestions for improvements and continued support in the future. These seem to be areas where there were concerns expressed, even though no question directly addressed suggestions for improvement. Suggestions for improvements were related to class projects, the participant nomination process, and interactions between cohorts.

Suggestions for continuing support related to providing opportunities for regional and local collaboration, additional training, scholarships, and all-youth classes or trainings.

## **Recommendations**

Based on evidence from the 2009 evaluation, the OSU evaluation team continues to suggest that evaluations:

- Assess the impacts of the training using current measures, tools, and methods. Doing so will yield robust evidence as to the impact of the Leadership Program on the target populations.
- Follow participants as they move out of the class and into the community. Some impacts on individuals, organizations, and communities may not be realized for many years to come.
- Use qualitative and quantitative methods to examine factors that relate to longer term impacts of the training including trajectories of individual leadership development, networking, and community engagement.
- Use qualitative and quantitative methods to ascertain community-level impacts of the Leadership Program, emphasizing changes to community capacity.
- Track the immediate outcomes of the Effective Organizations training using valid tools and measures
- Examine changes in actual participant behavior in organizations following Effective Organizations training and subsequent changes in organizational operations and collaborations.
- Work with the Institute and trainers as Community Collaborations Training evolves in order to design and assess appropriate outcomes for later evaluation.

## **2010 Evaluation Plan**

The next evaluation report will contain information about all past participants (2003 – 2008) to assess the longer-term impact of the Leadership Program. In addition, an assessment of trainer effectiveness and the possible relation of trainer to outcomes will be investigated. A case study approach of specific communities will examine the relation of local actions, collaboration, and leadership to the local economic, social, and environmental context.

### Data Collection

- Collect survey information from LD and EO participants in the Spring and Fall 2010.
- Implement the 12-month follow-up survey of Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 LD participants.
- Implement the 12-month follow-up survey of 2009 EO participants.
- Administer the population survey to all past Leadership Program participants who graduated prior to Spring 2008.
- Conduct focus groups with past participants to assess the longer term impact of FILP on themes to be determined.

### Case Studies

- Finalize design and begin to implement the case study approach of specific communities, including collecting community information. Personal interviews will be conducted with key informants in 2-4 rural communities.

### Data Analysis

- Analysis will be based on the evaluation questions, guided by feedback from the Institute, and utilize data from:
  - LD and EO participant surveys from Spring and Fall 2010
  - follow-up surveys with Fall 2008/Spring 2009 LD participants
  - surveys from past Leadership Program participants
  - interviews and/or focus groups with past participants
  - data from community case studies



## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: *Cronbach's Alpha* Coefficients for Pre and Post Effective Organizations Training Concept Groups

Appendix 2: Distribution of Responses for Application of Leadership Skills

Appendix 3: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Community Building Activities

Appendix 4: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Project Management Tasks

Appendix 5: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Civic Activities

Appendix 6: Distribution of Responses for Barriers to Skill Application

Appendix 7: Means, Standard Deviations, and Cohen's *d* for Organizational Knowledge Concept Groups

Appendix 1: *Cronbach's Alpha* Coefficients for Pre and Post Effective Organizations Training  
 Concept Groups

Concept Groups	Number of Items	Alpha Pre/ Before	Alpha Post/ After
<b>Knowledge</b>			
Strategic Planning	6	0.87	0.86
Operational Management	7	0.91	0.85
Resource Development & Management	6	0.85	0.84
<b>Behavior</b>			
Collaboration/Networking	3	0.77	0.6
Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to measure the internal reliability of the concept groups. An alpha of .60 to .70 indicates an acceptable reliability and .80 or higher indicates a good reliability. All concepts were found to have an acceptable internal consistency.			

Appendix 2: Distribution of Responses for Application of Leadership Skills

Application of Leadership Skills						
	Never	1-3 Times	4-6 Times	Once a Month	Weekly	Daily
<b>Communicate Effectively</b>						
Used active listening skills to understand another person's ideas	0%	1%	3%	10%	35%	51%
Used "appreciative inquiry" to emphasize the positive aspects of a situation	2%	14%	11%	21%	38%	14%
Given a speech or presentation to a group of people	7%	24%	16%	29%	17%	7%
Given constructive feedback to another person	2%	10%	10%	17%	43%	18%
<b>Work with Others</b>						
Worked effectively with different personality types	0%	1%	4%	10%	37%	48%
Facilitated group discussions	5%	17%	17%	23%	33%	5%
Worked to build consensus within a group	2%	16%	21%	28%	26%	7%
Used effective meeting techniques to guide a meeting	10%	19%	15%	30%	22%	4%
Used conflict resolution processes	7%	30%	17%	16%	23%	7%
<b>Network</b>						
Networked with others to address a community issue or problem	4%	18%	19%	26%	25%	9%
Networked with others to advance personally or professionally	9%	20%	17%	24%	19%	11%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.						

### Appendix 3: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Community Building Activities

Participation in Community Building Activities				
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Identified assets in your community	6%	17%	52%	25%
Educated yourself about social, economic, or environmental issues in your community	2%	13%	33%	52%
Helped build public awareness of a community issue or problem	5%	17%	44%	34%
Helped investigate possible solutions to a community issue or problem	4%	17%	47%	32%
Worked to improve the social, economic, and/or environmental conditions of your community	5%	12%	41%	42%
Helped define goals or a vision for your community	10%	25%	36%	29%
Encouraged others to participate in community issues and/or projects	3%	9%	38%	50%
Sought information about how community decisions would impact the local social, economic, and/or environmental conditions	12%	20%	38%	30%
Sought opportunities to learn more about community leadership	10%	21%	46%	23%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

Appendix 4: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Project Management Tasks

Participation in Project Management Tasks				
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Helped set goals for a community effort or project	6%	20%	41%	33%
Helped develop tasks, timelines, and assignments for a community effort or project	12%	20%	37%	31%
Participated in developing the budget for a community effort or project	19%	25%	31%	25%
Helped to publicize or promote some community effort or project	9%	16%	35%	40%
Helped plan a community fundraising effort	15%	20%	37%	28%
Helped involve stakeholders in a community project or effort	19%	17%	39%	25%
Helped to recruit and retain volunteers	14%	29%	32%	25%
Helped seek outside support for a community effort or project	14%	25%	33%	28%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

Appendix 5: Distribution of Responses for Barriers to Skill Application

<b>Barriers to Skill Application</b>				
	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
I felt “burned out” or discouraged by the class project	23%	42%	28%	7%
Personal concerns and demands (health, family, work) limited my time for community leadership activities	11%	31%	44%	14%
My community has been overwhelmed by economic, social, or environmental challenges that are out of our control	12%	50%	28%	10%
I felt overwhelmed by all there is to do in my community	15%	58%	23%	4%
Community work has been too frustrating for me	32%	54%	13%	1%
I was heavily engaged in community work before the Ford Leadership class and couldn’t take on more afterwards	15%	53%	27%	5%
I felt “closed out” of the leadership structure in my community	32%	53%	11%	4%
I have not been personally interested in the specific efforts or issues facing my community	47%	46%	6%	1%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

## Appendix 6: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Civic Activities

Participation in Civic Activities				
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Worked informally with others to address community issues	4%	16%	45%	34%
Worked as a member in a formal group or organization that addresses community issues	12%	16%	28%	44%
Helped mobilize community members to work on a common goal	10%	23%	37%	30%
Advocated for a policy or issue in your community	16%	21%	32%	31%
Participated in long-term community decision-making or governance processes	23%	22%	28%	27%
Participated on the board of any local service agency or organization	22%	13%	21%	44%
Volunteered in your community	2%	8%	32%	58%
Voted in elections	9%	1%	14%	76%
Attended any public hearings, town hall meetings, community forums, or city council meetings	10%	16%	37%	37%
Donated money, services, materials, or food to support a community effort, project or program	3%	10%	35%	52%
Helped raise money and collect materials to support a community effort, project, or program	6%	16%	42%	36%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

## Appendix 7: Means, Standard Deviations, and Cohen's *d* for Organizational Knowledge Concept Groups

Knowledge Concept Groups and Items	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen's <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Strategic Planning</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2.31</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.74</b>
Clarifying your organization's vision and mission	103	2.52	0.80	3.54	0.67	1.01	0.58
Establishing organizational goals and objectives	103	2.44	0.74	3.43	0.69	0.99	0.57
Effectively communicating your organization's message and mission	103	2.45	0.79	3.53	0.66	1.08	0.65
Analyzing the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats facing your organization (SWOT analysis)	103	1.94	0.85	3.31	0.64	1.37	0.70
Developing a strategic plan for your organization	102	2.01	0.83	3.21	0.72	1.20	0.64
Helping your organization fulfill its mission	102	2.47	0.77	3.47	0.64	1.00	0.58
<b>Operational Management</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>0.68</b>
Specifying board responsibilities	102	2.12	0.87	3.29	0.77	1.18	0.60
Creating effective board nomination and recruitment procedures	101	1.91	0.85	3.08	0.74	1.17	0.61
Communicating board responsibilities to board members	101	2.06	0.88	3.29	0.73	1.23	0.63
Understanding the purpose and use of bylaws and governing documents	102	2.30	1.01	3.31	0.78	1.00	0.51
Improving financial management systems	101	2.16	0.90	3.02	0.84	0.86	0.51
Developing and managing budgets	101	2.38	0.91	3.09	0.76	0.71	0.42
Planning for future leadership (succession planning)	101	1.85	0.86	3.02	0.80	1.17	0.60
<b>Resource Development &amp; Management</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2.04</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>3.12</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>0.68</b>
Establishing human resource management plan (employees & volunteers)	98	1.95	0.84	3.06	0.73	1.11	0.65
Establishing a resource development plan	100	1.86	0.75	3.06	0.75	1.20	0.62
Planning for future sustainability of an organization	101	2.06	0.82	3.03	0.79	0.98	0.55
Knowing how to fundraise in the community	103	2.20	0.83	3.33	0.69	1.12	0.61
Identifying grants appropriate for your organization's mission	98	2.10	0.95	3.14	0.87	1.04	0.50
Maintaining an effective volunteer base	100	2.01	0.81	3.11	0.79	1.10	0.58
<b>Single Item</b>							
Understanding the core competencies (i.e. strategic planning, organizational leadership, resource development, resource management) of effective organizational management	102	2.10	0.80	3.36	0.73	1.26	0.62
<b>Organizational Management Knowledge Overall</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2.15</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>3.23</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>0.74</b>

Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. **All results were significant at  $p < .05$** , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen's *d* statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect.



# Evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program 2009 Report



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**Evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program,  
2009 Report**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF 2009 FORD INSTITUTE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

In 2009, The Oregon State University evaluation team focused its evaluation of the impact of the Ford Institute Leadership Program on a sub-set of the evaluation questions that will ultimately gauge the impact of the program on individuals, organizations, and communities. In particular, questions which address the short- and mid-term impacts of the program on individuals were the focus of 2009 evaluation efforts.

## **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program develop effective community leaders who apply what they learned?**

An analysis of the three types of skills taught during the Leadership Development class found that graduates use leadership skills most often in the year after graduating (about once a month); followed by community building skills and project management skills, which are used occasionally. Leadership graduates use their leadership skills in a variety of settings, most often in community settings and within organizations.

The majority of graduates use their leadership, community building, and project management skills more often after the class than they did before, and they feel that the class contributed significantly to their ability to function as leaders in this way. In particular, graduates feel that the class equips them with skills and tools, teaches them to appreciate people with different personalities, gives them self- confidence, provides them an important opportunity to network, and builds their community awareness – all of which help them to be better community leaders in the year after the class.

Graduates who feel highly skilled or likely to do activities at the conclusion of the class actually engage in the activities more often than their classmates who felt less skilled or likely after the class ends.

Some participants describe barriers that prevent fully engaging in community work, including: personal concerns and demands; external challenges faced by the community; being heavily engaged in community work before the class; and feeling burned out from the class project (due to its length/duration or lack of participation by other class members). Many graduates engage in community work and leadership in spite of barriers they encounter.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?**

The positive effects of the Leadership Development class on participants' civic engagement are evident during the first year following the class. Graduates describe their activity in civic life after the class as occasional. They volunteer, vote, work in community groups, fundraise for local causes, and promote local events. The extent of civic engagement activity increased for about half of graduates, and the majority of participants attribute their ability to engage effectively in civic life to the leadership class itself.

The leadership class successfully builds the motivation of participants to engage in civic life, and those who are highly motivated at the end of the training are more active the following year than their less motivated peers. In addition, the larger the Leadership Development class size was and the more organizations an individual is affiliated with, the more frequently participants tend to engage in civic life in the year following the class.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?**

Focus groups in five different hub-communities revealed that the Leadership Program has helped build networks of community leaders in rural communities. Past participants feel that the number, diversity, and intensity of their social networks have increased because of their involvement with the Leadership Program. These networks have helped participants personally, professionally, and in their community work.

## **Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

The capacity of individuals to have an effect on community organizations is being built by the program through the Effective Organizations (EO) training. EO participants feel that their knowledge of strategic planning, operational management, and resource development and management (particularly strategic planning) is increased by the training. In fact, participants who had the least amount of knowledge about these topics before the training felt that it increased their knowledge more than those who had greater knowledge at the onset. Many participants feel the training gave them confidence to use organizational management skills and tools, but also gave them access to a greater network of organizations and individuals to collaborate with or draw on as resources later.

Participants expect to apply the skills and tools they learned to become more effective in their organizations, implement effective organizational strategies including strategic planning and board management, increase the role of their organizations in the community, and discuss what they have learned with others in their organizations. Participants reported that the training results in the greatest increases in their likelihoods of participating in the strategic recruitment of board members and discussing strategies for improving organizational effectiveness with others at their organization.

Effective Organizations participants are optimistic that the training will help their organizations become stronger in the long run. Primarily, they feel their organizations will become more focused, have better functioning boards, be better able to work together as an organization, be more sustainable into the future, and be better at obtaining and managing resources. These findings suggest changes and improvements are likely in organizations, so long as training participants engage in the organizational management process and are able to affect operations. Future evaluation efforts will focus on assessing the changes that are actually made in organizations as a result of the Leadership Program.

## **Suggestions for the future**

Ford Institute Leadership Program participants are overwhelmingly grateful to The Ford Family Foundation for providing educational experiences and fiscal support to their communities. Suggestions for improvements related to class projects, the participant nomination process, and interactions between cohorts. Suggestions for continuing support related to providing opportunities for regional and local collaboration, additional training, scholarships, and all-youth classes or trainings.

## **2010 Evaluation Plan**

The next year of evaluation will assess the impact of the Leadership Program on all past participants (2003-2008). An assessment of trainer effectiveness and the possible relation of trainer to outcomes will be investigated. Case studies of specific communities will untangle the relation of local initiatives, collaboration, and leadership development to community vitality.

# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

In 2003, The Ford Family Foundation initiated a comprehensive training program designed to increase the vitality of rural communities in Oregon and Siskiyou County, California. The core strategy was training to increase the leadership skills of individuals from rural communities, the effectiveness of rural community organizations, and the degree of collaboration in rural communities. From 2003 to 2009, over 2,500 individuals from 56 communities have participated in the Leadership Program.

In 2007, the Ford Family Foundation contracted with a team of evaluators from Oregon State University to design and conduct an outcome evaluation focused on the results of the leadership training program. Specifically the evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program was to examine the extent to which the program builds:

- More effective community leaders,
- Stronger networks of leaders within and across rural communities,
- Stronger community organizations and networks of organizations, and ultimately
- Vital rural communities.

In order to assess these outcomes, the team of evaluators from Oregon State University (OSU) began working collaboratively with the Ford Institute for Community Building to design a robust outcome evaluation. This evaluation began with the review and analysis of all evaluation data that had been collected from 2003 through 2007. The OSU team developed a comprehensive written report summarizing the evaluation findings for 2003-2007<sup>1</sup>. Submitted in January 2008, this 84-page report included extensive recommendations for both future programming and future evaluation of the Leadership Program.

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<sup>1</sup> Clara Pratt, Lena Etuk, Cheryl Peters, Sally Bowman, Denise Rennekamp, and Michaella Sektnan (January 31, 2008) *Evaluation Report Ford Institute Leadership Program, 2003-2007*. Oregon State University, Extension Family and Community Development Program.



Based on the evaluation recommendations contained in the 2007 report, in 2008 the OSU evaluation team established a systematic evaluation structure for the Leadership Program. The system was designed with the input of Ford Institute for Community Building staff and other stakeholders. Logic models and research questions were designed to clarify the desired program outcomes and indicators of the leadership training for individuals, cohorts, organizations, and communities. In addition, reliable and valid data collection tools were designed to assess attributes of and outcomes for individuals. Data collection methods yielded both quantitative (statistical) and qualitative information about the impact of the Leadership Program on individuals. In April 2009, the Ford Institute for Community Building received a report which explained the findings from 2008 and recommendations for future evaluation of the Leadership Program.<sup>2</sup>

### **Major Accomplishments**

Based on the recommendations laid out in the 2008 report, the OSU evaluation team focused its efforts in 2009 on answering a core sub-set of evaluation questions and establishing data collection and analysis systems to answer another sub-set of evaluation questions for 2010.

Although insight into additional questions was also gained, data analysis focused on exploring the following research questions in 2009:

- Does the Leadership Program develop effective community leaders who apply what they learned?
- Does the Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?
- Does the Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?
- Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?
- Does the Leadership Program transform individual participants, organizations, and communities above and beyond the intended outcomes?

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<sup>2</sup> Michaella Sektnan, Lena Etuk, Clara Pratt, Sally Bowman, and Denise Rennekamp. April 2009. "Evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program: 2008 Report"

- Do outcomes vary by aspects/attributes of the program, individual participant, organization, or community?

In order to answer these research questions, data were collected and analyzed from different groups of Leadership Program participants using quantitative and qualitative methodologies:

- Information was collected from Spring and Fall 2009 Leadership Development (LD) and Effective Organizations (EO) training participants using survey instruments designed in 2008.
- A survey instrument was designed, pre-tested, and implemented to follow up with Fall 2008 LD participants 12 months after they completed the training.
- Focus groups with past participants were conducted to assess the impact of the Leadership Program on networking and collaboration.

In 2009, the OSU evaluation team also designed, pre-tested, and implemented a survey of past participants (2003 through Spring 2008) to assess the longer-term impact of the Leadership Program. This dataset will be analyzed in 2010 to answer a number of evaluation questions including:

- When do changes in leadership, community organizations, and/or community vitality occur and are they sustained over time?

In the latter portion of 2009, the team received and assembled a new Leadership Development trainer dataset to assess participants' ratings of trainer effectiveness and explore any association between trainer type and leadership outcomes. The analysis of this Leadership Development trainer dataset will occur in 2010.

Finally, in 2009 the OSU team planned and designed a case study approach of specific communities which will be implemented in 2010 to answer these questions:

- Does local action, collaboration, and/or leadership have an impact on the local economy, society, and environment in rural communities? How has the Leadership Program contributed to these outcomes?

## **METHODS**

The following sections outline the qualitative and quantitative methods used to assess the outcomes of the Leadership Program in 2009. Results are discussed on page 18.

### **Leadership Development 12-Month Follow-Up Survey**

In order to gauge the application of leadership skills over time, a 12-month follow-up survey was created by the OSU evaluation team for distribution to all Fall 2008 cohort participants. This survey contained questions concerning the application of leadership, community building, and project management skills, as well as participation in civic activities, and perceived challenges to community leadership.

#### ***Procedure***

The survey was implemented using a multi-method approach. Starting in late January 2010, the survey was distributed via the internet using SurveyMonkey™ online survey software. All members of the target population were sent an email informing them of their selection for the survey, along with an explanation of the survey, and a link to the SurveyMonkey™ survey. Upon clicking on the SurveyMonkey™ link, respondents were directed to a web-page that again explained the purpose of survey, but also included an informed consent check-box.

Respondents who agreed to participate (by checking the informed consent box) were directed to the first page of the survey, while those who did not agree were directed to a screen with the OSU evaluation team contact information and removed from the survey.

In order to track the survey responses by individuals, each survey respondent was assigned a unique survey number. Individuals who did not complete the survey received specific follow-ups. In particular, two reminder emails were sent to participants – one week and two weeks after the initial email.

Three and a half weeks after the initial email, the target population database was matched to the survey number of the returned surveys. Individuals who returned surveys via SurveyMonkey™ were marked as completed and removed from the population database. Those

who had not returned surveys were sent a survey packet via US mail. The packet contained the following documents:

- A cover letter explaining survey
- 2 copies of the informed consent form (required by OSU Internal Review Board)
- The 12-month follow-up survey
- A stamped and pre-addressed return envelope for the completed survey

One week after the survey was delivered to an individual via mail, a follow-up thank you and reminder postcard was mailed. The postcard served to remind those who had forgotten, to return their survey as soon as possible, and to thank those who had already returned their survey. Three weeks after the initial survey packet was mailed to individuals, the survey number of respondents who had returned the survey were removed from the list. Those remaining in the database received a second follow-up letter and replacement survey packet one week later. The mailed questionnaire contained the exact same questions as the online survey. Any deviations between the two survey forms were merely due to formatting constraints.

Data collection for the 12-month follow-up survey extended from late January to early April 2010. At the completion of the survey implementation, OSU employees entered the information from the completed paper questionnaires into the SurveyMonkey™ database. In addition to the survey number mentioned above, participants were also asked to create a unique identifier that they can recall for future surveys (first and middle initial, date of birth, e.g. JS120367) when completing this survey instrument. This ID code allows the OSU research team to match participant's responses on the 12-month follow-up with previous surveys completed by each individual (LD Outcome Survey and Application).

### ***Response Rate***

The 12-month follow-up survey was sent to all participants from the Fall 2008 Leadership Development classes, for a total population size of 302. At least one source of contact

information (email address) was available for all but one participant. In the first round, 264 were sent invitations to participate via email. Of those, a total of 150 replied online using SurveyMonkey™. Subsequently, 167 participants were sent the survey via US mail, with 57 replying by mail. Nine (3%) participants opted out of participation by either selecting the opt out link in SurveyMonkey™, declining consent on the survey itself, or notifying the OSU evaluation team that they did not wish to participate. Combining both collection methods, a total of 207 participants responded to the survey, for a response rate of 69%.

Data from the 12-month survey were then matched with data previously collected throughout the evaluation, using the individual's unique ID code. This included data from the Leadership Development (LD) class application, the LD 4<sup>th</sup> week-end outcome survey, and FICB databases. By combining the data, the evaluation is able to capture a more comprehensive picture of individuals that participate in the program and what factors are related to program outcomes. A total of 163 Fall 2008 cohort members had data from all sources. Throughout the report, findings related to the leadership development class will be based on this sub-population who had data from all sources.

### ***Data Analysis***

Quantitative data from the Leadership Development 12-month follow-up survey were analyzed to assess a number of outcomes:

- Application of skills and ideas emphasized in the Leadership Program
- Change in activity level
- Settings of skill application
- The relationship between intention to apply skills and actual application
- The contribution of the Leadership Program to the activities of past participants
- Barriers to leadership

In order to evaluate these outcomes, quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive techniques including calculating means, running cross-tabulations, conducting dependent t-tests, running correlations, and doing Ordinary Least Squares regression. Dependent t-tests

were used to calculate whether there was a significant difference between the average frequency of specific skills or activities over the past year. Significant results indicate there is a statistical difference in how often different types of skills or activities were used ( $p < .05$ ).

In order to assess the impact of the individual participant characteristics on leadership outcomes, data on 163 individual participants for whom data from all sources were available was analyzed with correlations and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) methods. Correlation analysis reveals the simple association between two variables, such as being a public official and frequency of public speaking. While this simple association can indicate if within the data, participants with a particular personal attribute tend to have different outcomes than those without the attribute, the correlation does not reveal the size of the effect and may incorrectly lead the researcher to believe that there is a direct relationship between the two variables. For these reasons, OLS regression methods are also used to understand the relationship between individual characteristics and leadership outcomes. OLS regression examines the extent to which a unit increase in an independent variable, like income, affects the outcome variable, net of other factors that vary across individuals. OLS has the power to hold certain factors that vary across individuals constant, in order to isolate a “more pure” effect of an independent variable on the key outcome variable. OLS is useful and necessary if multiple independent variables are correlated with each other to some extent. OLS regression was also used to examine the relationship between participants’ responses to the 4<sup>th</sup> weekend Leadership Development survey regarding their intent to apply skills or do certain activities and the frequency of their activity 12 months later.

Qualitative data from the 12-month follow-up survey were analyzed to identify themes that reinforced the quantitative findings or revealed additional trends. Participant responses to a series of open-ended questions on the survey provided the source of this qualitative data. For each question, the responses that participants made were read by members of the evaluation team and assessed for themes. Themes correspond to ideas or concepts that are raised by more than one respondent. Naturally, one respondent can make a comment that addresses

more than one theme. Thus written responses themselves are the unit of analysis, not individual respondents.

Once the themes were identified and coded from the responses, the number of responses made in reference to each theme was tallied by the researchers. This tally provides a sense of the significance of the theme among the respondents. Themes that are mentioned very often therefore get more weight in the discussion than those that are mentioned only occasionally.

### **Leadership Program Focus Groups**

In order to explore the impact of the Leadership Program on networking among individuals and their communities, focus groups were conducted in rural communities around the state in 2009. Face-to-face focus groups have been a method used in social science over the last 20 years for discovery of patterns and trends that emerge from group interaction.

Networking is a way of describing how people interact with one another in various social settings. The focus groups centered on three types of networks:

- **Social networks** describe personal relationships people have in their personal life, such as friendships or acquaintances.
- **Professional or work networks** describe the relationships people have through their employment, such as with co-workers or acquaintances made through work.
- **Organizational or community work networks** describe the relationships people have with those with whom they volunteer or work on community projects, such as members of community boards.

All of these networks would be expected to overlap and/or intersect with each other. Figure 1 was shown to participants as a visual depiction of the reality that social, professional, and community networks may overlap in smaller communities. For example, sometimes these networks overlap when co-workers become close friends or join each other in volunteering on a community project or when an individual helps connect a friend with a job.

**Figure 1: Overlap of Social Networks**



In 2009, five focus groups were conducted with past Leadership Program participants in these communities: Baker City, Enterprise, Keno, Philomath, and Rainier. Focus group participants could have participated in one or all of the three components of the Leadership Program: Leadership Development, Community Collaborations, or Effective Organizations. In total, thirty-eight community members (16 male; 22 female) participated in the five focus groups. Participants were asked a range of questions regarding their experiences with the Leadership Program. The focus groups asked participants about changes in each area of networking as a result of participation in the leadership program:

- As a result of your participation in FILP, how did your social networks change?
- As a result of your participation in FILP, how did your work, school & professional networks change?
- As a result of your participation in FILP, how did your community networks change?

In each case, a series of follow-up probes were asked:

Can you give examples of how you...

- Formed new relationships with community members (increase in number of relationships)
- Strengthened existing relationships (more frequent interaction, ...)



- Formed relationships with people that are different from you in terms of age, economic status, culture

There were supplementary networking questions that were addressed, to varying degrees, depending on how the group conversation flowed:

- To what extent do your networks overlap and influence each other?
- What benefits have you experienced because of the changes in your networks?
- Have there been any drawbacks to the changes in your networks?
- What did Ford do to facilitate these changes in your social, community, and work networks?
- Have there been changes in your networking with individuals outside of your community?

### ***Data Analysis***

The focus groups were recorded and transcribed. Multiple raters read the transcripts, discussed the coding schemes, and wrote and rewrote the analysis of the focus groups. The flow of questions was the framework for organizing the results. Issues voiced by each focus group were analyzed horizontally, looking for common themes across the groups. An effort was made to discover common themes, but also to look for dissenting opinions.

### **Effective Organizations 2009 Participant Survey**

In 2009, Effective Organizations training participants were asked to complete evaluation surveys on the first and second weekends of the training. On the first weekend, participants were asked to complete a background survey with questions about age, gender, previous leadership or organizational management training, organizational involvement, and other types of personal characteristics. On the second weekend of the training, participants received an outcome survey with questions regarding their knowledge about and behavior concerning organizational planning and management before the training and after the training. These surveys underwent cognitive pretesting in the summer of 2008 and were piloted in two communities in the fall of 2008.

The outcome survey followed a retrospective pretest format, with questions about participants' knowledge and behavior before and after the training. For each item, respondents scored their knowledge on a scale of one to four, where one was "not knowledgeable" and four was "very knowledgeable." In the first section of the survey, participants were asked to rate their knowledge after the training and before the training for 20 organizational management skills.

Examples include:

- Developing a strategic plan for your organization
- Specifying board responsibilities
- Developing and managing budgets
- Establishing human resource management plan (employees & volunteers)
- Maintaining an effective volunteer base
- Helping your organization fulfill its mission

In the second section of the survey, participants were asked to rate their likelihood of engaging in 16 behaviors related to organizational management after the training and before the training. Again, the range of the scale was from one to four, where one was "not likely" and four was "very likely". Examples of items include:

- Participate in fundraising efforts for your organization
- Work with other organizations that have similar goals to your organization
- Promote positive board functioning (e.g. communication and decision making)
- Work to increase the role of your organization in improving the community
- Assist your organization in clarifying its mission, goals, and objectives
- Monitor the fiscal health of your organization

In the final section of the survey, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions to solicit some general thoughts and considerations about the impact of the Effective Organizations training on themselves and their organizations. One question asked participants to explain the specific changes they intend to make in their organizations as a result of the training. Another question asked individuals to consider the impact their participation in the

training will have on their organization in the long term. The last question asked participants to describe the impact the training had on them personally.

### ***Survey Administration***

The Effective Organizations background and outcome surveys were administered by the staff of the training facilitator organizations: Rural Development Initiatives, Inc., Human Systems, and TACS. In the spring of 2009, Effective Organizations training facilitators were provided electronic versions of the background and outcome surveys to be printed by their staff, a script to be used in explaining the survey to participants, and instructions on how to administer the survey. The OSU evaluation team spent about an hour and a half with the facilitators explaining the protocol of the survey. In short, trainers were asked to hand out the EO background survey on the Friday of the first EO training weekend and hand out the outcome survey on the Saturday of the second week-end (the final day) of the training. It was recommended that the background survey be handed out around the time the Ford Institute for Community Building is discussed, and trainers were strongly encouraged to hand out the outcome survey after the last module of the training, but not during lunch, and before participants were formally dismissed for the day. Training participants were to be instructed to place their completed surveys in an envelope addressed to the Ford Institute for Community Building. The surveys were then entered by Institute staff using EpiData open-source data entry software. The electronic EpiData files were then sent to the OSU evaluation team for analysis.

Attendance at both weekends of Effective Organizations training is not mandatory and, according to the trainers with whom OSU faculty consulted before implementing the surveys, there tend to be notable differences in attendance between the first and second weekends of the training. For this reason, training facilitators were also instructed to send a list of absentees to the Ford Institute so that the Institute staff could send surveys to these individuals.

## ***Response Rate***

In the spring and fall of 2009, 11 communities participated in Effective Organizations training:

- Chiloquin
- Grant County
- Harney County
- La Pine
- McKenzie River
- Newberg
- North Curry County
- Sisters
- South Lane
- White City – Upper Rogue
- Wild Rivers Coast

OSU faculty members received survey data from ten of these communities from the Ford Institute, with surveys from South Lane missing. Table 1 displays the total number of people who registered for the EO trainings as well as the number of surveys received from each community.

**Table 1**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Effective Organizations Training Registrants (#)</b>	<b>Background Survey Respondents (#)</b>	<b>Outcome Survey Respondents (#)</b>	<b>Respondents to both the Background &amp; Outcome Surveys (#)</b>
Chiloquin	24	8	15	6
Grant County	43	--	26	--
Harney County	26	19	19	16
La Pine	28	24	22	16
McKenzie River	12	11	9	6
Newberg	21	17	16	14
North Curry County	28	22	16	12
Sisters	30	--	18	--
White City – Upper Rogue	35	23	21	14
Wild Rivers Coast	49	32	26	19
South Lane	36	--	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>103</b>

As Table 1 shows, there were discrepancies between the number of people who registered for the training, the number who completed the background survey, and the number who completed the outcome survey, despite efforts to contact absentees. Also, due to the timing of the implementation of the surveys, the participants in the Grant County and Sisters did not have the opportunity to complete the background survey. Thus, in total, 103 people completed both the background and outcome surveys, while 156 completed the background survey and 187 completed the outcome survey. The response rates varied accordingly as well; 46% completed the background survey, 56% completed the outcome survey, and 31% completed both surveys. Throughout this report, the findings we discuss will relate only to the sub-population of EO participants who completed both surveys (N = 103).

### ***Analysis Variables***

In order to analyze the data in a clear and intuitive way, Effective Organizations outcome survey items were grouped based on their conceptual linkages. In the knowledge section of the survey, 19 of the 20 survey items were grouped into three categories: operational management and leadership, strategic planning, and resource development and management. One survey item encompassed all three of these topics, so it was not included in these three concept groups. In the behavior section of the survey, three survey items were grouped into one category collaboration/networking while the remaining 13 items were kept separate. Using these concept groups, analysis of changes in knowledge can be done without running separate analyses on each individual item. Table 2 describes the three concept groups that were formed from the 19 survey items in the knowledge section.

**Table 2**

<b>Knowledge Concept Groups</b>
<b>Concept Group and Definition</b>
<b>Strategic Planning</b>
Clarifying an organizational vision and mission; Establishing goals and objectives for the organization; Analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the organization; Developing a strategic plan; Helping the organization fulfill its mission
<b>Operational Management &amp; Leadership</b>
Creating effective board nomination and recruitment procedures; Specifying and communicating board responsibilities; Developing and managing budgets; Succession planning
<b>Resource Development &amp; Management</b>
Identifying appropriate grants; Fundraising in the community; Establishing a resource development plan; Establishing a human resource management plan; Maintaining an effective volunteer base

Table 3 describes the collaboration/networking concept group that was formed from items in the behavior section.

**Table 3**

<b>Behavior Concept Group</b>
<b>Concept Group and Definition</b>
<b>Collaboration/Networking</b>
Working with other organizations that have similar organizational goals; Working with other organizations that do not have similar goals; Developing networks and partnerships with other organizations

Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were used to measure the internal reliability of the concept groups. Alphas indicate how well a set of variables or items fit together to represent one dimension or concept. Alpha coefficients range from zero to one; an alpha of .60 to .70 indicates an acceptable level of reliability and .80 or higher indicates good reliability. All knowledge concept groups were found to have an acceptable internal reliability (for alpha statistics, see Appendix 1).

### ***Data Analysis***

Quantitative data from the Effective Organizations background and outcome surveys were analyzed to assess whether participants reported statistically significant changes in knowledge

and behaviors as a result of the training. In addition, further analysis was conducted to see if changes in outcomes varied by attributes of the individual. Qualitative data from the outcome survey were analyzed to identify themes that reinforced the quantitative findings or revealed additional trends in knowledge, behavior, or organizational change.

### *Changes in Knowledge and Behavior*

Outcome data were analyzed for all 103 EO training participants who completed both the outcome and background surveys. Participant scores from the retrospective pre and post were compared for the analysis of change in knowledge and behavior. Dependent t-tests were used to calculate whether there was a significant change in the participant reports before and after the training. Significant results indicate there is a statistical difference between the means for the pretest and posttest ( $p < .05$ ). In addition, a Cohen's  $d$  statistic was used to estimate the size of the impact of the training on this change. Cohen's  $d$  scores less than .40 indicate a small effect, scores from .40 to .74 indicate a moderate effect, scores .75 to 1.44 indicate a large effect, and scores greater than 1.45 indicate a very large effect.

### *Participant Attributes and Effective Organizations Training Outcomes*

In order to assess the impact of the individual participant characteristics on Effective Organizations training outcomes, data on 103 individual participants who completed the background and outcome surveys were analyzed with correlations and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression methods. Correlation analysis reveals the simple association between two variables, such as being a public official and knowledge of organizational strategic planning. OLS regression methods reveal the relationship between individual characteristics and EO training outcomes. Through OLS methods it is possible to examine the extent to which a unit increase in an independent variable, like income, affects the outcome variable, net of other factors that vary across individuals.

For the analysis, outcome variables for each participant were computed using the post-test scores across the survey items that correspond to the outcome concept or overall section. For example, for the participant's overall knowledge level after the training, an average post-test

score was calculated for each individual participant. To create this score, the post-training knowledge scores (that range from 1 to 4) were added together for all 20 questions on the survey that relate to knowledge and divided by 20. Each individual participant then has her own overall average knowledge value. This number is then regressed on the factors hypothesized to explain the variation in overall average change in knowledge across all participants. Average scores were also computed for overall behaviors, as well as the concept group within the behavior section.

### *Open-ended Responses*

In order to gain additional insight into the impact of the Effective Organizations training on participants, a series of open-ended questions were asked on the survey. As on the Leadership Development 12-month follow-up survey, for each question the responses of participants were read by members of the evaluation team and assessed for themes.

Once the themes were identified among the comments, they were given an overarching name and then the number of comments made in reference to each theme was tallied by the researchers. This tally provides a sense of the significance of the theme among the respondents. Themes that are mentioned very often therefore get more weight in the discussion than those that are mentioned only occasionally.



## RESULTS

To understand the impact of the Leadership Program on participants, a series of research questions were employed in 2009. The findings of this examination are discussed in the following sections, organized by question.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program develop effective community leaders?**

In order for leaders to be effective, they must first gain the skills and then apply them in their lives and communities. As effective leadership development follows this sequential pattern, it has been important to structure the evaluation in such a way to reflect this time-order. At the end of the Fall 2008 leadership class, participants completed an outcome survey assessing their competence (as a result of the training) and intent to apply the skills. The 12-month follow-up survey was then implemented one year later to see if and how the skills were indeed applied. Data summarized here is from the 163 participants that completed the leadership development application, the outcome survey at the conclusion of the leadership class, and 12-month follow-up survey.

#### ***Do participants feel more competent as leaders?***

In the 2008 Evaluation Report, Fall 2008 participants were found to be more competent in leadership skills directly after the training. In summary, participants indicated that the training helped increase their knowledge, skills, and motivation. In particular, they reported more confidence to lead and more willingness to work in their communities toward positive change. Participants reported they used these skills to work more effectively on their class projects and in their community organizations, in their workplaces, and with their families. In addition, participants who reported the least amount of competence and leadership behavior at the beginning of the training showed the most improvement. Overall, participants reported significantly higher levels of competence in leadership skills and significantly higher likelihoods of engaging in leadership behavior as a result of the training. To build on these findings, further evaluation was conducted to examine the effectiveness of these community leaders as they moved out of the class and into the community.

### ***How do participants apply what they learned during FILP?***

Application of leadership skills was gauged through responses to the 12-month follow-up survey conducted early in 2010. Fall 2008 participants were asked to report their application of leadership, community building, and project management skills during the first year after the training. Participants were from a total of 13 hub-communities, including Chiloquin, Jefferson County, La Pine, Lake County, Monmouth/Independence, Newberg, North Curry County, Philomath, South Lincoln County, Sutherlin, Union County, Wild Rivers Coast (South Curry County), and Winston/Dillard. Demographic characteristics of this sample did not vary significantly from those reported in the 2008 Report. Table 4 summarizes the demographic and background characteristics of this sample.

**Table 4**

<b>Mean, Standard Deviation, and Percentages of Demographic and Background Characteristics</b>			
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Years in the community	163	14.21	13.56
Years of education completed	163	14.93	2.88
Income <sup>1</sup>	160	\$66,390.00	\$38,521.00
Number of organizations <sup>2</sup>	163	2.74	1.47
Average hours per month work with organizations	144	12.83	13.33
<b>Gender</b>			
Gender	163	67% Female	33% Male
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>			
Race/ethnicity	162	90% White	11% Other
<b>Employed for pay</b>			
Employed for pay	105	89% Yes	11% No
<b>College degree (Associate's or higher)</b>			
College degree (Associate's or higher)	163	58% Yes	42% No
<b>Elected official</b>			
Elected official	163	20% Yes	80% No
<b>Previous leadership experience</b>			
Previous leadership experience	163	58% Yes	42% No
<sup>1</sup> Mean of midpoint of income categories, <sup>2</sup> Number of organizations as reported on the application, limit of 5.			

### **Frequency of Application**

On the 12 month follow-up survey, respondents were asked to report how often they engaged in a variety of leadership skills and behaviors in the past year, since the completion of the

leadership development class. Items on the survey were grouped into three main areas: leadership skills, community building activities, and project management tasks.

### *Leadership Skills*

On the 12-month survey, training participants were asked how often they had applied 11 specific leadership skills since completing the training. For each item, respondents scored their application of leadership skills on a scale of one to six, where one was “never”, two was “1-3 times”, three was “4-6 times”, four was “once a month”, five was “weekly” and six was “daily”. Leadership skills were divided into three sections reflecting the ability of participants to: communicate effectively, work with others, and network. Table 5 lists the means and standard deviations for the frequency of skills application. The higher the mean, the more frequently, on average, participants have been doing the activity.

**Table 5**

<b>Application of Leadership Skills: Means and Standard Deviations</b>			
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Communicate Effectively</b>	162	4.35	0.87
Used “appreciative inquiry” to emphasize the positive aspects of a situation	162	5.30	0.87
Given constructive feedback to another person	161	4.42	1.29
Used active listening skills to understand another person’s ideas	162	4.35	0.87
Given a speech or presentation to a group of people	161	4.20	1.33
<b>Work with Others</b>	162	3.94	1.01
Worked effectively with different personality types	162	5.26	0.88
Worked to build consensus within a group	160	3.83	1.24
Facilitated group discussions	162	3.77	1.36
Used effective meeting techniques to guide a meeting	162	3.49	1.39
Used conflict resolution processes	162	3.38	1.47
<b>Network</b>	162	3.66	1.26
Networked with others to address a community issue or problem	161	3.76	1.35
Networked with others to advance personally or professionally	161	3.58	1.49
<b>Leadership Skills Overall</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>0.85</b>
Scale ranged from 1 to 6, where 1 was “never”, 2 was “1-3 times”, 3 was “4-6 times”, 4 was “once a month”, 5 was “weekly” and 6 was “daily”.			

Overall, participants reported that they had applied leadership skills about once a month over the past year (mean = 4.04). There were significant differences in the frequency of application depending on the type of skill, however. Skills related to communicating effectively were applied the most often, with an overall average of at least once a month. Among these effective communication skills, appreciative inquiry was the most frequently applied, with participants reporting they used it weekly. Giving a speech or public presentation and active listening were the least frequently applied, on average, in this group of leadership skills. Interestingly, while the mean for active listening was among the lowest in the communication skill set, only a very low percentage of participants (2%) reported that they used the skill less than three times over the past year.

Following communication skills, skills for working with others were applied by participants just under once a month (mean = 3.94). Working effectively with different personality types was done significantly more often than the other skills, with the majority of participants reporting that they applied those skills weekly or daily (85%). Skills applied the least often in this skill set included effective meeting techniques and conflict resolution processes. These were only applied an average of four to six times during the past year by Fall 2008 leadership development class participants.

Finally, participants reported networking with others least often of these leadership skill sets; on average, four to six times during the past year (mean = 3.66). There was no significant difference between the level of networking to address community issues and the level of networking for personal or professional gain. Although applied the least often on average, one-third of participants reported networking weekly or daily. For a complete table of the distribution of responses for each leadership skill item, see Appendix 2.

#### *Change in Activity*

Results of the 12-month follow-up clearly indicate that participants are frequently using the skills they learned from the training. Yet, does their activity level reflect changes made as a result of participation in the leadership class? In order to answer this question, participants

were asked if they had done these leadership activities over the past year more often, less often, or about the same compared to before participating in the Ford leadership class. Overall, the majority of participants (67%) reported that they had applied these leadership skills more often during the year since the class. Only one percent of participants reported that they used the skills less frequently over the past year.

While the majority of participants reported increased use of leadership skills as a result of the training, further analysis explored the extent of change for participants who applied the skills very frequently. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to indicate high activity individuals. This was equivalent to applying the skills once a month or more. Of those who were highly active, 70% used the skills more often than before the training, with the remaining 30% using the skills at the same level as before the training. No participants who rated themselves at engaging in leadership skills at high levels stated that this level was less often than before the training. Therefore, for the majority of individuals who were using their leadership skills a lot 12 months after the class, this high outcome resulted from participation in the class.

#### *Settings of Skill Application*

In addition to the frequency of skill application, the 12-month survey also asked participants about settings in which leadership skills were applied. Specifically, the survey asked whether or not the participant had applied leadership skills with family and friends, at work, in school, in community organizations (e.g., non-profits, membership groups, institutions, local government) or in community or volunteer efforts. Table 6 outlines the percentages of participants that reported applying the skills in each setting.

**Table 6**

<b>Settings of Leadership Skill Application</b>				
	<b>N</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
With family or friends	162	86%	10%	4%
At work	161	79%	4%	17%
In school	160	28%	5%	67%
In community organizations (e.g., non-profits, membership groups, institutions, local government)	160	92%	5%	3%
In community or volunteer efforts	159	94%	4%	2%

As Table 6 illustrates, participants reported applying leadership skills in a variety of settings over the past year. The highest proportion of respondents said they used their leadership skills in the community (in organizations and for community or volunteer efforts), followed by family or friends, and at work. Of those participants attending school ( $n = 53$ ), 85% applied leadership skills in their school settings.

Most participants applied leadership skills in multiple settings. While not all settings applied to each participant, the overwhelming majority of participants (91%) reported applying the skills in three or more of the settings. Less than 3% reported applying skills in none of the settings, with 6% reporting that they applied skills in one or two of the settings.

Of the skills applied in work settings, understanding personality differences, running effective meetings, and conflict resolution were specifically noted as helpful. A few students reported that they found the skills for working with others, such as facilitating group discussions, and skills around fundraising as helpful in their school environment.

Community organizations, such as non-profits, membership groups, institutions, and local government, were also locations in which the majority of Leadership Program participants applied their leadership skills in the last year (92%). Based on comments provided by

participants on the survey, skills related to consensus building, facilitating group discussions, conflict resolution, public speaking, active listening, and working with different personality types were especially helpful to their work with community organizations. In addition to applying specific skills, participants also reported that they took on larger leadership roles or more responsibility in their organizations as a result of the training. One participant even noted that participation in the class opened up a greater network of organizations to be involved with.

As Table 6 shows, 94% of participants reported applying leadership skills in their work on community or volunteer efforts. Respondent comments indicated that having more leadership skills as a result of the class encouraged them to be more involved in community efforts and volunteer more in their community. In particular, participants noted that understanding how to work with different personalities and networking with others has been helpful for their work on community projects.

#### *Leadership Skills Summary*

As the previous discussion of findings reveals, participants on average applied leadership skills frequently in the year after the class. Most participants applied these skills more often in the last 12 months than they did before the class. Indeed, among those who used their skills a lot in the previous year, the majority felt that they increased their activity as a result of the leadership class. The data also indicate that leadership skills are applied in many settings, the most popular being in the community.

#### *Community Building Activities*

In addition to leadership skills, the 12-month follow-up survey asked participants how often they did various activities related to community building in the last year. For each item, respondents scored their application of community building skills on a scale of one to four, where one was “never”, two was “rarely”, three was “occasionally”, and four was “frequently.” Table 7 outlines the types of activities related to community building asked on the survey as well as the means, standard deviations, and percentages of participants who reported doing these activities in various amounts.

**Table 7**

Participation in Community Building Activities: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages						
	N	Mean	SD		Never to Rarely	Occasionally /Frequently
Encouraged others to participate in community issues and/or projects	162	3.36	0.75		12%	88%
Educated yourself about social, economic, or environmental issues in your community	163	3.35	0.79		15%	85%
Worked to improve the social, economic, and/or environmental conditions of your community	163	3.21	0.82		17%	83%
Helped build public awareness of a community issue or problem	163	3.08	0.84		22%	78%
Helped investigate possible solutions to a community issue or problem	162	3.08	0.80		21%	79%
Identified assets in your community	163	2.96	0.82		23%	77%
Sought information about how community decisions would impact the local social, economic, and/or environmental conditions	162	2.87	0.98		32%	68%
Helped define goals or a vision for your community	163	2.84	0.96		35%	65%
Sought opportunities to learn more about community leadership	163	2.82	0.90		23%	77%
<b>Community Building Activities Overall</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>0.68</b>		--	--
Scale ranged from 1 to 4, where 1 was "never", 2 was "rarely", 3 was "occasionally", and 4 was "frequently."						

As Table 7 shows, on average, participants reported that they had participated in community building activities occasionally over the past year (mean = 3.06). Among these community building activities, participants reported that they encouraged others to participate in community issues or projects and educated themselves about the issues in their community the most often. Identifying assets, seeking out information about the impact of community decisions, defining a goal or vision for the community, and seeking out opportunities to learn more about community leadership were the least frequently done in the last year. The relatively low frequency of these activities being done by participants may be due to the infrequency with which opportunities to do these activities arise. While there were significant differences in the frequency with which respondents participated in these activities, on the whole, most (65-88%) did each activity occasionally or frequently over the past year. For a



complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each community building activity, see Appendix 3.

### *Change in Activity*

As the data discussed above illustrate, participants have been engaging occasionally in community building activities since the leadership class ended. In order to gauge whether this activity level in the last year is representative of participants' level of activity before the class, participants were asked if they had done these community building activities over the past year more often, less often, or about the same compared to before they participated in the Ford leadership class. Overall, the majority of participants (60%) reported that they had done these community building activities more often in the year since the class than before. Thirty-three percent reported that their community building activity level did not change as a result of the program and only 7% of participants reported that they participated in these activities less frequently over the past year.

While the majority of participants reported an increase in the number of times they did community building activities since the training, further analysis explored the extent of change for individuals that did the activities very frequently. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to identify highly active individuals, which was equivalent to doing activities frequently in the last year. Of those who were highly active, 65% did community building activities more often in the last year than they did before the training, and 32% reported they were just as highly active before the training. Only 3% of participants who rated themselves as frequently engaging in community building activities in the last year stated that this level was less often than before the training. Therefore, for the majority of individuals who were doing a lot of community building activities in the 12 months after the class, this high outcome resulted from participation in the class.

### *Community Building Summary*

This examination of data from the 12-month follow-up survey reveals that, with respect to community building activities, Fall 2008 leadership class participants have only occasionally

taken on these types of endeavors in the year following the class. Of those who have engaged in these activities very frequently, it is encouraging to note, that the majority report doing so because of their participation in the class.

The lower average level of activity observed among Fall 2008 leadership class participants for community building activities, as opposed to leadership skill application, is possibly due to limited opportunity to do the activities. Many of these community building activities do not present themselves often; therefore it may not be possible for the majority of participants to do them frequently. Opportunities to apply leadership skills related to effective communication, working well with others, and networking are much more likely to present themselves more often for many people.

### *Project Management Skills*

On the 12-month follow-up survey, participants were asked how often they had done various project management tasks in community efforts or projects in the last year. Community efforts or projects were explained as including: organizing a community event, fundraising for community organizations, working with a community non-profit, serving on a non-profit board, participating in a community improvement effort, or building a community facility. Project management tasks were rated on the same scale as community building skills, where one was “never” and four was “frequently”. Table 8 lists the project management tasks as well as the mean and standard deviation for how often participants reported doing these activities.

**Table 8**

<b>Participation in Project Management Tasks: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages</b>						
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>Never to Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally /Frequently</b>
Helped to publicize or promote some community effort or project	162	3.07	0.95		25%	75%
Helped set goals for a community effort or project	162	3.01	0.88		26%	74%
Helped develop tasks, timelines, and assignments for a community effort or project	162	2.86	0.99		32%	68%
Helped plan a community fundraising effort	162	2.77	1.02		35%	65%
Helped seek outside support for a community effort or project	162	2.76	1.01		39%	61%
Helped involve stakeholders in a community project or effort	162	2.70	1.04		36%	64%
Helped to recruit and retain volunteers	161	2.68	1.01		43%	57%
Participated in developing the budget for a community effort or project	162	2.62	1.05		44%	56%
<b>Project Management Tasks Overall</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>2.81</b>	<b>0.84</b>		<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
Scale ranged from 1 to 4, where 1 was “never”, 2 was “rarely”, 3 was “occasionally”, and 4 was “frequently.”						

As Table 8 illustrates, in general, participants reported that they had done these project management tasks rarely to occasionally over the past year (mean = 2.81). Of all project management tasks listed, participants reported that they most often helped to publicize, promote, and set goals for community effort or project. Three-quarters of participants did these activities occasionally or frequently over the past year. There were no significant differences in the frequencies with which participants reported engaging in the other project management tasks. Participants reported that they developed tasks, timelines, and assignments; planned fundraising, sought outside support; involved stakeholders; recruited and retained volunteers, and developed budgets for community efforts or projects with about the same frequency during the past year, namely, rarely to occasionally. In contrast to publicizing and setting goals for community efforts or projects, only between 56% and 68% of participants reported doing all other project management activities occasionally or frequently in the last year. For a complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each project management item, see Appendix 4.

It is notable that Fall 2008 participants reported such infrequent project management activity in the last year, given that for many, the year after the leadership class is when cohort projects are completed. Ideally, the cohort project is the setting in which these project management skills would be applied. Most likely, this finding is due to the way the question was worded. Respondents were instructed to indicate how often they had done these project management activities for generic community efforts or projects. No specific mention of cohort projects was made in the list of examples on the survey. Respondents were therefore unlikely to include the cohort project as an example of a community effort or project. Analysis of the open-ended comments made on this section of the survey provides evidence for this conclusion; respondents were predominantly not including their cohort project when answering this set of questions. It is not surprising then that participants indicated infrequent project management activity in the last year. For many, the cohort project was the arena in which project management occurred, and it likely took much of participants' time and effort. Without much additional time to spend on other community efforts in the last year, the activity of participants in project management appears low based on the survey data.

It is also possible that the low frequency with which participants engaged in project management activities in the last year is due to the limited number of opportunities that presented themselves. Project management tasks are often applied in a limited setting, such as on specific community efforts or projects or within an organization. Also, the opportunity to do some of the project management tasks is dependent on the participant holding a certain role in the effort or project. Though the data indicate low project management activity among Fall 2008 participants in the last 12 months, it is important to bear these potential explanations in mind when interpreting results.

#### *Change in Activity*

Results of the 12 month follow-up survey indicate that participants are engaging in project management tasks on an occasional basis. In order to explore whether this level of activity is representative of participants' levels of activity before the leadership class, participants were

asked whether the number of times they have done project management tasks over the past year was more often, less often, or about the same compared to before they participated in the Ford leadership class. Overall, approximately half of participants (53%) reported that they had done these project management tasks more often during the year since the class. Forty-one percent reported that their project management activity level did not change as a result of the program and 6% of participants reported that they participated in these activities less frequently over the past year. A few participants noted their reasons for doing the tasks less frequently, such as illness that required resignation from a board and having other commitments that took up time.

Further analysis also explored the extent of change for individuals that did project management tasks very frequently. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to indicate high activity levels, which is equivalent to participating in the activities occasionally to frequently. Of those participants who occasionally or frequently did project management activities in the last year, 58% reported that this was more often than they had done before the training and 42% reported that this was the same frequency with which they did the activities before the training. No participants who rated themselves as participating in project management tasks with high frequency in the year after the class stated that this level was less often than before the class. Therefore, of those who were above average in their project management skill application over the last year, the majority were this active as a result of participation in the class.

#### *Project Management Summary*

These data reveal that in the year following the leadership class, participants on average are only doing project management activities rarely to occasionally in community efforts or projects. This may be due to the cohort project taking too much of their time, as it also requires project management tasks be done, but other explanations are likely as well such as limited community efforts or projects being available to work on in a given year.

Of those Fall 2008 leadership class participants who were doing project management activities in the last year more frequently than average participants, many felt they were doing so more often than they did before the class. This finding suggests that the leadership class is having a positive influence on participants, which is carrying through beyond the last day of the class itself.

### Contribution of Leadership Class

In addition to the frequency of skill application, the 12-month follow-up survey asked participants how much they felt the Ford leadership class contributed to their ability to do the skills, activities, and tasks. For each section of the survey, participants were asked to rate the leadership class' contribution on a scale from 1 to 5 with one for "not at all", two for "a little", three for "a moderate amount", four for "A good deal", and five for a "great deal". Table 9 outlines the distribution of responses for each section of the survey.

**Table 9**

<b>Contribution of Leadership Class</b>					
	Not at all	A Little	A Moderate Amount	A Good Deal	A Great Deal
Leadership Skills	2%	19%	40%	27%	12%
Communicate effectively	2%	15%	31%	36%	16%
Work with others	1%	14%	24%	38%	23%
Network	1%	19%	32%	28%	20%
Community Building Activities	1%	13%	27%	37%	22%
Project Management Tasks	3%	15%	33%	32%	17%

On average, participants reported that the leadership class contributed a moderate to great deal to their ability to do leadership skills, community building activities, and project management tasks (mean = 3.47 to 3.70). As the results in Table 9 show, approximately 40-60% of Fall 2008 participants felt that the class contributed a good or great deal to their skill ability in these areas. On average, about one-third of participants thought the class contributed a moderate amount, and only 15-20% felt like the class did not contribute to their ability at all or

only a little. One participant comment that represented the majority opinion on how the leadership class contributed:

*“Before the FILP class I was just beginning to become involved as a volunteer in various ways in the my community, but as a direct result of the FILP’s educational resources and the belief in my ability as an individual to make a difference, I have stepped up as a leader”*

### Qualitative Results

On the 12-month follow-up survey, respondents had the opportunity to explain how the training affected their ability to be a community leader in an open-ended question format. Approximately 140 individuals responded to the question to describe many ways they felt the leadership training affected them personally. From the many responses to the question provided, participants tended to indicate that they:

- Felt better equipped with skills and tools,
- Had a new appreciation for different personalities,
- Gained confidence in their ability to make a difference,
- Networked more with others, and
- Had a greater awareness of their community.

Overall, participants reported feeling better equipped to address issues in their community. Participants described a number of skills they gained through the training, that have helped them to be a better community leader. Of these, skills in communication and working with others were mentioned most frequently. These included active listening, public speaking, building consensus, and conflict resolution. Overall, many participants reported that they communicate more effectively and work better with others as a result of skills learned in the training. Being better equipped helped participants contribute in many areas and settings, including in their work, volunteer efforts, and participation in community projects. As two participants described:

*“The skills I learned through the appreciative inquiry process have helped me lead group discussions in a positive direction. I also am using skills I developed in conflict management. Our current fiscal climate has left many partners feeling as if they need to complete for resources and some are hesitant to collaborate.”*

*“When I am volunteered for things like student planning commissioner or to help fundraise for my school play, it makes not only me, but everyone on my team more effective. By using the fundraising skills we were able to step out of our normal donor box and surprise more people into giving.”*

In line with the quantitative results, many participants also mentioned a new appreciation for and ability to work with people of different personality types. Participants reported that the training helped them to see other’s points of view and be more willing to look at both sides of an issue or project. They also gained greater appreciation and respect for those that have differing opinions from their own and were more willing to work with others to accomplish a common goal. As one participant said:

*“The leadership class showed me that it is possible to work with many different kinds of people... even if most of us were fairly strong personalities we were shown how to come to a consensus while respecting and validating everyone’s ideas and goals.”*

By learning and refining their skills, many participants wrote that the leadership class increased their self-confidence. Some noted that the training validated their gifts and abilities, giving them confidence to get involved in their community. Others mentioned that they were more confident in public speaking and more willing to speak up on issues than they were before the training. Several respondents said that it increased their confidence to encourage others to become involved in community activities. Participants reported that the training gave them the skills to bring people together and encourage others to get involved in the community.

*“Primarily, the class improved my self-confidence in what I was doing. It let me know that I was on the right track, and that confidence is palpable to those I’m in contact with”*

Although participants did not report high frequency of networking on the quantitative portion of the survey, they found great value in the networking they did do. In the open-ended section, many respondents mentioned that the leadership class increased the size of their community networks and their ability to network better. It helped them get to know community leaders



and the structure of the community and provided contacts for accomplishing a specific task in a community. Participants also mentioned that networking with other community members and leaders was rewarding.

*“It connected me with an amazing group of community leaders, broadening my network base and giving me new hope for the future of our community”.*

Participants also commented on how the training helped them to better identify aspects of the community and have a better awareness of community issues. Several participants indicated that better knowledge of their community encouraged them to get involved. By gaining this knowledge, they also felt a greater responsibility to the community. As one participant noted,

*“The class gave me a sense of how I can personally impact my community and help shape the direction of it. I acknowledge that everyone has skills to contribute. Combining and harnessing that power to make positive changes for all, not just the current generation, but future generations as well, is a very real possibility.”*

Even those with previous leadership experience reported that they benefited from the class in some way. Through the class they were able to refresh their skills, practice using their skills, learn a different technique, and network with others. A few noted that they had gotten better at using the skills because they were refreshed in the training. As one participant stated:

*“Most of these items I did before. [But] I have been able to do them more effectively because of tools in the class”*

### *Do Outcomes Vary By Attributes of Participants or the Class?*

Previous sections of this report reveal that participants in the Ford leadership classes applied many of the leadership, community building, and project management tools gained through the training. While most participants applied the skills and activities occasionally to frequently, there was some variation in outcomes across individuals. In order to explore this further, correlation and regression analyses were completed to determine whether any of this variability in activity level in the year following the leadership class could be accounted for by

participants' intentions to apply the skills in Fall 2008, participants' demographic or background characteristics, or characteristics of the classes in which they participated.

### *Fall 2008 Outcomes*

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions were used to explore the relation between participants' intentions to apply skills at the end of the leadership class and the frequency with which skills were actually applied in the 12 months after the class. Twenty-six leadership skill, community building, and project management items appeared on both the 12-month follow-up survey and the outcome survey completed on the 4<sup>th</sup> weekend of the leadership class series. OLS regressions were run to see if participants' reported levels of competence in leadership skills and likelihoods of engaging in leadership behaviors at the end of the training predicted the actual level of engagement in these skills one year later.

Table 10 lists the standardized coefficients for 12-month follow-up survey items that were significantly predicted by the leadership outcome survey at the end of the training. For each standard deviation increase in the Fall 2008 item (competence or intention to apply a skill), the 12-month frequency of activity increased by the fraction of a standard deviation listed under beta ( $\beta$ ).

**Table 10**

<b>Standardized (<math>\beta</math>) Coefficient Effects of Fall 2008 Competence &amp; Intentions on Activity Level in Following Year</b>		
	<b>N</b>	<b>Beta (<math>\beta</math>)</b>
<b>Leadership Skills</b>		
Using active listening skills to understand another person's ideas	160	0.21
Giving a speech or presentation to a group of people	160	0.26
Facilitating group discussions	160	0.20
Networking with others to address a community issue or problem	161	0.29
<b>Community Building Activities</b>		
Educating yourself about social, economic, or environmental issues in your community	160	0.22
Helping build public awareness of a community issue or problem	161	0.26
Helping investigate possible solutions to a community issue or problem	159	0.18
Working to improve the social, economic, and/or environmental conditions of your community	162	0.28
Seeking information about how community decisions would impact the local social, economic, and/or environmental conditions	162	0.28
Seeking opportunities to learn more about community leadership	162	0.27
<b>Project Management Tasks</b>		
Helping set goals for a community effort or project	160	0.19
Helping develop tasks, timelines, and assignments for a community effort or project	159	0.20
Participating in developing the budget for a community effort or project	160	0.32
Helping to publicize or promote some community effort or project	160	0.31
Helping involve stakeholders in a community project or effort	160	0.33
Helping to recruit and retain volunteers	158	0.31
Helping seek outside support for a community effort or project	162	0.23
OLS regression analysis used to determine if Fall 2008 outcomes predicted 12-month activity level. Only items that were significant at $p < .05$ are included. Beta ( $\beta$ ) is the standardized coefficient (expressed in standard deviation units).		

Apparent from Table 10 is that of the 26 items that matched between the Fall 2008 outcome survey and the 12-month follow-up survey, 18 were found to be significantly related to each other. Also clear from Table 10 is that for each standard deviation increase in participants' competency or intention to apply a skill in the fall of 2008 there was approximately a .25 standard deviation increase in the frequency with which activities were done in the last year. As a specific example: for each standard deviation increase in participants' perceived competence in using active listening skills at the end of the leadership class, participants' reported frequency of using active listening skills in the year following the class increased .21 standard deviations. The results in Table 10 indicate that participants who felt more competent at using leadership skills at the end of the leadership class applied these leadership skills more often than those

that reported being less competent at the end of the training. This was also true for items related to project management and community building, some of which related to competence and some of which related to intention to apply the skill or do the activity. By and large, participants who reported being more competent or more likely to engage in leadership behaviors at the end of the leadership class did the activities more in the year after the class.

### *Individual and Class Characteristics*

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions were also run to understand the relationship of individual participant and class characteristics on the application of skills. Factors related to individual participants themselves that were included in the analysis were race/ethnicity, employment status (including whether retired or self-employed), education (associate's degree or higher), income, and previous leadership experience. The number of organizations participants listed on the application was also included as was the average hours involved with these organizations per month and whether the position within the organization was paid. Factors related to the class that were included in the analysis were hub-community, cohort number, number of females, number of males, number of youth, number of participants, whether the class had a community trainer, and the number of community trainers.

OLS regression of 12-month follow-up survey outcomes on individual and class attributes revealed one individual-level and one class-level factor as significant predictors of community building and project management outcomes, net of all other factors.<sup>3</sup> The number of organizations individuals reported being involved with on the application and the size of the leadership class both predicted the frequency with which participants engaged in community building and project management activities in the 12 months after the training.

According to the regression model, as the number of organizations increases so do participants' reports of their activity level in project management and community building. For

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<sup>3</sup> Only the regression models and the independent variables that were significant at the  $p < .05$  level are reported. This indicated that one can be 95% confident that the true population value indeed differs from zero as the model indicates. Regressions coefficients were standardized to put them on the same scale for comparisons of effect size.

each standard deviation increase in the number of organizations with which a participant was affiliated in 2008, there was a .28 standard deviation increase in the application of community building activities and a .37 standard deviation increase in application of project management tasks. It is not surprising that participants who are involved in more organizations apply their skills more frequently, as involvement in more organizations increases the opportunity to apply skills in various settings.

The regression model also indicates that as class size increases participant engagement in community building and project management after the class also increase. For each standard deviation increase in class size (about 5 people), there was a .36 standard deviation increase in the frequency of community building activities and a .40 standard deviation increase in the frequency of project management tasks being done in the year after the class. Perhaps larger leadership classes provide participants more opportunities for community building and projects as the number of fellow residents with whom to work or hear about opportunities increases.

### *Community*

OLS regression was also used to explore whether communities differed in application of skills and activities.<sup>4</sup> On average, participants in La Pine, North Curry, South Lincoln County, and Wild Rivers Coast had slightly higher activity levels (approximately half a point) in project management and community building, compared to participants in other communities. Participants in La Pine, Union County, and Wild Rivers Coast also scored slightly higher in networking activity. It appears that participants in these communities used their community building and project management skills more frequently than participants in other communities. It is unclear why this may be, though it may have something to do with the composition of the classes, their status as cohort 1 and cohort 2 classes, or the communities themselves.

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<sup>4</sup> Regressions for communities did not include other background variables.

### Barriers to Community Leadership

On the 12-month follow-up survey, training participants were asked about barriers or circumstances that limited their engagement in community work. For each item, respondents scored each barrier on a scale of one to four, where one was “strongly disagree”, two was “disagree”, three was “agree”, and four was “strongly agree.” Table 11 lists the means, standard deviations, and percentages of participants who indicated they had experienced each specific barrier.

**Table 11**

Barriers to Engagement in Community Work: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages						
	N	Mean	SD		Disagree	Agree
Personal concerns and demands (health, family, work) limited my time for community leadership activities	160	2.62	0.86		42%	58%
My community has been overwhelmed by economic, social, or environmental challenges that are out of our control	161	2.35	0.82		62%	38%
I was heavily engaged in community work before the Ford Leadership class and couldn't take on more afterwards	160	2.23	0.76		68%	32%
I felt “burned out” or discouraged by the class project	160	2.19	0.87		65%	35%
I felt overwhelmed by all there is to do in my community	160	2.16	0.73		73%	27%
I felt “closed out” of the leadership structure in my community	159	1.87	0.76		85%	15%
Community work has been too frustrating for me	158	1.84	0.69		86%	14%
I have not been personally interested in the specific efforts or issues facing my community	161	1.6	0.63		93%	7%
Scale ranged from 1-4, where 1 was “strongly disagree”, 2 was “disagree”, 3 was “agree”, and 4 was “strongly agree.”						

Table 11 demonstrates that the greatest barrier to taking on community work in the year after the class was competing personal concerns and demands. The majority of participants (58%) indicated that personal concerns and demands limited their engagement by agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. A minority of participants identified the remaining barriers as limiting their engagement in community work. Just over a third of participants felt that their community has been overwhelmed with economic, social, or environmental challenges and that limited their engagement in the community. About a third of participants felt that they were already too heavily engaged in community work to take on more, and a similar percentage indicated that cohort project “burn out” represented a barrier to their taking

on work in their communities. Just below 30% of participants reported that feeling overwhelmed by all there is to do in the community limited their engagement in community work. Very few participants indicated feeling the remaining three barriers had limited the extent to which they engaged in community work in the year after the leadership class. The least significant barrier was lack of personal interest in the specific issues facing the community. For a complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each barrier, see Appendix 5.

In terms of the numbers of barriers experienced by participants, about 50% of participants identified one to two barriers, and 28% identified three to four barriers to engaging in community work. (Barriers were counted as those with which participants strongly agreed or agreed). An analysis was conducted to determine if the number of barriers experienced by participants affected their leadership activity levels in the 12 months after the training. Most participants who indicated the same or increased activity levels identified 2 to 3 barriers, so barriers apparently did not prevent leadership activities.

Respondents also had an opportunity to comment on specific barriers on the 12-month follow-up survey. Participants comments are helpful in understanding how these barriers impacted their ability to be involved the class project and community leadership efforts in their community. Overall participants commented mostly on barriers related to personal demands, feeling burned out, and being closed out of leadership.

Personal concerns and demands that limited participants' involvement in community leadership included health issues of family members or themselves, caring for aging family, changes in the family (such as a new baby), and work responsibilities. Several participants reported that despite the desire to be more involved, balancing family life, work, and community engagement was challenging.

In the qualitative comments, participants noted specific aspects about the cohort project that resulted in their feeling of “burn out.” Most often mentioned was the length of the project and lack of participation among cohort members. One participant noted that the project was just too big and required “many many hours of fundraising.” A few participants also commented that the project grew more than they expected. As one participant noted:

*“I tend to feel that our project has gotten bogged down and the longer we pursued it the more details and loops appeared making it hard to get a sense of forward progress. This tended to diminish interest and eventually slow the whole project down.”*

Other participants noted that class involvement in the project decreased over time. Participants commented on being frustrated by the lack of participation, especially of individuals who pushed for the project initially only to drop out of the process once the class was over. Reasons cited for people dropping out included scheduling difficulties among class members who are trying to balance the leadership class commitment with other responsibilities as well as participants being closed out of the process.

Being “closed out” of community leadership was a strong theme in the comments regarding barriers. Several participants specifically mentioned that work on their community project was limited because they felt closed out of the decision-making or felt isolated from the group due to strong personalities. Participants noted that when the project was championed by one or a few class members with strong personalities, opportunities for others to get involved were limited and participants tended to stop coming as a result. As one participant stated:

*“These characteristics ended up hurting the group as a whole because they wanted and took control away from others, thus hurting the dynamics of the group and relationships in the community”*

In addition to the project, participants also felt closed out of community leadership due to the dynamics of their community. One participant spoke of an “inner circle” of leadership in her community that was resistant to change. Another noted that there is a “local county-wide lack of cooperation and collaboration” that limits the community work that can be accomplished.



In addition to the barriers rated quantitatively, a few individuals mentioned additional barriers that limited their community engagement. One participant noted that stressed finances due to the downturn in the economy extremely limited his time to participate in community efforts. Another noted that combining two communities for the Ford leadership class and project was challenging.

*“Two different communities, two different counties, two different states, 30 miles traveling between was too much and took the enjoyment out of the great project.”*

Another respondent mentioned that the long commute from the county to the city for the class was a barrier to their participation. In addition, a few participants noted that they work within the local governance structure and must remain neutral on certain topics, which limited their ability to be involved in community issues. Alternatively, a few noted that by doing community work as part of their job, they did not have time to be involved in other issues outside the scope of their work.

### ***Summary***

The findings discussed above reveal that Leadership Program participants apply their leadership skills and engage in leadership activities to varying degrees and in various settings in the year after the training. Most participants do leadership activities and use leadership skills more often than they did before the training and many attribute this increase to the Leadership class itself. Not surprisingly, participants' intentions to apply their skills or do particular activities at the end of the class (Fall 2008) predict their frequency of application or activity in the year following the class. Interestingly, so does class size and the number of organizations with which participants were affiliated. Despite the barriers many individuals faced in their engagement in community work, these barriers only somewhat limited their amount of leadership activity in the last year.

In the year following the leadership development class, participants reported applying their communication skills almost weekly, working with others about once a month, and networking slightly less frequently. These three types of leadership skills overall were applied about once a month by participants. Similarly, participants reported engaging in community building

activities occasionally in the year following the leadership class, with some activities being done more often than others. Project management tasks in community efforts or projects were done slightly less than community building activities, with participant's engaging in these tasks slightly less than occasionally. The vast majority of participants reported applying their leadership skills related to communication, working with others, and networking in community settings, and more than ninety percent applied these skills in more than one setting.

For all types of leadership activities, the majority of participants reported that in the year following the class they did the activities more often than they did before the class. In each case (leadership skills, community building, and project management), the majority of participants who reported high activity indicated that this level of activity was greater than before. This implies that the leadership class is fostering high engagement among participants, and participant responses to the question of the class' contribution solidify this connection. Again, for each form of effective community leadership, forty to sixty percent of participants indicated that the leadership class contributed a good to a great deal to their ability to do the activities or use the skills. Qualitative findings corroborated the statistics. Participants left the class better equipped to address issues in their community, with the confidence to make a difference, and with expanded networks of people to work with.

The data also revealed that participant expectations for the level of leadership activity at the end of the class were associated with their actual activity level in the following year. Those who felt highly competent at the end of the class used leadership skills more after the class. Participants who said they were highly likely to do particular activities at the end of the class actually did the activities more after the class than their classmates. Based on these findings, the immediate outcomes of the class appear to be following participants as they move out into the community, despite the barriers often encountered like personal concerns and demands, cohort project "burn out," and community challenges.

## **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?**

Civic engagement refers to the involvement of residents of a community in formal and informal government and non-governmental affairs. Examples include voting, participating in voluntary associations, or advocating for an issue.

### **Increased Civic Engagement**

On the 12-month follow-up survey, participants were asked how often they participated in various activities related to civic engagement in the year since the class. For each item, respondents scored their participation on a scale of one to four, where one was “never”, two was “rarely”, three was “occasionally”, and four was “frequently.” Table 12 lists the range of civic activities asked on the survey as well as the means, standard deviations, and percentages of participants who participated in civic activities with various frequencies.

**Table 12**

<b>Participation in Civic Activities: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages</b>						
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>Never to Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally/ Frequently</b>
Voted in elections	161	3.58	0.88		10%	90%
Volunteered in your community	161	3.47	0.72		10%	90%
Donated money, services, materials, or food to support a community effort, project or program	161	3.35	0.79		13%	87%
Worked informally with others to address community issues	160	3.09	0.82		20%	79%
Helped raise money and collect materials to support a community effort, project, or program	159	3.08	0.86		22%	78%
Worked as a member in a formal group or organization that addresses community issues	160	3.04	1.04		28%	72%
Attended any public hearings, town hall meetings, community forums, or city council meetings	161	3.00	0.97		26%	74%
Participated on the board of any local service agency or organization	160	2.88	1.20		35%	65%
Helped mobilize community members to work on a common goal	160	2.86	0.97		33%	67%
Advocated for a policy or issue in your community	160	2.77	1.06		37%	63%
Participated in long-term community decision-making or governance processes	160	2.58	1.12		45%	55%
<b>Civic Activities Overall</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>0.68</b>		<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
Scale ranged from 1-4, where 1 was "never", 2 was "rarely", 3 was "occasionally", and 4 was "frequently."						

As Table 12 shows, in the last year, Fall 2008 leadership class participants occasionally did civic activities (mean = 3.07). The highest levels of participation were found in voting in elections, volunteering in communities, and donating money services, materials, or food. On average, participants reported doing these activities almost frequently and the vast majority (around 90%) of participants reported doing these activities occasionally or frequently in the last year. In the year following the leadership class, participants reported engaging in the remaining activities with similar frequency (occasionally), except for participating in long-term community decision-making processes. On average, participants reported rarely engaging in this form of civic engagement, though just over 50% reported participating in long-term community processes occasionally or frequently.

Participants reported that the Ford leadership class contributed moderately to a great deal towards their ability to engage in these civic activities. Approximately 50% felt that the class contributed a good or great deal to their ability, whereas 31% indicated a moderate amount, and 19% a little or not at all. For a complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each civic engagement item, see Appendix 6.

### *Change in Activity*

Results of the 12-month follow-up survey clearly indicate that participants are engaging in civic activities, albeit occasionally. Next, we investigated whether participants' activity levels in the 12 months after the class reflect changes made as a result of participation. In order to answer this question, participants were asked whether the number of times they have done civic activities over the past year was more often, less often, or about the same than the number of times they did them before they participated in the Ford leadership class. Overall, the majority of participants (52%) reported that they had engaged in civic activities more often in the year after the class than they did before the class. Forty-seven percent reported that their civic activity did not change after the class and only 1% of participants reported that they participated in these activities less frequently over the past year than they used to.

While the majority of participants reported an increase in the frequency of civic activities as a result of the training, further analysis explored the extent of change for individuals who were very active. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to identify individuals who were highly engaged in civic activities, which was equivalent to participating in the activities frequently. Of those who were highly active in civic life, 58% participated in civic activities more often in the last 12 months than they did before the training and 42% reported participating at the same high level as before the training. No participants who rated themselves as engaging in civic activities at high levels stated that this level was less often than before the training. Therefore, for the majority of participants who engaged frequently in civic activities in the year after the training that level of activity was higher than before they took the class, and likely had to do with their participation.

### Qualitative Results

In response to the question on the 12-month follow-up survey, “Please give one to two examples of how the leadership class has affected you as a community leader”, respondents indicated that participation in the leadership class resulted in greater civic engagement. This was evident in the responses of those who increased their volunteerism and those who agreed to serve on committees or run for office. Participants volunteered more and joined more community groups. Participants became involved in the Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Commission, and nonprofit boards. One participant facilitates public forums now for United Way agencies. One participant said she gained “*passion to help move community issues forward.*” Increased involvement with organizations was typified by these statements:

*“I have taken on more responsibilities within the groups I have been a part of for the last 6 years. I am currently putting together a group within a group to [supply] artists in schools as a public service, as well as for publicity for our artisan group.”*

*“I have been able to take on new roles in the organizations I presently am involved in and take on roles that I would never have considered before in new community efforts.”*

*“My experience with the Ford class, as well as my experience with Rotary, pushed me away from working locally, but led me to a greater level of involvement at the district level. “*

Youth reported being more active on youth leadership committees in school and in the community and one student mentioned voting in student elections.

Participants increased efforts to promote events in their communities. Participants reported working or leading several fundraising efforts (e.g., for schools, for holiday programs). One participant learned about grants and raised considerable funds for a local foundation. Another participant said:

*“We were able to work with a donor to acquire a school facility and occupy the space over the summer. The school has been without a permanent home for over 25 years.”*

A few participants commented on their increased political activity, such as gathering signatures on an initiative for the city ballot, involvement in a political party, or running for office. One

participant reported his increased “*confidence to enter the County Commissioners office as a person concerned with an issue and know that I can add value to the process and solve a problem.*” More than one participant mentioned attending more city council meetings. One participant said she became motivated to become more involved in city and county government issues.

### *Do Outcomes Vary By Attributes of Participants or the Class?*

Overall, many participants reported engaging in civic activities as a result of the Ford leadership training and more than they used to. While most participants engaged in civic activities occasionally to frequently, there was some variation in outcomes across individuals. In order to explore this further, correlation and regression analyses were completed to determine whether any of this variability in 12-month activity level could be accounted for by participants’ intentions of applying the skills in Fall 2008, participants’ demographic or background characteristics, or characteristics of the classes in which they participated.

### *Fall 2008 Outcomes*

Ordinary Least Squared (OLS) regressions were used to explore the relation between participants’ motivations to engage in civic activities at the end of the leadership class and the frequency with which they did civic activities in the following year. Eight civic activity items appeared on both the 12-month follow-up survey and the outcome survey completed on the 4<sup>th</sup> weekend of the leadership class series. Table 13 lists the standardized coefficients for 12-month follow-up items that were significantly predicted by the leadership outcome survey at the end of the training. For each standard deviation increase in the motivation reported for the Fall 2008 item, the 12-month frequency of civic activity increased by the fraction of a standard deviation listed under beta ( $\beta$ ). Overall, participants who reported being more motivated to engage in civic activities at the end of the leadership class had higher civic activity levels in the 12 months following the class.

**Table 13**

Standardized ( $\beta$ ) Coefficient Effects of Fall 2008 Motivation on Civic Activity Level in Following Year		
	N	Beta ( $\beta$ )
<b>Civic Activities</b>		
Working informally with others to address community issues	159	0.17
Helping to mobilize community members to work on a common goal	159	0.40
Advocating for a policy or issue in your community	158	0.38
Participating in long-term community decision-making or governance processes	159	0.31
Participating on the board of any local service agency or organization	158	0.27
Volunteering in your community	160	0.36
Voting in elections	155	0.38
Helping raise money and collect materials to support a community effort, project, or program	158	0.24
OLS regression analysis used to determine if Fall 2008 outcomes predicted 12-month activity level. Only items that were significant at $p < .05$ are included. Beta ( $\beta$ ) is the standardized coefficient (expressed in standard deviation units).		

As Table 13 illustrates, out of eight matched survey items, all eight were found to be significantly related. Participants who were more motivated to engage in civic activities, such as volunteering in their community, serving on a board, or advocating for a policy or issues, at the end of the leadership training were likely to be doing these activities more than other participants who reported being less motivated at the end of the training. For example, for each standard deviation increase in participants' motivation to work informally with others to address a community issue at the end of the leadership class, participants' reported frequency of working informally with others to address a community issue in the year following the class increased .17 standard deviations.

### *Individual and Class Characteristics*

According to OLS regressions, civic engagement outcomes were also found to vary by the number of organizations a person was involved with as well as the size of the leadership class. Patterns were the same as those found for community building and project management outcomes. For a one standard deviation increase in the number of organizations, there was a .45 standard deviation increase in civic activities. For a one standard deviation increase in class



size (about 5 people), there was a .29 standard deviation increase in participation in civic activities.

### ***Summary***

The findings discussed above indicate that in the year after the leadership development class, participants are engaging occasionally in overall civic life, but more frequently in particular activities like volunteering, voting, working in community groups, fundraising for local causes, and promoting local events. About half of participants reported that since the leadership class, their level of civic engagement has increased, and the majority of participants attribute their ability to engage effectively in civic life to the leadership class.

Results also point to participants' motivation to be engaged in civic activities at the end of the class as a significant predictor of participants' levels of civic activity in the year after the class. Those who said they were highly motivated at the end of the class to do particular civic activities did the civic activities more often in the following year than leadership class participants who indicated lower motivation. Interestingly, class size and the number of organization affiliations were also positively associated with levels of civic activity after the class. Despite some variation by these individual and class attributes, these results indicate that the immediate positive effects of the class on participants are carrying through a year later. The leadership class successfully increases the motivation of participants to engage in civic life and those who are highly motivated at the end of the training are more active the following year.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?**

One of the goals of the Ford Institute Leadership Program is for participants to experience expanded and strengthened networks of social relationships, both inside and outside their communities. This goal is consistent with the Ford Institute's theory of change that suggests networking among community members and across rural communities helps build the vitality of rural communities. As community residents participate in the Ford Institute Leadership Program's Leadership Development, Effective Organizations, and/or Community Collaborations

trainings, it is important to investigate the extent to which participants report that these trainings contributed to their networking with other individuals socially, professionally, and in their rural communities.

This section explains the findings from focus groups that were conducted in five rural communities in 2009. The purpose of these focus groups was to explore the impact of the Leadership Program on networking among individuals and their communities. Three types of networks were described to participants:

- **Social networks** describe personal relationships people have in their personal life, such as friendships or acquaintances.
- **Professional or work networks** describe the relationships people have through their employment, such as with co-workers or acquaintances made through work.
- **Organizational or community work networks** describe the relationships people have with those with whom they volunteer or work on community projects, such as members of community boards.

### ***Social Networks***

Focus group participants indicated that their social networks changed significantly as a direct result of their involvement in the Ford Institute Leadership Program. There were several ways in which their networks changed: the size of social networks increased, the diversity of their social networks changed, and distant social relationships became closer. Indeed, participants said that the opportunity for social networking was one of the most important aspects of the program.

*“I actually think that the networking aspect of the Ford program is probably the best part for me. You can go to a book and find out about strategic planning and gphant charts. But you can’t meet people. You can’t get to know them. You can’t do a project with them.”*

Some focus group participants who were lifelong or long-term residents in their communities commented that the size of their social networks increased greatly as a result of their participation in the Leadership Program. One long-term resident said:

*“I’ve been here for the past 20 years. Since I’ve been to the cohort training my interconnectivity and knowing people in the community has probably quadrupled in that short amount of time.”*

From the perspective of a relative new-comer to a community, the Leadership Program provided the opportunity for relationships with fellow community members to form outside the realms of family and work.

*“I relocated here before taking the class. So before I took the class, my relationships were my family and my work, I was pretty limited.”*

Based on the focus group findings, the Leadership Program clearly succeeded at providing new opportunities for newcomers and long-term residents to get to know one another in a community context. In fact, these new opportunities for community members, who may not have worked with one another before, affected the size of their social networks in communities.

Involvement with the Leadership Program also brought about a change in the types of people with which participants networked. As one focus group participant said:

*“I used to always kind of stick to the kind of people that thought like I did. [But I learned] it’s more fun to be around people that don’t think like I do. Get their ideas.”*

Focus group participants also talked about the new-found diversity in their social networks. For some, participating in the Leadership Program led them to form social relationships with people of different ages, while for others the diversity took the form of interactions with people with personalities different from their own.

*“The training and our togetherness really bridged so many gaps. I mean age gaps, political gaps, you name it any gap that there is. It really is that common thread.”*

Finally, many focus group participants indicated that their participation helped to strengthen their social relationships, transforming acquaintances into friendships. As one youth respondent indicated, this transformation occurred simply due to the prolonged exposure to old acquaintances in a new setting:

*“People knew me from my Dad, but I never had my own personal relationships with people in the community. I kind of knew them because I was like my Dad’s shadow everywhere, but now I have my own relationships. I’m able to talk with people, have my own ties with people instead of just always having someone else’s ties.”*

For others, this transformation in the quality of social relationships with community members came about because of the intensity of interaction required for completion of the cohort project. As one focus group respondent put so clearly,

*“I had some people that I sort of knew before, but through implementing the project I got to know more about their personal lives and we did something on a personal level. I think we probably would have gotten to that point, but it just happened more quickly because we spent a lot more time together.”*

The environment of the cohort project provided the opportunity for fellow community members to share an experience that could serve to deepen personal relationships by forming social bonds. These bonds led them to trust the other members of their cohort, to feel more confident in their interactions outside of the program, and to help mitigate discord among individuals.

*“[I liked] getting to know the people in the community that I previously haven’t known or only saw in passing. I got to know them on a more personal level. So therefore when I saw them in another group, I felt there was some kind of a bond that we’ve had or some history together.”*

*“We build relationships socially, then when the things get tight, when we have conflict, there’s this relationship in place that will hold when the stress happens.”*

As shown by the focus group findings in these five communities, individuals who participated in the Leadership Program increased their number of social relationships, diversified the types of people with whom they socialized, and strengthened existing relationships.

### ***Work, School, and Professional Networks***

Focus group participants were also asked about any changes in their relationships with co-workers or work-related acquaintances as a result of the Leadership Program. Many participants reported that the leadership program intersected with their work environment. A few participants volunteered that participation in the program resulted in a new career for them. The most significant impact indicated by participants was that the Leadership Program opened up a pool of human resources for people to call on for the improvement of their individual careers.

*“I think my career here throughout this county was really jump started because of the networking.”*

*“I got a chance to meet a really strong cross-section of the community and it was extremely helpful in ramping up some of the [professional] work I’ve been doing.”*

One participant mentioned that involvement of work associates in successive cohorts of the leadership classes was improving the work environment. Some said that the Ford Leadership Program helped in the development and formation of non-profit organizations.

Other focus group respondents explicitly noted that their newly expanded networks had an impact on the ability of their organizations to succeed. This finding reveals that relationships formed in the Leadership Program not only positively affect individuals’ ability to perform within their work environment, but also positively affect their organizations.

*“We’ve (the organization) been collaborating with four or five different organizations to put on three different workshops. I don’t think that would have ever happened if it weren’t for the leadership class.”*

## ***Organizational and Community Networks***

Organizational and community networks refer to relationships with individuals on community projects or in other organizations. Participants reported that their community networks changed – new relationships were formed, existing relationships became stronger, and relationships with people not typically in their social networks were established.

*“It’s not just about making specific networking connections, but actually learning how to connect with people who don’t necessarily share the same interests and values other than perhaps we all agree that we want a better community to live in.”*

In one focus group, a participant referred to dropping a rock in a quiet pool and watching the ripples. The program “splashes” onto other community residents, such as spouses or family members. Individuals are drawn into community relationships and activities by Leadership Program participants that would not have happened without the program in their community. As a result of engaging community members, participants reported an overall increase in civic engagement and the capacity of the community to address issues.

*“Now if something comes up, a project needs to be done, you know the avenues to take, you know the people that might be supportive or they can help you find people. So you develop this network and it just moves throughout the whole community.”*

*“I think since Ford started their classes... there’s been a definite improvement to our city and interrelations between people and being more active.”*

The increase in community networks brought more diversity to community relationships. Participants saw community members come together for a common purpose regardless of who participated or who benefited. As focus group participant stated:

*“Now we’re seeing people from different backgrounds that have that common need or want to see something happen in this community coming together. They are willing to put some work into it and no matter what the outcome is, they’re going to feel good. I hadn’t seen that before. It’s very refreshing.”*

Focus group participants credited the Leadership Program with giving individuals the skills to work collaboratively in the community. Having many members of the community involved in the Leadership Program has helped to build a common language for community work.

*“People who have been in the Ford Family Leadership are really much easier to collaborate with, I think because of the training. We feel like we belong to the same tribe. We talk the same lingo. We all speak Ford.”*

*“There are people here I’ve had conflicts with, and [now] what I know is we all enrich our community and we’re doing our best. And so we work together and Ford helps us connect in really healthy ways.”*

New community ventures also emerged as a result of networking between Leadership Program participants. Participants were able to connect with others around a common purpose. In some cases, new organizations or non-profits were formed.

*“The Business Enterprise Resource Alliance that we have put together would probably not have formed if we had not gone through the Ford Family training.”*

*“I formed a small non-profit that’s to support the performing arts, and we have a studio theatre that we operate. Three of the founding members were members of the leadership class. These are people I would have never had a conversation with before Ford.”*

Networks can also be formed with others outside of a participant’s community. Some focus group participants reported that their networks had expanded beyond their community of residence. Being part of the “Ford experience” means that when meeting residents of other communities, they share a common experience. They viewed these enlarged networks as positive outcomes of their leadership experience. In a few cases, these larger networks related to economic development efforts.

*“Ford Family has allowed me to realize that it’s not just a community of Baker City. Specifically when we are talking about economic development. I’ve been able to talk to Huntington and Sumter about economic development. It wouldn’t have happened without Ford Family.”*

## **Summary**

The main goal of the focus groups was to explore the impact of the Leadership Program on individuals, their social relationships, and their communities. Networking, as expressed by Ford participants, is about being connected to and collaborating with others to benefit the community. Participants gained confidence in improved communication skills, helping them to cope with conflict and different styles of interaction. This in turn helped them connect and collaborate, and move forward into new leadership roles.

*“It strengthened my commitment to community by reinforcing the connections that are already there.”*

Participants in the five focus groups also gave many examples of ways in which the Ford Leadership Program increased their social, work, and community networks. Individuals increased the number of social relationships and formed new relationships with individuals who differed demographically from themselves. Some individuals were able to form relationships with individuals in other Ford hub-communities. Other benefits included increased business contacts and strengthening bonds of individuals to their rural communities. Increased networks, new community ventures, and increased abilities to collaborate were reported and linked to an overall improvement in the community’s capacity to address issues.

### **Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

The intention of the Ford Institute Leadership Program is to have a positive impact on individuals, organizations, and communities. In order to influence the trajectory of organizations, the Effective Organizations training is offered in communities during the second year of the Leadership Program. The training focuses on teaching skills in strategic planning, organizational leadership and governance, as well as resource development and management. The logic of the program is that if participants in the Effective Organizations training successfully increase their skills in these areas, then the organizations in which they work or volunteer will improve along these dimensions as well. Given this logic, it is important first to



understand the extent to which Effective Organizations participants improve their skills and knowledge in the areas targeted by the training. In subsequent analyses, it will be appropriate to ascertain the extent to which these participants (if they have improved their skills in these areas) have influenced their organizations.

In order to understand the extent to which participants in the Effective Organizations training increase their knowledge and skill in organizational strategic planning, organizational leadership and governance, and organizational resource development and management, we rely on data collected from Fall and Spring 2009 Effective Organizations participants. The methods used for collecting these data via the Effective Organizations background and outcome surveys were described on pages 10-17.

### ***Descriptive Characteristics of 2009 Effective Organizations Participants***

Before discussing the findings from the 2009 EO survey that relate to knowledge and behavior change, it is important to understand the characteristics of Effective Organizations participants. In this description of participant characteristics we focus on the individuals who completed both the background and outcome surveys.<sup>5</sup>

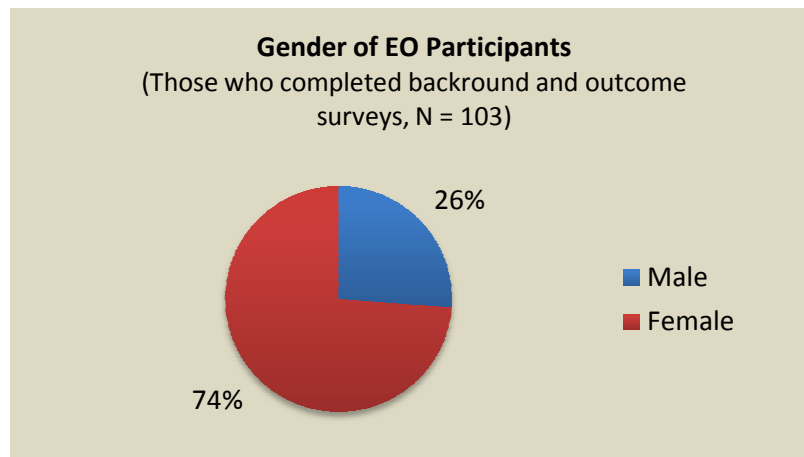
#### ***Gender***

According to the survey findings, the vast majority of 2009 Effective Organizations participants were female. As Figure 2 illustrates, only a quarter of Effective Organizations participants were male.

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<sup>5</sup> There were no significant differences between the composition of people who filled out the background survey and those who filled out both surveys, though the total number of individuals did differ (there were 156 respondents to the background survey and 103 respondents to both surveys).

**Figure 2**



Of the eight Effective Organizations training groups for which we had complete background and outcome survey data, only three had equal proportions of women and men, namely North Curry County, McKenzie River, and Chiloquin.

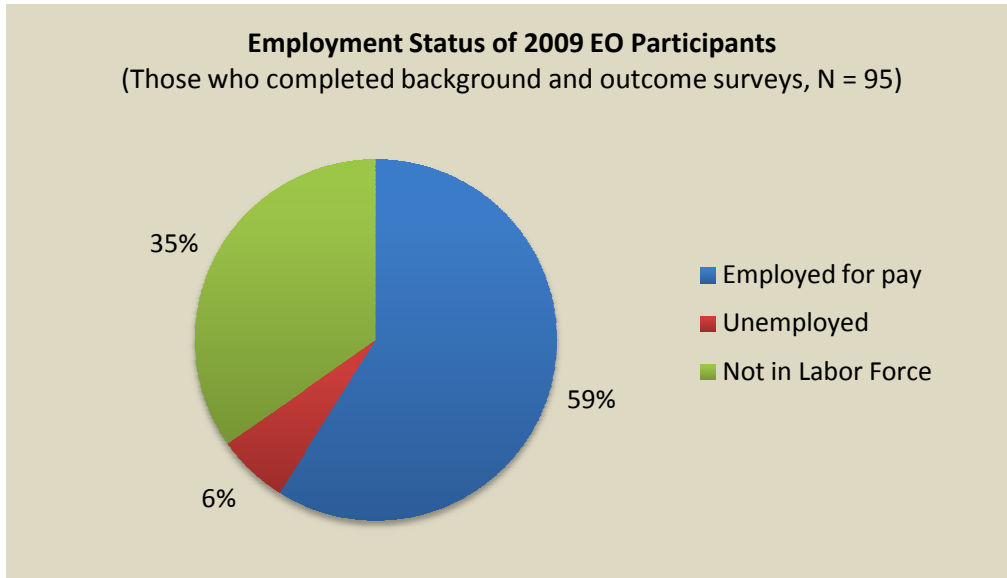
### *Age*

On the Effective Organizations background survey, respondents were asked how old they were on their last birthday. The average age of participants at the time of the training was 55, while the median was 57, and the range of ages was quite broad: from 16 to 82. Women tended to be younger than men, however, with an average age of 52 compared to the average age of men around 60.

### *Employment Status*

In 2009, while the majority of EO participants were employed for pay (59%), a full 35% were not employed or seeking employment at the time of the training. As Figure 3 illustrates, only a small proportion of respondents were unemployed, but seeking work at the time (referred to as “not in labor force”).

**Figure 3**



The large proportion of EO participants who were not in the labor force echoes the proportion of participants who indicated they were retired at the time of the training (35%), although not all retired people have exited the labor force and not all people who are not in the labor force are retired. As Table 14 shows, however, the majority of people who were not in the labor force at the time of the EO training were retired. Other reasons for not being in the labor force at the time of the training were not asked on the survey, but often include personal desire, discouragement from the job hunt, the need to care for family members, and other reasons.

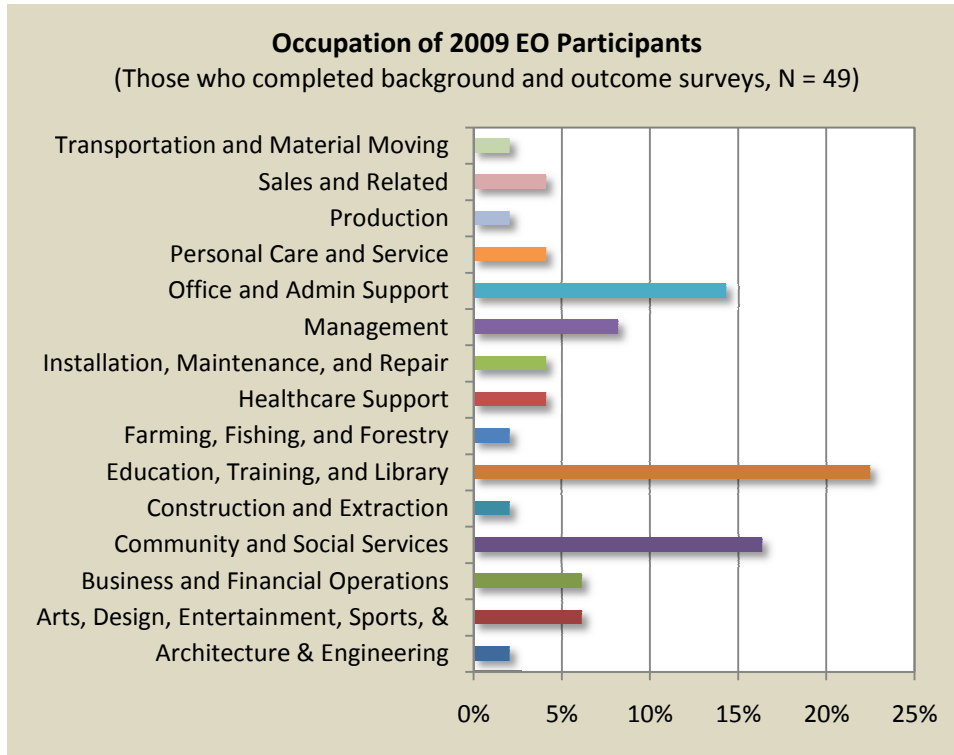
**Table 14**

	Not in Labor Force	In Labor Force
Retired	84%	3%
Not Retired	16%	97%
Total	100%	100%

Among the EO participants who were employed for pay at the time of the training, four occupations stood out as the most prevalent, namely Education, Training, and Library; Community and Social Services; Office and Administrative Support; and Management. It is important to note, however, that only 49 EO participants who answered this question also completed an outcome survey. Figure 4 illustrates that the representation of other occupations

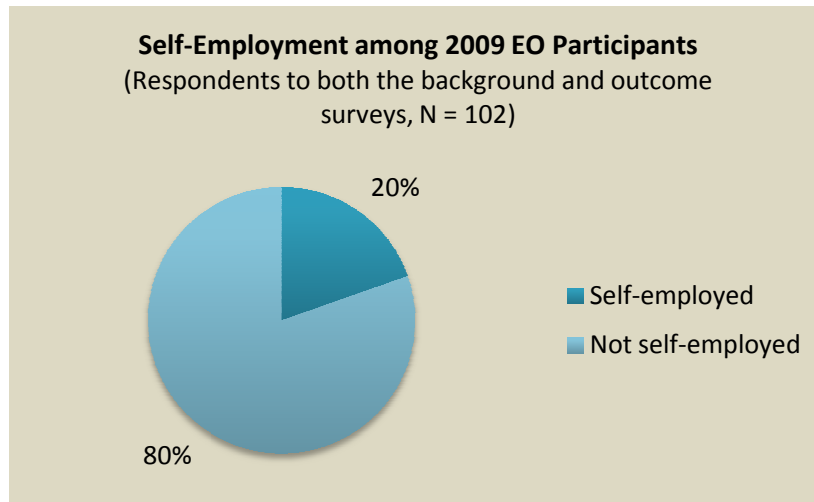
among EO participants was relatively diverse; 15 occupations were represented among participants, albeit to varying degrees.

**Figure 4**



A fair proportion of Effective Organizations participants indicated that they were self-employed at the time of the training. As Figure 5 reveals, approximately one out of five participants was self-employed, although these individuals could also be working for pay with another employer.

**Figure 5**

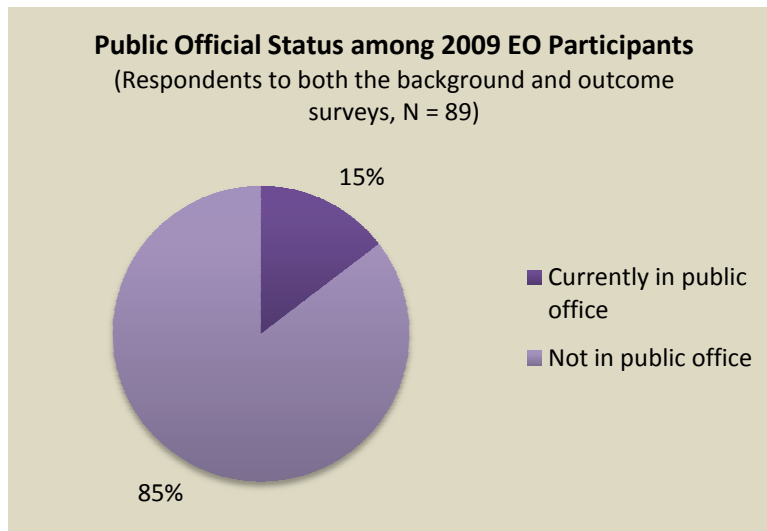


In sum, the EO survey data indicate that 41% of participants were not in the labor force at the time of the training, and that the majority of those individuals were retired. Of those who were employed for pay, nearly half worked in four occupations and 20% were self-employed.

*Public Office*

Effective Organizations participants were also asked if they held public office as elected or appointed officials. As Figure 6 illustrates, 15% of participants indicated that they held public office at the time of the training.

**Figure 6**

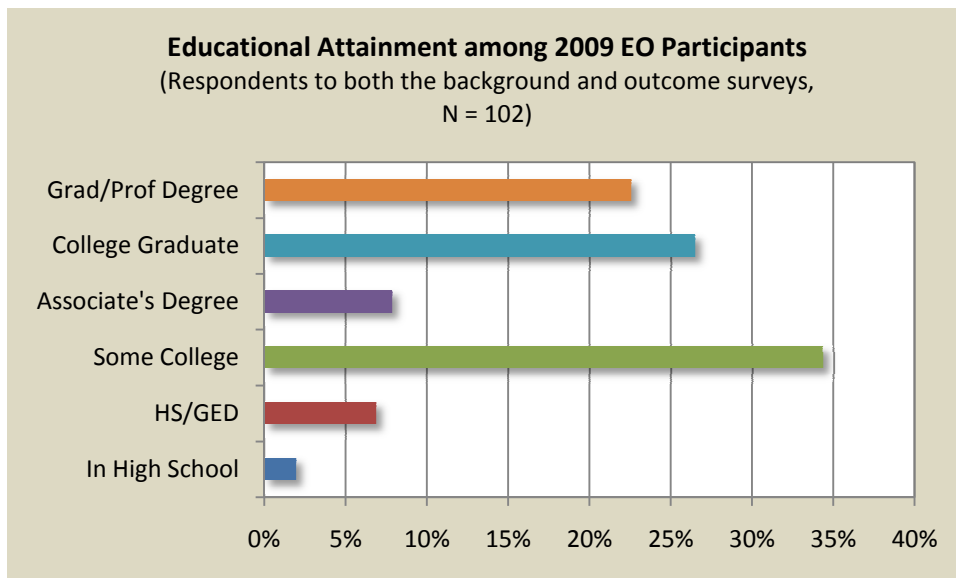


Among EO participants who held public office at the time of the training, the majority were men (54%) and their average age was 61.

### *Education*

The majority (59%) of Effective Organizations participants in 2009 had an Associate's degree or higher at the time of the training. As Figure 7 shows, the majority of people with less than an Associate's degree had some college education.

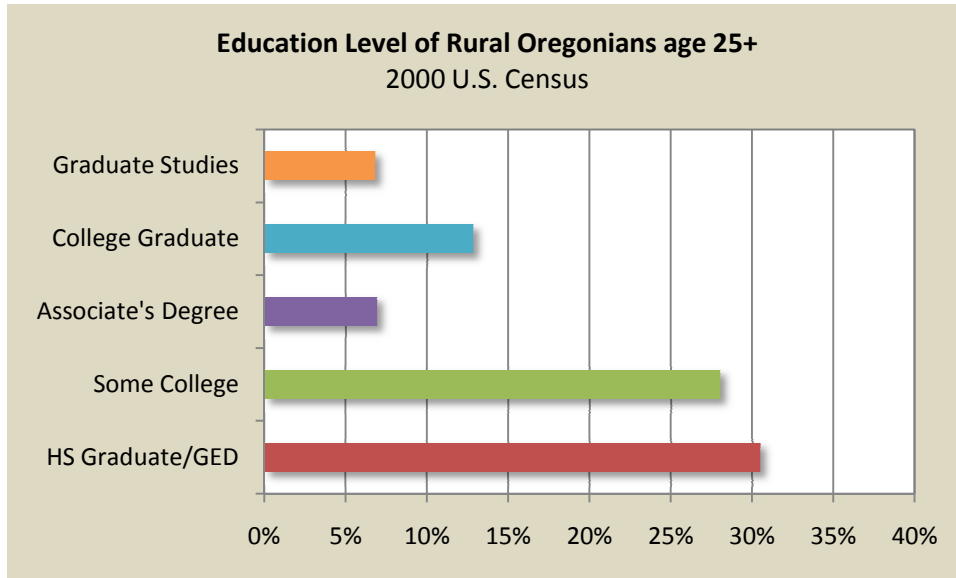
**Figure 7**



Not surprisingly, as the EO training is not targeted to young people, only a very small percentage of participants were in high school at the time of the Effective Organizations training (2%).

Compared to the educational levels of rural Oregonians from the US Census Bureau in 2000, Effective Organizations participants appear to be skewed toward the more highly educated. As Figure 8 indicates, the majority of rural Oregonians in 2000 had less than an Associate's Degree.

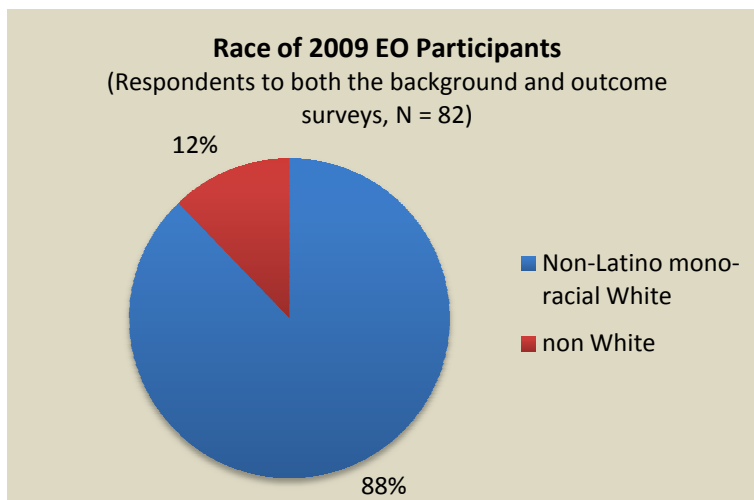
**Figure 8**



*Race*

In 2009, the majority of Effective Organizations participants were non-Latino, mono-racial whites (88%), as Figure 9 depicts. The remaining 12 percent of participants were Asian, Native American, Latino, and multi-racial. No EO participants in 2009 were African American.

**Figure 9**



Compared to rural Oregon in 2000, according to the US Census Bureau, the racial composition of the Effective Organizations trainings in 2009 were representative of the population. In 2000, 87% of rural Oregonians were mono-racial, non-Latino whites.

Among Effective Organizations participants, non-whites tended to be younger and slightly less educated. Thirty percent of non-whites had an Associate's degree or higher, compared to 64% of non-Latino, mono-racial whites; a statistically significant difference.<sup>6</sup> On average, non-whites were ten years younger than whites; 55 was the average age of non-Latino, mono-racial whites, while 45 was the average age of non-whites.

### *Income*

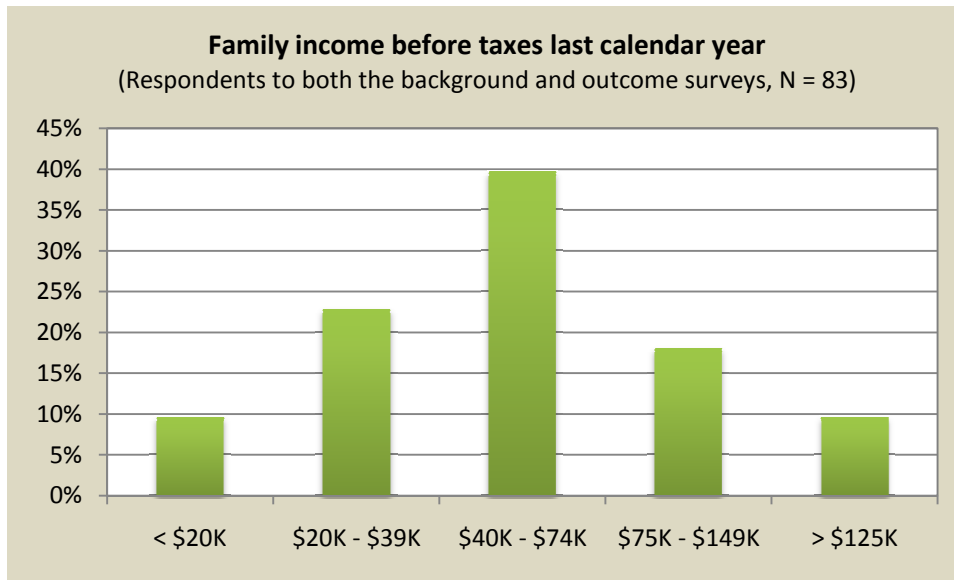
Of the 103 Effective Organizations participants reported on in this section, 83 provided information about their incomes (80%). The responses of these 83 people provide some insight into the economic status of EO participants. As Figure 10 shows, the greatest percentage of participants reported a family income between \$40,000 and \$74,999 (36%). Nearly equal percentages of participants reported income in the next highest and next lowest income categories (approximately 17% and 23% respectively). At the tails of the income categories, 9% reported income less than \$19,999 and 9% reported income greater than \$125,000.

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<sup>6</sup> Chi-squared tests of the equality of proportions revealed that these proportions were significantly different at the  $p < .01$  level.



**Figure 10**

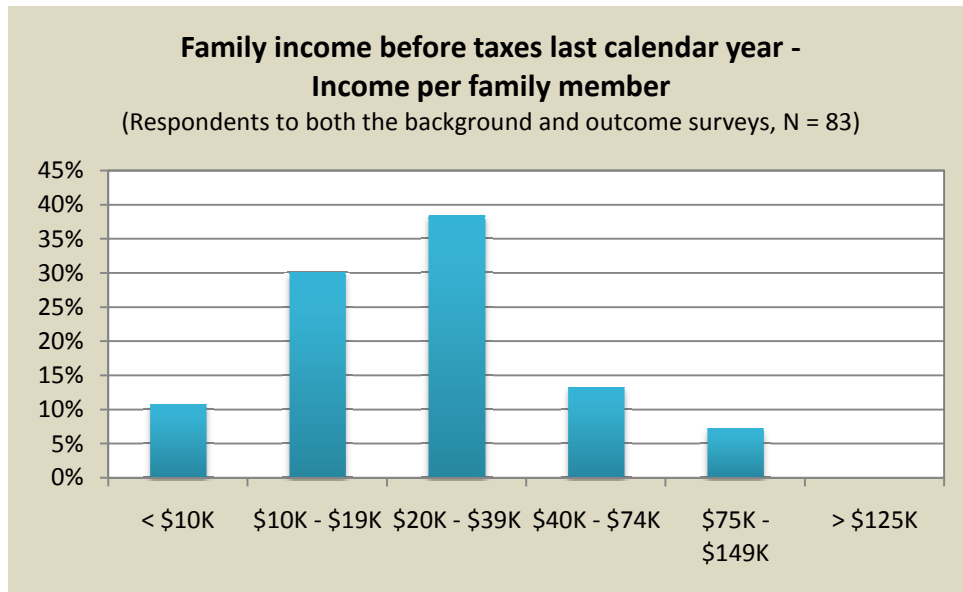


Respondents to the background survey were also asked to list the number of people in their families, which, in combination with income data, can provide a more nuanced view of the family economic status of EO participants. Dividing the midpoint of the income categories by the total number of people in the participant’s family yields a measure of income per person in the family. As Figure 11 reveals, for approximately 10% of EO participants the income available to each family member is less than \$10,000 per year, which is poverty level for a family of one person.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> US Department of Health & Human Services. 2009 Federal Poverty Guidelines. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/09poverty.shtml>

Figure 11



Almost a third of participants are in families in which the per capita income is between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per year, and almost 40% of participants are in families in which per capita income is \$20,000-\$39,000. Taking family size into consideration reveals that the vast majority of EO participants in 2009 were financially well off, though some families appear to struggle somewhat to make ends meet.

*Previous Leadership & Organizational Management Training.*

Respondents to the Effective Organizations background survey were asked if they had any leadership training experience *or* education in organizational development or non-profit administration prior to the EO training. If so, they were asked to list that prior training or education. In 2009, as Figure 12 shows, the majority of participants (58%) said they had participated in some form of leadership training or organizational management prior to the Effective Organizations training.

**Figure 12**



Among those with previous leadership experience, 70% had an Associate's degree or higher at the time of the EO training, compared to only 38% of those without previous leadership training or organizational development education. This difference was statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). In addition, a quarter of those with prior leadership training or organizational development education held public office at the time of the training. Conversely all of those who held public office, and who completed the background and outcome surveys, reported past leadership training or organizational development education.

The predominant past leadership training experience of EO participants was the Ford Institute's leadership development class. With respect to past organizational development education, however, no particular venue or type dominated. 2009 Effective Organizations participants listed a variety of different experiences with organizational development training, such as:

- Board Training for a charter school
- Grant writing class
- MPA w/Emphasis in Non-Profit
- TACS Training/Centro Latino Americano Board

- Credit Union National Administration Supervisory Program

As the survey findings indicate, the majority of Effective Organizations training participants enter the training with some prior exposure to training in leadership or organizational management. In addition, the people who have this previous exposure share some characteristics, namely educational background and positions in public office.

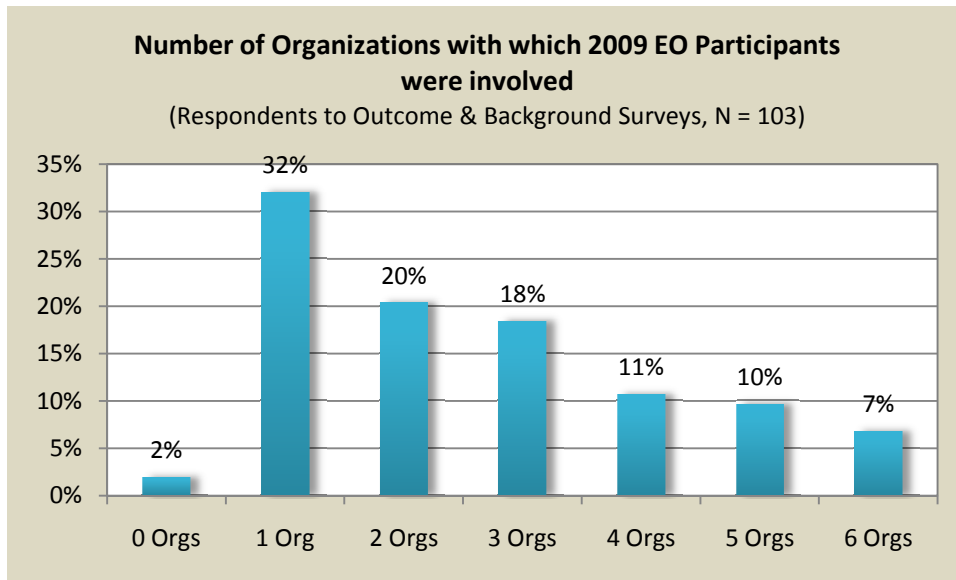
### *Organizational Involvement*

The Effective Organizations training focuses on providing participants with skills in strategic planning, operational leadership, and resource development and management that they can take back to their organizations. For this reason it is important to understand how these participants are involved with organizations. For example, if the intention of the Leadership Program is to have an effect on organizations it would be beneficial to know if participants in EO training indeed are part of organizations and if their roles permit such influence.

On the EO background survey, respondents were asked to complete a series of questions about the organizations or groups (at the time of the training) in which they were currently a member or actively volunteered on a regular basis for at least one hour a month (a minimum of 12 hours per year). Respondents were asked to provide each organization's name and its location. In addition, the respondent was to list her role in the organization and information about whether the position was paid, the number of years she has been involved in the organization, and the number of hours per month she works with the organization. This information was summarized to provide an overview of the involvement of EO participants in a variety of organizations.

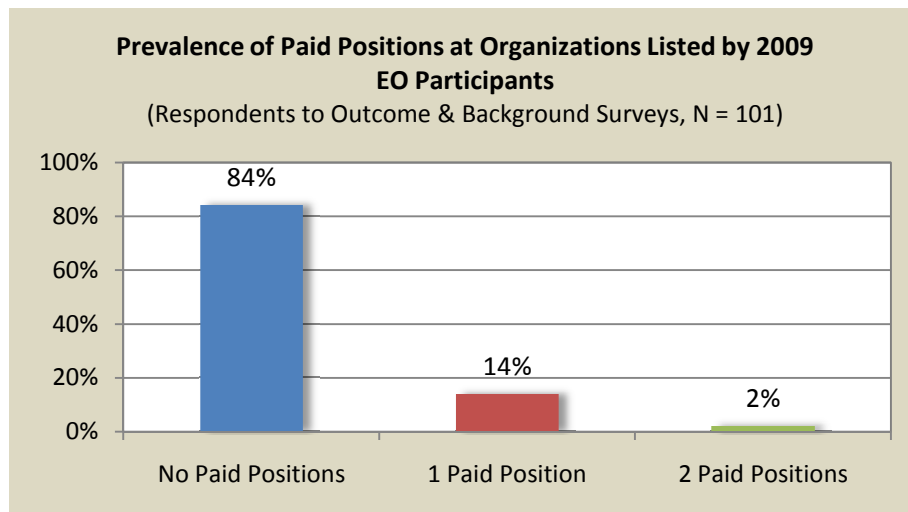
According to the background survey data, 98% of EO participants in 2009 were part of one or more organizations at the time of the training. As Figure 13 reveals, about a third of participants were actively involved with only one organization, and around 40% were involved with two or three organizations. About 30% of training participants indicated they were involved with a total of four to six organizations at the time.

**Figure 13**



These results imply that indeed, the vast majority of EO participants are involved with organizations in some way. In fact, as Figure 14 indicates, the vast majority of people who said they were involved with one or more organizations were not getting paid and were therefore volunteers or simply members.

**Figure 14**



Of Effective Organizations participants who were involved with one or more organizations at the time of the training, only 14% said they held a paid position at one of those organizations,

while only 2% held two paid positions at those organizations. Unfortunately, examined in combination with data collected on the EO outcome survey, it appears that this question about the number of paid positions in organizations was misinterpreted by respondents. This is apparent because on the outcome survey respondents were asked to think about one organization in which they were most likely to use what they gained from the training. They were then asked to list the name of the organization and their current role in the organization.

The roles from which they could choose were:

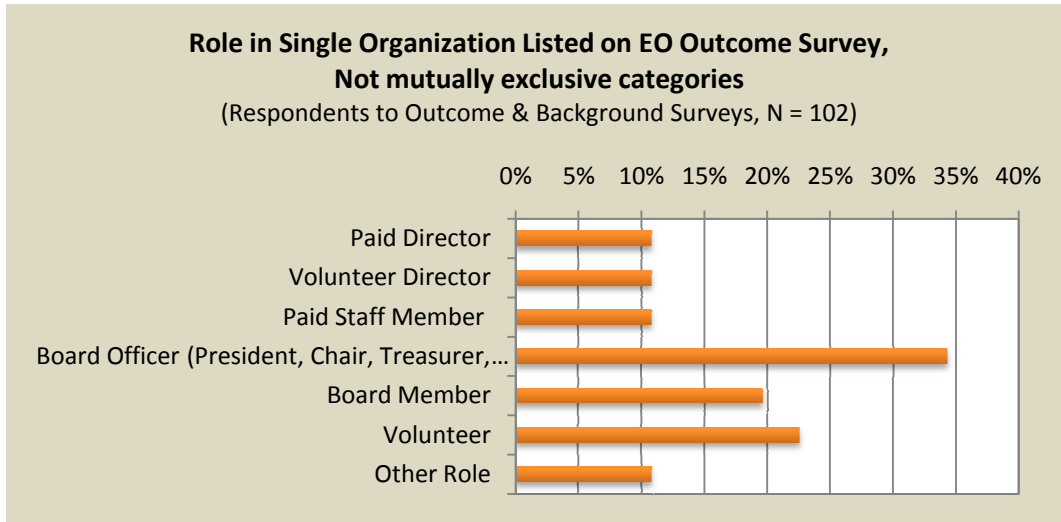
- Paid director
- Volunteer director
- Paid staff member (other than Director)
- Board officer (i.e. President, Chair, Treasurer, etc.)
- Board member
- Volunteer
- Other

Of those who listed their involvement with the one organization on the outcome survey as a paid director, 63% indicated on the background survey that they held no paid positions at any of the organizations with which they were involved. Also, of those who said they were a paid staff member at their organization on the outcome survey, 72% had indicated on their background survey not being paid at any of their organizations. Clearly the background survey question about organizational involvement was picking up different information than the outcome survey question about organizational involvement. In all likelihood, the background survey question was eliciting information about volunteer organizations and the outcome survey question was making people think about the organization(s) in which they worked. This is evinced by the fact that only 20% of outcome survey respondents listed an organization in which they were a volunteer (volunteer director or volunteer).

Given the disconnect between the results from EO background and outcome surveys with respect to organizational involvement, we will rely more heavily on the outcome survey data to tell the story about the ways in which EO participants are involved with organizations that may be impacted by the training.

According to the EO outcome survey data displayed in Figure 15, 34% of participants were board officers in the organization where they intended to apply their EO training knowledge. The next most prevalent role of EO participants in their organizations was as volunteers, followed by board members. That said, around 20% of participants indicated they were either a paid or unpaid director (separate analysis).

**Figure 15**



As the survey data indicate, a fair number of Effective Organizations training participants held powerful positions in their organizations. Indeed, more than half (58%) of participants held positions that had some say over the trajectory of an organization. Specifically, these positions were paid or unpaid directors, board officers, and board members. People who were paid staff members, volunteers, or were in other roles were not included as having significant power in the organization they listed on the outcome survey.

The organizations EO participants listed on the outcome survey as the ones in which they were most likely to apply the skills they learned in the training varied widely from churches, to schools, to specific city or county departments. Other participants listed community organizations with specific missions such as the arts, child care, animal rescue, or wetland education. Other examples of organizations included:

- Port Orford Revitalization Association

- Boys & Girls Club
- Community Emergency Response Team
- Oregon Society of Tax Consultants
- Providence Newberg Medical Center
- Chetco Activity Center

The survey data also indicate that in any given training, the number of people who represented the same organization varied from one to five. In Table 15 the numbers of members from unique organizations who attended the training are displayed, clarifying the depth of EO training infiltration into organizations in the community.

**Table 15**

Hub-Community	# of Organizations Represented at EO	# of Orgs with 1 member at EO	# of Orgs with 2 members at EO	# of Orgs with 3 members at EO	# of Orgs with 4 members at EO	# of Orgs with 5 members at EO
Chiloquin	9	6	1	1	1	0
Grant County	19	15	3	1	0	0
Harney County	12	9	2	0	0	1
La Pine	12	8	2	1	0	1
McKenzie River	9	9	0	0	0	0
Newberg	12	11	0	0	1	0
North Curry County	14	12	2	0	0	0
Sisters	13	11	0	1	1	0
White City-Upper Rogue	12	6	5	0	1	0
Wild Rivers Coast	13	8	2	1	1	1
South Lane	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Total</b>	125	95	17	5	5	3
<b>% of Total Organizations</b>		76%	14%	4%	4%	2%

**Source: 2009 Effective Organizations Outcome Survey, total number of respondents: 180**

As Table 15 shows, just over three-quarters of the 125 organizations that were represented at the Effective Organizations trainings in 2009 had only one member who participated in the



training. The next greatest proportion of organizations had two members who participated in the EO training, but these were only 17 out of 125 organizations (14%). Very few organizations that were represented in the EO training had three, four, or five members who were in attendance. These data indicate that the EO training is pulling in a large number of organizations, but not saturating any single organization. Although it is unclear at this point how the number of organization members who participate in the EO training will affect the organizational outcomes desired by the Ford Institute, these statistics suggest that some intended outcomes may be influenced by this broad but shallow penetration of organizations represented in the training.

In sum, the vast majority of 2009 Effective Organizations participants were involved with one or more organizations as members or volunteers. In addition, most participants held some position of authority in the organization in which they were most likely to apply any new skills learned in EO training. The prevalence of positions of organizational authority among EO participants suggests there is likely to be ample opportunity for EO concepts to be applied in these organizations by EO participants, as many of them can have an influence on the way the organization operates. It appears, however, that very few members of any particular organization attend the training, meaning that the impact of the training on organizations may indeed be lessened. For the tools or approaches taught in the training to be implemented in an organization, EO participants will likely have to be very deliberate in their attempts to get the organization to change. This may be more difficult for some than others.

### *Summary*

This examination of the background characteristics of 2009 Effective Organizations participants reveals some diversity and some commonalities among individuals:

- The majority of participants were female
- The average age of participants was 55
- The majority of participants were employed for pay, but over a third were not employed and not seeking work
- Four occupations dominated: Education, Training, and Library, Community and Social Services, Office and Administrative Support, and Management

- One out of five participants was self-employed at the time
- The majority of participants had an Associate's degree or higher
- 15% of participants held public office as appointed or elected officials
- The racial and ethnic composition of the training matched that observed in rural Oregon
- The majority of participants had some prior leadership training or organizational management education experience
- The majority of 2009 Effective Organizations participants were involved with one or more organizations as members or volunteers
- Most participants held some position of authority in the organization in which they were most likely to apply any new skills learned in EO training

### ***Outcomes of 2009 Effective Organizations Participants***

The intent of the Ford Institute Leadership Program is to influence individuals, organizations, and communities. Specifically with respect to organizations, the goals of the program are to help them improve their capacity to accomplish their mission, increase their contributions to the community, and increase their collaboration with other organizations. To develop this capacity, the Effective Organizations training focuses on increasing the capacity of individual members of organizations who can then apply their skills in their organizations. Specifically, participants are exposed to information about strategic planning, resource management and development, and operational leadership. The Effective Organizations outcome survey is designed to gauge the extent to which knowledge is gained by participants as a result of the training, but also to learn about the behavior changes participants intend to make as a result of the training in order to gain some preliminary insight into the changes participants think will occur in their organizations as a result of the training. In the following sections, the three aspects of the training's intended immediate impact are explored:

- Increased individual capacity to accomplish organizational mission
- Anticipated individual application of skills (behaviors)
- Anticipated effects on organizations

*Do Effective Organizations participants improve their capacity to accomplish their organizational mission?*

The capacity of individuals to accomplish the missions of their organizations depends on their knowledge, capacity, location in the organization, and other factors. Those who lack knowledge in organizational management, regardless of their desire to affect change in this area, will not have the capacity to help an organization accomplish its mission. The Effective Organizations outcome survey provides insight into the extent to which participating in the training increases the knowledge of individuals to accomplish organizational goals through closed- and open-ended survey questions.

*Increased Organizational Knowledge*

On the Effective Organizations outcome survey, training participants were asked a series of closed-ended questions about how knowledgeable they felt on 20 skills related to organizational management after completing the training as well as how knowledgeable they felt on those skills before the training. Comparing pre-training knowledge scores with post-training knowledge scores reveals whether or not knowledge was gained and the extent thereof. Dependent t-tests of equal means were conducted on participants’ pre-training and post-training knowledge for each of the three organizational management knowledge concepts in addition to the Cohen’s *d* statistic. Findings are displayed in Table 16.

**Table 16**

Pre to Post Change in Knowledge Concept Groups							
	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen’s <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Strategic Planning	103	2.31	0.63	3.41	0.51	1.10	0.74
Operational Management	102	2.10	0.74	3.15	0.57	1.05	0.68
Resource Development & Management	103	2.04	0.64	3.12	0.57	1.08	0.68
Knowledge Overall	103	2.15	0.61	3.23	0.49	1.08	0.74

Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. **All results were significant at  $p < .05$** , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen’s *d* statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect.

As Table 16 indicates, comparing pre-training means to post-training means, participants reported increased knowledge in all three concept areas and overall gains in organizational management knowledge (all 20 items) as a result of the Effective Organizations training. The differences in means pre to post were very similar for each concept group, therefore, participants indicated that their knowledge increased about equally across concept groups as a result of the training.

With respect to knowledge levels at the end of the training, however, participants felt their knowledge of strategic planning was the highest of the three areas (mean = 3.41) and felt their post-training level of knowledge in operational management and resource development and management were about the same (based on dependent t-tests, significance at  $p < .05$ ). Given that the difference in means pre to post were about equal, the higher post-training level of knowledge in strategic planning is driven largely by the higher pre-training level of knowledge reported on average (statistically significant at  $p < .05$ ). It appears that participants came into the training with more knowledge in strategic planning than the other concept groups, which resulted in them remaining more knowledgeable in this area at the end of the training. According to the Cohen's  $d$  statistic, the effect of the training on the knowledge of participants was moderate. See Appendix 7 for the pre to post means and Cohen's  $d$  statistics for each individual knowledge item.

The survey data also reveal that those who had the lowest pre-training knowledge reported the greatest gains in knowledge as a result of the training. For example, participants who rated themselves moderately knowledgeable in overall organizational management before the training (greater than 3) reported a .41 point increase from pre to post, whereas participants who rated themselves as somewhat knowledgeable (between a 2 and a 3, inclusive) before the training reported a .87 point increase in knowledge pre to post. By contrast, those who rated themselves as not knowledgeable in organizational management before the training (less than 2) reported a 1.5 point increase from pre to post. Therefore, participants who reported the least amount of knowledge at the beginning of the training showed the most improvement. The

Effective Organizations training was able to bring all participants to similarly high levels of knowledge.

In the correlation and Ordinary Least Squares regression analyses, pre-training knowledge emerged as the only factor associated with post-training knowledge for any of the concepts or for overall knowledge of organizational management.

### *Qualitative Results*

On the Effective Organizations outcome survey, respondents had the opportunity to express in their own words the impact the training may have had on them. Approximately 180 individuals responded to this question and described many ways they felt the EO training affected them personally. From the many responses to the question provided, participants tended to indicate that changes they experienced fell into a few categories. Participants felt they had:

- A greater understanding and knowledge of skills and tools
- Increased their confidence to use skills and tools
- Increased the size of their individual and organizational networks
- Grown on a personal level

The most frequently cited personal impacts participants mentioned were that the EO training increased their knowledge about skills and tools to use in their organizations and increased their confidence to use those skills and tools. Over 100 comments related to increased knowledge and 34 related to increased confidence. Participants also made references to specific types of skills and tools.

Overwhelmingly, these skills and tools mapped onto the three concept groups of the survey: strategic planning, operational management, and resource development/management. This finding in the open-ended responses corroborates the quantitative data findings regarding the impact of the training on participants' knowledge of organizational management. While many comments stopped simply at acknowledging an increase in knowledge, others drew the link between personal impact and broader changes. As one respondent put it, the training gave

him: *“new and exciting information to make me a better, more effective board member.”* With the information from the EO training in hand, many participants said they felt they would be able to influence their organization either with direct action or by sharing their knowledge with others in the organization.

Less frequently mentioned, though often-cited (about 30 times), was that the training affected people’s personal connections to individuals and organizations in their community. Participants indicated that the opportunity to network with other individuals and organizations was valuable for various reasons. For some, the networking opportunity gave them the chance to learn about new organizations with whom to collaborate in the future:

*“There was some “mixing-up” time allowed so that we could meet others in the group and talk about how we might connect and work with one another. This time for mixing is very important in a small community like ours.”*

For many more, networking with others in the community revealed that there were fellow residents they could turn to for advice. As one respondent put it:

*“[The training] connected me with valuable resources and introduced me to other members in my community who extended their support.”*

Others simply acknowledged the value of networking for its own sake in a rural environment.

Finally, a few respondents indicated that the training contributed to their personal development (approximately 11 comments). Sometimes this took the form of improved communication styles, like for one participant:

*“It [the training] made me reconsider some of the ways I interact with others. Sometimes I think I’m right and I just want to force an issue. Now I’m more likely to recognize that I have to be more than right. I have to be more diplomatic. I am more likely to say thanks, especially to people who I need to get more cooperation from.”*

For other participants the training helped them hone in on their life goals, and for yet others the training helped them realize what their strengths and weaknesses were so they could focus on developing them or recognizing them as assets. These comments indicate that the EO

training was able to expand the horizons of participants on a personal level to help them re-shape their personalities and lives.

### *Summary*

The results discussed above indicate that, on average, Effective Organizations participants' knowledge increased moderately as a result of the training. On average, participants increased their knowledge of operational management, strategic planning, and resource development and management equally as a result of the training, though knowledge of strategic planning was highest at the conclusion of the training. Many participants expect this increased knowledge to translate into being more effective in their organizations, and some plan to share what they learned at the training with others in their organizations.

For those with limited knowledge of organizational management before the training, the training increased their knowledge greatly. Important to note is that a fair number of Effective Organizations participants come to the training with knowledge of organizational management. For these individuals, the training increased their knowledge only a small amount.

The data analyzed here also point to benefits of the training beyond knowledge gain. Effective Organizations training participants reported gaining confidence to use organizational management tools, which will doubtless have a positive impact on future application of skills. In addition, training participants gained access to new people and organizations at the training with whom they can collaborate in the future. Finally, the training appeared to help some individuals grow on a personal level, revealing assets to be capitalized and weaknesses to be developed using tools or insights gleaned from the training.

### *Do Leadership Program participants plan to apply their knowledge of organizational management?*

Insight into the actions EO participants plan to make as a result of their participation in the training was gained by examining responses to the second section of the outcome survey and responses to the open-ended question: "As a result of the training, what specific changes do

you intend to make in your organization?” In the second section of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate how likely they were to do 16 activities after the training as well as how likely they were to do so before the training.

*Intention to Apply Organizational Knowledge*

Comparing pre-training likelihood to post-training likelihood scores using dependent t-tests and Cohen’s *d* statistics reveal the extent to which participants expect to change their behavior in their organizations as a result of the EO training. Unlike the knowledge portion of the survey, survey items in the behavior section were not grouped into concepts except for one: collaboration/networking. Thus, the majority of findings will be examined for each survey item individually. Results are displayed in Table 17 and Table 18.

**Table 17**

Pre to Post Change in Behavior Concept Groups– Collaboration Concept							
	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen’s <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>2.32</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>0.65</b>
Develop networks and partnerships with other organizations	100	2.55	1.03	3.66	0.55	1.11	0.54
Work with other organizations that have similar goals to your organization	101	2.48	0.94	3.54	0.59	1.06	0.58
Work with organizations that do NOT have similar goals to your organization	98	1.89	0.93	2.92	0.81	1.03	0.56
<b>Behavior Overall</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>2.42</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>0.72</b>
Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. <b>All results were significant at <math>p &lt; .05</math></b> , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen’s <i>d</i> statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect. Behavior Overall includes single items from Table 18.							

Overall, participants reported increased likelihood of engaging in organizational management behaviors as a result of the EO training, as seen in Table 17. On average, participants reported that before the training they were mid-way between somewhat likely and likely to engage in the 16 behaviors (mean = 2.42), but after the training they were between likely and very likely to engage in the behaviors (3.51). The Cohen’s *d* value of .72 implies that the effect of the training on participant outcomes was moderate.



Within the area of collaboration, participants' average post-training likelihood of collaborating in any way increased from somewhat likely to likely. Of the various forms of collaborating listed on the survey, the average post-training likelihood of working with dissimilar organizations was significantly lower (2.92) than participants' average post-training likelihood of working with similar organizations or simply developing networks with other organizations (difference significant at  $p < .05$ ). Participants increased their likelihood of working with dissimilar organizations (difference was 1.03), but the average likelihood of participants doing so before the training was quite low (1.89).

**Table 18**

Pre to Post Change in Behavior Concept Groups – Single Items							
	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen's <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Single Items</b>							
Work to increase the role of your organization in improving the community	101	2.69	0.86	3.73	0.47	1.04	0.60
Assist your organization in clarifying its mission, goals, and objectives	101	2.58	0.95	3.71	0.57	1.12	0.57
Discuss strategies for improving organizational effectiveness with others in your organizations	101	2.37	0.96	3.65	0.57	1.28	0.64
Promote positive board functioning (e.g. communication and decision making)	99	2.45	0.92	3.63	0.61	1.18	0.61
See yourself as a catalyst for change within your organization	101	2.59	0.92	3.60	0.57	1.00	0.55
Communicate clearly with the community about your organization and its purpose	101	2.64	0.92	3.58	0.62	0.93	0.54
Participate in fundraising efforts for your organization	100	2.87	0.99	3.57	0.68	0.70	0.35
Develop strategies to acquire resources for your organization	101	2.37	0.94	3.56	0.61	1.19	0.61
Work with your board to develop policies/procedures	99	2.43	1.00	3.51	0.75	1.08	0.56
Monitor the fiscal health of your organization	100	2.40	1.07	3.47	0.67	1.07	0.56
Adopt strategies in your organization to sustain activities/programs at the end of a funding cycle	100	2.25	0.93	3.43	0.74	1.18	0.60
Participate in the strategic recruitment of board members	99	2.03	0.97	3.34	0.82	1.31	0.65
Create specific job descriptions for board members or volunteers	100	2.14	0.95	3.31	0.84	1.17	0.61
Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. <b>All results were significant at <math>p &lt; .05</math></b> , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen's <i>d</i> statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect. Overall means reported in Table 17.							

Among the single item behaviors in Table 18, post-training scores varied from 3.31 to 3.73, indicating that after the EO training participants thought they were likely to engage in these organizational management behaviors. The highest post-training scores were observed for working to increase the role of the organization in improving the community, assisting the organization to clarify its mission, discussing strategies for improving the effectiveness of the organization with others, promoting positive board functioning, and seeing oneself as a catalyst for change. By contrast, participants felt they were the least likely to create job descriptions for board members or volunteers, participate in the strategic recruitment of board members, and adopt strategies to sustain organizational activities at the end of a funding cycle after completing the EO training.

The greatest changes in the likelihood of performing particular activities were seen for participating in the strategic recruitment of board members and discussing strategies for improving organizational effectiveness with others in the organization. The area in which participants anticipated seeing the least change to their behavior was participation in fundraising efforts for their organization. Looking at the pre-training average likelihood of doing this activity, however, reveals that before the training participants were likely to participate in fundraising efforts for their organizations (mean of 2.87).

The quantitative data regarding behaviors of Effective Organizations participants indicate that the EO training increased participants' likelihoods of engaging in all organizational management behaviors although some activities appear more likely to happen than others. Correlation and regression analyses revealed that no individual level characteristics were associated with these increased likelihoods, therefore, any variation in outcomes was not due to participant characteristics.

### *Qualitative Results*

In order to gain deeper insight into how the Leadership Program has affected individuals in their organizations, two data sources were relied upon. Open-ended responses from the Effective Organizations outcome survey, in addition to open-ended responses from the 12-

month follow-up were used to understand how Leadership Program participants have applied their skills in organizations.

### *Effective Organizations Outcome Survey*

Approximately 175 Effective Organizations participants provided written comments to the question: “As a result of this training, what specific changes do you intend to make in your organization?” Examination of the responses to this question reveals some repetition of the quantitative findings discussed above and some new insights. Participants most often mentioned intentions to improve the ways in which their boards function (approximately 50 comments) and intentions to improve the development and management of resources (approximately 50 comments). Intentions to implement strategic planning or update elements of the organization’s strategic plan emerged as the third most often cited theme (approximately 40 comments). These were followed by intentions to:

- Improve the operational management of the organization by doing things like improving the management of meetings, developing written policies and bylaws, and improving financial record keeping (30 comments)
- Improve communication channels within the organization and with others outside the organization (20 comments)
- Improve the connection of the organization to the community through activities that expand the commitment of the organization to the community and improve the quality of information about the organization shared within the community (12 comments)
- Improve the collaboration between organizations (9 comments)
- Share the training materials or new knowledge gained with others in the organization (8 comments)
- Continue learning about organizational management topics (6 comments)
- Increase individual involvement in the organization (3 comments)
- Make no change (3 comments)

With respect to improving the ways in which boards operate, participants noted intentions to create job descriptions for board members, do more strategic recruitment for members, clarify the responsibilities of the board, do board self-assessments, and plan for smooth board

member successions. One respondent noted the need to comprehensively integrate the board into the organization by stating she would,

*“Train and orient the potential board members. Give new board members the history of our organization. Train all board members in how to tell our story.”*

Clearly, participants felt it was both necessary and possible for them to help the boards of their organizations become more efficient, more effective, and more solidly grounded in the mission of the organization as a result of the training. The frequency of comments regarding improving board functioning correspond to the high likelihood participants expressed on the closed-ended portion of the survey to do the same activities.

In the arena of resource development and management, participants put fairly equal weight on improving financial and human resources. Respondents often mentioned plans to implement new fundraising ideas gleaned from the training as well as pursue grant opportunities. With respect to developing and managing human resources, participants focused most of their intentions on volunteers, such as recruiting more of them, retaining them for longer, tracking their contributions, and making sure their responsibilities were clear. One respondent clearly noted the importance of both financial and human resource development and management in this comment:

*“I intend to suggest that we concentrate more on volunteer recruitment and develop more diversity in our fundraising activities. I intend to propose that we write job descriptions for all board members and volunteers.”*

Intentions to implement or improve strategic planning also came up frequently in the open-ended comments. Most participants indicated they were planning on updating, redoing, or creating a strategic plan as a result of the training, while others said they planned to create a vision or mission statement or implement some form of a SWOT analysis or needs assessment. Often, participants situated the need to update their strategic plan in a desire to improve their chances of receiving funding or to better communicate with others about the organization. As one participant said:

*“We will review our mission, vision, and goals to enhance a quality program and communicate this effectively.”*

As the quantitative data revealed, a fair number of participants intend to go back to their organizations equipped to help clarify visions and missions and strategically plan for the future.

Though sharing the training resources and methods was not often mentioned as a specific change participants intended to make in their organizations on the open-ended portion of the survey, the majority of respondents to the closed-ended portion of the survey indicated they were likely to share the training tools and skills with their organizations. Despite this inconsistency between the open- and closed-ended portions of the survey, it is likely that participants will share what they learned at the training with others. An open-ended comment illustrated the idea well. This participant plans to:

*“Share this training resource and knowledge with others in my organization that were unable to attend. Promote continuing education and actual utilization of methods taught at this training.”*

Perhaps implicit to most people’s comments about changes they intend to make was the additional action of sharing new-found knowledge of the EO training with members of their organization. Unfortunately, we cannot be sure of this, due to the limited number of explicit statements to that effect, but it is likely given the quantitative data findings.

#### *Leadership Development 12-Month Follow-Up Survey*

On the Leadership Development 12-month follow-up survey, participants were asked to provide one to two examples of how the leadership class has affected them in their community organizations. One hundred thirty-eight leadership development class graduates answered the question and shared how they felt the leadership class had affected them in their organizations. Ten respondents indicated no change, in some cases due to personal constraints. Of the other 128 responses, a few individuals said that they had stepped back from leadership roles due to over-commitment, and one individual said she had not been successful in applying what she learned to her organizational work. The vast majority of responses, however, did indicate application of leadership skills in their organizations. The types of organizations in which LD

participants mentioned using their skills included: church, school, service organizations, planning commission, historic commission, downtown association, fair event association, Chamber of Commerce, welcome center, nonprofit organizations, community boards, and community committees.

Overall, three themes emerged from the data. Leadership Development participants, in the 12 months since taking the class, said they had:

- increased the number of skills they applied in organizational settings
- increased their activity in organizations
- increased organizational collaboration

In terms of increased skills, respondents said the Leadership Development class gave them tools that have helped in group settings. For example,

*“Not only do I have better tools for helping our groups to get things done, but I also have greater awareness of potential outside resources to help us accomplish our goals and have lost any feeling of intimidation when it's time to make the ask. And while I'm far more willing to step up to fill needed roles, I'm also confident enough to encourage others to adopt their own roles and "run with them" with the support and confidence they need as well.”*

Specifically, in the last 12 months, graduates mentioned using active listening skills, facilitation skills, conflict resolution skills, communication tools, consensus-building tools, asset inventory, and project management skills in their organizations. Some respondents mentioned increasing their activity in community organizations. For most, this increased activity meant doing things like contributing more volunteer hours at schools, becoming an officer in an organization, becoming more active in a political party, promoting a community event, and taking on roles in new community organizations. In the words of one participant,

*“I assumed leadership of a crew maintaining hiking trails in and near my town. I [also] took on more responsibility for the health of a non-profit on whose board I sat.”*

Increasing the level of activity in their community organizations was one way in which the leadership program affected the relationship between graduates and organizations, and for some, the skills learned in the class helped them be more effective at the same time. Nine respondents reported that it helped them function more effectively as board members. Increased organizational collaboration was another theme that emerged from these responses, though not mentioned as frequently as the previous themes. Respondents indicated that by increasing their awareness of the many organizations in their community and by giving them the tools to work well with others, the leadership development class encouraged them to work towards organizational collaboration. As one participant said, the leadership class helped her:

*“think creatively about how to work with different organizations in the community to build partnerships and move forward toward a common goal.”*

Participants also mentioned an increased capacity to collaborate with other organizations to pool resources toward a community goal.

### *Summary*

The quantitative and qualitative data illustrate that Leadership Program participants leave their respective trainings highly likely to implement many of the strategies and activities discussed in the training in organizations. While some activities emerged as more likely to occur than others, such as making improvements to the functioning of boards, updating strategic plans, and improving the way in which human and financial resources are developed and managed, overall, training participants plan to implement many elements of organizational management taught in the Effective Organizations training.

### **Does Effective Organizations build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

In order to truly understand the impact of the Leadership Program on community organizations it will be important to talk with various members of organizations. In future years of the evaluation, a case study approach should be used to gain deeper insight into the organizational impacts of the Leadership Program. At this point, however, preliminary results can be gleaned

from responses to the EO outcome survey open-ended question: “What effects do you think the Effective Organization training will have on your organization over the longer term?”

Approximately 170 Effective Organizations training participants responded to the open-ended question regarding anticipated effects of the training on their organization. Most often, participants made general statements that their organization would be stronger, healthier, more successful, or just more effective:

*“I think [the training] will really help us become a more viable organization.”*

*“We will become stronger.”*

*“If the rest of the board is receptive, this should be very beneficial for the organization.”*

Unfortunately, comments like these do not reveal much with respect to how community organizations will be affected, although anticipation of general improvements is a positive outcome. About forty-five comments were recorded as belonging to this “generally better” category or theme. When participants mentioned specific improvements they expected to make in their organizations, certain themes emerged. In particular, participants thought their organizations would become:

- More focused, with improved strategic plans
- Stronger with respect to board functioning
- Better able to work together as an organization
- More sustainable into the future
- Better at obtaining and managing volunteers and financial resources
- Better connected with the community
- More collaborative with other organizations

The responses to the open-ended question indicate that participants easily expect the overall strength of their organizations to increase. They will be better at managing day to day operations, better at strategic planning, and better at developing and managing resources. Some participants felt that their organizations would become more connected to the



community and yet others felt their organizations would become more collaborative, but changes in these two arenas were least mentioned of the themes.

With respect to participants' expectations that the strength of their organizations would increase as a result of their participation in the training, the majority of comments related to an increased focus within organization (approximately 30 comments). One participant said that because of the training,

*"Our organization will have a clearer idea of where we are going and what we need to get there."*

The second most often cited improvement to the overall management of the organization related to board functioning (approximately 28 comments). Considering the number of board members in attendance at the EO training, it is not surprising that many comments might relate to ways in which this aspect of operations may improve. As these participants noted,

*"It has brought our board together and thinking along the same target. We're ready to move forward."*

*"By clarifying the personality types, work styles, needs, communication, etc., those board members who have never taken an RDI course had visible light bulbs going off over their heads! This realization, if nothing else, will greatly improve our organization."*

*"We will start to recruit people who want to help because they have a passion, not because we have a 'board position open.'"*

Evident from these comments is that the training was able give participants the tools they needed to either help construct a strong and effective board for their organization or become better members of boards themselves. In the long run, these changes will contribute strongly to the viability of the organization, as many participants indicated.

Strong organizational management includes additional components that participants felt would occur in their organizations. Approximately 26 comments were made pertaining to future improvements in the way the organization manages operations. Primarily, respondents indicated that their organizations would streamline their functions, operate smoother, manage

meetings better, foster better staff relations, improve their internal leadership, and clarify responsibilities as a result of the training. As one participant put it, the organization will:

*“Operate smoother by [having] ideas about what needs to be done and having a knowledge base to support why there is a reason for change.”*

Another participant mentioned,

*“I think our meetings will be more productive and shorter. I think we’ll start developing some better relationships with staff – more affirmative and less negative.”*

After improvements to operational management, around 20 comments were made pertaining to the increased sustainability participants thought would occur in their organizations.

Participants referred to sustainability as financial stability and leadership succession or stability of human resources. One participant said that as a result of the training *“I feel that we will become financially stable and sound.”* With respect to stability of human resources, issues of leadership succession often arose. According to one participant, because of the training: *“Our organization will develop ways of sustaining itself when I am no longer able to guide them.”* Often, new organizations are created by one or two charismatic and passionate people, and when they leave, if they have not established a good succession plan, the organization deteriorates. As many of these participants indicate, they felt the EO training prepared them to help make that transition smoother.

Improving the development and management of resources was mentioned about sixteen times by participants as an expected impact of the EO training on their organization. Comments were split evenly between improving financial resources and improving human resources in the form of volunteers. Of these comments, however, a majority anticipated improvements in their organizations’ development rather than the management of these resources: *“Your training will help equip us to function at a higher level in fund seeking...”* Some participants mentioned that the training will help their organization manage resources better, which will help them be more sustainable in the long run.

As mentioned above, the majority of participant comments referred to the impact the EO training would have on the way in which their organizations manage day to day activities. Less apparent from the open-ended responses was much anticipation that the EO training would affect the community orientation or the collaborative nature of the organization.

Approximately nine comments were made that indicated participants expected their organizations to become more community-oriented. For example, participants said:

*"We will become more clearly focused on our role in the community."*

*"I see our group growing and becoming a force for our community and our youth."*

With respect to organizations becoming more collaborative as a result of the training, around eight comments were made to this effect. Though individual participants indicated they would be likely to partner and network with organizations after the EO training, given the infrequency of these comments, it seems that few saw that their individual actions would have a significant impact on the collaborative nature of their organization.

### ***Summary***

These responses about the anticipated impact of the Effective Organizations training on organizations indicate that overall, organizations are likely to become stronger because of their members' exposure to the training materials. These data also suggest that as a result of the training, organizations are not as likely to become more community oriented or collaborate more with other organizations. It is very important to note at this point that any organizational change occurring as a result of the training depends heavily on the organization accepting any new information an EO participant brings to the table. In many cases this will not be an issue given the size of the organization the participant belongs to. In other cases, this may turn out to be an impediment to the EO training having a deeper effect on organizations in these communities. As one participant put it,

*"I think [the training] will be helpful, if the organization's leaders will listen to suggestions."*

While these qualitative findings begin to shed some light on the question of organizational impact of the training, further study is needed to fully gauge the extent to which organizations are affected by their members participating in the EO training.

### **Does the Leadership Program contribute to vital rural communities?**

Vital rural communities, for the purpose of this report, are those that possess the capacity to work together and realize a balance of positive social, economic, and environmental outcomes. When looking at vital rural communities, it is important to note that both capacity and outcomes are influenced by conditions outside the direct influence of the community. Community capacity includes a cadre of committed and skillful leaders, who are actively engaged in community organizations and affairs that are aimed at improving their communities' social, economic, and environmental circumstances. Thus, capacity implies empowerment to create change in the community.

Evidence of the initial stages of capacity building were seen in 2008 data from the Leadership Development Outcome Survey, Community Trainer Interviews, and South Lane Class Project Interviews (2008 Evaluation Report). At that time, participants reported that the Leadership Program had already had positive impacts on their rural communities through the increased number of trained, actively engaged leaders and successful completion of class projects. Moreover, they were confident that the momentum would continue into the future due to a new sense of hope, the feeling of cohesiveness within the community, and the increased capacity of the community as a whole to embrace and facilitate change. They believed they could make a difference in their community and were committed to community change.

Following up on participant's initial thoughts about how the program would impact their community, Fall 2008 Leadership Development class participants were asked one year later to provide one or two examples of how the leadership class has affected their community. On the 12-month follow-up survey, 140 respondents gave examples of how the program has impacted their community. Common themes included pride in community, increased collaboration and

relationships among community members, increased awareness of community needs, and an increase in the number of trained leaders in the community.

Participants reported that the class has affected the level of community pride among residents in their communities. One respondent said,

*“One of the identified issues with our community, in the first cohort, was a lack of community pride. ‘If it came from here, it can’t be that good’....Several of us from the program have stepped up and invested in new businesses or been involved in projects that are beginning to have a positive effect on that attitude.”*

Although many participants continue to provide suggestions for revising the class project methodology, successful class projects were a source of pride, and potentially, unity. Specific examples of projects cited were physical improvements: signs, tennis courts, trails, gardens, playgrounds, bioswales, lights, kiosks, and handicap access at fairgrounds.

Participants reported that increased collaboration, a shared vision, increased cooperation between groups, working together better than before, all describe increased community capacity due to the leadership program. *“More people understand community is all ‘our’ responsibility.”* Groups of people who did not know each other worked to become a team with a common goal for the good of their communities. In some cases, the leadership program involved all ages, a variety of ethnic groups, and/or multiple communities.

*“It brought my community of many ethnicities to work and collaborate on a common goal together. We worked to think of a project, and together we completed it within the community, even with the help of people who weren’t in the leadership class.”*

Participants also reported that the Ford leadership program raised awareness of community needs as well as roadblocks to change. As one participant stated, *“It opened people’s eyes to see what needs to be done.”* As participants better understood community needs, they could design a project and contact local board members and community members in ways they had not before.

A widespread perception was that the program built new relationships among community residents. It provided the tools to empower community residents to become leaders. Those residents now have a common vocabulary. Individuals who were not previously involved in community organizations became volunteers and leaders. One participant suggested that the program transformed volunteers into “community-minded” volunteers, who reached out to people. Respondents were very positive about the benefits of community networking, and some thought it was the most important result of the Leadership Program. The class became a network that could be tapped for a variety of projects. One respondent reported:

*“The social networking was invaluable and will continue to be far-reaching. I think this aspect is still undervalued by some classmates, but we are really there for others to call on and to help make contacts and referrals – even if a specific project isn’t for us.”*

There were a few comments about a critical mass of leaders being formed as a result of the program. However, feelings were mixed among these participants about the extent to which the critical mass could affect change in the community. One respondent indicated that one result of the Leadership Program was a larger base of new leaders who could foster the development of other leaders “for a very long time to come.” Another respondent thought new collaborations had occurred, but the number of leadership graduates was not sufficient to make effective changes in the community yet. By contrast, a few respondents were positive about the capacity of their communities since the Leadership Program came to their town:

*“Our town can work together to accomplish what we could not accomplish before.”*

Only 16 respondents (11%) reported that they were not sure that the Leadership Program made a difference in their community or felt it was unable to increase vitality. Two respondents spoke of community or leadership divisions, with one reporting that the first cohort did not stay connected or mentor the next classes. Another said that the leadership class had a positive effect in the past, but not in the present: “The community just doesn’t care.” One respondent indicated that when the class ended, the interest in continuing the new relationships faded. She thought a new class would be helpful, but said that some community residents are reluctant to

shed old prejudices and embrace the concepts of leadership training, so that benefits might be limited. The other comments related to class projects, such as the inability of the class to complete a class project. One participant said that it has gotten people to talk about things, but put some parts of the community on edge because you end up with factions that do and do not like what is being done.

### **Suggestions for the Future**

Suggestions for improvement to the Ford Institute Leadership Program came from two sources: the five focus groups held around the state and the 12-month follow-up survey of Fall 2008 leadership class participants. Although not the purpose of the focus groups, focus group participants nevertheless shared some suggestions for change. The 12-month survey asked a specific question about what The Ford Family Foundation could do in the future to support participants, organizations, and communities.

One area mentioned for possible improvement was the participant nomination process. In one focus group, participants were concerned that those individuals who were nominated were already viewed as leaders in the community and were over committed. The class is sometimes perceived as

*“just another place where people of power come together and get more powerful.”*

Finding people who were not already too busy, but who had leadership potential, was a suggestion for improving the nomination process. Despite the fact that the Leadership Program intends to identify these people for nomination, it was apparent from focus group participants that this goal had not been reached in some communities.

Focus group participants shared their admiration for the youth who had participated in the Leadership Program. In some communities, informal mentoring relationships between youth and adults were established as a result of the class. However, in two focus groups, concerns were expressed that youth who participated in the training were not involved beyond the class

or left the community for higher education following the class. One suggestion was to have an all-youth leadership class.

Cohorts and cohort experiences were another focal point for suggested improvements that emerged from the focus groups. Some felt their experiences were different depending on their participation within a particular cohort. One focus group thought greater connections between the different cohorts within their communities would have been beneficial. Another community that had experienced more interactions between the cohorts saw these interactions as valuable.

*“There were a lot of things that happened in the first [cohort] that never happened in the second one.”*

*“I’d like to see more ties of the three classes together. Some type of training or event that ties us together.”*

Some participants credited the projects with helping their class to bond and giving them an opportunity to put their newly acquired skills to use. Other participants discussed their frustration with the class projects. Some projects became overwhelming and went over budget. Perhaps the greatest frustration was the attrition of class participants during the project process.

*“Halfway through our project, out of thirty people in our class we were down to eight or nine who were involved. People go back to their lives; they have a job and responsibilities.”*

Many respondents to the 12-month follow-up survey brought up the community projects as an area of concern and suggested changes as well. For example, making the time commitment clearer, making sure the community project is actually desired by the whole community, or having the class in the middle of the year to help the group with the logistics of the project were all mentioned. More than one participant mentioned helping participants pick easier-to-accomplish projects. This comment was representative of that sentiment:



*“The format of the class made it difficult to realistically evaluate potential projects in the given time frame – and in the context of the class, there is confusion about who’s in charge, the facilitators or us. We did succeed.....but I think some of us felt that we were in for more than we’d signed up for.”*

One respondent suggested:

*“I would re-think using the project model. I think [the project] becomes the object of the class rather than learning and practicing the skills.”*

Another respondent concurred, saying that the project was too much about the process and not enough about the skills – it felt more like meeting requirements of a grant, rather than supporting class members working on a cause. Another respondent commented:

*“The entire process of the class project seemed very limiting. The diverse voices were shut down and we were left with the same power players at the table. People who had divergent views or processes were slowly shut out.”*

One respondent suggested that a helpline for leadership class graduates might be good. He found that the group processes broke down during the project and a call to the facilitator helped him get the group back on track. Although the cohort project is designed to provide leadership class participants the opportunity to apply the skills of the class, it seems apparent that this notion was lost on some classes.

On the 12-month follow-up survey, 136 leadership class participants responded to the question about what The Ford Family Foundation could do to support them as community leaders, their organizations, and/or their communities. Respondents focused on both the educational and fiscal functions of the Foundation. Forty-two percent of respondents wrote that they wanted the Foundation to continue existing programs. Many participants (32%) mentioned the educational classes, while others (17%) mentioned the importance of financing community projects, but many spoke of both:

*“Continue matching grant opportunities and availability of additional leadership classes within our struggling community.”*

Seven participants (5%) had no specific suggestions.

Other respondents suggested other types of support including sponsoring a day or weekend where neighboring cohorts could get together. One suggestion was a regional collaboration conference. Another was to hold a statewide conference for all class members to gather. Another idea was providing education about social networking to help *“many more of us to be resources for each other.”* A recurrent suggestion for continued support was offering refresher classes, although the specifics varied – after 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, etc. Five participants recommended offering grant writing workshops. Other ideas included offering scholarships to high school students in another part of the county, providing leadership seminars for student government classes in high school, or offering youth intervention projects for youth only. One participant suggested that the Foundation have a regional coordinator who could be available to speak to groups about projects, grants, and programs.

In sum, participants suggested that improvements might be made in the class projects, the selection process, cohort experiences, and to a lesser extent, designing programs specifically for youth. However, participants were overwhelmingly grateful to The Ford Family Foundation for providing educational experiences and fiscal support to their communities. Many participants commented:

*“You are already doing a great job!”*

*“FILP and FFF are exceptionally good community partners and neighbors.”*

## CONCLUSION

### Conclusions

The 2009 evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program concentrated on answering a sub-set of the research questions that were established in 2008. This focused the research effort on understanding if:

- leadership development class participants are effective community leaders and increase their civic engagement after completion of the class,
- strong networks of community leaders develop as a result of the program,
- the Leadership Program builds strong, collaborative, community-oriented organizations.

In order to answer these research questions, quantitative and qualitative methodologies were employed and data were collected from different sub-populations of Leadership Program participants, improving the reliability of findings. Although not a focus of the 2009 evaluation efforts, insights were also gained on the extent to which the Leadership Program contributes to the vitality of rural communities and on how participants think the program could be improved.

### **Does the Leadership Program develop effective community leaders who apply what they learned?**

Overall, participants reported that they had applied leadership skills frequently over the past year. In the year following the leadership development class, participants reported applying their communication skills almost weekly, working with others about once a month, and networking slightly less frequently. These three types of leadership skills overall were applied about once a month by participants. Similarly, participants reported engaging in community building activities occasionally in the year following the leadership class, with some activities being done more often than others. Project management tasks in community efforts or projects were done slightly less than community building activities, with participants engaging in these tasks slightly less than occasionally. Overall, participants left the class better equipped to address issues in their community, with the confidence to make a difference, and with expanded networks of people to work with.

Participants' intentions to apply their skills or engage in particular activities at the end of the class (Fall 2008) also predicted their frequency of application or activity in the year following the class. Interestingly, so does class size and the number of organizations with which participants were affiliated. Although participants reported barriers to their engagement in community work, these barriers only somewhat limited their amount of leadership activity in the last year.

For the majority of individuals who were applying these skills at relatively high levels, this level was higher than before the class, implying that the leadership class had a positive effect on participants. When asked how much the Ford leadership class contributed to their ability to do the skills, activities, and tasks associated with leadership training, 80% of respondents said that a moderate to a great deal of their capacity was directly attributable to participation in the leadership class. Overall, the immediate outcomes of the class appear to be following participants as they move out into the community.

### **Does the Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?**

Participation in the leadership class resulted in greater civic engagement in the year after the class for about half of the Fall 2008 leadership class participants. On average, in the year after the class, participants engaged occasionally in civic activities, but for most this was more than they had engaged in civic activities before the class. The most popular forms of civic engagement for Fall 2008 leadership class participants after the class were voting, volunteering, working in community groups, fundraising for local causes, and promoting local events. The data indicate that the Leadership Program is encouraging rural community residents to be active in community life.

Also clear from the evaluation data collected and analyzed this year is that the positive outcomes of the Leadership Program at the conclusion of the leadership class stick with participants in the year following the class. Those who left the class highly motivated to engage in civic activities engage in more civic activities than those who left the class not very

motivated. Class size and the number of organization affiliations were also positively associated with levels of civic activity after the class. Despite some variation by these individual and class attributes, these results indicate that the leadership class successfully increases the motivation of participants to engage in civic life, thereby affecting the level of civic activity of participants the following year.

**Does the Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?**

Networking, as expressed by Ford participants, is about being connected to and collaborating with others to benefit the community. Participants reported that both their social networks and their organizational and community networks expanded: new relationships were built, existing relationships became stronger and relationships with people not typically in their social networks were established. Respondents also reported some impacts on work, social, and professional networks, but to a lesser extent.

**Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

Effective Organizations participants reported increased knowledge in strategic planning, operational management, and resource development and management as a result of the training. Participants who reported the least amount of knowledge at the beginning of the training showed the most improvement. At the conclusion of the training, participants felt quite knowledgeable in all aspects of organizational management, reported increased confidence to use the skills and tools they learned about in the training, and had a new network of organizations to collaborate with or draw on as resources. All of these outcomes are important as they represent the foundation of individual capacity to work effectively in organizations.

In addition to these outcomes of the Effective Organizations training, participants expect to apply the skills and tools taught in the training in their organizations. In order for the Leadership Program to have an impact on rural community organizations, it is very important that training participants apply the skills learned in the EO training and Leadership Development class in their organizations. Results of the 2009 study give cause for optimism; Leadership Program

participants plan to apply what they have learned to become more effective as individuals in their organizations, to help re-design or implement effective organizational strategies, and to share what they have learned with others in their organizations. One reason organizations may not change, despite the increased knowledge of training participants, is that only a limited number of organizational members tend to attend the training. Without organization-wide buy-in to the intent of the EO training and without developing the skills of a critical mass of organizational members, the Leadership Program may fall short of realizing significant impact on organizations as a whole. Although further research is needed to determine if organizations will change as a result of the Leadership Program, preliminary evidence indicates individuals are equipped to realize this change.

Effective Organizations participants are optimistic that the training will help their organizations become stronger. Indeed, this is the primary way in which training participants anticipate their organizations changing as a result of the Leadership Program. While participants were quick to envision ways in which their organizations will become better at strategic planning, resource development and management, and operational management as a result of the training, fewer participants anticipated their organizations would become more community-oriented and collaborative as a result.

### **Does the Leadership Program contribute to vital rural communities?**

Although data to answer this research question were limited to open-ended responses to the 12-month follow-up survey, findings confirm results discussed in the 2008 report. Greater community pride, increased collaboration, and increased community networks were the ways in which Fall 2008 leadership class participants saw that their communities have been affected by the Leadership Program. In future years it will be necessary to engage in a more in-depth study of rural communities to understand how the Leadership Program affects not only the capacity of communities, but also economic, environmental, and social outcomes.

## **Suggestions for the future**

Although Ford Institute Leadership Program participants are overwhelmingly grateful to The Ford Family Foundation for providing educational experiences and fiscal support to their communities, they do have some suggestions for improvements and continued support in the future. These seem to be areas where there were concerns expressed, even though no question directly addressed suggestions for improvement. Suggestions for improvements were related to class projects, the participant nomination process, and interactions between cohorts.

Suggestions for continuing support related to providing opportunities for regional and local collaboration, additional training, scholarships, and all-youth classes or trainings.

## **Recommendations**

Based on evidence from the 2009 evaluation, the OSU evaluation team continues to suggest that evaluations:

- Assess the impacts of the training using current measures, tools, and methods. Doing so will yield robust evidence as to the impact of the Leadership Program on the target populations.
- Follow participants as they move out of the class and into the community. Some impacts on individuals, organizations, and communities may not be realized for many years to come.
- Use qualitative and quantitative methods to examine factors that relate to longer term impacts of the training including trajectories of individual leadership development, networking, and community engagement.
- Use qualitative and quantitative methods to ascertain community-level impacts of the Leadership Program, emphasizing changes to community capacity.
- Track the immediate outcomes of the Effective Organizations training using valid tools and measures
- Examine changes in actual participant behavior in organizations following Effective Organizations training and subsequent changes in organizational operations and collaborations.
- Work with the Institute and trainers as Community Collaborations Training evolves in order to design and assess appropriate outcomes for later evaluation.

## **2010 Evaluation Plan**

The next evaluation report will contain information about all past participants (2003 – 2008) to assess the longer-term impact of the Leadership Program. In addition, an assessment of trainer effectiveness and the possible relation of trainer to outcomes will be investigated. A case study approach of specific communities will examine the relation of local actions, collaboration, and leadership to the local economic, social, and environmental context.

### Data Collection

- Collect survey information from LD and EO participants in the Spring and Fall 2010.
- Implement the 12-month follow-up survey of Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 LD participants.
- Implement the 12-month follow-up survey of 2009 EO participants.
- Administer the population survey to all past Leadership Program participants who graduated prior to Spring 2008.
- Conduct focus groups with past participants to assess the longer term impact of FILP on themes to be determined.

### Case Studies

- Finalize design and begin to implement the case study approach of specific communities, including collecting community information. Personal interviews will be conducted with key informants in 2-4 rural communities.

### Data Analysis

- Analysis will be based on the evaluation questions, guided by feedback from the Institute, and utilize data from:
  - LD and EO participant surveys from Spring and Fall 2010
  - follow-up surveys with Fall 2008/Spring 2009 LD participants
  - surveys from past Leadership Program participants
  - interviews and/or focus groups with past participants
  - data from community case studies



## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: *Cronbach's Alpha* Coefficients for Pre and Post Effective Organizations Training Concept Groups

Appendix 2: Distribution of Responses for Application of Leadership Skills

Appendix 3: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Community Building Activities

Appendix 4: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Project Management Tasks

Appendix 5: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Civic Activities

Appendix 6: Distribution of Responses for Barriers to Skill Application

Appendix 7: Means, Standard Deviations, and Cohen's *d* for Organizational Knowledge Concept Groups

Appendix 1: *Cronbach's Alpha* Coefficients for Pre and Post Effective Organizations Training  
 Concept Groups

Concept Groups	Number of Items	Alpha Pre/ Before	Alpha Post/ After
<b>Knowledge</b>			
Strategic Planning	6	0.87	0.86
Operational Management	7	0.91	0.85
Resource Development & Management	6	0.85	0.84
<b>Behavior</b>			
Collaboration/Networking	3	0.77	0.6
Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to measure the internal reliability of the concept groups. An alpha of .60 to .70 indicates an acceptable reliability and .80 or higher indicates a good reliability. All concepts were found to have an acceptable internal consistency.			

## Appendix 2: Distribution of Responses for Application of Leadership Skills

Application of Leadership Skills						
	Never	1-3 Times	4-6 Times	Once a Month	Weekly	Daily
<b>Communicate Effectively</b>						
Used active listening skills to understand another person's ideas	0%	1%	3%	10%	35%	51%
Used "appreciative inquiry" to emphasize the positive aspects of a situation	2%	14%	11%	21%	38%	14%
Given a speech or presentation to a group of people	7%	24%	16%	29%	17%	7%
Given constructive feedback to another person	2%	10%	10%	17%	43%	18%
<b>Work with Others</b>						
Worked effectively with different personality types	0%	1%	4%	10%	37%	48%
Facilitated group discussions	5%	17%	17%	23%	33%	5%
Worked to build consensus within a group	2%	16%	21%	28%	26%	7%
Used effective meeting techniques to guide a meeting	10%	19%	15%	30%	22%	4%
Used conflict resolution processes	7%	30%	17%	16%	23%	7%
<b>Network</b>						
Networked with others to address a community issue or problem	4%	18%	19%	26%	25%	9%
Networked with others to advance personally or professionally	9%	20%	17%	24%	19%	11%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.						

### Appendix 3: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Community Building Activities

Participation in Community Building Activities				
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Identified assets in your community	6%	17%	52%	25%
Educated yourself about social, economic, or environmental issues in your community	2%	13%	33%	52%
Helped build public awareness of a community issue or problem	5%	17%	44%	34%
Helped investigate possible solutions to a community issue or problem	4%	17%	47%	32%
Worked to improve the social, economic, and/or environmental conditions of your community	5%	12%	41%	42%
Helped define goals or a vision for your community	10%	25%	36%	29%
Encouraged others to participate in community issues and/or projects	3%	9%	38%	50%
Sought information about how community decisions would impact the local social, economic, and/or environmental conditions	12%	20%	38%	30%
Sought opportunities to learn more about community leadership	10%	21%	46%	23%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

Appendix 4: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Project Management Tasks

Participation in Project Management Tasks				
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Helped set goals for a community effort or project	6%	20%	41%	33%
Helped develop tasks, timelines, and assignments for a community effort or project	12%	20%	37%	31%
Participated in developing the budget for a community effort or project	19%	25%	31%	25%
Helped to publicize or promote some community effort or project	9%	16%	35%	40%
Helped plan a community fundraising effort	15%	20%	37%	28%
Helped involve stakeholders in a community project or effort	19%	17%	39%	25%
Helped to recruit and retain volunteers	14%	29%	32%	25%
Helped seek outside support for a community effort or project	14%	25%	33%	28%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

Appendix 5: Distribution of Responses for Barriers to Skill Application

<b>Barriers to Skill Application</b>				
	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
I felt “burned out” or discouraged by the class project	23%	42%	28%	7%
Personal concerns and demands (health, family, work) limited my time for community leadership activities	11%	31%	44%	14%
My community has been overwhelmed by economic, social, or environmental challenges that are out of our control	12%	50%	28%	10%
I felt overwhelmed by all there is to do in my community	15%	58%	23%	4%
Community work has been too frustrating for me	32%	54%	13%	1%
I was heavily engaged in community work before the Ford Leadership class and couldn’t take on more afterwards	15%	53%	27%	5%
I felt “closed out” of the leadership structure in my community	32%	53%	11%	4%
I have not been personally interested in the specific efforts or issues facing my community	47%	46%	6%	1%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

## Appendix 6: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Civic Activities

Participation in Civic Activities				
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Worked informally with others to address community issues	4%	16%	45%	34%
Worked as a member in a formal group or organization that addresses community issues	12%	16%	28%	44%
Helped mobilize community members to work on a common goal	10%	23%	37%	30%
Advocated for a policy or issue in your community	16%	21%	32%	31%
Participated in long-term community decision-making or governance processes	23%	22%	28%	27%
Participated on the board of any local service agency or organization	22%	13%	21%	44%
Volunteered in your community	2%	8%	32%	58%
Voted in elections	9%	1%	14%	76%
Attended any public hearings, town hall meetings, community forums, or city council meetings	10%	16%	37%	37%
Donated money, services, materials, or food to support a community effort, project or program	3%	10%	35%	52%
Helped raise money and collect materials to support a community effort, project, or program	6%	16%	42%	36%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

## Appendix 7: Means, Standard Deviations, and Cohen's *d* for Organizational Knowledge Concept Groups

Knowledge Concept Groups and Items	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen's <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Strategic Planning</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2.31</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.74</b>
Clarifying your organization's vision and mission	103	2.52	0.80	3.54	0.67	1.01	0.58
Establishing organizational goals and objectives	103	2.44	0.74	3.43	0.69	0.99	0.57
Effectively communicating your organization's message and mission	103	2.45	0.79	3.53	0.66	1.08	0.65
Analyzing the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats facing your organization (SWOT analysis)	103	1.94	0.85	3.31	0.64	1.37	0.70
Developing a strategic plan for your organization	102	2.01	0.83	3.21	0.72	1.20	0.64
Helping your organization fulfill its mission	102	2.47	0.77	3.47	0.64	1.00	0.58
<b>Operational Management</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>0.68</b>
Specifying board responsibilities	102	2.12	0.87	3.29	0.77	1.18	0.60
Creating effective board nomination and recruitment procedures	101	1.91	0.85	3.08	0.74	1.17	0.61
Communicating board responsibilities to board members	101	2.06	0.88	3.29	0.73	1.23	0.63
Understanding the purpose and use of bylaws and governing documents	102	2.30	1.01	3.31	0.78	1.00	0.51
Improving financial management systems	101	2.16	0.90	3.02	0.84	0.86	0.51
Developing and managing budgets	101	2.38	0.91	3.09	0.76	0.71	0.42
Planning for future leadership (succession planning)	101	1.85	0.86	3.02	0.80	1.17	0.60
<b>Resource Development &amp; Management</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2.04</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>3.12</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>0.68</b>
Establishing human resource management plan (employees & volunteers)	98	1.95	0.84	3.06	0.73	1.11	0.65
Establishing a resource development plan	100	1.86	0.75	3.06	0.75	1.20	0.62
Planning for future sustainability of an organization	101	2.06	0.82	3.03	0.79	0.98	0.55
Knowing how to fundraise in the community	103	2.20	0.83	3.33	0.69	1.12	0.61
Identifying grants appropriate for your organization's mission	98	2.10	0.95	3.14	0.87	1.04	0.50
Maintaining an effective volunteer base	100	2.01	0.81	3.11	0.79	1.10	0.58
<b>Single Item</b>							
Understanding the core competencies (i.e. strategic planning, organizational leadership, resource development, resource management) of effective organizational management	102	2.10	0.80	3.36	0.73	1.26	0.62
<b>Organizational Management Knowledge Overall</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2.15</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>3.23</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>0.74</b>

Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. **All results were significant at  $p < .05$** , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen's *d* statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect.



# Evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program 2009 Report



Tillamook County Cohort 2

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**Evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program,  
2009 Report**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF 2009 FORD INSTITUTE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

In 2009, The Oregon State University evaluation team focused its evaluation of the impact of the Ford Institute Leadership Program on a sub-set of the evaluation questions that will ultimately gauge the impact of the program on individuals, organizations, and communities. In particular, questions which address the short- and mid-term impacts of the program on individuals were the focus of 2009 evaluation efforts.

## **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program develop effective community leaders who apply what they learned?**

An analysis of the three types of skills taught during the Leadership Development class found that graduates use leadership skills most often in the year after graduating (about once a month); followed by community building skills and project management skills, which are used occasionally. Leadership graduates use their leadership skills in a variety of settings, most often in community settings and within organizations.

The majority of graduates use their leadership, community building, and project management skills more often after the class than they did before, and they feel that the class contributed significantly to their ability to function as leaders in this way. In particular, graduates feel that the class equips them with skills and tools, teaches them to appreciate people with different personalities, gives them self- confidence, provides them an important opportunity to network, and builds their community awareness – all of which help them to be better community leaders in the year after the class.

Graduates who feel highly skilled or likely to do activities at the conclusion of the class actually engage in the activities more often than their classmates who felt less skilled or likely after the class ends.

Some participants describe barriers that prevent fully engaging in community work, including: personal concerns and demands; external challenges faced by the community; being heavily engaged in community work before the class; and feeling burned out from the class project (due to its length/duration or lack of participation by other class members). Many graduates engage in community work and leadership in spite of barriers they encounter.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?**

The positive effects of the Leadership Development class on participants' civic engagement are evident during the first year following the class. Graduates describe their activity in civic life after the class as occasional. They volunteer, vote, work in community groups, fundraise for local causes, and promote local events. The extent of civic engagement activity increased for about half of graduates, and the majority of participants attribute their ability to engage effectively in civic life to the leadership class itself.

The leadership class successfully builds the motivation of participants to engage in civic life, and those who are highly motivated at the end of the training are more active the following year than their less motivated peers. In addition, the larger the Leadership Development class size was and the more organizations an individual is affiliated with, the more frequently participants tend to engage in civic life in the year following the class.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?**

Focus groups in five different hub-communities revealed that the Leadership Program has helped build networks of community leaders in rural communities. Past participants feel that the number, diversity, and intensity of their social networks have increased because of their involvement with the Leadership Program. These networks have helped participants personally, professionally, and in their community work.

## **Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

The capacity of individuals to have an effect on community organizations is being built by the program through the Effective Organizations (EO) training. EO participants feel that their knowledge of strategic planning, operational management, and resource development and management (particularly strategic planning) is increased by the training. In fact, participants who had the least amount of knowledge about these topics before the training felt that it increased their knowledge more than those who had greater knowledge at the onset. Many participants feel the training gave them confidence to use organizational management skills and tools, but also gave them access to a greater network of organizations and individuals to collaborate with or draw on as resources later.

Participants expect to apply the skills and tools they learned to become more effective in their organizations, implement effective organizational strategies including strategic planning and board management, increase the role of their organizations in the community, and discuss what they have learned with others in their organizations. Participants reported that the training results in the greatest increases in their likelihoods of participating in the strategic recruitment of board members and discussing strategies for improving organizational effectiveness with others at their organization.

Effective Organizations participants are optimistic that the training will help their organizations become stronger in the long run. Primarily, they feel their organizations will become more focused, have better functioning boards, be better able to work together as an organization, be more sustainable into the future, and be better at obtaining and managing resources. These findings suggest changes and improvements are likely in organizations, so long as training participants engage in the organizational management process and are able to affect operations. Future evaluation efforts will focus on assessing the changes that are actually made in organizations as a result of the Leadership Program.

## **Suggestions for the future**

Ford Institute Leadership Program participants are overwhelmingly grateful to The Ford Family Foundation for providing educational experiences and fiscal support to their communities. Suggestions for improvements related to class projects, the participant nomination process, and interactions between cohorts. Suggestions for continuing support related to providing opportunities for regional and local collaboration, additional training, scholarships, and all-youth classes or trainings.

## **2010 Evaluation Plan**

The next year of evaluation will assess the impact of the Leadership Program on all past participants (2003-2008). An assessment of trainer effectiveness and the possible relation of trainer to outcomes will be investigated. Case studies of specific communities will untangle the relation of local initiatives, collaboration, and leadership development to community vitality.

# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

In 2003, The Ford Family Foundation initiated a comprehensive training program designed to increase the vitality of rural communities in Oregon and Siskiyou County, California. The core strategy was training to increase the leadership skills of individuals from rural communities, the effectiveness of rural community organizations, and the degree of collaboration in rural communities. From 2003 to 2009, over 2,500 individuals from 56 communities have participated in the Leadership Program.

In 2007, the Ford Family Foundation contracted with a team of evaluators from Oregon State University to design and conduct an outcome evaluation focused on the results of the leadership training program. Specifically the evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program was to examine the extent to which the program builds:

- More effective community leaders,
- Stronger networks of leaders within and across rural communities,
- Stronger community organizations and networks of organizations, and ultimately
- Vital rural communities.

In order to assess these outcomes, the team of evaluators from Oregon State University (OSU) began working collaboratively with the Ford Institute for Community Building to design a robust outcome evaluation. This evaluation began with the review and analysis of all evaluation data that had been collected from 2003 through 2007. The OSU team developed a comprehensive written report summarizing the evaluation findings for 2003-2007<sup>1</sup>. Submitted in January 2008, this 84-page report included extensive recommendations for both future programming and future evaluation of the Leadership Program.

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<sup>1</sup> Clara Pratt, Lena Etuk, Cheryl Peters, Sally Bowman, Denise Rennekamp, and Michaella Sektnan (January 31, 2008) *Evaluation Report Ford Institute Leadership Program, 2003-2007*. Oregon State University, Extension Family and Community Development Program.



Based on the evaluation recommendations contained in the 2007 report, in 2008 the OSU evaluation team established a systematic evaluation structure for the Leadership Program. The system was designed with the input of Ford Institute for Community Building staff and other stakeholders. Logic models and research questions were designed to clarify the desired program outcomes and indicators of the leadership training for individuals, cohorts, organizations, and communities. In addition, reliable and valid data collection tools were designed to assess attributes of and outcomes for individuals. Data collection methods yielded both quantitative (statistical) and qualitative information about the impact of the Leadership Program on individuals. In April 2009, the Ford Institute for Community Building received a report which explained the findings from 2008 and recommendations for future evaluation of the Leadership Program.<sup>2</sup>

### **Major Accomplishments**

Based on the recommendations laid out in the 2008 report, the OSU evaluation team focused its efforts in 2009 on answering a core sub-set of evaluation questions and establishing data collection and analysis systems to answer another sub-set of evaluation questions for 2010.

Although insight into additional questions was also gained, data analysis focused on exploring the following research questions in 2009:

- Does the Leadership Program develop effective community leaders who apply what they learned?
- Does the Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?
- Does the Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?
- Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?
- Does the Leadership Program transform individual participants, organizations, and communities above and beyond the intended outcomes?

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<sup>2</sup> Michaella Sektnan, Lena Etuk, Clara Pratt, Sally Bowman, and Denise Rennekamp. April 2009. "Evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program: 2008 Report"

- Do outcomes vary by aspects/attributes of the program, individual participant, organization, or community?

In order to answer these research questions, data were collected and analyzed from different groups of Leadership Program participants using quantitative and qualitative methodologies:

- Information was collected from Spring and Fall 2009 Leadership Development (LD) and Effective Organizations (EO) training participants using survey instruments designed in 2008.
- A survey instrument was designed, pre-tested, and implemented to follow up with Fall 2008 LD participants 12 months after they completed the training.
- Focus groups with past participants were conducted to assess the impact of the Leadership Program on networking and collaboration.

In 2009, the OSU evaluation team also designed, pre-tested, and implemented a survey of past participants (2003 through Spring 2008) to assess the longer-term impact of the Leadership Program. This dataset will be analyzed in 2010 to answer a number of evaluation questions including:

- When do changes in leadership, community organizations, and/or community vitality occur and are they sustained over time?

In the latter portion of 2009, the team received and assembled a new Leadership Development trainer dataset to assess participants' ratings of trainer effectiveness and explore any association between trainer type and leadership outcomes. The analysis of this Leadership Development trainer dataset will occur in 2010.

Finally, in 2009 the OSU team planned and designed a case study approach of specific communities which will be implemented in 2010 to answer these questions:

- Does local action, collaboration, and/or leadership have an impact on the local economy, society, and environment in rural communities? How has the Leadership Program contributed to these outcomes?

## **METHODS**

The following sections outline the qualitative and quantitative methods used to assess the outcomes of the Leadership Program in 2009. Results are discussed on page 18.

### **Leadership Development 12-Month Follow-Up Survey**

In order to gauge the application of leadership skills over time, a 12-month follow-up survey was created by the OSU evaluation team for distribution to all Fall 2008 cohort participants. This survey contained questions concerning the application of leadership, community building, and project management skills, as well as participation in civic activities, and perceived challenges to community leadership.

#### ***Procedure***

The survey was implemented using a multi-method approach. Starting in late January 2010, the survey was distributed via the internet using SurveyMonkey™ online survey software. All members of the target population were sent an email informing them of their selection for the survey, along with an explanation of the survey, and a link to the SurveyMonkey™ survey. Upon clicking on the SurveyMonkey™ link, respondents were directed to a web-page that again explained the purpose of survey, but also included an informed consent check-box.

Respondents who agreed to participate (by checking the informed consent box) were directed to the first page of the survey, while those who did not agree were directed to a screen with the OSU evaluation team contact information and removed from the survey.

In order to track the survey responses by individuals, each survey respondent was assigned a unique survey number. Individuals who did not complete the survey received specific follow-ups. In particular, two reminder emails were sent to participants – one week and two weeks after the initial email.

Three and a half weeks after the initial email, the target population database was matched to the survey number of the returned surveys. Individuals who returned surveys via SurveyMonkey™ were marked as completed and removed from the population database. Those

who had not returned surveys were sent a survey packet via US mail. The packet contained the following documents:

- A cover letter explaining survey
- 2 copies of the informed consent form (required by OSU Internal Review Board)
- The 12-month follow-up survey
- A stamped and pre-addressed return envelope for the completed survey

One week after the survey was delivered to an individual via mail, a follow-up thank you and reminder postcard was mailed. The postcard served to remind those who had forgotten, to return their survey as soon as possible, and to thank those who had already returned their survey. Three weeks after the initial survey packet was mailed to individuals, the survey number of respondents who had returned the survey were removed from the list. Those remaining in the database received a second follow-up letter and replacement survey packet one week later. The mailed questionnaire contained the exact same questions as the online survey. Any deviations between the two survey forms were merely due to formatting constraints.

Data collection for the 12-month follow-up survey extended from late January to early April 2010. At the completion of the survey implementation, OSU employees entered the information from the completed paper questionnaires into the SurveyMonkey™ database. In addition to the survey number mentioned above, participants were also asked to create a unique identifier that they can recall for future surveys (first and middle initial, date of birth, e.g. JS120367) when completing this survey instrument. This ID code allows the OSU research team to match participant's responses on the 12-month follow-up with previous surveys completed by each individual (LD Outcome Survey and Application).

### ***Response Rate***

The 12-month follow-up survey was sent to all participants from the Fall 2008 Leadership Development classes, for a total population size of 302. At least one source of contact

information (email address) was available for all but one participant. In the first round, 264 were sent invitations to participate via email. Of those, a total of 150 replied online using SurveyMonkey™. Subsequently, 167 participants were sent the survey via US mail, with 57 replying by mail. Nine (3%) participants opted out of participation by either selecting the opt out link in SurveyMonkey™, declining consent on the survey itself, or notifying the OSU evaluation team that they did not wish to participate. Combining both collection methods, a total of 207 participants responded to the survey, for a response rate of 69%.

Data from the 12-month survey were then matched with data previously collected throughout the evaluation, using the individual's unique ID code. This included data from the Leadership Development (LD) class application, the LD 4<sup>th</sup> week-end outcome survey, and FICB databases. By combining the data, the evaluation is able to capture a more comprehensive picture of individuals that participate in the program and what factors are related to program outcomes. A total of 163 Fall 2008 cohort members had data from all sources. Throughout the report, findings related to the leadership development class will be based on this sub-population who had data from all sources.

### ***Data Analysis***

Quantitative data from the Leadership Development 12-month follow-up survey were analyzed to assess a number of outcomes:

- Application of skills and ideas emphasized in the Leadership Program
- Change in activity level
- Settings of skill application
- The relationship between intention to apply skills and actual application
- The contribution of the Leadership Program to the activities of past participants
- Barriers to leadership

In order to evaluate these outcomes, quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive techniques including calculating means, running cross-tabulations, conducting dependent t-tests, running correlations, and doing Ordinary Least Squares regression. Dependent t-tests

were used to calculate whether there was a significant difference between the average frequency of specific skills or activities over the past year. Significant results indicate there is a statistical difference in how often different types of skills or activities were used ( $p < .05$ ).

In order to assess the impact of the individual participant characteristics on leadership outcomes, data on 163 individual participants for whom data from all sources were available was analyzed with correlations and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) methods. Correlation analysis reveals the simple association between two variables, such as being a public official and frequency of public speaking. While this simple association can indicate if within the data, participants with a particular personal attribute tend to have different outcomes than those without the attribute, the correlation does not reveal the size of the effect and may incorrectly lead the researcher to believe that there is a direct relationship between the two variables. For these reasons, OLS regression methods are also used to understand the relationship between individual characteristics and leadership outcomes. OLS regression examines the extent to which a unit increase in an independent variable, like income, affects the outcome variable, net of other factors that vary across individuals. OLS has the power to hold certain factors that vary across individuals constant, in order to isolate a “more pure” effect of an independent variable on the key outcome variable. OLS is useful and necessary if multiple independent variables are correlated with each other to some extent. OLS regression was also used to examine the relationship between participants’ responses to the 4<sup>th</sup> weekend Leadership Development survey regarding their intent to apply skills or do certain activities and the frequency of their activity 12 months later.

Qualitative data from the 12-month follow-up survey were analyzed to identify themes that reinforced the quantitative findings or revealed additional trends. Participant responses to a series of open-ended questions on the survey provided the source of this qualitative data. For each question, the responses that participants made were read by members of the evaluation team and assessed for themes. Themes correspond to ideas or concepts that are raised by more than one respondent. Naturally, one respondent can make a comment that addresses

more than one theme. Thus written responses themselves are the unit of analysis, not individual respondents.

Once the themes were identified and coded from the responses, the number of responses made in reference to each theme was tallied by the researchers. This tally provides a sense of the significance of the theme among the respondents. Themes that are mentioned very often therefore get more weight in the discussion than those that are mentioned only occasionally.

### **Leadership Program Focus Groups**

In order to explore the impact of the Leadership Program on networking among individuals and their communities, focus groups were conducted in rural communities around the state in 2009. Face-to-face focus groups have been a method used in social science over the last 20 years for discovery of patterns and trends that emerge from group interaction.

Networking is a way of describing how people interact with one another in various social settings. The focus groups centered on three types of networks:

- **Social networks** describe personal relationships people have in their personal life, such as friendships or acquaintances.
- **Professional or work networks** describe the relationships people have through their employment, such as with co-workers or acquaintances made through work.
- **Organizational or community work networks** describe the relationships people have with those with whom they volunteer or work on community projects, such as members of community boards.

All of these networks would be expected to overlap and/or intersect with each other. Figure 1 was shown to participants as a visual depiction of the reality that social, professional, and community networks may overlap in smaller communities. For example, sometimes these networks overlap when co-workers become close friends or join each other in volunteering on a community project or when an individual helps connect a friend with a job.

**Figure 1: Overlap of Social Networks**



In 2009, five focus groups were conducted with past Leadership Program participants in these communities: Baker City, Enterprise, Keno, Philomath, and Rainier. Focus group participants could have participated in one or all of the three components of the Leadership Program: Leadership Development, Community Collaborations, or Effective Organizations. In total, thirty-eight community members (16 male; 22 female) participated in the five focus groups. Participants were asked a range of questions regarding their experiences with the Leadership Program. The focus groups asked participants about changes in each area of networking as a result of participation in the leadership program:

- As a result of your participation in FILP, how did your social networks change?
- As a result of your participation in FILP, how did your work, school & professional networks change?
- As a result of your participation in FILP, how did your community networks change?

In each case, a series of follow-up probes were asked:

Can you give examples of how you...

- Formed new relationships with community members (increase in number of relationships)
- Strengthened existing relationships (more frequent interaction, ...)



- Formed relationships with people that are different from you in terms of age, economic status, culture

There were supplementary networking questions that were addressed, to varying degrees, depending on how the group conversation flowed:

- To what extent do your networks overlap and influence each other?
- What benefits have you experienced because of the changes in your networks?
- Have there been any drawbacks to the changes in your networks?
- What did Ford do to facilitate these changes in your social, community, and work networks?
- Have there been changes in your networking with individuals outside of your community?

### ***Data Analysis***

The focus groups were recorded and transcribed. Multiple raters read the transcripts, discussed the coding schemes, and wrote and rewrote the analysis of the focus groups. The flow of questions was the framework for organizing the results. Issues voiced by each focus group were analyzed horizontally, looking for common themes across the groups. An effort was made to discover common themes, but also to look for dissenting opinions.

### **Effective Organizations 2009 Participant Survey**

In 2009, Effective Organizations training participants were asked to complete evaluation surveys on the first and second weekends of the training. On the first weekend, participants were asked to complete a background survey with questions about age, gender, previous leadership or organizational management training, organizational involvement, and other types of personal characteristics. On the second weekend of the training, participants received an outcome survey with questions regarding their knowledge about and behavior concerning organizational planning and management before the training and after the training. These surveys underwent cognitive pretesting in the summer of 2008 and were piloted in two communities in the fall of 2008.

The outcome survey followed a retrospective pretest format, with questions about participants' knowledge and behavior before and after the training. For each item, respondents scored their knowledge on a scale of one to four, where one was "not knowledgeable" and four was "very knowledgeable." In the first section of the survey, participants were asked to rate their knowledge after the training and before the training for 20 organizational management skills.

Examples include:

- Developing a strategic plan for your organization
- Specifying board responsibilities
- Developing and managing budgets
- Establishing human resource management plan (employees & volunteers)
- Maintaining an effective volunteer base
- Helping your organization fulfill its mission

In the second section of the survey, participants were asked to rate their likelihood of engaging in 16 behaviors related to organizational management after the training and before the training. Again, the range of the scale was from one to four, where one was "not likely" and four was "very likely". Examples of items include:

- Participate in fundraising efforts for your organization
- Work with other organizations that have similar goals to your organization
- Promote positive board functioning (e.g. communication and decision making)
- Work to increase the role of your organization in improving the community
- Assist your organization in clarifying its mission, goals, and objectives
- Monitor the fiscal health of your organization

In the final section of the survey, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions to solicit some general thoughts and considerations about the impact of the Effective Organizations training on themselves and their organizations. One question asked participants to explain the specific changes they intend to make in their organizations as a result of the training. Another question asked individuals to consider the impact their participation in the

training will have on their organization in the long term. The last question asked participants to describe the impact the training had on them personally.

### ***Survey Administration***

The Effective Organizations background and outcome surveys were administered by the staff of the training facilitator organizations: Rural Development Initiatives, Inc., Human Systems, and TACS. In the spring of 2009, Effective Organizations training facilitators were provided electronic versions of the background and outcome surveys to be printed by their staff, a script to be used in explaining the survey to participants, and instructions on how to administer the survey. The OSU evaluation team spent about an hour and a half with the facilitators explaining the protocol of the survey. In short, trainers were asked to hand out the EO background survey on the Friday of the first EO training weekend and hand out the outcome survey on the Saturday of the second week-end (the final day) of the training. It was recommended that the background survey be handed out around the time the Ford Institute for Community Building is discussed, and trainers were strongly encouraged to hand out the outcome survey after the last module of the training, but not during lunch, and before participants were formally dismissed for the day. Training participants were to be instructed to place their completed surveys in an envelope addressed to the Ford Institute for Community Building. The surveys were then entered by Institute staff using EpiData open-source data entry software. The electronic EpiData files were then sent to the OSU evaluation team for analysis.

Attendance at both weekends of Effective Organizations training is not mandatory and, according to the trainers with whom OSU faculty consulted before implementing the surveys, there tend to be notable differences in attendance between the first and second weekends of the training. For this reason, training facilitators were also instructed to send a list of absentees to the Ford Institute so that the Institute staff could send surveys to these individuals.

## ***Response Rate***

In the spring and fall of 2009, 11 communities participated in Effective Organizations training:

- Chiloquin
- Grant County
- Harney County
- La Pine
- McKenzie River
- Newberg
- North Curry County
- Sisters
- South Lane
- White City – Upper Rogue
- Wild Rivers Coast

OSU faculty members received survey data from ten of these communities from the Ford Institute, with surveys from South Lane missing. Table 1 displays the total number of people who registered for the EO trainings as well as the number of surveys received from each community.

**Table 1**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Effective Organizations Training Registrants (#)</b>	<b>Background Survey Respondents (#)</b>	<b>Outcome Survey Respondents (#)</b>	<b>Respondents to both the Background &amp; Outcome Surveys (#)</b>
Chiloquin	24	8	15	6
Grant County	43	--	26	--
Harney County	26	19	19	16
La Pine	28	24	22	16
McKenzie River	12	11	9	6
Newberg	21	17	16	14
North Curry County	28	22	16	12
Sisters	30	--	18	--
White City – Upper Rogue	35	23	21	14
Wild Rivers Coast	49	32	26	19
South Lane	36	--	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>103</b>

As Table 1 shows, there were discrepancies between the number of people who registered for the training, the number who completed the background survey, and the number who completed the outcome survey, despite efforts to contact absentees. Also, due to the timing of the implementation of the surveys, the participants in the Grant County and Sisters did not have the opportunity to complete the background survey. Thus, in total, 103 people completed both the background and outcome surveys, while 156 completed the background survey and 187 completed the outcome survey. The response rates varied accordingly as well; 46% completed the background survey, 56% completed the outcome survey, and 31% completed both surveys. Throughout this report, the findings we discuss will relate only to the sub-population of EO participants who completed both surveys (N = 103).

### ***Analysis Variables***

In order to analyze the data in a clear and intuitive way, Effective Organizations outcome survey items were grouped based on their conceptual linkages. In the knowledge section of the survey, 19 of the 20 survey items were grouped into three categories: operational management and leadership, strategic planning, and resource development and management. One survey item encompassed all three of these topics, so it was not included in these three concept groups. In the behavior section of the survey, three survey items were grouped into one category collaboration/networking while the remaining 13 items were kept separate. Using these concept groups, analysis of changes in knowledge can be done without running separate analyses on each individual item. Table 2 describes the three concept groups that were formed from the 19 survey items in the knowledge section.

**Table 2**

<b>Knowledge Concept Groups</b>	
<b>Concept Group and Definition</b>	
<b>Strategic Planning</b>	Clarifying an organizational vision and mission; Establishing goals and objectives for the organization; Analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the organization; Developing a strategic plan; Helping the organization fulfill its mission
<b>Operational Management &amp; Leadership</b>	Creating effective board nomination and recruitment procedures; Specifying and communicating board responsibilities; Developing and managing budgets; Succession planning
<b>Resource Development &amp; Management</b>	Identifying appropriate grants; Fundraising in the community; Establishing a resource development plan; Establishing a human resource management plan; Maintaining an effective volunteer base

Table 3 describes the collaboration/networking concept group that was formed from items in the behavior section.

**Table 3**

<b>Behavior Concept Group</b>	
<b>Concept Group and Definition</b>	
<b>Collaboration/Networking</b>	Working with other organizations that have similar organizational goals; Working with other organizations that do not have similar goals; Developing networks and partnerships with other organizations

Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were used to measure the internal reliability of the concept groups. Alphas indicate how well a set of variables or items fit together to represent one dimension or concept. Alpha coefficients range from zero to one; an alpha of .60 to .70 indicates an acceptable level of reliability and .80 or higher indicates good reliability. All knowledge concept groups were found to have an acceptable internal reliability (for alpha statistics, see Appendix 1).

### ***Data Analysis***

Quantitative data from the Effective Organizations background and outcome surveys were analyzed to assess whether participants reported statistically significant changes in knowledge

and behaviors as a result of the training. In addition, further analysis was conducted to see if changes in outcomes varied by attributes of the individual. Qualitative data from the outcome survey were analyzed to identify themes that reinforced the quantitative findings or revealed additional trends in knowledge, behavior, or organizational change.

### *Changes in Knowledge and Behavior*

Outcome data were analyzed for all 103 EO training participants who completed both the outcome and background surveys. Participant scores from the retrospective pre and post were compared for the analysis of change in knowledge and behavior. Dependent t-tests were used to calculate whether there was a significant change in the participant reports before and after the training. Significant results indicate there is a statistical difference between the means for the pretest and posttest ( $p < .05$ ). In addition, a Cohen's  $d$  statistic was used to estimate the size of the impact of the training on this change. Cohen's  $d$  scores less than .40 indicate a small effect, scores from .40 to .74 indicate a moderate effect, scores .75 to 1.44 indicate a large effect, and scores greater than 1.45 indicate a very large effect.

### *Participant Attributes and Effective Organizations Training Outcomes*

In order to assess the impact of the individual participant characteristics on Effective Organizations training outcomes, data on 103 individual participants who completed the background and outcome surveys were analyzed with correlations and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression methods. Correlation analysis reveals the simple association between two variables, such as being a public official and knowledge of organizational strategic planning. OLS regression methods reveal the relationship between individual characteristics and EO training outcomes. Through OLS methods it is possible to examine the extent to which a unit increase in an independent variable, like income, affects the outcome variable, net of other factors that vary across individuals.

For the analysis, outcome variables for each participant were computed using the post-test scores across the survey items that correspond to the outcome concept or overall section. For example, for the participant's overall knowledge level after the training, an average post-test

score was calculated for each individual participant. To create this score, the post-training knowledge scores (that range from 1 to 4) were added together for all 20 questions on the survey that relate to knowledge and divided by 20. Each individual participant then has her own overall average knowledge value. This number is then regressed on the factors hypothesized to explain the variation in overall average change in knowledge across all participants. Average scores were also computed for overall behaviors, as well as the concept group within the behavior section.

### *Open-ended Responses*

In order to gain additional insight into the impact of the Effective Organizations training on participants, a series of open-ended questions were asked on the survey. As on the Leadership Development 12-month follow-up survey, for each question the responses of participants were read by members of the evaluation team and assessed for themes.

Once the themes were identified among the comments, they were given an overarching name and then the number of comments made in reference to each theme was tallied by the researchers. This tally provides a sense of the significance of the theme among the respondents. Themes that are mentioned very often therefore get more weight in the discussion than those that are mentioned only occasionally.



## RESULTS

To understand the impact of the Leadership Program on participants, a series of research questions were employed in 2009. The findings of this examination are discussed in the following sections, organized by question.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program develop effective community leaders?**

In order for leaders to be effective, they must first gain the skills and then apply them in their lives and communities. As effective leadership development follows this sequential pattern, it has been important to structure the evaluation in such a way to reflect this time-order. At the end of the Fall 2008 leadership class, participants completed an outcome survey assessing their competence (as a result of the training) and intent to apply the skills. The 12-month follow-up survey was then implemented one year later to see if and how the skills were indeed applied. Data summarized here is from the 163 participants that completed the leadership development application, the outcome survey at the conclusion of the leadership class, and 12-month follow-up survey.

#### ***Do participants feel more competent as leaders?***

In the 2008 Evaluation Report, Fall 2008 participants were found to be more competent in leadership skills directly after the training. In summary, participants indicated that the training helped increase their knowledge, skills, and motivation. In particular, they reported more confidence to lead and more willingness to work in their communities toward positive change. Participants reported they used these skills to work more effectively on their class projects and in their community organizations, in their workplaces, and with their families. In addition, participants who reported the least amount of competence and leadership behavior at the beginning of the training showed the most improvement. Overall, participants reported significantly higher levels of competence in leadership skills and significantly higher likelihoods of engaging in leadership behavior as a result of the training. To build on these findings, further evaluation was conducted to examine the effectiveness of these community leaders as they moved out of the class and into the community.

### ***How do participants apply what they learned during FILP?***

Application of leadership skills was gauged through responses to the 12-month follow-up survey conducted early in 2010. Fall 2008 participants were asked to report their application of leadership, community building, and project management skills during the first year after the training. Participants were from a total of 13 hub-communities, including Chiloquin, Jefferson County, La Pine, Lake County, Monmouth/Independence, Newberg, North Curry County, Philomath, South Lincoln County, Sutherlin, Union County, Wild Rivers Coast (South Curry County), and Winston/Dillard. Demographic characteristics of this sample did not vary significantly from those reported in the 2008 Report. Table 4 summarizes the demographic and background characteristics of this sample.

**Table 4**

<b>Mean, Standard Deviation, and Percentages of Demographic and Background Characteristics</b>			
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Years in the community	163	14.21	13.56
Years of education completed	163	14.93	2.88
Income <sup>1</sup>	160	\$66,390.00	\$38,521.00
Number of organizations <sup>2</sup>	163	2.74	1.47
Average hours per month work with organizations	144	12.83	13.33
<b>Gender</b>			
Gender	163	67% Female	33% Male
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>			
Race/ethnicity	162	90% White	11% Other
<b>Employed for pay</b>			
Employed for pay	105	89% Yes	11% No
<b>College degree (Associate's or higher)</b>			
College degree (Associate's or higher)	163	58% Yes	42% No
<b>Elected official</b>			
Elected official	163	20% Yes	80% No
<b>Previous leadership experience</b>			
Previous leadership experience	163	58% Yes	42% No
<sup>1</sup> Mean of midpoint of income categories, <sup>2</sup> Number of organizations as reported on the application, limit of 5.			

### **Frequency of Application**

On the 12 month follow-up survey, respondents were asked to report how often they engaged in a variety of leadership skills and behaviors in the past year, since the completion of the

leadership development class. Items on the survey were grouped into three main areas: leadership skills, community building activities, and project management tasks.

### *Leadership Skills*

On the 12-month survey, training participants were asked how often they had applied 11 specific leadership skills since completing the training. For each item, respondents scored their application of leadership skills on a scale of one to six, where one was “never”, two was “1-3 times”, three was “4-6 times”, four was “once a month”, five was “weekly” and six was “daily”. Leadership skills were divided into three sections reflecting the ability of participants to: communicate effectively, work with others, and network. Table 5 lists the means and standard deviations for the frequency of skills application. The higher the mean, the more frequently, on average, participants have been doing the activity.

**Table 5**

<b>Application of Leadership Skills: Means and Standard Deviations</b>			
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Communicate Effectively</b>	162	4.35	0.87
Used “appreciative inquiry” to emphasize the positive aspects of a situation	162	5.30	0.87
Given constructive feedback to another person	161	4.42	1.29
Used active listening skills to understand another person’s ideas	162	4.35	0.87
Given a speech or presentation to a group of people	161	4.20	1.33
<b>Work with Others</b>	162	3.94	1.01
Worked effectively with different personality types	162	5.26	0.88
Worked to build consensus within a group	160	3.83	1.24
Facilitated group discussions	162	3.77	1.36
Used effective meeting techniques to guide a meeting	162	3.49	1.39
Used conflict resolution processes	162	3.38	1.47
<b>Network</b>	162	3.66	1.26
Networked with others to address a community issue or problem	161	3.76	1.35
Networked with others to advance personally or professionally	161	3.58	1.49
<b>Leadership Skills Overall</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>0.85</b>
Scale ranged from 1 to 6, where 1 was “never”, 2 was “1-3 times”, 3 was “4-6 times”, 4 was “once a month”, 5 was “weekly” and 6 was “daily”.			

Overall, participants reported that they had applied leadership skills about once a month over the past year (mean = 4.04). There were significant differences in the frequency of application depending on the type of skill, however. Skills related to communicating effectively were applied the most often, with an overall average of at least once a month. Among these effective communication skills, appreciative inquiry was the most frequently applied, with participants reporting they used it weekly. Giving a speech or public presentation and active listening were the least frequently applied, on average, in this group of leadership skills. Interestingly, while the mean for active listening was among the lowest in the communication skill set, only a very low percentage of participants (2%) reported that they used the skill less than three times over the past year.

Following communication skills, skills for working with others were applied by participants just under once a month (mean = 3.94). Working effectively with different personality types was done significantly more often than the other skills, with the majority of participants reporting that they applied those skills weekly or daily (85%). Skills applied the least often in this skill set included effective meeting techniques and conflict resolution processes. These were only applied an average of four to six times during the past year by Fall 2008 leadership development class participants.

Finally, participants reported networking with others least often of these leadership skill sets; on average, four to six times during the past year (mean = 3.66). There was no significant difference between the level of networking to address community issues and the level of networking for personal or professional gain. Although applied the least often on average, one-third of participants reported networking weekly or daily. For a complete table of the distribution of responses for each leadership skill item, see Appendix 2.

#### *Change in Activity*

Results of the 12-month follow-up clearly indicate that participants are frequently using the skills they learned from the training. Yet, does their activity level reflect changes made as a result of participation in the leadership class? In order to answer this question, participants

were asked if they had done these leadership activities over the past year more often, less often, or about the same compared to before participating in the Ford leadership class. Overall, the majority of participants (67%) reported that they had applied these leadership skills more often during the year since the class. Only one percent of participants reported that they used the skills less frequently over the past year.

While the majority of participants reported increased use of leadership skills as a result of the training, further analysis explored the extent of change for participants who applied the skills very frequently. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to indicate high activity individuals. This was equivalent to applying the skills once a month or more. Of those who were highly active, 70% used the skills more often than before the training, with the remaining 30% using the skills at the same level as before the training. No participants who rated themselves at engaging in leadership skills at high levels stated that this level was less often than before the training. Therefore, for the majority of individuals who were using their leadership skills a lot 12 months after the class, this high outcome resulted from participation in the class.

#### *Settings of Skill Application*

In addition to the frequency of skill application, the 12-month survey also asked participants about settings in which leadership skills were applied. Specifically, the survey asked whether or not the participant had applied leadership skills with family and friends, at work, in school, in community organizations (e.g., non-profits, membership groups, institutions, local government) or in community or volunteer efforts. Table 6 outlines the percentages of participants that reported applying the skills in each setting.

**Table 6**

<b>Settings of Leadership Skill Application</b>				
	<b>N</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
With family or friends	162	86%	10%	4%
At work	161	79%	4%	17%
In school	160	28%	5%	67%
In community organizations (e.g., non-profits, membership groups, institutions, local government)	160	92%	5%	3%
In community or volunteer efforts	159	94%	4%	2%

As Table 6 illustrates, participants reported applying leadership skills in a variety of settings over the past year. The highest proportion of respondents said they used their leadership skills in the community (in organizations and for community or volunteer efforts), followed by family or friends, and at work. Of those participants attending school ( $n = 53$ ), 85% applied leadership skills in their school settings.

Most participants applied leadership skills in multiple settings. While not all settings applied to each participant, the overwhelming majority of participants (91%) reported applying the skills in three or more of the settings. Less than 3% reported applying skills in none of the settings, with 6% reporting that they applied skills in one or two of the settings.

Of the skills applied in work settings, understanding personality differences, running effective meetings, and conflict resolution were specifically noted as helpful. A few students reported that they found the skills for working with others, such as facilitating group discussions, and skills around fundraising as helpful in their school environment.

Community organizations, such as non-profits, membership groups, institutions, and local government, were also locations in which the majority of Leadership Program participants applied their leadership skills in the last year (92%). Based on comments provided by

participants on the survey, skills related to consensus building, facilitating group discussions, conflict resolution, public speaking, active listening, and working with different personality types were especially helpful to their work with community organizations. In addition to applying specific skills, participants also reported that they took on larger leadership roles or more responsibility in their organizations as a result of the training. One participant even noted that participation in the class opened up a greater network of organizations to be involved with.

As Table 6 shows, 94% of participants reported applying leadership skills in their work on community or volunteer efforts. Respondent comments indicated that having more leadership skills as a result of the class encouraged them to be more involved in community efforts and volunteer more in their community. In particular, participants noted that understanding how to work with different personalities and networking with others has been helpful for their work on community projects.

#### *Leadership Skills Summary*

As the previous discussion of findings reveals, participants on average applied leadership skills frequently in the year after the class. Most participants applied these skills more often in the last 12 months than they did before the class. Indeed, among those who used their skills a lot in the previous year, the majority felt that they increased their activity as a result of the leadership class. The data also indicate that leadership skills are applied in many settings, the most popular being in the community.

#### *Community Building Activities*

In addition to leadership skills, the 12-month follow-up survey asked participants how often they did various activities related to community building in the last year. For each item, respondents scored their application of community building skills on a scale of one to four, where one was “never”, two was “rarely”, three was “occasionally”, and four was “frequently.” Table 7 outlines the types of activities related to community building asked on the survey as well as the means, standard deviations, and percentages of participants who reported doing these activities in various amounts.

**Table 7**

<b>Participation in Community Building Activities: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages</b>						
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>Never to Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally /Frequently</b>
Encouraged others to participate in community issues and/or projects	162	3.36	0.75		12%	88%
Educated yourself about social, economic, or environmental issues in your community	163	3.35	0.79		15%	85%
Worked to improve the social, economic, and/or environmental conditions of your community	163	3.21	0.82		17%	83%
Helped build public awareness of a community issue or problem	163	3.08	0.84		22%	78%
Helped investigate possible solutions to a community issue or problem	162	3.08	0.80		21%	79%
Identified assets in your community	163	2.96	0.82		23%	77%
Sought information about how community decisions would impact the local social, economic, and/or environmental conditions	162	2.87	0.98		32%	68%
Helped define goals or a vision for your community	163	2.84	0.96		35%	65%
Sought opportunities to learn more about community leadership	163	2.82	0.90		23%	77%
<b>Community Building Activities Overall</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>0.68</b>		--	--
Scale ranged from 1 to 4, where 1 was "never", 2 was "rarely", 3 was "occasionally", and 4 was "frequently."						

As Table 7 shows, on average, participants reported that they had participated in community building activities occasionally over the past year (mean = 3.06). Among these community building activities, participants reported that they encouraged others to participate in community issues or projects and educated themselves about the issues in their community the most often. Identifying assets, seeking out information about the impact of community decisions, defining a goal or vision for the community, and seeking out opportunities to learn more about community leadership were the least frequently done in the last year. The relatively low frequency of these activities being done by participants may be due to the infrequency with which opportunities to do these activities arise. While there were significant differences in the frequency with which respondents participated in these activities, on the whole, most (65-88%) did each activity occasionally or frequently over the past year. For a



complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each community building activity, see Appendix 3.

### *Change in Activity*

As the data discussed above illustrate, participants have been engaging occasionally in community building activities since the leadership class ended. In order to gauge whether this activity level in the last year is representative of participants' level of activity before the class, participants were asked if they had done these community building activities over the past year more often, less often, or about the same compared to before they participated in the Ford leadership class. Overall, the majority of participants (60%) reported that they had done these community building activities more often in the year since the class than before. Thirty-three percent reported that their community building activity level did not change as a result of the program and only 7% of participants reported that they participated in these activities less frequently over the past year.

While the majority of participants reported an increase in the number of times they did community building activities since the training, further analysis explored the extent of change for individuals that did the activities very frequently. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to identify highly active individuals, which was equivalent to doing activities frequently in the last year. Of those who were highly active, 65% did community building activities more often in the last year than they did before the training, and 32% reported they were just as highly active before the training. Only 3% of participants who rated themselves as frequently engaging in community building activities in the last year stated that this level was less often than before the training. Therefore, for the majority of individuals who were doing a lot of community building activities in the 12 months after the class, this high outcome resulted from participation in the class.

### *Community Building Summary*

This examination of data from the 12-month follow-up survey reveals that, with respect to community building activities, Fall 2008 leadership class participants have only occasionally

taken on these types of endeavors in the year following the class. Of those who have engaged in these activities very frequently, it is encouraging to note, that the majority report doing so because of their participation in the class.

The lower average level of activity observed among Fall 2008 leadership class participants for community building activities, as opposed to leadership skill application, is possibly due to limited opportunity to do the activities. Many of these community building activities do not present themselves often; therefore it may not be possible for the majority of participants to do them frequently. Opportunities to apply leadership skills related to effective communication, working well with others, and networking are much more likely to present themselves more often for many people.

### *Project Management Skills*

On the 12-month follow-up survey, participants were asked how often they had done various project management tasks in community efforts or projects in the last year. Community efforts or projects were explained as including: organizing a community event, fundraising for community organizations, working with a community non-profit, serving on a non-profit board, participating in a community improvement effort, or building a community facility. Project management tasks were rated on the same scale as community building skills, where one was “never” and four was “frequently”. Table 8 lists the project management tasks as well as the mean and standard deviation for how often participants reported doing these activities.

**Table 8**

<b>Participation in Project Management Tasks: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages</b>						
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>Never to Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally /Frequently</b>
Helped to publicize or promote some community effort or project	162	3.07	0.95		25%	75%
Helped set goals for a community effort or project	162	3.01	0.88		26%	74%
Helped develop tasks, timelines, and assignments for a community effort or project	162	2.86	0.99		32%	68%
Helped plan a community fundraising effort	162	2.77	1.02		35%	65%
Helped seek outside support for a community effort or project	162	2.76	1.01		39%	61%
Helped involve stakeholders in a community project or effort	162	2.70	1.04		36%	64%
Helped to recruit and retain volunteers	161	2.68	1.01		43%	57%
Participated in developing the budget for a community effort or project	162	2.62	1.05		44%	56%
<b>Project Management Tasks Overall</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>2.81</b>	<b>0.84</b>		<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
Scale ranged from 1 to 4, where 1 was “never”, 2 was “rarely”, 3 was “occasionally”, and 4 was “frequently.”						

As Table 8 illustrates, in general, participants reported that they had done these project management tasks rarely to occasionally over the past year (mean = 2.81). Of all project management tasks listed, participants reported that they most often helped to publicize, promote, and set goals for community effort or project. Three-quarters of participants did these activities occasionally or frequently over the past year. There were no significant differences in the frequencies with which participants reported engaging in the other project management tasks. Participants reported that they developed tasks, timelines, and assignments; planned fundraising, sought outside support; involved stakeholders; recruited and retained volunteers, and developed budgets for community efforts or projects with about the same frequency during the past year, namely, rarely to occasionally. In contrast to publicizing and setting goals for community efforts or projects, only between 56% and 68% of participants reported doing all other project management activities occasionally or frequently in the last year. For a complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each project management item, see Appendix 4.

It is notable that Fall 2008 participants reported such infrequent project management activity in the last year, given that for many, the year after the leadership class is when cohort projects are completed. Ideally, the cohort project is the setting in which these project management skills would be applied. Most likely, this finding is due to the way the question was worded. Respondents were instructed to indicate how often they had done these project management activities for generic community efforts or projects. No specific mention of cohort projects was made in the list of examples on the survey. Respondents were therefore unlikely to include the cohort project as an example of a community effort or project. Analysis of the open-ended comments made on this section of the survey provides evidence for this conclusion; respondents were predominantly not including their cohort project when answering this set of questions. It is not surprising then that participants indicated infrequent project management activity in the last year. For many, the cohort project was the arena in which project management occurred, and it likely took much of participants' time and effort. Without much additional time to spend on other community efforts in the last year, the activity of participants in project management appears low based on the survey data.

It is also possible that the low frequency with which participants engaged in project management activities in the last year is due to the limited number of opportunities that presented themselves. Project management tasks are often applied in a limited setting, such as on specific community efforts or projects or within an organization. Also, the opportunity to do some of the project management tasks is dependent on the participant holding a certain role in the effort or project. Though the data indicate low project management activity among Fall 2008 participants in the last 12 months, it is important to bear these potential explanations in mind when interpreting results.

#### *Change in Activity*

Results of the 12 month follow-up survey indicate that participants are engaging in project management tasks on an occasional basis. In order to explore whether this level of activity is representative of participants' levels of activity before the leadership class, participants were

asked whether the number of times they have done project management tasks over the past year was more often, less often, or about the same compared to before they participated in the Ford leadership class. Overall, approximately half of participants (53%) reported that they had done these project management tasks more often during the year since the class. Forty-one percent reported that their project management activity level did not change as a result of the program and 6% of participants reported that they participated in these activities less frequently over the past year. A few participants noted their reasons for doing the tasks less frequently, such as illness that required resignation from a board and having other commitments that took up time.

Further analysis also explored the extent of change for individuals that did project management tasks very frequently. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to indicate high activity levels, which is equivalent to participating in the activities occasionally to frequently. Of those participants who occasionally or frequently did project management activities in the last year, 58% reported that this was more often than they had done before the training and 42% reported that this was the same frequency with which they did the activities before the training. No participants who rated themselves as participating in project management tasks with high frequency in the year after the class stated that this level was less often than before the class. Therefore, of those who were above average in their project management skill application over the last year, the majority were this active as a result of participation in the class.

#### *Project Management Summary*

These data reveal that in the year following the leadership class, participants on average are only doing project management activities rarely to occasionally in community efforts or projects. This may be due to the cohort project taking too much of their time, as it also requires project management tasks be done, but other explanations are likely as well such as limited community efforts or projects being available to work on in a given year.

Of those Fall 2008 leadership class participants who were doing project management activities in the last year more frequently than average participants, many felt they were doing so more often than they did before the class. This finding suggests that the leadership class is having a positive influence on participants, which is carrying through beyond the last day of the class itself.

*Contribution of Leadership Class*

In addition to the frequency of skill application, the 12-month follow-up survey asked participants how much they felt the Ford leadership class contributed to their ability to do the skills, activities, and tasks. For each section of the survey, participants were asked to rate the leadership class’ contribution on a scale from 1 to 5 with one for “not at all”, two for “a little”, three for “a moderate amount”, four for “A good deal”, and five for a “great deal”. Table 9 outlines the distribution of responses for each section of the survey.

**Table 9**

<b>Contribution of Leadership Class</b>					
	Not at all	A Little	A Moderate Amount	A Good Deal	A Great Deal
Leadership Skills	2%	19%	40%	27%	12%
Communicate effectively	2%	15%	31%	36%	16%
Work with others	1%	14%	24%	38%	23%
Network	1%	19%	32%	28%	20%
Community Building Activities	1%	13%	27%	37%	22%
Project Management Tasks	3%	15%	33%	32%	17%

On average, participants reported that the leadership class contributed a moderate to great deal to their ability to do leadership skills, community building activities, and project management tasks (mean = 3.47 to 3.70). As the results in Table 9 show, approximately 40-60% of Fall 2008 participants felt that the class contributed a good or great deal to their skill ability in these areas. On average, about one-third of participants thought the class contributed a moderate amount, and only 15-20% felt like the class did not contribute to their ability at all or

only a little. One participant comment that represented the majority opinion on how the leadership class contributed:

*“Before the FILP class I was just beginning to become involved as a volunteer in various ways in the my community, but as a direct result of the FILP’s educational resources and the belief in my ability as an individual to make a difference, I have stepped up as a leader”*

### Qualitative Results

On the 12-month follow-up survey, respondents had the opportunity to explain how the training affected their ability to be a community leader in an open-ended question format. Approximately 140 individuals responded to the question to describe many ways they felt the leadership training affected them personally. From the many responses to the question provided, participants tended to indicate that they:

- Felt better equipped with skills and tools,
- Had a new appreciation for different personalities,
- Gained confidence in their ability to make a difference,
- Networked more with others, and
- Had a greater awareness of their community.

Overall, participants reported feeling better equipped to address issues in their community. Participants described a number of skills they gained through the training, that have helped them to be a better community leader. Of these, skills in communication and working with others were mentioned most frequently. These included active listening, public speaking, building consensus, and conflict resolution. Overall, many participants reported that they communicate more effectively and work better with others as a result of skills learned in the training. Being better equipped helped participants contribute in many areas and settings, including in their work, volunteer efforts, and participation in community projects. As two participants described:

*“The skills I learned through the appreciative inquiry process have helped me lead group discussions in a positive direction. I also am using skills I developed in conflict management. Our current fiscal climate has left many partners feeling as if they need to complete for resources and some are hesitant to collaborate.”*

*“When I am volunteered for things like student planning commissioner or to help fundraise for my school play, it makes not only me, but everyone on my team more effective. By using the fundraising skills we were able to step out of our normal donor box and surprise more people into giving.”*

In line with the quantitative results, many participants also mentioned a new appreciation for and ability to work with people of different personality types. Participants reported that the training helped them to see other’s points of view and be more willing to look at both sides of an issue or project. They also gained greater appreciation and respect for those that have differing opinions from their own and were more willing to work with others to accomplish a common goal. As one participant said:

*“The leadership class showed me that it is possible to work with many different kinds of people... even if most of us were fairly strong personalities we were shown how to come to a consensus while respecting and validating everyone’s ideas and goals.”*

By learning and refining their skills, many participants wrote that the leadership class increased their self-confidence. Some noted that the training validated their gifts and abilities, giving them confidence to get involved in their community. Others mentioned that they were more confident in public speaking and more willing to speak up on issues than they were before the training. Several respondents said that it increased their confidence to encourage others to become involved in community activities. Participants reported that the training gave them the skills to bring people together and encourage others to get involved in the community.

*“Primarily, the class improved my self-confidence in what I was doing. It let me know that I was on the right track, and that confidence is palpable to those I’m in contact with”*

Although participants did not report high frequency of networking on the quantitative portion of the survey, they found great value in the networking they did do. In the open-ended section, many respondents mentioned that the leadership class increased the size of their community networks and their ability to network better. It helped them get to know community leaders



and the structure of the community and provided contacts for accomplishing a specific task in a community. Participants also mentioned that networking with other community members and leaders was rewarding.

*“It connected me with an amazing group of community leaders, broadening my network base and giving me new hope for the future of our community”.*

Participants also commented on how the training helped them to better identify aspects of the community and have a better awareness of community issues. Several participants indicated that better knowledge of their community encouraged them to get involved. By gaining this knowledge, they also felt a greater responsibility to the community. As one participant noted,

*“The class gave me a sense of how I can personally impact my community and help shape the direction of it. I acknowledge that everyone has skills to contribute. Combining and harnessing that power to make positive changes for all, not just the current generation, but future generations as well, is a very real possibility.”*

Even those with previous leadership experience reported that they benefited from the class in some way. Through the class they were able to refresh their skills, practice using their skills, learn a different technique, and network with others. A few noted that they had gotten better at using the skills because they were refreshed in the training. As one participant stated:

*“Most of these items I did before. [But] I have been able to do them more effectively because of tools in the class”*

### *Do Outcomes Vary By Attributes of Participants or the Class?*

Previous sections of this report reveal that participants in the Ford leadership classes applied many of the leadership, community building, and project management tools gained through the training. While most participants applied the skills and activities occasionally to frequently, there was some variation in outcomes across individuals. In order to explore this further, correlation and regression analyses were completed to determine whether any of this variability in activity level in the year following the leadership class could be accounted for by

participants' intentions to apply the skills in Fall 2008, participants' demographic or background characteristics, or characteristics of the classes in which they participated.

### *Fall 2008 Outcomes*

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions were used to explore the relation between participants' intentions to apply skills at the end of the leadership class and the frequency with which skills were actually applied in the 12 months after the class. Twenty-six leadership skill, community building, and project management items appeared on both the 12-month follow-up survey and the outcome survey completed on the 4<sup>th</sup> weekend of the leadership class series. OLS regressions were run to see if participants' reported levels of competence in leadership skills and likelihoods of engaging in leadership behaviors at the end of the training predicted the actual level of engagement in these skills one year later.

Table 10 lists the standardized coefficients for 12-month follow-up survey items that were significantly predicted by the leadership outcome survey at the end of the training. For each standard deviation increase in the Fall 2008 item (competence or intention to apply a skill), the 12-month frequency of activity increased by the fraction of a standard deviation listed under beta ( $\beta$ ).

**Table 10**

<b>Standardized (<math>\beta</math>) Coefficient Effects of Fall 2008 Competence &amp; Intentions on Activity Level in Following Year</b>		
	<b>N</b>	<b>Beta (<math>\beta</math>)</b>
<b>Leadership Skills</b>		
Using active listening skills to understand another person's ideas	160	0.21
Giving a speech or presentation to a group of people	160	0.26
Facilitating group discussions	160	0.20
Networking with others to address a community issue or problem	161	0.29
<b>Community Building Activities</b>		
Educating yourself about social, economic, or environmental issues in your community	160	0.22
Helping build public awareness of a community issue or problem	161	0.26
Helping investigate possible solutions to a community issue or problem	159	0.18
Working to improve the social, economic, and/or environmental conditions of your community	162	0.28
Seeking information about how community decisions would impact the local social, economic, and/or environmental conditions	162	0.28
Seeking opportunities to learn more about community leadership	162	0.27
<b>Project Management Tasks</b>		
Helping set goals for a community effort or project	160	0.19
Helping develop tasks, timelines, and assignments for a community effort or project	159	0.20
Participating in developing the budget for a community effort or project	160	0.32
Helping to publicize or promote some community effort or project	160	0.31
Helping involve stakeholders in a community project or effort	160	0.33
Helping to recruit and retain volunteers	158	0.31
Helping seek outside support for a community effort or project	162	0.23
OLS regression analysis used to determine if Fall 2008 outcomes predicted 12-month activity level. Only items that were significant at $p < .05$ are included. Beta ( $\beta$ ) is the standardized coefficient (expressed in standard deviation units).		

Apparent from Table 10 is that of the 26 items that matched between the Fall 2008 outcome survey and the 12-month follow-up survey, 18 were found to be significantly related to each other. Also clear from Table 10 is that for each standard deviation increase in participants' competency or intention to apply a skill in the fall of 2008 there was approximately a .25 standard deviation increase in the frequency with which activities were done in the last year. As a specific example: for each standard deviation increase in participants' perceived competence in using active listening skills at the end of the leadership class, participants' reported frequency of using active listening skills in the year following the class increased .21 standard deviations. The results in Table 10 indicate that participants who felt more competent at using leadership skills at the end of the leadership class applied these leadership skills more often than those

that reported being less competent at the end of the training. This was also true for items related to project management and community building, some of which related to competence and some of which related to intention to apply the skill or do the activity. By and large, participants who reported being more competent or more likely to engage in leadership behaviors at the end of the leadership class did the activities more in the year after the class.

### *Individual and Class Characteristics*

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions were also run to understand the relationship of individual participant and class characteristics on the application of skills. Factors related to individual participants themselves that were included in the analysis were race/ethnicity, employment status (including whether retired or self-employed), education (associate's degree or higher), income, and previous leadership experience. The number of organizations participants listed on the application was also included as was the average hours involved with these organizations per month and whether the position within the organization was paid. Factors related to the class that were included in the analysis were hub-community, cohort number, number of females, number of males, number of youth, number of participants, whether the class had a community trainer, and the number of community trainers.

OLS regression of 12-month follow-up survey outcomes on individual and class attributes revealed one individual-level and one class-level factor as significant predictors of community building and project management outcomes, net of all other factors.<sup>3</sup> The number of organizations individuals reported being involved with on the application and the size of the leadership class both predicted the frequency with which participants engaged in community building and project management activities in the 12 months after the training.

According to the regression model, as the number of organizations increases so do participants' reports of their activity level in project management and community building. For

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<sup>3</sup> Only the regression models and the independent variables that were significant at the  $p < .05$  level are reported. This indicated that one can be 95% confident that the true population value indeed differs from zero as the model indicates. Regressions coefficients were standardized to put them on the same scale for comparisons of effect size.

each standard deviation increase in the number of organizations with which a participant was affiliated in 2008, there was a .28 standard deviation increase in the application of community building activities and a .37 standard deviation increase in application of project management tasks. It is not surprising that participants who are involved in more organizations apply their skills more frequently, as involvement in more organizations increases the opportunity to apply skills in various settings.

The regression model also indicates that as class size increases participant engagement in community building and project management after the class also increase. For each standard deviation increase in class size (about 5 people), there was a .36 standard deviation increase in the frequency of community building activities and a .40 standard deviation increase in the frequency of project management tasks being done in the year after the class. Perhaps larger leadership classes provide participants more opportunities for community building and projects as the number of fellow residents with whom to work or hear about opportunities increases.

### *Community*

OLS regression was also used to explore whether communities differed in application of skills and activities.<sup>4</sup> On average, participants in La Pine, North Curry, South Lincoln County, and Wild Rivers Coast had slightly higher activity levels (approximately half a point) in project management and community building, compared to participants in other communities. Participants in La Pine, Union County, and Wild Rivers Coast also scored slightly higher in networking activity. It appears that participants in these communities used their community building and project management skills more frequently than participants in other communities. It is unclear why this may be, though it may have something to do with the composition of the classes, their status as cohort 1 and cohort 2 classes, or the communities themselves.

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<sup>4</sup> Regressions for communities did not include other background variables.

### Barriers to Community Leadership

On the 12-month follow-up survey, training participants were asked about barriers or circumstances that limited their engagement in community work. For each item, respondents scored each barrier on a scale of one to four, where one was “strongly disagree”, two was “disagree”, three was “agree”, and four was “strongly agree.” Table 11 lists the means, standard deviations, and percentages of participants who indicated they had experienced each specific barrier.

**Table 11**

Barriers to Engagement in Community Work: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages						
	N	Mean	SD		Disagree	Agree
Personal concerns and demands (health, family, work) limited my time for community leadership activities	160	2.62	0.86		42%	58%
My community has been overwhelmed by economic, social, or environmental challenges that are out of our control	161	2.35	0.82		62%	38%
I was heavily engaged in community work before the Ford Leadership class and couldn't take on more afterwards	160	2.23	0.76		68%	32%
I felt “burned out” or discouraged by the class project	160	2.19	0.87		65%	35%
I felt overwhelmed by all there is to do in my community	160	2.16	0.73		73%	27%
I felt “closed out” of the leadership structure in my community	159	1.87	0.76		85%	15%
Community work has been too frustrating for me	158	1.84	0.69		86%	14%
I have not been personally interested in the specific efforts or issues facing my community	161	1.6	0.63		93%	7%
Scale ranged from 1-4, where 1 was “strongly disagree”, 2 was “disagree”, 3 was “agree”, and 4 was “strongly agree.”						

Table 11 demonstrates that the greatest barrier to taking on community work in the year after the class was competing personal concerns and demands. The majority of participants (58%) indicated that personal concerns and demands limited their engagement by agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. A minority of participants identified the remaining barriers as limiting their engagement in community work. Just over a third of participants felt that their community has been overwhelmed with economic, social, or environmental challenges and that limited their engagement in the community. About a third of participants felt that they were already too heavily engaged in community work to take on more, and a similar percentage indicated that cohort project “burn out” represented a barrier to their taking

on work in their communities. Just below 30% of participants reported that feeling overwhelmed by all there is to do in the community limited their engagement in community work. Very few participants indicated feeling the remaining three barriers had limited the extent to which they engaged in community work in the year after the leadership class. The least significant barrier was lack of personal interest in the specific issues facing the community. For a complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each barrier, see Appendix 5.

In terms of the numbers of barriers experienced by participants, about 50% of participants identified one to two barriers, and 28% identified three to four barriers to engaging in community work. (Barriers were counted as those with which participants strongly agreed or agreed). An analysis was conducted to determine if the number of barriers experienced by participants affected their leadership activity levels in the 12 months after the training. Most participants who indicated the same or increased activity levels identified 2 to 3 barriers, so barriers apparently did not prevent leadership activities.

Respondents also had an opportunity to comment on specific barriers on the 12-month follow-up survey. Participants comments are helpful in understanding how these barriers impacted their ability to be involved the class project and community leadership efforts in their community. Overall participants commented mostly on barriers related to personal demands, feeling burned out, and being closed out of leadership.

Personal concerns and demands that limited participants' involvement in community leadership included health issues of family members or themselves, caring for aging family, changes in the family (such as a new baby), and work responsibilities. Several participants reported that despite the desire to be more involved, balancing family life, work, and community engagement was challenging.

In the qualitative comments, participants noted specific aspects about the cohort project that resulted in their feeling of “burn out.” Most often mentioned was the length of the project and lack of participation among cohort members. One participant noted that the project was just too big and required “many many hours of fundraising.” A few participants also commented that the project grew more than they expected. As one participant noted:

*“I tend to feel that our project has gotten bogged down and the longer we pursued it the more details and loops appeared making it hard to get a sense of forward progress. This tended to diminish interest and eventually slow the whole project down.”*

Other participants noted that class involvement in the project decreased over time. Participants commented on being frustrated by the lack of participation, especially of individuals who pushed for the project initially only to drop out of the process once the class was over. Reasons cited for people dropping out included scheduling difficulties among class members who are trying to balance the leadership class commitment with other responsibilities as well as participants being closed out of the process.

Being “closed out” of community leadership was a strong theme in the comments regarding barriers. Several participants specifically mentioned that work on their community project was limited because they felt closed out of the decision-making or felt isolated from the group due to strong personalities. Participants noted that when the project was championed by one or a few class members with strong personalities, opportunities for others to get involved were limited and participants tended to stop coming as a result. As one participant stated:

*“These characteristics ended up hurting the group as a whole because they wanted and took control away from others, thus hurting the dynamics of the group and relationships in the community”*

In addition to the project, participants also felt closed out of community leadership due to the dynamics of their community. One participant spoke of an “inner circle” of leadership in her community that was resistant to change. Another noted that there is a “local county-wide lack of cooperation and collaboration” that limits the community work that can be accomplished.



In addition to the barriers rated quantitatively, a few individuals mentioned additional barriers that limited their community engagement. One participant noted that stressed finances due to the downturn in the economy extremely limited his time to participate in community efforts. Another noted that combining two communities for the Ford leadership class and project was challenging.

*“Two different communities, two different counties, two different states, 30 miles traveling between was too much and took the enjoyment out of the great project.”*

Another respondent mentioned that the long commute from the county to the city for the class was a barrier to their participation. In addition, a few participants noted that they work within the local governance structure and must remain neutral on certain topics, which limited their ability to be involved in community issues. Alternatively, a few noted that by doing community work as part of their job, they did not have time to be involved in other issues outside the scope of their work.

### ***Summary***

The findings discussed above reveal that Leadership Program participants apply their leadership skills and engage in leadership activities to varying degrees and in various settings in the year after the training. Most participants do leadership activities and use leadership skills more often than they did before the training and many attribute this increase to the Leadership class itself. Not surprisingly, participants' intentions to apply their skills or do particular activities at the end of the class (Fall 2008) predict their frequency of application or activity in the year following the class. Interestingly, so does class size and the number of organizations with which participants were affiliated. Despite the barriers many individuals faced in their engagement in community work, these barriers only somewhat limited their amount of leadership activity in the last year.

In the year following the leadership development class, participants reported applying their communication skills almost weekly, working with others about once a month, and networking slightly less frequently. These three types of leadership skills overall were applied about once a month by participants. Similarly, participants reported engaging in community building

activities occasionally in the year following the leadership class, with some activities being done more often than others. Project management tasks in community efforts or projects were done slightly less than community building activities, with participant's engaging in these tasks slightly less than occasionally. The vast majority of participants reported applying their leadership skills related to communication, working with others, and networking in community settings, and more than ninety percent applied these skills in more than one setting.

For all types of leadership activities, the majority of participants reported that in the year following the class they did the activities more often than they did before the class. In each case (leadership skills, community building, and project management), the majority of participants who reported high activity indicated that this level of activity was greater than before. This implies that the leadership class is fostering high engagement among participants, and participant responses to the question of the class' contribution solidify this connection. Again, for each form of effective community leadership, forty to sixty percent of participants indicated that the leadership class contributed a good to a great deal to their ability to do the activities or use the skills. Qualitative findings corroborated the statistics. Participants left the class better equipped to address issues in their community, with the confidence to make a difference, and with expanded networks of people to work with.

The data also revealed that participant expectations for the level of leadership activity at the end of the class were associated with their actual activity level in the following year. Those who felt highly competent at the end of the class used leadership skills more after the class. Participants who said they were highly likely to do particular activities at the end of the class actually did the activities more after the class than their classmates. Based on these findings, the immediate outcomes of the class appear to be following participants as they move out into the community, despite the barriers often encountered like personal concerns and demands, cohort project "burn out," and community challenges.

## **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?**

Civic engagement refers to the involvement of residents of a community in formal and informal government and non-governmental affairs. Examples include voting, participating in voluntary associations, or advocating for an issue.

### **Increased Civic Engagement**

On the 12-month follow-up survey, participants were asked how often they participated in various activities related to civic engagement in the year since the class. For each item, respondents scored their participation on a scale of one to four, where one was “never”, two was “rarely”, three was “occasionally”, and four was “frequently.” Table 12 lists the range of civic activities asked on the survey as well as the means, standard deviations, and percentages of participants who participated in civic activities with various frequencies.

**Table 12**

<b>Participation in Civic Activities: Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages</b>						
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>		<b>Never to Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally/ Frequently</b>
Voted in elections	161	3.58	0.88		10%	90%
Volunteered in your community	161	3.47	0.72		10%	90%
Donated money, services, materials, or food to support a community effort, project or program	161	3.35	0.79		13%	87%
Worked informally with others to address community issues	160	3.09	0.82		20%	79%
Helped raise money and collect materials to support a community effort, project, or program	159	3.08	0.86		22%	78%
Worked as a member in a formal group or organization that addresses community issues	160	3.04	1.04		28%	72%
Attended any public hearings, town hall meetings, community forums, or city council meetings	161	3.00	0.97		26%	74%
Participated on the board of any local service agency or organization	160	2.88	1.20		35%	65%
Helped mobilize community members to work on a common goal	160	2.86	0.97		33%	67%
Advocated for a policy or issue in your community	160	2.77	1.06		37%	63%
Participated in long-term community decision-making or governance processes	160	2.58	1.12		45%	55%
<b>Civic Activities Overall</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>0.68</b>		<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
Scale ranged from 1-4, where 1 was "never", 2 was "rarely", 3 was "occasionally", and 4 was "frequently."						

As Table 12 shows, in the last year, Fall 2008 leadership class participants occasionally did civic activities (mean = 3.07). The highest levels of participation were found in voting in elections, volunteering in communities, and donating money services, materials, or food. On average, participants reported doing these activities almost frequently and the vast majority (around 90%) of participants reported doing these activities occasionally or frequently in the last year. In the year following the leadership class, participants reported engaging in the remaining activities with similar frequency (occasionally), except for participating in long-term community decision-making processes. On average, participants reported rarely engaging in this form of civic engagement, though just over 50% reported participating in long-term community processes occasionally or frequently.

Participants reported that the Ford leadership class contributed moderately to a great deal towards their ability to engage in these civic activities. Approximately 50% felt that the class contributed a good or great deal to their ability, whereas 31% indicated a moderate amount, and 19% a little or not at all. For a complete table of the percentage of responses in each frequency category for each civic engagement item, see Appendix 6.

### *Change in Activity*

Results of the 12-month follow-up survey clearly indicate that participants are engaging in civic activities, albeit occasionally. Next, we investigated whether participants' activity levels in the 12 months after the class reflect changes made as a result of participation. In order to answer this question, participants were asked whether the number of times they have done civic activities over the past year was more often, less often, or about the same than the number of times they did them before they participated in the Ford leadership class. Overall, the majority of participants (52%) reported that they had engaged in civic activities more often in the year after the class than they did before the class. Forty-seven percent reported that their civic activity did not change after the class and only 1% of participants reported that they participated in these activities less frequently over the past year than they used to.

While the majority of participants reported an increase in the frequency of civic activities as a result of the training, further analysis explored the extent of change for individuals who were very active. A cut-off of one standard deviation above the mean was used to identify individuals who were highly engaged in civic activities, which was equivalent to participating in the activities frequently. Of those who were highly active in civic life, 58% participated in civic activities more often in the last 12 months than they did before the training and 42% reported participating at the same high level as before the training. No participants who rated themselves as engaging in civic activities at high levels stated that this level was less often than before the training. Therefore, for the majority of participants who engaged frequently in civic activities in the year after the training that level of activity was higher than before they took the class, and likely had to do with their participation.

### Qualitative Results

In response to the question on the 12-month follow-up survey, “Please give one to two examples of how the leadership class has affected you as a community leader”, respondents indicated that participation in the leadership class resulted in greater civic engagement. This was evident in the responses of those who increased their volunteerism and those who agreed to serve on committees or run for office. Participants volunteered more and joined more community groups. Participants became involved in the Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Commission, and nonprofit boards. One participant facilitates public forums now for United Way agencies. One participant said she gained “*passion to help move community issues forward.*” Increased involvement with organizations was typified by these statements:

*“I have taken on more responsibilities within the groups I have been a part of for the last 6 years. I am currently putting together a group within a group to [supply] artists in schools as a public service, as well as for publicity for our artisan group.”*

*“I have been able to take on new roles in the organizations I presently am involved in and take on roles that I would never have considered before in new community efforts.”*

*“My experience with the Ford class, as well as my experience with Rotary, pushed me away from working locally, but led me to a greater level of involvement at the district level. “*

Youth reported being more active on youth leadership committees in school and in the community and one student mentioned voting in student elections.

Participants increased efforts to promote events in their communities. Participants reported working or leading several fundraising efforts (e.g., for schools, for holiday programs). One participant learned about grants and raised considerable funds for a local foundation. Another participant said:

*“We were able to work with a donor to acquire a school facility and occupy the space over the summer. The school has been without a permanent home for over 25 years.”*

A few participants commented on their increased political activity, such as gathering signatures on an initiative for the city ballot, involvement in a political party, or running for office. One

participant reported his increased “*confidence to enter the County Commissioners office as a person concerned with an issue and know that I can add value to the process and solve a problem.*” More than one participant mentioned attending more city council meetings. One participant said she became motivated to become more involved in city and county government issues.

### *Do Outcomes Vary By Attributes of Participants or the Class?*

Overall, many participants reported engaging in civic activities as a result of the Ford leadership training and more than they used to. While most participants engaged in civic activities occasionally to frequently, there was some variation in outcomes across individuals. In order to explore this further, correlation and regression analyses were completed to determine whether any of this variability in 12-month activity level could be accounted for by participants’ intentions of applying the skills in Fall 2008, participants’ demographic or background characteristics, or characteristics of the classes in which they participated.

### *Fall 2008 Outcomes*

Ordinary Least Squared (OLS) regressions were used to explore the relation between participants’ motivations to engage in civic activities at the end of the leadership class and the frequency with which they did civic activities in the following year. Eight civic activity items appeared on both the 12-month follow-up survey and the outcome survey completed on the 4<sup>th</sup> weekend of the leadership class series. Table 13 lists the standardized coefficients for 12-month follow-up items that were significantly predicted by the leadership outcome survey at the end of the training. For each standard deviation increase in the motivation reported for the Fall 2008 item, the 12-month frequency of civic activity increased by the fraction of a standard deviation listed under beta ( $\beta$ ). Overall, participants who reported being more motivated to engage in civic activities at the end of the leadership class had higher civic activity levels in the 12 months following the class.

**Table 13**

Standardized ( $\beta$ ) Coefficient Effects of Fall 2008 Motivation on Civic Activity Level in Following Year		
	N	Beta ( $\beta$ )
<b>Civic Activities</b>		
Working informally with others to address community issues	159	0.17
Helping to mobilize community members to work on a common goal	159	0.40
Advocating for a policy or issue in your community	158	0.38
Participating in long-term community decision-making or governance processes	159	0.31
Participating on the board of any local service agency or organization	158	0.27
Volunteering in your community	160	0.36
Voting in elections	155	0.38
Helping raise money and collect materials to support a community effort, project, or program	158	0.24
OLS regression analysis used to determine if Fall 2008 outcomes predicted 12-month activity level. Only items that were significant at $p < .05$ are included. Beta ( $\beta$ ) is the standardized coefficient (expressed in standard deviation units).		

As Table 13 illustrates, out of eight matched survey items, all eight were found to be significantly related. Participants who were more motivated to engage in civic activities, such as volunteering in their community, serving on a board, or advocating for a policy or issues, at the end of the leadership training were likely to be doing these activities more than other participants who reported being less motivated at the end of the training. For example, for each standard deviation increase in participants' motivation to work informally with others to address a community issue at the end of the leadership class, participants' reported frequency of working informally with others to address a community issue in the year following the class increased .17 standard deviations.

### *Individual and Class Characteristics*

According to OLS regressions, civic engagement outcomes were also found to vary by the number of organizations a person was involved with as well as the size of the leadership class. Patterns were the same as those found for community building and project management outcomes. For a one standard deviation increase in the number of organizations, there was a .45 standard deviation increase in civic activities. For a one standard deviation increase in class



size (about 5 people), there was a .29 standard deviation increase in participation in civic activities.

### ***Summary***

The findings discussed above indicate that in the year after the leadership development class, participants are engaging occasionally in overall civic life, but more frequently in particular activities like volunteering, voting, working in community groups, fundraising for local causes, and promoting local events. About half of participants reported that since the leadership class, their level of civic engagement has increased, and the majority of participants attribute their ability to engage effectively in civic life to the leadership class.

Results also point to participants' motivation to be engaged in civic activities at the end of the class as a significant predictor of participants' levels of civic activity in the year after the class. Those who said they were highly motivated at the end of the class to do particular civic activities did the civic activities more often in the following year than leadership class participants who indicated lower motivation. Interestingly, class size and the number of organization affiliations were also positively associated with levels of civic activity after the class. Despite some variation by these individual and class attributes, these results indicate that the immediate positive effects of the class on participants are carrying through a year later. The leadership class successfully increases the motivation of participants to engage in civic life and those who are highly motivated at the end of the training are more active the following year.

### **Does the Ford Institute Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?**

One of the goals of the Ford Institute Leadership Program is for participants to experience expanded and strengthened networks of social relationships, both inside and outside their communities. This goal is consistent with the Ford Institute's theory of change that suggests networking among community members and across rural communities helps build the vitality of rural communities. As community residents participate in the Ford Institute Leadership Program's Leadership Development, Effective Organizations, and/or Community Collaborations

trainings, it is important to investigate the extent to which participants report that these trainings contributed to their networking with other individuals socially, professionally, and in their rural communities.

This section explains the findings from focus groups that were conducted in five rural communities in 2009. The purpose of these focus groups was to explore the impact of the Leadership Program on networking among individuals and their communities. Three types of networks were described to participants:

- **Social networks** describe personal relationships people have in their personal life, such as friendships or acquaintances.
- **Professional or work networks** describe the relationships people have through their employment, such as with co-workers or acquaintances made through work.
- **Organizational or community work networks** describe the relationships people have with those with whom they volunteer or work on community projects, such as members of community boards.

### ***Social Networks***

Focus group participants indicated that their social networks changed significantly as a direct result of their involvement in the Ford Institute Leadership Program. There were several ways in which their networks changed: the size of social networks increased, the diversity of their social networks changed, and distant social relationships became closer. Indeed, participants said that the opportunity for social networking was one of the most important aspects of the program.

*“I actually think that the networking aspect of the Ford program is probably the best part for me. You can go to a book and find out about strategic planning and gphant charts. But you can’t meet people. You can’t get to know them. You can’t do a project with them.”*

Some focus group participants who were lifelong or long-term residents in their communities commented that the size of their social networks increased greatly as a result of their participation in the Leadership Program. One long-term resident said:

*“I’ve been here for the past 20 years. Since I’ve been to the cohort training my interconnectivity and knowing people in the community has probably quadrupled in that short amount of time.”*

From the perspective of a relative new-comer to a community, the Leadership Program provided the opportunity for relationships with fellow community members to form outside the realms of family and work.

*“I relocated here before taking the class. So before I took the class, my relationships were my family and my work, I was pretty limited.”*

Based on the focus group findings, the Leadership Program clearly succeeded at providing new opportunities for newcomers and long-term residents to get to know one another in a community context. In fact, these new opportunities for community members, who may not have worked with one another before, affected the size of their social networks in communities.

Involvement with the Leadership Program also brought about a change in the types of people with which participants networked. As one focus group participant said:

*“I used to always kind of stick to the kind of people that thought like I did. [But I learned] it’s more fun to be around people that don’t think like I do. Get their ideas.”*

Focus group participants also talked about the new-found diversity in their social networks. For some, participating in the Leadership Program led them to form social relationships with people of different ages, while for others the diversity took the form of interactions with people with personalities different from their own.

*“The training and our togetherness really bridged so many gaps. I mean age gaps, political gaps, you name it any gap that there is. It really is that common thread.”*

Finally, many focus group participants indicated that their participation helped to strengthen their social relationships, transforming acquaintances into friendships. As one youth respondent indicated, this transformation occurred simply due to the prolonged exposure to old acquaintances in a new setting:

*“People knew me from my Dad, but I never had my own personal relationships with people in the community. I kind of knew them because I was like my Dad’s shadow everywhere, but now I have my own relationships. I’m able to talk with people, have my own ties with people instead of just always having someone else’s ties.”*

For others, this transformation in the quality of social relationships with community members came about because of the intensity of interaction required for completion of the cohort project. As one focus group respondent put so clearly,

*“I had some people that I sort of knew before, but through implementing the project I got to know more about their personal lives and we did something on a personal level. I think we probably would have gotten to that point, but it just happened more quickly because we spent a lot more time together.”*

The environment of the cohort project provided the opportunity for fellow community members to share an experience that could serve to deepen personal relationships by forming social bonds. These bonds led them to trust the other members of their cohort, to feel more confident in their interactions outside of the program, and to help mitigate discord among individuals.

*“[I liked] getting to know the people in the community that I previously haven’t known or only saw in passing. I got to know them on a more personal level. So therefore when I saw them in another group, I felt there was some kind of a bond that we’ve had or some history together.”*

*“We build relationships socially, then when the things get tight, when we have conflict, there’s this relationship in place that will hold when the stress happens.”*

As shown by the focus group findings in these five communities, individuals who participated in the Leadership Program increased their number of social relationships, diversified the types of people with whom they socialized, and strengthened existing relationships.

### ***Work, School, and Professional Networks***

Focus group participants were also asked about any changes in their relationships with co-workers or work-related acquaintances as a result of the Leadership Program. Many participants reported that the leadership program intersected with their work environment. A few participants volunteered that participation in the program resulted in a new career for them. The most significant impact indicated by participants was that the Leadership Program opened up a pool of human resources for people to call on for the improvement of their individual careers.

*“I think my career here throughout this county was really jump started because of the networking.”*

*“I got a chance to meet a really strong cross-section of the community and it was extremely helpful in ramping up some of the [professional] work I’ve been doing.”*

One participant mentioned that involvement of work associates in successive cohorts of the leadership classes was improving the work environment. Some said that the Ford Leadership Program helped in the development and formation of non-profit organizations.

Other focus group respondents explicitly noted that their newly expanded networks had an impact on the ability of their organizations to succeed. This finding reveals that relationships formed in the Leadership Program not only positively affect individuals’ ability to perform within their work environment, but also positively affect their organizations.

*“We’ve (the organization) been collaborating with four or five different organizations to put on three different workshops. I don’t think that would have ever happened if it weren’t for the leadership class.”*

## ***Organizational and Community Networks***

Organizational and community networks refer to relationships with individuals on community projects or in other organizations. Participants reported that their community networks changed – new relationships were formed, existing relationships became stronger, and relationships with people not typically in their social networks were established.

*“It’s not just about making specific networking connections, but actually learning how to connect with people who don’t necessarily share the same interests and values other than perhaps we all agree that we want a better community to live in.”*

In one focus group, a participant referred to dropping a rock in a quiet pool and watching the ripples. The program “splashes” onto other community residents, such as spouses or family members. Individuals are drawn into community relationships and activities by Leadership Program participants that would not have happened without the program in their community. As a result of engaging community members, participants reported an overall increase in civic engagement and the capacity of the community to address issues.

*“Now if something comes up, a project needs to be done, you know the avenues to take, you know the people that might be supportive or they can help you find people. So you develop this network and it just moves throughout the whole community.”*

*“I think since Ford started their classes... there’s been a definite improvement to our city and interrelations between people and being more active.”*

The increase in community networks brought more diversity to community relationships. Participants saw community members come together for a common purpose regardless of who participated or who benefited. As focus group participant stated:

*“Now we’re seeing people from different backgrounds that have that common need or want to see something happen in this community coming together. They are willing to put some work into it and no matter what the outcome is, they’re going to feel good. I hadn’t seen that before. It’s very refreshing.”*

Focus group participants credited the Leadership Program with giving individuals the skills to work collaboratively in the community. Having many members of the community involved in the Leadership Program has helped to build a common language for community work.

*“People who have been in the Ford Family Leadership are really much easier to collaborate with, I think because of the training. We feel like we belong to the same tribe. We talk the same lingo. We all speak Ford.”*

*“There are people here I’ve had conflicts with, and [now] what I know is we all enrich our community and we’re doing our best. And so we work together and Ford helps us connect in really healthy ways.”*

New community ventures also emerged as a result of networking between Leadership Program participants. Participants were able to connect with others around a common purpose. In some cases, new organizations or non-profits were formed.

*“The Business Enterprise Resource Alliance that we have put together would probably not have formed if we had not gone through the Ford Family training.”*

*“I formed a small non-profit that’s to support the performing arts, and we have a studio theatre that we operate. Three of the founding members were members of the leadership class. These are people I would have never had a conversation with before Ford.”*

Networks can also be formed with others outside of a participant’s community. Some focus group participants reported that their networks had expanded beyond their community of residence. Being part of the “Ford experience” means that when meeting residents of other communities, they share a common experience. They viewed these enlarged networks as positive outcomes of their leadership experience. In a few cases, these larger networks related to economic development efforts.

*“Ford Family has allowed me to realize that it’s not just a community of Baker City. Specifically when we are talking about economic development. I’ve been able to talk to Huntington and Sumter about economic development. It wouldn’t have happened without Ford Family.”*

## **Summary**

The main goal of the focus groups was to explore the impact of the Leadership Program on individuals, their social relationships, and their communities. Networking, as expressed by Ford participants, is about being connected to and collaborating with others to benefit the community. Participants gained confidence in improved communication skills, helping them to cope with conflict and different styles of interaction. This in turn helped them connect and collaborate, and move forward into new leadership roles.

*“It strengthened my commitment to community by reinforcing the connections that are already there.”*

Participants in the five focus groups also gave many examples of ways in which the Ford Leadership Program increased their social, work, and community networks. Individuals increased the number of social relationships and formed new relationships with individuals who differed demographically from themselves. Some individuals were able to form relationships with individuals in other Ford hub-communities. Other benefits included increased business contacts and strengthening bonds of individuals to their rural communities. Increased networks, new community ventures, and increased abilities to collaborate were reported and linked to an overall improvement in the community’s capacity to address issues.

### **Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

The intention of the Ford Institute Leadership Program is to have a positive impact on individuals, organizations, and communities. In order to influence the trajectory of organizations, the Effective Organizations training is offered in communities during the second year of the Leadership Program. The training focuses on teaching skills in strategic planning, organizational leadership and governance, as well as resource development and management. The logic of the program is that if participants in the Effective Organizations training successfully increase their skills in these areas, then the organizations in which they work or volunteer will improve along these dimensions as well. Given this logic, it is important first to



understand the extent to which Effective Organizations participants improve their skills and knowledge in the areas targeted by the training. In subsequent analyses, it will be appropriate to ascertain the extent to which these participants (if they have improved their skills in these areas) have influenced their organizations.

In order to understand the extent to which participants in the Effective Organizations training increase their knowledge and skill in organizational strategic planning, organizational leadership and governance, and organizational resource development and management, we rely on data collected from Fall and Spring 2009 Effective Organizations participants. The methods used for collecting these data via the Effective Organizations background and outcome surveys were described on pages 10-17.

### ***Descriptive Characteristics of 2009 Effective Organizations Participants***

Before discussing the findings from the 2009 EO survey that relate to knowledge and behavior change, it is important to understand the characteristics of Effective Organizations participants. In this description of participant characteristics we focus on the individuals who completed both the background and outcome surveys.<sup>5</sup>

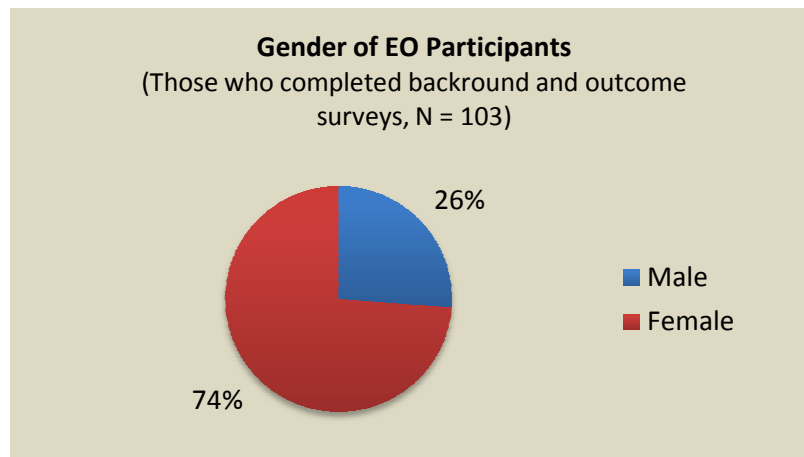
#### ***Gender***

According to the survey findings, the vast majority of 2009 Effective Organizations participants were female. As Figure 2 illustrates, only a quarter of Effective Organizations participants were male.

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<sup>5</sup> There were no significant differences between the composition of people who filled out the background survey and those who filled out both surveys, though the total number of individuals did differ (there were 156 respondents to the background survey and 103 respondents to both surveys).

**Figure 2**



Of the eight Effective Organizations training groups for which we had complete background and outcome survey data, only three had equal proportions of women and men, namely North Curry County, McKenzie River, and Chiloquin.

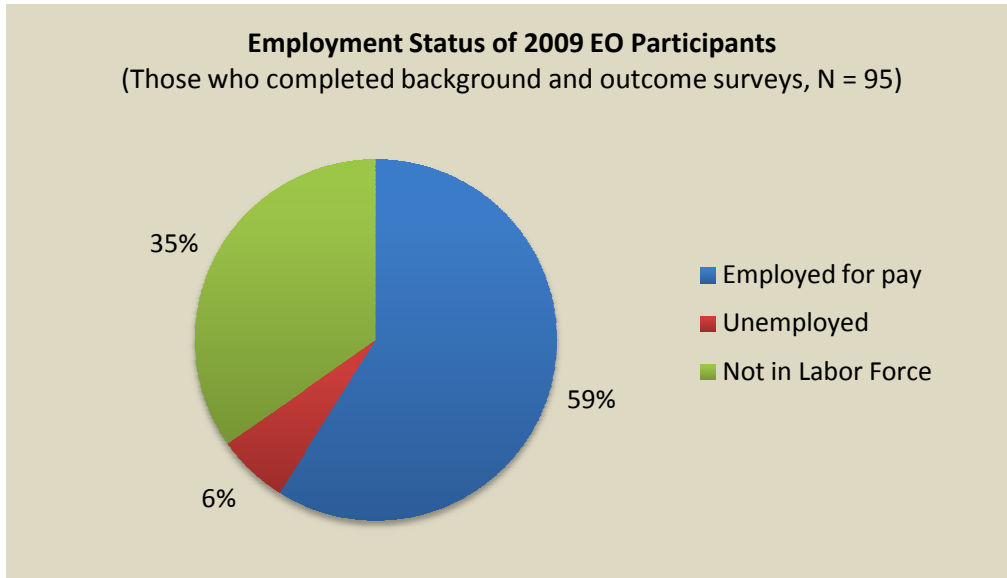
### *Age*

On the Effective Organizations background survey, respondents were asked how old they were on their last birthday. The average age of participants at the time of the training was 55, while the median was 57, and the range of ages was quite broad: from 16 to 82. Women tended to be younger than men, however, with an average age of 52 compared to the average age of men around 60.

### *Employment Status*

In 2009, while the majority of EO participants were employed for pay (59%), a full 35% were not employed or seeking employment at the time of the training. As Figure 3 illustrates, only a small proportion of respondents were unemployed, but seeking work at the time (referred to as “not in labor force”).

**Figure 3**



The large proportion of EO participants who were not in the labor force echoes the proportion of participants who indicated they were retired at the time of the training (35%), although not all retired people have exited the labor force and not all people who are not in the labor force are retired. As Table 14 shows, however, the majority of people who were not in the labor force at the time of the EO training were retired. Other reasons for not being in the labor force at the time of the training were not asked on the survey, but often include personal desire, discouragement from the job hunt, the need to care for family members, and other reasons.

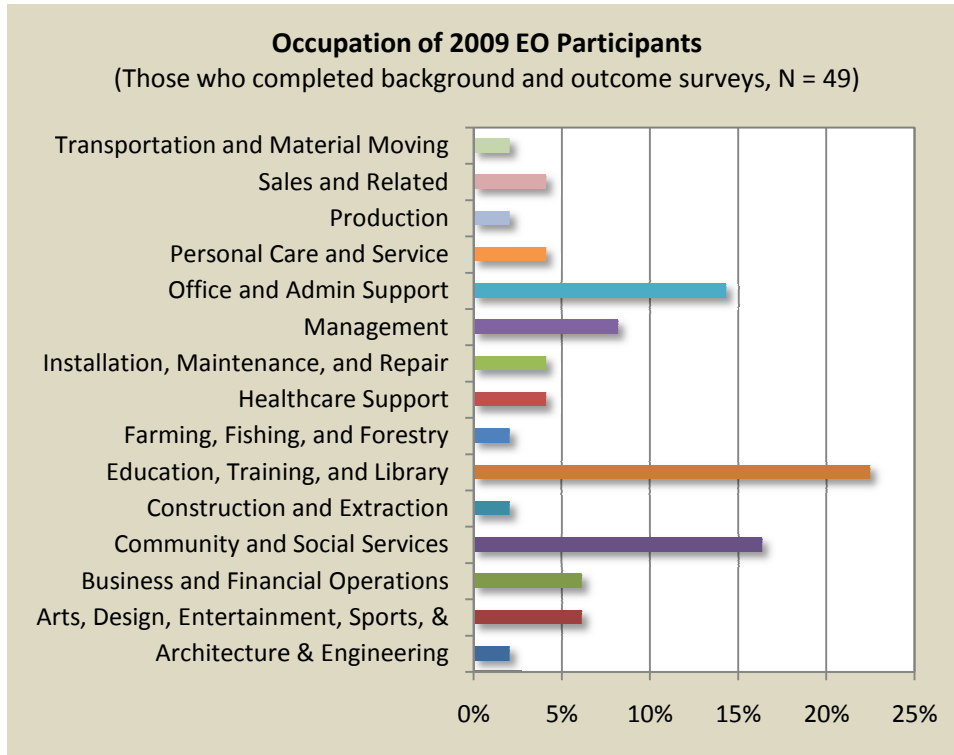
**Table 14**

	Not in Labor Force	In Labor Force
Retired	84%	3%
Not Retired	16%	97%
Total	100%	100%

Among the EO participants who were employed for pay at the time of the training, four occupations stood out as the most prevalent, namely Education, Training, and Library; Community and Social Services; Office and Administrative Support; and Management. It is important to note, however, that only 49 EO participants who answered this question also completed an outcome survey. Figure 4 illustrates that the representation of other occupations

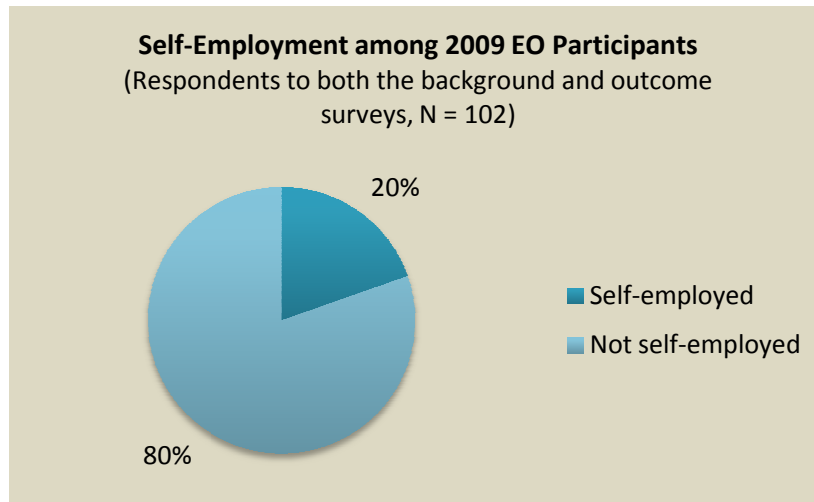
among EO participants was relatively diverse; 15 occupations were represented among participants, albeit to varying degrees.

**Figure 4**



A fair proportion of Effective Organizations participants indicated that they were self-employed at the time of the training. As Figure 5 reveals, approximately one out of five participants was self-employed, although these individuals could also be working for pay with another employer.

**Figure 5**

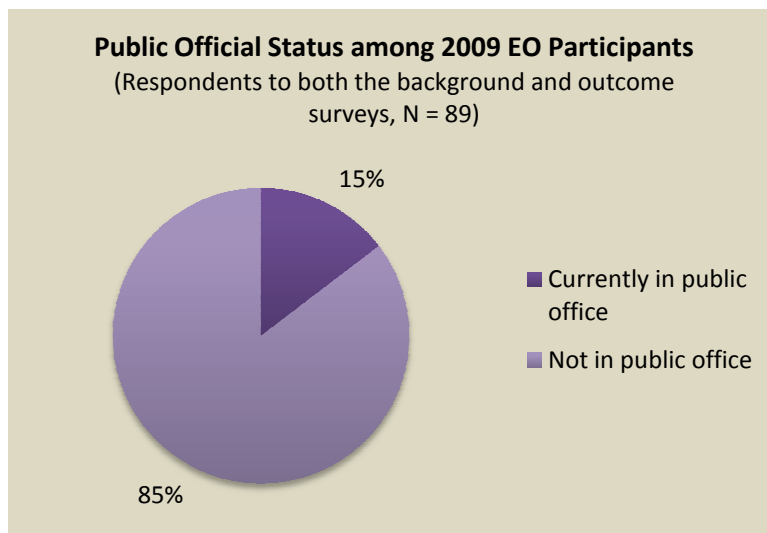


In sum, the EO survey data indicate that 41% of participants were not in the labor force at the time of the training, and that the majority of those individuals were retired. Of those who were employed for pay, nearly half worked in four occupations and 20% were self-employed.

*Public Office*

Effective Organizations participants were also asked if they held public office as elected or appointed officials. As Figure 6 illustrates, 15% of participants indicated that they held public office at the time of the training.

**Figure 6**

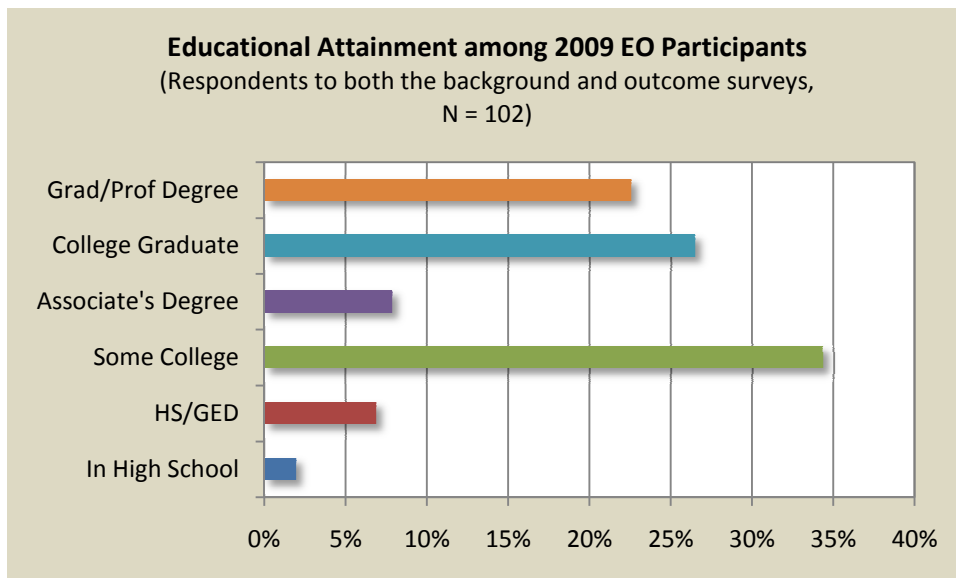


Among EO participants who held public office at the time of the training, the majority were men (54%) and their average age was 61.

### *Education*

The majority (59%) of Effective Organizations participants in 2009 had an Associate's degree or higher at the time of the training. As Figure 7 shows, the majority of people with less than an Associate's degree had some college education.

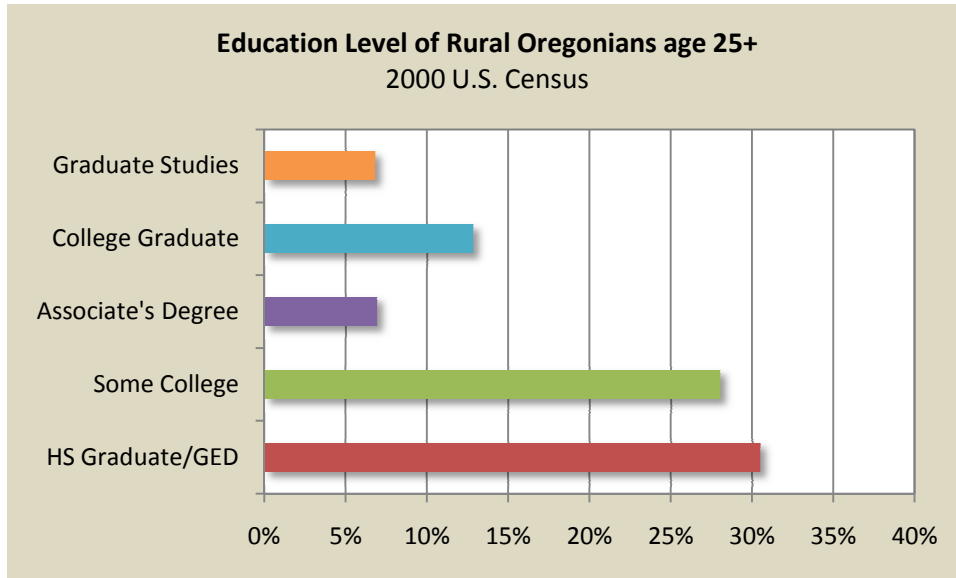
**Figure 7**



Not surprisingly, as the EO training is not targeted to young people, only a very small percentage of participants were in high school at the time of the Effective Organizations training (2%).

Compared to the educational levels of rural Oregonians from the US Census Bureau in 2000, Effective Organizations participants appear to be skewed toward the more highly educated. As Figure 8 indicates, the majority of rural Oregonians in 2000 had less than an Associate's Degree.

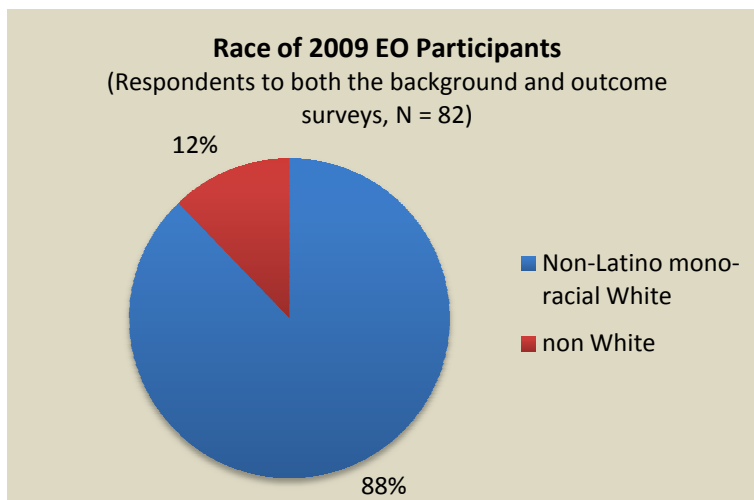
**Figure 8**



*Race*

In 2009, the majority of Effective Organizations participants were non-Latino, mono-racial whites (88%), as Figure 9 depicts. The remaining 12 percent of participants were Asian, Native American, Latino, and multi-racial. No EO participants in 2009 were African American.

**Figure 9**



Compared to rural Oregon in 2000, according to the US Census Bureau, the racial composition of the Effective Organizations trainings in 2009 were representative of the population. In 2000, 87% of rural Oregonians were mono-racial, non-Latino whites.

Among Effective Organizations participants, non-whites tended to be younger and slightly less educated. Thirty percent of non-whites had an Associate's degree or higher, compared to 64% of non-Latino, mono-racial whites; a statistically significant difference.<sup>6</sup> On average, non-whites were ten years younger than whites; 55 was the average age of non-Latino, mono-racial whites, while 45 was the average age of non-whites.

### *Income*

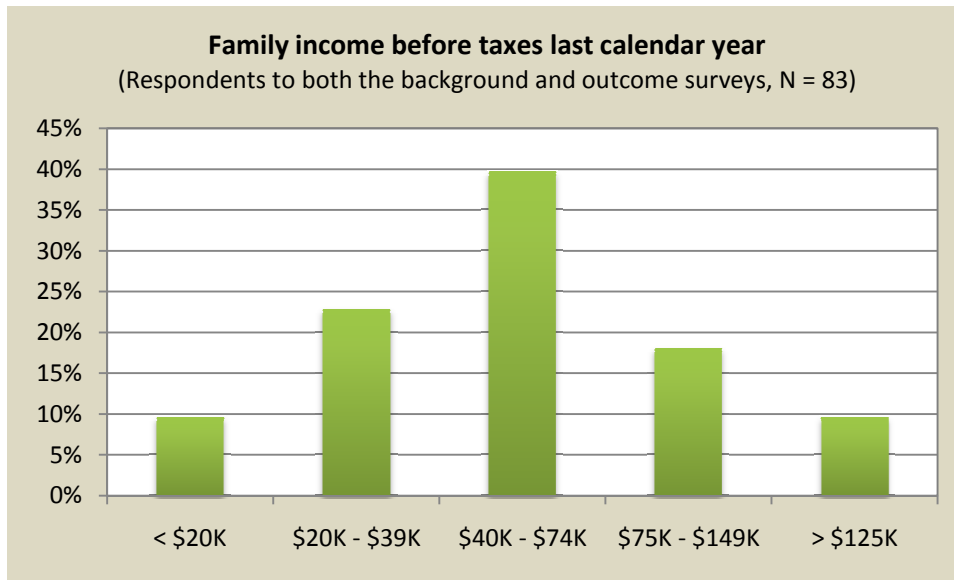
Of the 103 Effective Organizations participants reported on in this section, 83 provided information about their incomes (80%). The responses of these 83 people provide some insight into the economic status of EO participants. As Figure 10 shows, the greatest percentage of participants reported a family income between \$40,000 and \$74,999 (36%). Nearly equal percentages of participants reported income in the next highest and next lowest income categories (approximately 17% and 23% respectively). At the tails of the income categories, 9% reported income less than \$19,999 and 9% reported income greater than \$125,000.

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<sup>6</sup> Chi-squared tests of the equality of proportions revealed that these proportions were significantly different at the  $p < .01$  level.



**Figure 10**

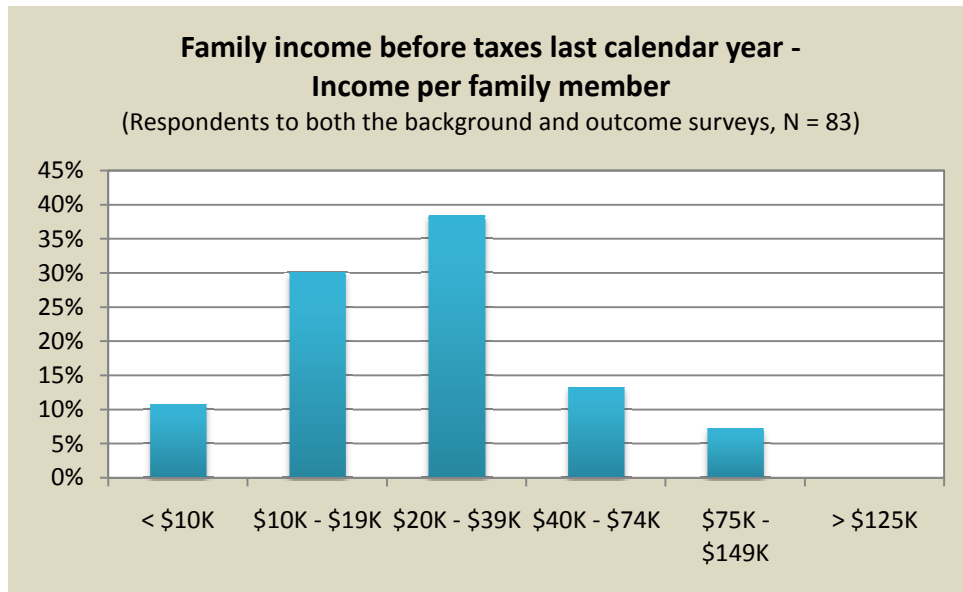


Respondents to the background survey were also asked to list the number of people in their families, which, in combination with income data, can provide a more nuanced view of the family economic status of EO participants. Dividing the midpoint of the income categories by the total number of people in the participant’s family yields a measure of income per person in the family. As Figure 11 reveals, for approximately 10% of EO participants the income available to each family member is less than \$10,000 per year, which is poverty level for a family of one person.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> US Department of Health & Human Services. 2009 Federal Poverty Guidelines. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/09poverty.shtml>

Figure 11



Almost a third of participants are in families in which the per capita income is between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per year, and almost 40% of participants are in families in which per capita income is \$20,000-\$39,000. Taking family size into consideration reveals that the vast majority of EO participants in 2009 were financially well off, though some families appear to struggle somewhat to make ends meet.

*Previous Leadership & Organizational Management Training.*

Respondents to the Effective Organizations background survey were asked if they had any leadership training experience *or* education in organizational development or non-profit administration prior to the EO training. If so, they were asked to list that prior training or education. In 2009, as Figure 12 shows, the majority of participants (58%) said they had participated in some form of leadership training or organizational management prior to the Effective Organizations training.

**Figure 12**



Among those with previous leadership experience, 70% had an Associate's degree or higher at the time of the EO training, compared to only 38% of those without previous leadership training or organizational development education. This difference was statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). In addition, a quarter of those with prior leadership training or organizational development education held public office at the time of the training. Conversely all of those who held public office, and who completed the background and outcome surveys, reported past leadership training or organizational development education.

The predominant past leadership training experience of EO participants was the Ford Institute's leadership development class. With respect to past organizational development education, however, no particular venue or type dominated. 2009 Effective Organizations participants listed a variety of different experiences with organizational development training, such as:

- Board Training for a charter school
- Grant writing class
- MPA w/Emphasis in Non-Profit
- TACS Training/Centro Latino Americano Board

- Credit Union National Administration Supervisory Program

As the survey findings indicate, the majority of Effective Organizations training participants enter the training with some prior exposure to training in leadership or organizational management. In addition, the people who have this previous exposure share some characteristics, namely educational background and positions in public office.

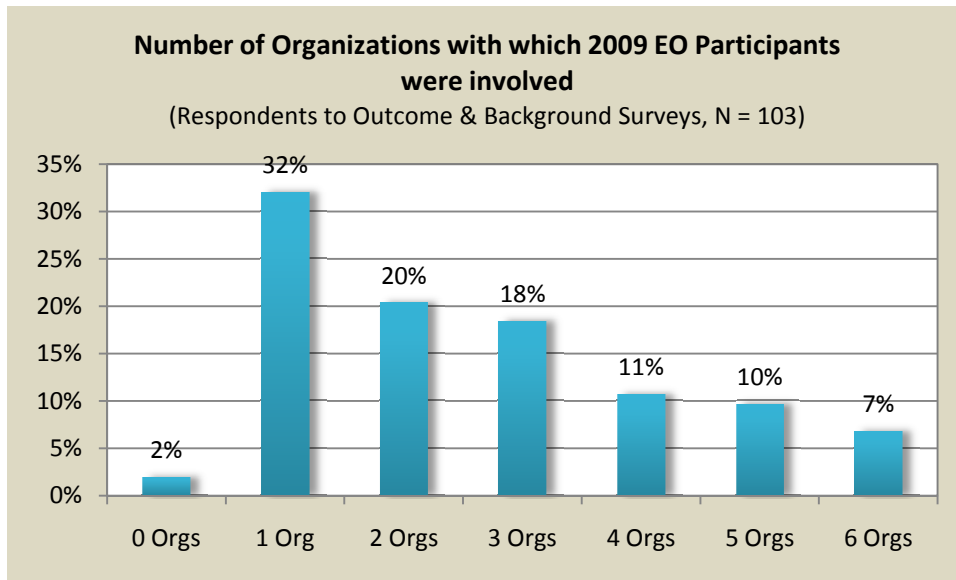
### *Organizational Involvement*

The Effective Organizations training focuses on providing participants with skills in strategic planning, operational leadership, and resource development and management that they can take back to their organizations. For this reason it is important to understand how these participants are involved with organizations. For example, if the intention of the Leadership Program is to have an effect on organizations it would be beneficial to know if participants in EO training indeed are part of organizations and if their roles permit such influence.

On the EO background survey, respondents were asked to complete a series of questions about the organizations or groups (at the time of the training) in which they were currently a member or actively volunteered on a regular basis for at least one hour a month (a minimum of 12 hours per year). Respondents were asked to provide each organization's name and its location. In addition, the respondent was to list her role in the organization and information about whether the position was paid, the number of years she has been involved in the organization, and the number of hours per month she works with the organization. This information was summarized to provide an overview of the involvement of EO participants in a variety of organizations.

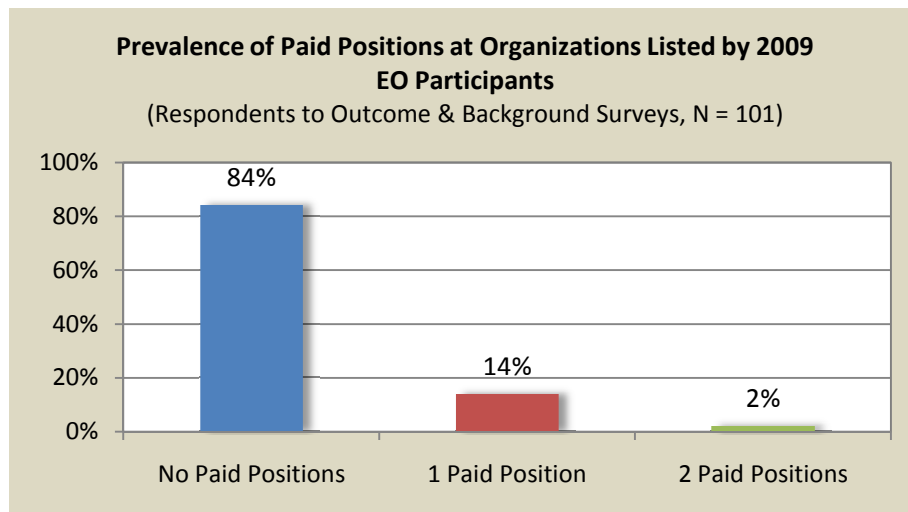
According to the background survey data, 98% of EO participants in 2009 were part of one or more organizations at the time of the training. As Figure 13 reveals, about a third of participants were actively involved with only one organization, and around 40% were involved with two or three organizations. About 30% of training participants indicated they were involved with a total of four to six organizations at the time.

**Figure 13**



These results imply that indeed, the vast majority of EO participants are involved with organizations in some way. In fact, as Figure 14 indicates, the vast majority of people who said they were involved with one or more organizations were not getting paid and were therefore volunteers or simply members.

**Figure 14**



Of Effective Organizations participants who were involved with one or more organizations at the time of the training, only 14% said they held a paid position at one of those organizations,

while only 2% held two paid positions at those organizations. Unfortunately, examined in combination with data collected on the EO outcome survey, it appears that this question about the number of paid positions in organizations was misinterpreted by respondents. This is apparent because on the outcome survey respondents were asked to think about one organization in which they were most likely to use what they gained from the training. They were then asked to list the name of the organization and their current role in the organization.

The roles from which they could choose were:

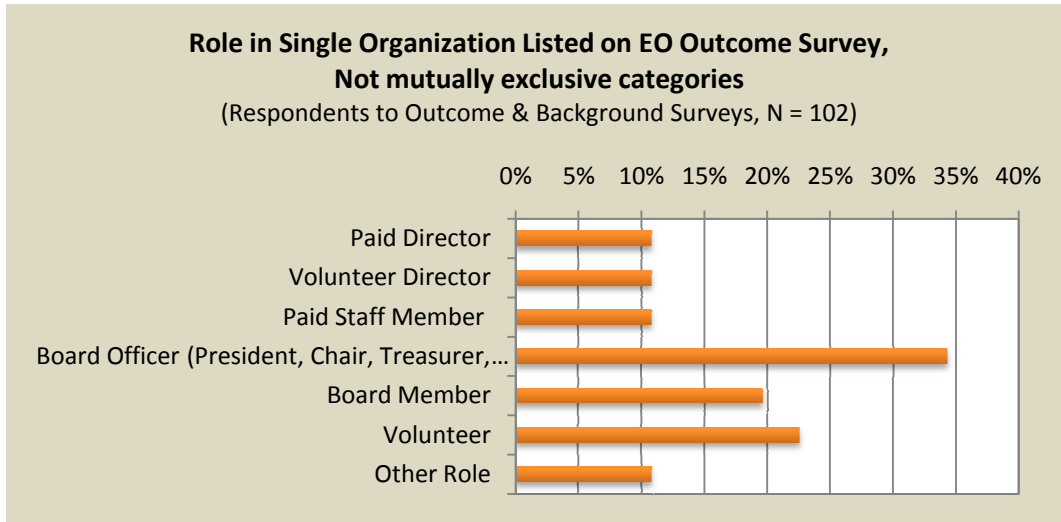
- Paid director
- Volunteer director
- Paid staff member (other than Director)
- Board officer (i.e. President, Chair, Treasurer, etc.)
- Board member
- Volunteer
- Other

Of those who listed their involvement with the one organization on the outcome survey as a paid director, 63% indicated on the background survey that they held no paid positions at any of the organizations with which they were involved. Also, of those who said they were a paid staff member at their organization on the outcome survey, 72% had indicated on their background survey not being paid at any of their organizations. Clearly the background survey question about organizational involvement was picking up different information than the outcome survey question about organizational involvement. In all likelihood, the background survey question was eliciting information about volunteer organizations and the outcome survey question was making people think about the organization(s) in which they worked. This is evinced by the fact that only 20% of outcome survey respondents listed an organization in which they were a volunteer (volunteer director or volunteer).

Given the disconnect between the results from EO background and outcome surveys with respect to organizational involvement, we will rely more heavily on the outcome survey data to tell the story about the ways in which EO participants are involved with organizations that may be impacted by the training.

According to the EO outcome survey data displayed in Figure 15, 34% of participants were board officers in the organization where they intended to apply their EO training knowledge. The next most prevalent role of EO participants in their organizations was as volunteers, followed by board members. That said, around 20% of participants indicated they were either a paid or unpaid director (separate analysis).

**Figure 15**



As the survey data indicate, a fair number of Effective Organizations training participants held powerful positions in their organizations. Indeed, more than half (58%) of participants held positions that had some say over the trajectory of an organization. Specifically, these positions were paid or unpaid directors, board officers, and board members. People who were paid staff members, volunteers, or were in other roles were not included as having significant power in the organization they listed on the outcome survey.

The organizations EO participants listed on the outcome survey as the ones in which they were most likely to apply the skills they learned in the training varied widely from churches, to schools, to specific city or county departments. Other participants listed community organizations with specific missions such as the arts, child care, animal rescue, or wetland education. Other examples of organizations included:

- Port Orford Revitalization Association

- Boys & Girls Club
- Community Emergency Response Team
- Oregon Society of Tax Consultants
- Providence Newberg Medical Center
- Chetco Activity Center

The survey data also indicate that in any given training, the number of people who represented the same organization varied from one to five. In Table 15 the numbers of members from unique organizations who attended the training are displayed, clarifying the depth of EO training infiltration into organizations in the community.

**Table 15**

Hub-Community	# of Organizations Represented at EO	# of Orgs with 1 member at EO	# of Orgs with 2 members at EO	# of Orgs with 3 members at EO	# of Orgs with 4 members at EO	# of Orgs with 5 members at EO
Chiloquin	9	6	1	1	1	0
Grant County	19	15	3	1	0	0
Harney County	12	9	2	0	0	1
La Pine	12	8	2	1	0	1
McKenzie River	9	9	0	0	0	0
Newberg	12	11	0	0	1	0
North Curry County	14	12	2	0	0	0
Sisters	13	11	0	1	1	0
White City-Upper Rogue	12	6	5	0	1	0
Wild Rivers Coast	13	8	2	1	1	1
South Lane	--	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Total</b>	125	95	17	5	5	3
<b>% of Total Organizations</b>		76%	14%	4%	4%	2%

**Source: 2009 Effective Organizations Outcome Survey, total number of respondents: 180**

As Table 15 shows, just over three-quarters of the 125 organizations that were represented at the Effective Organizations trainings in 2009 had only one member who participated in the



training. The next greatest proportion of organizations had two members who participated in the EO training, but these were only 17 out of 125 organizations (14%). Very few organizations that were represented in the EO training had three, four, or five members who were in attendance. These data indicate that the EO training is pulling in a large number of organizations, but not saturating any single organization. Although it is unclear at this point how the number of organization members who participate in the EO training will affect the organizational outcomes desired by the Ford Institute, these statistics suggest that some intended outcomes may be influenced by this broad but shallow penetration of organizations represented in the training.

In sum, the vast majority of 2009 Effective Organizations participants were involved with one or more organizations as members or volunteers. In addition, most participants held some position of authority in the organization in which they were most likely to apply any new skills learned in EO training. The prevalence of positions of organizational authority among EO participants suggests there is likely to be ample opportunity for EO concepts to be applied in these organizations by EO participants, as many of them can have an influence on the way the organization operates. It appears, however, that very few members of any particular organization attend the training, meaning that the impact of the training on organizations may indeed be lessened. For the tools or approaches taught in the training to be implemented in an organization, EO participants will likely have to be very deliberate in their attempts to get the organization to change. This may be more difficult for some than others.

### *Summary*

This examination of the background characteristics of 2009 Effective Organizations participants reveals some diversity and some commonalities among individuals:

- The majority of participants were female
- The average age of participants was 55
- The majority of participants were employed for pay, but over a third were not employed and not seeking work
- Four occupations dominated: Education, Training, and Library, Community and Social Services, Office and Administrative Support, and Management

- One out of five participants was self-employed at the time
- The majority of participants had an Associate's degree or higher
- 15% of participants held public office as appointed or elected officials
- The racial and ethnic composition of the training matched that observed in rural Oregon
- The majority of participants had some prior leadership training or organizational management education experience
- The majority of 2009 Effective Organizations participants were involved with one or more organizations as members or volunteers
- Most participants held some position of authority in the organization in which they were most likely to apply any new skills learned in EO training

### ***Outcomes of 2009 Effective Organizations Participants***

The intent of the Ford Institute Leadership Program is to influence individuals, organizations, and communities. Specifically with respect to organizations, the goals of the program are to help them improve their capacity to accomplish their mission, increase their contributions to the community, and increase their collaboration with other organizations. To develop this capacity, the Effective Organizations training focuses on increasing the capacity of individual members of organizations who can then apply their skills in their organizations. Specifically, participants are exposed to information about strategic planning, resource management and development, and operational leadership. The Effective Organizations outcome survey is designed to gauge the extent to which knowledge is gained by participants as a result of the training, but also to learn about the behavior changes participants intend to make as a result of the training in order to gain some preliminary insight into the changes participants think will occur in their organizations as a result of the training. In the following sections, the three aspects of the training's intended immediate impact are explored:

- Increased individual capacity to accomplish organizational mission
- Anticipated individual application of skills (behaviors)
- Anticipated effects on organizations

*Do Effective Organizations participants improve their capacity to accomplish their organizational mission?*

The capacity of individuals to accomplish the missions of their organizations depends on their knowledge, capacity, location in the organization, and other factors. Those who lack knowledge in organizational management, regardless of their desire to affect change in this area, will not have the capacity to help an organization accomplish its mission. The Effective Organizations outcome survey provides insight into the extent to which participating in the training increases the knowledge of individuals to accomplish organizational goals through closed- and open-ended survey questions.

*Increased Organizational Knowledge*

On the Effective Organizations outcome survey, training participants were asked a series of closed-ended questions about how knowledgeable they felt on 20 skills related to organizational management after completing the training as well as how knowledgeable they felt on those skills before the training. Comparing pre-training knowledge scores with post-training knowledge scores reveals whether or not knowledge was gained and the extent thereof. Dependent t-tests of equal means were conducted on participants’ pre-training and post-training knowledge for each of the three organizational management knowledge concepts in addition to the Cohen’s *d* statistic. Findings are displayed in Table 16.

**Table 16**

Pre to Post Change in Knowledge Concept Groups							
	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen’s <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Strategic Planning	103	2.31	0.63	3.41	0.51	1.10	0.74
Operational Management	102	2.10	0.74	3.15	0.57	1.05	0.68
Resource Development & Management	103	2.04	0.64	3.12	0.57	1.08	0.68
Knowledge Overall	103	2.15	0.61	3.23	0.49	1.08	0.74

Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. **All results were significant at  $p < .05$** , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen’s *d* statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect.

As Table 16 indicates, comparing pre-training means to post-training means, participants reported increased knowledge in all three concept areas and overall gains in organizational management knowledge (all 20 items) as a result of the Effective Organizations training. The differences in means pre to post were very similar for each concept group, therefore, participants indicated that their knowledge increased about equally across concept groups as a result of the training.

With respect to knowledge levels at the end of the training, however, participants felt their knowledge of strategic planning was the highest of the three areas (mean = 3.41) and felt their post-training level of knowledge in operational management and resource development and management were about the same (based on dependent t-tests, significance at  $p < .05$ ). Given that the difference in means pre to post were about equal, the higher post-training level of knowledge in strategic planning is driven largely by the higher pre-training level of knowledge reported on average (statistically significant at  $p < .05$ ). It appears that participants came into the training with more knowledge in strategic planning than the other concept groups, which resulted in them remaining more knowledgeable in this area at the end of the training. According to the Cohen's  $d$  statistic, the effect of the training on the knowledge of participants was moderate. See Appendix 7 for the pre to post means and Cohen's  $d$  statistics for each individual knowledge item.

The survey data also reveal that those who had the lowest pre-training knowledge reported the greatest gains in knowledge as a result of the training. For example, participants who rated themselves moderately knowledgeable in overall organizational management before the training (greater than 3) reported a .41 point increase from pre to post, whereas participants who rated themselves as somewhat knowledgeable (between a 2 and a 3, inclusive) before the training reported a .87 point increase in knowledge pre to post. By contrast, those who rated themselves as not knowledgeable in organizational management before the training (less than 2) reported a 1.5 point increase from pre to post. Therefore, participants who reported the least amount of knowledge at the beginning of the training showed the most improvement. The

Effective Organizations training was able to bring all participants to similarly high levels of knowledge.

In the correlation and Ordinary Least Squares regression analyses, pre-training knowledge emerged as the only factor associated with post-training knowledge for any of the concepts or for overall knowledge of organizational management.

### *Qualitative Results*

On the Effective Organizations outcome survey, respondents had the opportunity to express in their own words the impact the training may have had on them. Approximately 180 individuals responded to this question and described many ways they felt the EO training affected them personally. From the many responses to the question provided, participants tended to indicate that changes they experienced fell into a few categories. Participants felt they had:

- A greater understanding and knowledge of skills and tools
- Increased their confidence to use skills and tools
- Increased the size of their individual and organizational networks
- Grown on a personal level

The most frequently cited personal impacts participants mentioned were that the EO training increased their knowledge about skills and tools to use in their organizations and increased their confidence to use those skills and tools. Over 100 comments related to increased knowledge and 34 related to increased confidence. Participants also made references to specific types of skills and tools.

Overwhelmingly, these skills and tools mapped onto the three concept groups of the survey: strategic planning, operational management, and resource development/management. This finding in the open-ended responses corroborates the quantitative data findings regarding the impact of the training on participants' knowledge of organizational management. While many comments stopped simply at acknowledging an increase in knowledge, others drew the link between personal impact and broader changes. As one respondent put it, the training gave

him: *“new and exciting information to make me a better, more effective board member.”* With the information from the EO training in hand, many participants said they felt they would be able to influence their organization either with direct action or by sharing their knowledge with others in the organization.

Less frequently mentioned, though often-cited (about 30 times), was that the training affected people’s personal connections to individuals and organizations in their community. Participants indicated that the opportunity to network with other individuals and organizations was valuable for various reasons. For some, the networking opportunity gave them the chance to learn about new organizations with whom to collaborate in the future:

*“There was some “mixing-up” time allowed so that we could meet others in the group and talk about how we might connect and work with one another. This time for mixing is very important in a small community like ours.”*

For many more, networking with others in the community revealed that there were fellow residents they could turn to for advice. As one respondent put it:

*“[The training] connected me with valuable resources and introduced me to other members in my community who extended their support.”*

Others simply acknowledged the value of networking for its own sake in a rural environment.

Finally, a few respondents indicated that the training contributed to their personal development (approximately 11 comments). Sometimes this took the form of improved communication styles, like for one participant:

*“It [the training] made me reconsider some of the ways I interact with others. Sometimes I think I’m right and I just want to force an issue. Now I’m more likely to recognize that I have to be more than right. I have to be more diplomatic. I am more likely to say thanks, especially to people who I need to get more cooperation from.”*

For other participants the training helped them hone in on their life goals, and for yet others the training helped them realize what their strengths and weaknesses were so they could focus on developing them or recognizing them as assets. These comments indicate that the EO

training was able to expand the horizons of participants on a personal level to help them re-shape their personalities and lives.

### *Summary*

The results discussed above indicate that, on average, Effective Organizations participants' knowledge increased moderately as a result of the training. On average, participants increased their knowledge of operational management, strategic planning, and resource development and management equally as a result of the training, though knowledge of strategic planning was highest at the conclusion of the training. Many participants expect this increased knowledge to translate into being more effective in their organizations, and some plan to share what they learned at the training with others in their organizations.

For those with limited knowledge of organizational management before the training, the training increased their knowledge greatly. Important to note is that a fair number of Effective Organizations participants come to the training with knowledge of organizational management. For these individuals, the training increased their knowledge only a small amount.

The data analyzed here also point to benefits of the training beyond knowledge gain. Effective Organizations training participants reported gaining confidence to use organizational management tools, which will doubtless have a positive impact on future application of skills. In addition, training participants gained access to new people and organizations at the training with whom they can collaborate in the future. Finally, the training appeared to help some individuals grow on a personal level, revealing assets to be capitalized and weaknesses to be developed using tools or insights gleaned from the training.

### *Do Leadership Program participants plan to apply their knowledge of organizational management?*

Insight into the actions EO participants plan to make as a result of their participation in the training was gained by examining responses to the second section of the outcome survey and responses to the open-ended question: "As a result of the training, what specific changes do

you intend to make in your organization?” In the second section of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate how likely they were to do 16 activities after the training as well as how likely they were to do so before the training.

*Intention to Apply Organizational Knowledge*

Comparing pre-training likelihood to post-training likelihood scores using dependent t-tests and Cohen’s *d* statistics reveal the extent to which participants expect to change their behavior in their organizations as a result of the EO training. Unlike the knowledge portion of the survey, survey items in the behavior section were not grouped into concepts except for one: collaboration/networking. Thus, the majority of findings will be examined for each survey item individually. Results are displayed in Table 17 and Table 18.

**Table 17**

Pre to Post Change in Behavior Concept Groups– Collaboration Concept							
	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen’s <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>2.32</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>0.65</b>
Develop networks and partnerships with other organizations	100	2.55	1.03	3.66	0.55	1.11	0.54
Work with other organizations that have similar goals to your organization	101	2.48	0.94	3.54	0.59	1.06	0.58
Work with organizations that do NOT have similar goals to your organization	98	1.89	0.93	2.92	0.81	1.03	0.56
<b>Behavior Overall</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>2.42</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>0.72</b>
Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. <b>All results were significant at <math>p &lt; .05</math></b> , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen’s <i>d</i> statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect. Behavior Overall includes single items from Table 18.							

Overall, participants reported increased likelihood of engaging in organizational management behaviors as a result of the EO training, as seen in Table 17. On average, participants reported that before the training they were mid-way between somewhat likely and likely to engage in the 16 behaviors (mean = 2.42), but after the training they were between likely and very likely to engage in the behaviors (3.51). The Cohen’s *d* value of .72 implies that the effect of the training on participant outcomes was moderate.



Within the area of collaboration, participants' average post-training likelihood of collaborating in any way increased from somewhat likely to likely. Of the various forms of collaborating listed on the survey, the average post-training likelihood of working with dissimilar organizations was significantly lower (2.92) than participants' average post-training likelihood of working with similar organizations or simply developing networks with other organizations (difference significant at  $p < .05$ ). Participants increased their likelihood of working with dissimilar organizations (difference was 1.03), but the average likelihood of participants doing so before the training was quite low (1.89).

**Table 18**

Pre to Post Change in Behavior Concept Groups – Single Items							
	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen's <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Single Items</b>							
Work to increase the role of your organization in improving the community	101	2.69	0.86	3.73	0.47	1.04	0.60
Assist your organization in clarifying its mission, goals, and objectives	101	2.58	0.95	3.71	0.57	1.12	0.57
Discuss strategies for improving organizational effectiveness with others in your organizations	101	2.37	0.96	3.65	0.57	1.28	0.64
Promote positive board functioning (e.g. communication and decision making)	99	2.45	0.92	3.63	0.61	1.18	0.61
See yourself as a catalyst for change within your organization	101	2.59	0.92	3.60	0.57	1.00	0.55
Communicate clearly with the community about your organization and its purpose	101	2.64	0.92	3.58	0.62	0.93	0.54
Participate in fundraising efforts for your organization	100	2.87	0.99	3.57	0.68	0.70	0.35
Develop strategies to acquire resources for your organization	101	2.37	0.94	3.56	0.61	1.19	0.61
Work with your board to develop policies/procedures	99	2.43	1.00	3.51	0.75	1.08	0.56
Monitor the fiscal health of your organization	100	2.40	1.07	3.47	0.67	1.07	0.56
Adopt strategies in your organization to sustain activities/programs at the end of a funding cycle	100	2.25	0.93	3.43	0.74	1.18	0.60
Participate in the strategic recruitment of board members	99	2.03	0.97	3.34	0.82	1.31	0.65
Create specific job descriptions for board members or volunteers	100	2.14	0.95	3.31	0.84	1.17	0.61
Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. <b>All results were significant at <math>p &lt; .05</math></b> , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen's <i>d</i> statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect. Overall means reported in Table 17.							

Among the single item behaviors in Table 18, post-training scores varied from 3.31 to 3.73, indicating that after the EO training participants thought they were likely to engage in these organizational management behaviors. The highest post-training scores were observed for working to increase the role of the organization in improving the community, assisting the organization to clarify its mission, discussing strategies for improving the effectiveness of the organization with others, promoting positive board functioning, and seeing oneself as a catalyst for change. By contrast, participants felt they were the least likely to create job descriptions for board members or volunteers, participate in the strategic recruitment of board members, and adopt strategies to sustain organizational activities at the end of a funding cycle after completing the EO training.

The greatest changes in the likelihood of performing particular activities were seen for participating in the strategic recruitment of board members and discussing strategies for improving organizational effectiveness with others in the organization. The area in which participants anticipated seeing the least change to their behavior was participation in fundraising efforts for their organization. Looking at the pre-training average likelihood of doing this activity, however, reveals that before the training participants were likely to participate in fundraising efforts for their organizations (mean of 2.87).

The quantitative data regarding behaviors of Effective Organizations participants indicate that the EO training increased participants' likelihoods of engaging in all organizational management behaviors although some activities appear more likely to happen than others. Correlation and regression analyses revealed that no individual level characteristics were associated with these increased likelihoods, therefore, any variation in outcomes was not due to participant characteristics.

### *Qualitative Results*

In order to gain deeper insight into how the Leadership Program has affected individuals in their organizations, two data sources were relied upon. Open-ended responses from the Effective Organizations outcome survey, in addition to open-ended responses from the 12-

month follow-up were used to understand how Leadership Program participants have applied their skills in organizations.

### *Effective Organizations Outcome Survey*

Approximately 175 Effective Organizations participants provided written comments to the question: “As a result of this training, what specific changes do you intend to make in your organization?” Examination of the responses to this question reveals some repetition of the quantitative findings discussed above and some new insights. Participants most often mentioned intentions to improve the ways in which their boards function (approximately 50 comments) and intentions to improve the development and management of resources (approximately 50 comments). Intentions to implement strategic planning or update elements of the organization’s strategic plan emerged as the third most often cited theme (approximately 40 comments). These were followed by intentions to:

- Improve the operational management of the organization by doing things like improving the management of meetings, developing written policies and bylaws, and improving financial record keeping (30 comments)
- Improve communication channels within the organization and with others outside the organization (20 comments)
- Improve the connection of the organization to the community through activities that expand the commitment of the organization to the community and improve the quality of information about the organization shared within the community (12 comments)
- Improve the collaboration between organizations (9 comments)
- Share the training materials or new knowledge gained with others in the organization (8 comments)
- Continue learning about organizational management topics (6 comments)
- Increase individual involvement in the organization (3 comments)
- Make no change (3 comments)

With respect to improving the ways in which boards operate, participants noted intentions to create job descriptions for board members, do more strategic recruitment for members, clarify the responsibilities of the board, do board self-assessments, and plan for smooth board

member successions. One respondent noted the need to comprehensively integrate the board into the organization by stating she would,

*“Train and orient the potential board members. Give new board members the history of our organization. Train all board members in how to tell our story.”*

Clearly, participants felt it was both necessary and possible for them to help the boards of their organizations become more efficient, more effective, and more solidly grounded in the mission of the organization as a result of the training. The frequency of comments regarding improving board functioning correspond to the high likelihood participants expressed on the closed-ended portion of the survey to do the same activities.

In the arena of resource development and management, participants put fairly equal weight on improving financial and human resources. Respondents often mentioned plans to implement new fundraising ideas gleaned from the training as well as pursue grant opportunities. With respect to developing and managing human resources, participants focused most of their intentions on volunteers, such as recruiting more of them, retaining them for longer, tracking their contributions, and making sure their responsibilities were clear. One respondent clearly noted the importance of both financial and human resource development and management in this comment:

*“I intend to suggest that we concentrate more on volunteer recruitment and develop more diversity in our fundraising activities. I intend to propose that we write job descriptions for all board members and volunteers.”*

Intentions to implement or improve strategic planning also came up frequently in the open-ended comments. Most participants indicated they were planning on updating, redoing, or creating a strategic plan as a result of the training, while others said they planned to create a vision or mission statement or implement some form of a SWOT analysis or needs assessment. Often, participants situated the need to update their strategic plan in a desire to improve their chances of receiving funding or to better communicate with others about the organization. As one participant said:

*“We will review our mission, vision, and goals to enhance a quality program and communicate this effectively.”*

As the quantitative data revealed, a fair number of participants intend to go back to their organizations equipped to help clarify visions and missions and strategically plan for the future.

Though sharing the training resources and methods was not often mentioned as a specific change participants intended to make in their organizations on the open-ended portion of the survey, the majority of respondents to the closed-ended portion of the survey indicated they were likely to share the training tools and skills with their organizations. Despite this inconsistency between the open- and closed-ended portions of the survey, it is likely that participants will share what they learned at the training with others. An open-ended comment illustrated the idea well. This participant plans to:

*“Share this training resource and knowledge with others in my organization that were unable to attend. Promote continuing education and actual utilization of methods taught at this training.”*

Perhaps implicit to most people’s comments about changes they intend to make was the additional action of sharing new-found knowledge of the EO training with members of their organization. Unfortunately, we cannot be sure of this, due to the limited number of explicit statements to that effect, but it is likely given the quantitative data findings.

#### *Leadership Development 12-Month Follow-Up Survey*

On the Leadership Development 12-month follow-up survey, participants were asked to provide one to two examples of how the leadership class has affected them in their community organizations. One hundred thirty-eight leadership development class graduates answered the question and shared how they felt the leadership class had affected them in their organizations. Ten respondents indicated no change, in some cases due to personal constraints. Of the other 128 responses, a few individuals said that they had stepped back from leadership roles due to over-commitment, and one individual said she had not been successful in applying what she learned to her organizational work. The vast majority of responses, however, did indicate application of leadership skills in their organizations. The types of organizations in which LD

participants mentioned using their skills included: church, school, service organizations, planning commission, historic commission, downtown association, fair event association, Chamber of Commerce, welcome center, nonprofit organizations, community boards, and community committees.

Overall, three themes emerged from the data. Leadership Development participants, in the 12 months since taking the class, said they had:

- increased the number of skills they applied in organizational settings
- increased their activity in organizations
- increased organizational collaboration

In terms of increased skills, respondents said the Leadership Development class gave them tools that have helped in group settings. For example,

*“Not only do I have better tools for helping our groups to get things done, but I also have greater awareness of potential outside resources to help us accomplish our goals and have lost any feeling of intimidation when it's time to make the ask. And while I'm far more willing to step up to fill needed roles, I'm also confident enough to encourage others to adopt their own roles and "run with them" with the support and confidence they need as well.”*

Specifically, in the last 12 months, graduates mentioned using active listening skills, facilitation skills, conflict resolution skills, communication tools, consensus-building tools, asset inventory, and project management skills in their organizations. Some respondents mentioned increasing their activity in community organizations. For most, this increased activity meant doing things like contributing more volunteer hours at schools, becoming an officer in an organization, becoming more active in a political party, promoting a community event, and taking on roles in new community organizations. In the words of one participant,

*“I assumed leadership of a crew maintaining hiking trails in and near my town. I [also] took on more responsibility for the health of a non-profit on whose board I sat.”*

Increasing the level of activity in their community organizations was one way in which the leadership program affected the relationship between graduates and organizations, and for some, the skills learned in the class helped them be more effective at the same time. Nine respondents reported that it helped them function more effectively as board members. Increased organizational collaboration was another theme that emerged from these responses, though not mentioned as frequently as the previous themes. Respondents indicated that by increasing their awareness of the many organizations in their community and by giving them the tools to work well with others, the leadership development class encouraged them to work towards organizational collaboration. As one participant said, the leadership class helped her:

*“think creatively about how to work with different organizations in the community to build partnerships and move forward toward a common goal.”*

Participants also mentioned an increased capacity to collaborate with other organizations to pool resources toward a community goal.

### *Summary*

The quantitative and qualitative data illustrate that Leadership Program participants leave their respective trainings highly likely to implement many of the strategies and activities discussed in the training in organizations. While some activities emerged as more likely to occur than others, such as making improvements to the functioning of boards, updating strategic plans, and improving the way in which human and financial resources are developed and managed, overall, training participants plan to implement many elements of organizational management taught in the Effective Organizations training.

### **Does Effective Organizations build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

In order to truly understand the impact of the Leadership Program on community organizations it will be important to talk with various members of organizations. In future years of the evaluation, a case study approach should be used to gain deeper insight into the organizational impacts of the Leadership Program. At this point, however, preliminary results can be gleaned

from responses to the EO outcome survey open-ended question: “What effects do you think the Effective Organization training will have on your organization over the longer term?”

Approximately 170 Effective Organizations training participants responded to the open-ended question regarding anticipated effects of the training on their organization. Most often, participants made general statements that their organization would be stronger, healthier, more successful, or just more effective:

*“I think [the training] will really help us become a more viable organization.”*

*“We will become stronger.”*

*“If the rest of the board is receptive, this should be very beneficial for the organization.”*

Unfortunately, comments like these do not reveal much with respect to how community organizations will be affected, although anticipation of general improvements is a positive outcome. About forty-five comments were recorded as belonging to this “generally better” category or theme. When participants mentioned specific improvements they expected to make in their organizations, certain themes emerged. In particular, participants thought their organizations would become:

- More focused, with improved strategic plans
- Stronger with respect to board functioning
- Better able to work together as an organization
- More sustainable into the future
- Better at obtaining and managing volunteers and financial resources
- Better connected with the community
- More collaborative with other organizations

The responses to the open-ended question indicate that participants easily expect the overall strength of their organizations to increase. They will be better at managing day to day operations, better at strategic planning, and better at developing and managing resources. Some participants felt that their organizations would become more connected to the



community and yet others felt their organizations would become more collaborative, but changes in these two arenas were least mentioned of the themes.

With respect to participants' expectations that the strength of their organizations would increase as a result of their participation in the training, the majority of comments related to an increased focus within organization (approximately 30 comments). One participant said that because of the training,

*"Our organization will have a clearer idea of where we are going and what we need to get there."*

The second most often cited improvement to the overall management of the organization related to board functioning (approximately 28 comments). Considering the number of board members in attendance at the EO training, it is not surprising that many comments might relate to ways in which this aspect of operations may improve. As these participants noted,

*"It has brought our board together and thinking along the same target. We're ready to move forward."*

*"By clarifying the personality types, work styles, needs, communication, etc., those board members who have never taken an RDI course had visible light bulbs going off over their heads! This realization, if nothing else, will greatly improve our organization."*

*"We will start to recruit people who want to help because they have a passion, not because we have a 'board position open.'"*

Evident from these comments is that the training was able give participants the tools they needed to either help construct a strong and effective board for their organization or become better members of boards themselves. In the long run, these changes will contribute strongly to the viability of the organization, as many participants indicated.

Strong organizational management includes additional components that participants felt would occur in their organizations. Approximately 26 comments were made pertaining to future improvements in the way the organization manages operations. Primarily, respondents indicated that their organizations would streamline their functions, operate smoother, manage

meetings better, foster better staff relations, improve their internal leadership, and clarify responsibilities as a result of the training. As one participant put it, the organization will:

*“Operate smoother by [having] ideas about what needs to be done and having a knowledge base to support why there is a reason for change.”*

Another participant mentioned,

*“I think our meetings will be more productive and shorter. I think we’ll start developing some better relationships with staff – more affirmative and less negative.”*

After improvements to operational management, around 20 comments were made pertaining to the increased sustainability participants thought would occur in their organizations.

Participants referred to sustainability as financial stability and leadership succession or stability of human resources. One participant said that as a result of the training *“I feel that we will become financially stable and sound.”* With respect to stability of human resources, issues of leadership succession often arose. According to one participant, because of the training: *“Our organization will develop ways of sustaining itself when I am no longer able to guide them.”* Often, new organizations are created by one or two charismatic and passionate people, and when they leave, if they have not established a good succession plan, the organization deteriorates. As many of these participants indicate, they felt the EO training prepared them to help make that transition smoother.

Improving the development and management of resources was mentioned about sixteen times by participants as an expected impact of the EO training on their organization. Comments were split evenly between improving financial resources and improving human resources in the form of volunteers. Of these comments, however, a majority anticipated improvements in their organizations’ development rather than the management of these resources: *“Your training will help equip us to function at a higher level in fund seeking...”* Some participants mentioned that the training will help their organization manage resources better, which will help them be more sustainable in the long run.

As mentioned above, the majority of participant comments referred to the impact the EO training would have on the way in which their organizations manage day to day activities. Less apparent from the open-ended responses was much anticipation that the EO training would affect the community orientation or the collaborative nature of the organization.

Approximately nine comments were made that indicated participants expected their organizations to become more community-oriented. For example, participants said:

*“We will become more clearly focused on our role in the community.”*

*“I see our group growing and becoming a force for our community and our youth.”*

With respect to organizations becoming more collaborative as a result of the training, around eight comments were made to this effect. Though individual participants indicated they would be likely to partner and network with organizations after the EO training, given the infrequency of these comments, it seems that few saw that their individual actions would have a significant impact on the collaborative nature of their organization.

### ***Summary***

These responses about the anticipated impact of the Effective Organizations training on organizations indicate that overall, organizations are likely to become stronger because of their members’ exposure to the training materials. These data also suggest that as a result of the training, organizations are not as likely to become more community oriented or collaborate more with other organizations. It is very important to note at this point that any organizational change occurring as a result of the training depends heavily on the organization accepting any new information an EO participant brings to the table. In many cases this will not be an issue given the size of the organization the participant belongs to. In other cases, this may turn out to be an impediment to the EO training having a deeper effect on organizations in these communities. As one participant put it,

*“I think [the training] will be helpful, if the organization’s leaders will listen to suggestions.”*

While these qualitative findings begin to shed some light on the question of organizational impact of the training, further study is needed to fully gauge the extent to which organizations are affected by their members participating in the EO training.

### **Does the Leadership Program contribute to vital rural communities?**

Vital rural communities, for the purpose of this report, are those that possess the capacity to work together and realize a balance of positive social, economic, and environmental outcomes. When looking at vital rural communities, it is important to note that both capacity and outcomes are influenced by conditions outside the direct influence of the community. Community capacity includes a cadre of committed and skillful leaders, who are actively engaged in community organizations and affairs that are aimed at improving their communities' social, economic, and environmental circumstances. Thus, capacity implies empowerment to create change in the community.

Evidence of the initial stages of capacity building were seen in 2008 data from the Leadership Development Outcome Survey, Community Trainer Interviews, and South Lane Class Project Interviews (2008 Evaluation Report). At that time, participants reported that the Leadership Program had already had positive impacts on their rural communities through the increased number of trained, actively engaged leaders and successful completion of class projects. Moreover, they were confident that the momentum would continue into the future due to a new sense of hope, the feeling of cohesiveness within the community, and the increased capacity of the community as a whole to embrace and facilitate change. They believed they could make a difference in their community and were committed to community change.

Following up on participant's initial thoughts about how the program would impact their community, Fall 2008 Leadership Development class participants were asked one year later to provide one or two examples of how the leadership class has affected their community. On the 12-month follow-up survey, 140 respondents gave examples of how the program has impacted their community. Common themes included pride in community, increased collaboration and

relationships among community members, increased awareness of community needs, and an increase in the number of trained leaders in the community.

Participants reported that the class has affected the level of community pride among residents in their communities. One respondent said,

*“One of the identified issues with our community, in the first cohort, was a lack of community pride. ‘If it came from here, it can’t be that good’....Several of us from the program have stepped up and invested in new businesses or been involved in projects that are beginning to have a positive effect on that attitude.”*

Although many participants continue to provide suggestions for revising the class project methodology, successful class projects were a source of pride, and potentially, unity. Specific examples of projects cited were physical improvements: signs, tennis courts, trails, gardens, playgrounds, bioswales, lights, kiosks, and handicap access at fairgrounds.

Participants reported that increased collaboration, a shared vision, increased cooperation between groups, working together better than before, all describe increased community capacity due to the leadership program. *“More people understand community is all ‘our’ responsibility.”* Groups of people who did not know each other worked to become a team with a common goal for the good of their communities. In some cases, the leadership program involved all ages, a variety of ethnic groups, and/or multiple communities.

*“It brought my community of many ethnicities to work and collaborate on a common goal together. We worked to think of a project, and together we completed it within the community, even with the help of people who weren’t in the leadership class.”*

Participants also reported that the Ford leadership program raised awareness of community needs as well as roadblocks to change. As one participant stated, *“It opened people’s eyes to see what needs to be done.”* As participants better understood community needs, they could design a project and contact local board members and community members in ways they had not before.

A widespread perception was that the program built new relationships among community residents. It provided the tools to empower community residents to become leaders. Those residents now have a common vocabulary. Individuals who were not previously involved in community organizations became volunteers and leaders. One participant suggested that the program transformed volunteers into “community-minded” volunteers, who reached out to people. Respondents were very positive about the benefits of community networking, and some thought it was the most important result of the Leadership Program. The class became a network that could be tapped for a variety of projects. One respondent reported:

*“The social networking was invaluable and will continue to be far-reaching. I think this aspect is still undervalued by some classmates, but we are really there for others to call on and to help make contacts and referrals – even if a specific project isn’t for us.”*

There were a few comments about a critical mass of leaders being formed as a result of the program. However, feelings were mixed among these participants about the extent to which the critical mass could affect change in the community. One respondent indicated that one result of the Leadership Program was a larger base of new leaders who could foster the development of other leaders “for a very long time to come.” Another respondent thought new collaborations had occurred, but the number of leadership graduates was not sufficient to make effective changes in the community yet. By contrast, a few respondents were positive about the capacity of their communities since the Leadership Program came to their town:

*“Our town can work together to accomplish what we could not accomplish before.”*

Only 16 respondents (11%) reported that they were not sure that the Leadership Program made a difference in their community or felt it was unable to increase vitality. Two respondents spoke of community or leadership divisions, with one reporting that the first cohort did not stay connected or mentor the next classes. Another said that the leadership class had a positive effect in the past, but not in the present: “The community just doesn’t care.” One respondent indicated that when the class ended, the interest in continuing the new relationships faded. She thought a new class would be helpful, but said that some community residents are reluctant to

shed old prejudices and embrace the concepts of leadership training, so that benefits might be limited. The other comments related to class projects, such as the inability of the class to complete a class project. One participant said that it has gotten people to talk about things, but put some parts of the community on edge because you end up with factions that do and do not like what is being done.

### **Suggestions for the Future**

Suggestions for improvement to the Ford Institute Leadership Program came from two sources: the five focus groups held around the state and the 12-month follow-up survey of Fall 2008 leadership class participants. Although not the purpose of the focus groups, focus group participants nevertheless shared some suggestions for change. The 12-month survey asked a specific question about what The Ford Family Foundation could do in the future to support participants, organizations, and communities.

One area mentioned for possible improvement was the participant nomination process. In one focus group, participants were concerned that those individuals who were nominated were already viewed as leaders in the community and were over committed. The class is sometimes perceived as

*“just another place where people of power come together and get more powerful.”*

Finding people who were not already too busy, but who had leadership potential, was a suggestion for improving the nomination process. Despite the fact that the Leadership Program intends to identify these people for nomination, it was apparent from focus group participants that this goal had not been reached in some communities.

Focus group participants shared their admiration for the youth who had participated in the Leadership Program. In some communities, informal mentoring relationships between youth and adults were established as a result of the class. However, in two focus groups, concerns were expressed that youth who participated in the training were not involved beyond the class

or left the community for higher education following the class. One suggestion was to have an all-youth leadership class.

Cohorts and cohort experiences were another focal point for suggested improvements that emerged from the focus groups. Some felt their experiences were different depending on their participation within a particular cohort. One focus group thought greater connections between the different cohorts within their communities would have been beneficial. Another community that had experienced more interactions between the cohorts saw these interactions as valuable.

*“There were a lot of things that happened in the first [cohort] that never happened in the second one.”*

*“I’d like to see more ties of the three classes together. Some type of training or event that ties us together.”*

Some participants credited the projects with helping their class to bond and giving them an opportunity to put their newly acquired skills to use. Other participants discussed their frustration with the class projects. Some projects became overwhelming and went over budget. Perhaps the greatest frustration was the attrition of class participants during the project process.

*“Halfway through our project, out of thirty people in our class we were down to eight or nine who were involved. People go back to their lives; they have a job and responsibilities.”*

Many respondents to the 12-month follow-up survey brought up the community projects as an area of concern and suggested changes as well. For example, making the time commitment clearer, making sure the community project is actually desired by the whole community, or having the class in the middle of the year to help the group with the logistics of the project were all mentioned. More than one participant mentioned helping participants pick easier-to-accomplish projects. This comment was representative of that sentiment:



*“The format of the class made it difficult to realistically evaluate potential projects in the given time frame – and in the context of the class, there is confusion about who’s in charge, the facilitators or us. We did succeed.....but I think some of us felt that we were in for more than we’d signed up for.”*

One respondent suggested:

*“I would re-think using the project model. I think [the project] becomes the object of the class rather than learning and practicing the skills.”*

Another respondent concurred, saying that the project was too much about the process and not enough about the skills – it felt more like meeting requirements of a grant, rather than supporting class members working on a cause. Another respondent commented:

*“The entire process of the class project seemed very limiting. The diverse voices were shut down and we were left with the same power players at the table. People who had divergent views or processes were slowly shut out.”*

One respondent suggested that a helpline for leadership class graduates might be good. He found that the group processes broke down during the project and a call to the facilitator helped him get the group back on track. Although the cohort project is designed to provide leadership class participants the opportunity to apply the skills of the class, it seems apparent that this notion was lost on some classes.

On the 12-month follow-up survey, 136 leadership class participants responded to the question about what The Ford Family Foundation could do to support them as community leaders, their organizations, and/or their communities. Respondents focused on both the educational and fiscal functions of the Foundation. Forty-two percent of respondents wrote that they wanted the Foundation to continue existing programs. Many participants (32%) mentioned the educational classes, while others (17%) mentioned the importance of financing community projects, but many spoke of both:

*“Continue matching grant opportunities and availability of additional leadership classes within our struggling community.”*

Seven participants (5%) had no specific suggestions.

Other respondents suggested other types of support including sponsoring a day or weekend where neighboring cohorts could get together. One suggestion was a regional collaboration conference. Another was to hold a statewide conference for all class members to gather. Another idea was providing education about social networking to help *“many more of us to be resources for each other.”* A recurrent suggestion for continued support was offering refresher classes, although the specifics varied – after 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, etc. Five participants recommended offering grant writing workshops. Other ideas included offering scholarships to high school students in another part of the county, providing leadership seminars for student government classes in high school, or offering youth intervention projects for youth only. One participant suggested that the Foundation have a regional coordinator who could be available to speak to groups about projects, grants, and programs.

In sum, participants suggested that improvements might be made in the class projects, the selection process, cohort experiences, and to a lesser extent, designing programs specifically for youth. However, participants were overwhelmingly grateful to The Ford Family Foundation for providing educational experiences and fiscal support to their communities. Many participants commented:

*“You are already doing a great job!”*

*“FILP and FFF are exceptionally good community partners and neighbors.”*

## CONCLUSION

### Conclusions

The 2009 evaluation of the Ford Institute Leadership Program concentrated on answering a sub-set of the research questions that were established in 2008. This focused the research effort on understanding if:

- leadership development class participants are effective community leaders and increase their civic engagement after completion of the class,
- strong networks of community leaders develop as a result of the program,
- the Leadership Program builds strong, collaborative, community-oriented organizations.

In order to answer these research questions, quantitative and qualitative methodologies were employed and data were collected from different sub-populations of Leadership Program participants, improving the reliability of findings. Although not a focus of the 2009 evaluation efforts, insights were also gained on the extent to which the Leadership Program contributes to the vitality of rural communities and on how participants think the program could be improved.

### **Does the Leadership Program develop effective community leaders who apply what they learned?**

Overall, participants reported that they had applied leadership skills frequently over the past year. In the year following the leadership development class, participants reported applying their communication skills almost weekly, working with others about once a month, and networking slightly less frequently. These three types of leadership skills overall were applied about once a month by participants. Similarly, participants reported engaging in community building activities occasionally in the year following the leadership class, with some activities being done more often than others. Project management tasks in community efforts or projects were done slightly less than community building activities, with participants engaging in these tasks slightly less than occasionally. Overall, participants left the class better equipped to address issues in their community, with the confidence to make a difference, and with expanded networks of people to work with.

Participants' intentions to apply their skills or engage in particular activities at the end of the class (Fall 2008) also predicted their frequency of application or activity in the year following the class. Interestingly, so does class size and the number of organizations with which participants were affiliated. Although participants reported barriers to their engagement in community work, these barriers only somewhat limited their amount of leadership activity in the last year.

For the majority of individuals who were applying these skills at relatively high levels, this level was higher than before the class, implying that the leadership class had a positive effect on participants. When asked how much the Ford leadership class contributed to their ability to do the skills, activities, and tasks associated with leadership training, 80% of respondents said that a moderate to a great deal of their capacity was directly attributable to participation in the leadership class. Overall, the immediate outcomes of the class appear to be following participants as they move out into the community.

### **Does the Leadership Program contribute to increased civic engagement?**

Participation in the leadership class resulted in greater civic engagement in the year after the class for about half of the Fall 2008 leadership class participants. On average, in the year after the class, participants engaged occasionally in civic activities, but for most this was more than they had engaged in civic activities before the class. The most popular forms of civic engagement for Fall 2008 leadership class participants after the class were voting, volunteering, working in community groups, fundraising for local causes, and promoting local events. The data indicate that the Leadership Program is encouraging rural community residents to be active in community life.

Also clear from the evaluation data collected and analyzed this year is that the positive outcomes of the Leadership Program at the conclusion of the leadership class stick with participants in the year following the class. Those who left the class highly motivated to engage in civic activities engage in more civic activities than those who left the class not very

motivated. Class size and the number of organization affiliations were also positively associated with levels of civic activity after the class. Despite some variation by these individual and class attributes, these results indicate that the leadership class successfully increases the motivation of participants to engage in civic life, thereby affecting the level of civic activity of participants the following year.

**Does the Leadership Program build strong networks of community leaders within and across rural communities?**

Networking, as expressed by Ford participants, is about being connected to and collaborating with others to benefit the community. Participants reported that both their social networks and their organizational and community networks expanded: new relationships were built, existing relationships became stronger and relationships with people not typically in their social networks were established. Respondents also reported some impacts on work, social, and professional networks, but to a lesser extent.

**Does the Leadership Program build strong, community-oriented, and collaborative community organizations?**

Effective Organizations participants reported increased knowledge in strategic planning, operational management, and resource development and management as a result of the training. Participants who reported the least amount of knowledge at the beginning of the training showed the most improvement. At the conclusion of the training, participants felt quite knowledgeable in all aspects of organizational management, reported increased confidence to use the skills and tools they learned about in the training, and had a new network of organizations to collaborate with or draw on as resources. All of these outcomes are important as they represent the foundation of individual capacity to work effectively in organizations.

In addition to these outcomes of the Effective Organizations training, participants expect to apply the skills and tools taught in the training in their organizations. In order for the Leadership Program to have an impact on rural community organizations, it is very important that training participants apply the skills learned in the EO training and Leadership Development class in their organizations. Results of the 2009 study give cause for optimism; Leadership Program

participants plan to apply what they have learned to become more effective as individuals in their organizations, to help re-design or implement effective organizational strategies, and to share what they have learned with others in their organizations. One reason organizations may not change, despite the increased knowledge of training participants, is that only a limited number of organizational members tend to attend the training. Without organization-wide buy-in to the intent of the EO training and without developing the skills of a critical mass of organizational members, the Leadership Program may fall short of realizing significant impact on organizations as a whole. Although further research is needed to determine if organizations will change as a result of the Leadership Program, preliminary evidence indicates individuals are equipped to realize this change.

Effective Organizations participants are optimistic that the training will help their organizations become stronger. Indeed, this is the primary way in which training participants anticipate their organizations changing as a result of the Leadership Program. While participants were quick to envision ways in which their organizations will become better at strategic planning, resource development and management, and operational management as a result of the training, fewer participants anticipated their organizations would become more community-oriented and collaborative as a result.

### **Does the Leadership Program contribute to vital rural communities?**

Although data to answer this research question were limited to open-ended responses to the 12-month follow-up survey, findings confirm results discussed in the 2008 report. Greater community pride, increased collaboration, and increased community networks were the ways in which Fall 2008 leadership class participants saw that their communities have been affected by the Leadership Program. In future years it will be necessary to engage in a more in-depth study of rural communities to understand how the Leadership Program affects not only the capacity of communities, but also economic, environmental, and social outcomes.

## **Suggestions for the future**

Although Ford Institute Leadership Program participants are overwhelmingly grateful to The Ford Family Foundation for providing educational experiences and fiscal support to their communities, they do have some suggestions for improvements and continued support in the future. These seem to be areas where there were concerns expressed, even though no question directly addressed suggestions for improvement. Suggestions for improvements were related to class projects, the participant nomination process, and interactions between cohorts.

Suggestions for continuing support related to providing opportunities for regional and local collaboration, additional training, scholarships, and all-youth classes or trainings.

## **Recommendations**

Based on evidence from the 2009 evaluation, the OSU evaluation team continues to suggest that evaluations:

- Assess the impacts of the training using current measures, tools, and methods. Doing so will yield robust evidence as to the impact of the Leadership Program on the target populations.
- Follow participants as they move out of the class and into the community. Some impacts on individuals, organizations, and communities may not be realized for many years to come.
- Use qualitative and quantitative methods to examine factors that relate to longer term impacts of the training including trajectories of individual leadership development, networking, and community engagement.
- Use qualitative and quantitative methods to ascertain community-level impacts of the Leadership Program, emphasizing changes to community capacity.
- Track the immediate outcomes of the Effective Organizations training using valid tools and measures
- Examine changes in actual participant behavior in organizations following Effective Organizations training and subsequent changes in organizational operations and collaborations.
- Work with the Institute and trainers as Community Collaborations Training evolves in order to design and assess appropriate outcomes for later evaluation.

## **2010 Evaluation Plan**

The next evaluation report will contain information about all past participants (2003 – 2008) to assess the longer-term impact of the Leadership Program. In addition, an assessment of trainer effectiveness and the possible relation of trainer to outcomes will be investigated. A case study approach of specific communities will examine the relation of local actions, collaboration, and leadership to the local economic, social, and environmental context.

### Data Collection

- Collect survey information from LD and EO participants in the Spring and Fall 2010.
- Implement the 12-month follow-up survey of Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 LD participants.
- Implement the 12-month follow-up survey of 2009 EO participants.
- Administer the population survey to all past Leadership Program participants who graduated prior to Spring 2008.
- Conduct focus groups with past participants to assess the longer term impact of FILP on themes to be determined.

### Case Studies

- Finalize design and begin to implement the case study approach of specific communities, including collecting community information. Personal interviews will be conducted with key informants in 2-4 rural communities.

### Data Analysis

- Analysis will be based on the evaluation questions, guided by feedback from the Institute, and utilize data from:
  - LD and EO participant surveys from Spring and Fall 2010
  - follow-up surveys with Fall 2008/Spring 2009 LD participants
  - surveys from past Leadership Program participants
  - interviews and/or focus groups with past participants
  - data from community case studies



## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: *Cronbach's Alpha* Coefficients for Pre and Post Effective Organizations Training Concept Groups

Appendix 2: Distribution of Responses for Application of Leadership Skills

Appendix 3: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Community Building Activities

Appendix 4: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Project Management Tasks

Appendix 5: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Civic Activities

Appendix 6: Distribution of Responses for Barriers to Skill Application

Appendix 7: Means, Standard Deviations, and Cohen's *d* for Organizational Knowledge Concept Groups

Appendix 1: *Cronbach's Alpha* Coefficients for Pre and Post Effective Organizations Training  
 Concept Groups

Concept Groups	Number of Items	Alpha Pre/ Before	Alpha Post/ After
<b>Knowledge</b>			
Strategic Planning	6	0.87	0.86
Operational Management	7	0.91	0.85
Resource Development & Management	6	0.85	0.84
<b>Behavior</b>			
Collaboration/Networking	3	0.77	0.6
Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to measure the internal reliability of the concept groups. An alpha of .60 to .70 indicates an acceptable reliability and .80 or higher indicates a good reliability. All concepts were found to have an acceptable internal consistency.			

Appendix 2: Distribution of Responses for Application of Leadership Skills

Application of Leadership Skills						
	Never	1-3 Times	4-6 Times	Once a Month	Weekly	Daily
<b>Communicate Effectively</b>						
Used active listening skills to understand another person's ideas	0%	1%	3%	10%	35%	51%
Used "appreciative inquiry" to emphasize the positive aspects of a situation	2%	14%	11%	21%	38%	14%
Given a speech or presentation to a group of people	7%	24%	16%	29%	17%	7%
Given constructive feedback to another person	2%	10%	10%	17%	43%	18%
<b>Work with Others</b>						
Worked effectively with different personality types	0%	1%	4%	10%	37%	48%
Facilitated group discussions	5%	17%	17%	23%	33%	5%
Worked to build consensus within a group	2%	16%	21%	28%	26%	7%
Used effective meeting techniques to guide a meeting	10%	19%	15%	30%	22%	4%
Used conflict resolution processes	7%	30%	17%	16%	23%	7%
<b>Network</b>						
Networked with others to address a community issue or problem	4%	18%	19%	26%	25%	9%
Networked with others to advance personally or professionally	9%	20%	17%	24%	19%	11%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.						

### Appendix 3: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Community Building Activities

Participation in Community Building Activities				
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Identified assets in your community	6%	17%	52%	25%
Educated yourself about social, economic, or environmental issues in your community	2%	13%	33%	52%
Helped build public awareness of a community issue or problem	5%	17%	44%	34%
Helped investigate possible solutions to a community issue or problem	4%	17%	47%	32%
Worked to improve the social, economic, and/or environmental conditions of your community	5%	12%	41%	42%
Helped define goals or a vision for your community	10%	25%	36%	29%
Encouraged others to participate in community issues and/or projects	3%	9%	38%	50%
Sought information about how community decisions would impact the local social, economic, and/or environmental conditions	12%	20%	38%	30%
Sought opportunities to learn more about community leadership	10%	21%	46%	23%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

Appendix 4: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Project Management Tasks

Participation in Project Management Tasks				
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Helped set goals for a community effort or project	6%	20%	41%	33%
Helped develop tasks, timelines, and assignments for a community effort or project	12%	20%	37%	31%
Participated in developing the budget for a community effort or project	19%	25%	31%	25%
Helped to publicize or promote some community effort or project	9%	16%	35%	40%
Helped plan a community fundraising effort	15%	20%	37%	28%
Helped involve stakeholders in a community project or effort	19%	17%	39%	25%
Helped to recruit and retain volunteers	14%	29%	32%	25%
Helped seek outside support for a community effort or project	14%	25%	33%	28%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

Appendix 5: Distribution of Responses for Barriers to Skill Application

<b>Barriers to Skill Application</b>				
	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
I felt “burned out” or discouraged by the class project	23%	42%	28%	7%
Personal concerns and demands (health, family, work) limited my time for community leadership activities	11%	31%	44%	14%
My community has been overwhelmed by economic, social, or environmental challenges that are out of our control	12%	50%	28%	10%
I felt overwhelmed by all there is to do in my community	15%	58%	23%	4%
Community work has been too frustrating for me	32%	54%	13%	1%
I was heavily engaged in community work before the Ford Leadership class and couldn’t take on more afterwards	15%	53%	27%	5%
I felt “closed out” of the leadership structure in my community	32%	53%	11%	4%
I have not been personally interested in the specific efforts or issues facing my community	47%	46%	6%	1%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

## Appendix 6: Distribution of Responses for Participation in Civic Activities

Participation in Civic Activities				
	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Worked informally with others to address community issues	4%	16%	45%	34%
Worked as a member in a formal group or organization that addresses community issues	12%	16%	28%	44%
Helped mobilize community members to work on a common goal	10%	23%	37%	30%
Advocated for a policy or issue in your community	16%	21%	32%	31%
Participated in long-term community decision-making or governance processes	23%	22%	28%	27%
Participated on the board of any local service agency or organization	22%	13%	21%	44%
Volunteered in your community	2%	8%	32%	58%
Voted in elections	9%	1%	14%	76%
Attended any public hearings, town hall meetings, community forums, or city council meetings	10%	16%	37%	37%
Donated money, services, materials, or food to support a community effort, project or program	3%	10%	35%	52%
Helped raise money and collect materials to support a community effort, project, or program	6%	16%	42%	36%
Survey items from the 12-month follow-up survey.				

## Appendix 7: Means, Standard Deviations, and Cohen's *d* for Organizational Knowledge Concept Groups

Knowledge Concept Groups and Items	N	Pre/ Before		Post/ After		Difference	Cohen's <i>d</i>
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<b>Strategic Planning</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2.31</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.74</b>
Clarifying your organization's vision and mission	103	2.52	0.80	3.54	0.67	1.01	0.58
Establishing organizational goals and objectives	103	2.44	0.74	3.43	0.69	0.99	0.57
Effectively communicating your organization's message and mission	103	2.45	0.79	3.53	0.66	1.08	0.65
Analyzing the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats facing your organization (SWOT analysis)	103	1.94	0.85	3.31	0.64	1.37	0.70
Developing a strategic plan for your organization	102	2.01	0.83	3.21	0.72	1.20	0.64
Helping your organization fulfill its mission	102	2.47	0.77	3.47	0.64	1.00	0.58
<b>Operational Management</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>0.68</b>
Specifying board responsibilities	102	2.12	0.87	3.29	0.77	1.18	0.60
Creating effective board nomination and recruitment procedures	101	1.91	0.85	3.08	0.74	1.17	0.61
Communicating board responsibilities to board members	101	2.06	0.88	3.29	0.73	1.23	0.63
Understanding the purpose and use of bylaws and governing documents	102	2.30	1.01	3.31	0.78	1.00	0.51
Improving financial management systems	101	2.16	0.90	3.02	0.84	0.86	0.51
Developing and managing budgets	101	2.38	0.91	3.09	0.76	0.71	0.42
Planning for future leadership (succession planning)	101	1.85	0.86	3.02	0.80	1.17	0.60
<b>Resource Development &amp; Management</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2.04</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>3.12</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>0.68</b>
Establishing human resource management plan (employees & volunteers)	98	1.95	0.84	3.06	0.73	1.11	0.65
Establishing a resource development plan	100	1.86	0.75	3.06	0.75	1.20	0.62
Planning for future sustainability of an organization	101	2.06	0.82	3.03	0.79	0.98	0.55
Knowing how to fundraise in the community	103	2.20	0.83	3.33	0.69	1.12	0.61
Identifying grants appropriate for your organization's mission	98	2.10	0.95	3.14	0.87	1.04	0.50
Maintaining an effective volunteer base	100	2.01	0.81	3.11	0.79	1.10	0.58
<b>Single Item</b>							
Understanding the core competencies (i.e. strategic planning, organizational leadership, resource development, resource management) of effective organizational management	102	2.10	0.80	3.36	0.73	1.26	0.62
<b>Organizational Management Knowledge Overall</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2.15</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>3.23</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>0.74</b>

Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. **All results were significant at  $p < .05$** , indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between the means for the pre-test and post-test. Cohen's *d* statistic greater than .40 indicates a moderate effect.