

**COMMUNITY-FOCUSED
LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
START UP PLAN**

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**Prepared by:
Mary Dumas, Dumas & Associates**

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Executive Summary

Background

The *Community-focused Leadership Program* Start Up Plan provides recommendations on program design and steps for starting a Community-focused Leadership Program and is based on national and local research on community leadership programs. In an effort to identify best practices, 34 leadership programs nationwide were reviewed and 24 were interviewed. A scan of local efforts on leadership development was conducted and a sampling of programs interviewed. The Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities (WCHC) then sponsored two Leadership Work Sessions to engage key local stakeholders in program design and feasibility discussions. Work Session participants affirmed the need for a community-focused leadership program that connects emerging and existing leaders from a mix of sectors and helped identify next steps in developing the program. A Program Governance Committee will be formed as a direct result of the Work Sessions.

The *Community-focused Leadership Program* would be a yearlong adult leadership training bringing together a mix of existing and emerging leaders from diverse communities in Whatcom County to increase their knowledge on community issues and skills in the area of collaborative leadership. This Plan provides a foundation for local organizations and individuals interested in creating a local leadership program. It is intended as a foundation on which the governance committee can build, rather than as a substitute for their work.

The timing is ripe for a local leadership development program. We face increasingly complex economic, cultural, social, and natural resource issues with inadequate financial resources. The demand for public/private partnerships and collaborations across organizations and institutions are increasingly called upon to improve our communities. More than ever, we need highly skilled, passionate, and collaborative leaders who work together for the common good of our diverse communities.

An effective leadership development program will improve proactive, collaborative thinking and action for the future. This Plan outlines guidelines and next steps for developing such a program. A number of critical steps need to be taken in the near future including setting up a program governance committee, identifying host agency, developing curriculum, marketing the program, recruiting participants, launching and evaluating the program.

Goals

The immediate goal of this Start Up Plan is to move from discussion to action on what has been learned regarding leadership program development, design, and implementation.

Fourteen self-identified Work Session participants are ready to begin development of the *Community-focused Leadership Program*. This Plan provides a launching point for the program and is based on a foundation of both national research and local recommendations.

A diverse body of informed, skillful leaders in connection with one another provide an invaluable resource for a community seeking to collaborate inclusively on matters of importance and change.

The long term goal of this Program is to improve our communities through skillful, collaborative leadership that reaches across organizations and institutions and is sustained through shared learning, respect for diversity, and inclusive activity.

Methodology

Local efforts to develop a leadership program in Whatcom County have been committed to an inclusive process that builds on existing community assets. The following strategies were implemented to assure this Start Up Plan integrates community input from 1997 to 2004 and is based on national research regarding how to set up and establish a community leadership program (Dumas, 2003; Galloway, 1997; Morgan, 1996; Wituk, Warren, et al. 2003):

Best Practices	Local Actions Taken
1. Survey other areas' programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2003 National Scan of leadership programs in peer communities was conducted by Dumas & Associates.¹ • 2002 Kellogg Foundation's National Scan was reviewed.
2. Assess current needs within the community around leadership training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2003 Scan of Whatcom County Leadership Enhancement Opportunities and Activities was conducted by Dumas & Associates
3. Identify the niche the program will fill in your community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCHC found that there is no overarching program that links individuals across sectors in a community-focused leadership training, based on 2003 Local Scan findings. • 2004 Leadership Work Session participants affirmed this need.
4. Ensure a diversity of participants across all spectrums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2004 Leadership Work Session participants from a broad range of perspectives were engaged in the discussions, along with key stakeholders in the adult learning community. Participants included individuals from business, education, social service, non-profit, faith-based, and government agencies and organizations. • 2004 Work Session participants affirmed this core value for the leadership program design.
5. Identify the target audience you wish to engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2004 Leadership Work Session participants' recommendations developed.
6. Engage both existing and emerging leaders in the training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2004 Leadership Work Session recommendations affirmed this approach.
7. Include an applied leadership project as a requirement in the program design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2004 Leadership Work Session recommendations affirmed this approach.

¹ For a description of peer counties, see Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities. 2002. Community Counts: Whatcom County Health Indicator Report. Bellingham: Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities.

Recommendations

Management

Form a diverse Program Governance Committee to develop the program's vision, mission, learning objectives and policies.

Goals

Create a community-focused leadership program that broadens the base and diversity of leaders in our communities who think long range, work inclusively and collaboratively on issues of importance in our diverse communities, and contribute to a community of purpose.

Operations

Identify an inclusive host agency or organization to run the day-to-day operations of the program.

Resources

Secure funding adequate for paid staff to set up the program and cover the operating expenses for the first three years.

Outcomes

Create a learning community that focuses on the interconnectedness of issues and communities, connects emerging and existing leaders from a mix of sectors, and networks across organizations, institutions, and diverse communities.

Guiding Principles

The following seven principles will guide development, implementation, and evaluation of the *Community-focused Leadership Program*.

- Sustaining the community-focus of this program is a top priority.
- Broadening the base and diversity of leaders in all communities so that more interests are represented at the leadership table is an important element of the community-focused approach.
- Program organizers are wise and attentive to the challenges of sustaining the program's mission, organizational structure, and financial needs over time. Action, assessment and evaluation of measurable results must be components in the implementation process.
- The development of cohort communications and life-long networks across sectors are important outcomes for the training. The program design will support the development of a learning community and on-going relationships of graduates, organizations, and institutions.
- Leaders are knowledgeable of best practices in leadership, challenge assumptions and stereotypes about leadership, and break down barriers between diverse communities. Program participants will develop collaborative attitudes and skills necessary for finding common ground and apply their greater understanding in our communities.
- Leadership program participants and organizers transcend partisanship and foster civil discussion on difficult issues. Program marketing and participant selection criteria will be developed to assure a diverse mix.
- Community-focused education addresses the interconnectedness of issues and institutions to support well-informed leadership and deepen appreciation for differences in our communities.

Community Climate for Program Start Up

Current Status of Community-based Leadership Programs

The challenge of creating and sustaining healthy, vital communities is being met by increasing emerging and existing leaders' skills, networks, and collaborative capacity. Increasingly, partnerships among business, government, non-profit, and social action groups are a matter of doing business. A diverse body of informed, skillful leaders in connection with one another provide an invaluable resource for a community seeking to collaborate inclusively on matters of importance and change. This is the impetus for creating a *Community-focused Leadership Program* that will serve adults in Whatcom County, Lummi Nation, and the Nooksack Tribe.

In 1997, it was estimated that more than a thousand communities across the country have formal programs, and 25 states offer statewide programs for existing and emerging leaders (Galloway, 1997). Leadership Skagit launched a community leadership program in 2003. The Seattle areas boasts numerous programs offered by community organizations, government agencies, and learning institutions such as the Center for Ethical Leadership, Leadership Tomorrow, and the Neighborhood Leadership program just to name a few. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, a major funder of leadership program research and implementation, continues to see this method of improving individuals and communities as an important component of supporting constructive and long-standing social change (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2002).

Local Community Need

A local scan of new and existing programs that contribute to the development of leadership capacity in Whatcom County, Lummi Nation, and Nooksack Tribe found that there is no overarching program that links individuals across sectors in a community-focused leadership training.

The overwhelming majority of those interviewed in the 2003 scan shared a desire for a leadership program that would build the collaborative capacity in our communities.

2004 Work Session participants affirmed the need for a community focused leadership program that connects emerging and existing leaders from a mix of sectors.

We face increasingly complex economic, cultural, social, and natural resource issues, with inadequate financial resources and few new emerging leaders. The demand for public/ private partnerships and collaboration across organizations and institutions are increasingly called upon to improve our communities. More than ever, Whatcom County needs the valuable resource a leadership program provides to support the development of highly skilled, passionate, and collaborative leaders who work together for the common good of our diverse communities.

“Most people who want leadership training go to Seattle. We have a desperate need in this community – there is a vacuum.

Our organization has identified that there is a clear need for leadership training in the community.”

(2003 Scan response)

Growth and Diversity

Whatcom County is one of the fastest growing regions in Washington State. It has experienced a 30% growth in population over the 1990s, resulting in a more racially and ethnically diverse community. Whatcom County is ripe for a leadership program to broaden the base of leadership in a more representative way. "The percentage of Whites decreased from 93% in 1990 to 91% in 2000. Ten years ago, Native Americans were the largest non-white population in the county. While their numbers have increased by 20%, this is less than the county's overall growth of 30% growth, and is significantly less than the 134% growth rate of Latino/Hispanics, and the 106% growth rate of Asians (Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities, 2002)." We need to develop connections across sectors and communities to prepare for a future that is inclusive and actively seeks to engage the insight and perspectives of all our communities. These connections will deepen appreciation for one another and create invaluable networks for future collaboration.

Complex Issues

Whatcom County has experienced significant shifts in economic activity and the community landscape. Whatcom County is both a popular place to live and visit. Exciting new projects are on the horizon in downtown Bellingham and the waterfront, county industries are growing and closing at rapid rates, and tourist opportunities are increasing. "Typical of a rapidly urbanizing area, Whatcom County's open spaces are being converted to other uses. Between 1987 and 1997, the county lost 21,000 acres of farmland, a rate greater than the state average (Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities, 2002)."

Pressures on our natural resources affect the quality of life, the natural resource base for historic industries, and traditional livelihoods. The Kellogg Foundation (2004), a major funder for community-focused leadership research and program development considers leadership development as the "foundation for building the capacity of individuals, communities, and institutions to solve their own problems." We are at an important juncture in growth and decision-making regarding our communities and increased leadership capacity will improve proactive, collaborative thinking and action for the future.

Community Assets and Potential Resources

Critical program development and administrative resources are necessary to create and sustain a community-focused leadership program. This Program is committed to a process that builds on existing community assets. Some of the critical development and administrative resources necessary to create and sustain a program include: a governance body to guide development of the program, an entity to maintain program operations and financial activities, marketing and fund development strategies, training design, participant recruitment and registration systems, instruction and evaluation strategies, and key staff to implement the program.

Whatcom County and the surrounding communities enjoy the benefits of four institutions of higher learning, each serving a unique and vital function in the continuum of lifelong learning. In addition, numerous organizations contribute to individual skills development and community action.

The following organizations and institutions provide valuable services to adults interested in life long learning, though none is currently offering a year long community-focused leadership program. Each was evaluated for the potential role it could play in providing essential resources to the development and administration of a community-focused leadership program.

One of our greatest community assets is the pool of leaders, established and emerging, who can coalesce the vision, resources, and skills necessary to bring about positive action for the greater good.

Through community-based leadership programming we can cultivate one of the important resources we know will make a difference – inspired, collaborative, and creative individuals who seek to make a difference for the good of the community.

Western Washington University (WWU) is the third largest university in Washington State with over 12,000 students, offering undergraduate, graduate, and extended learning courses.

The University also has an Extended Education and Summer Program providing professional level course work for continuing education credit and certification.

The Small Business Development Center, an affiliate of the University, provides confidential business counseling services and targeted training programs to small businesses upon request.

Each of these WWU affiliated programs support an individual's or business's development of technical skill associated with leadership, such as employee management and supervision and business plan development. However, these programs are not designed to create an ongoing learning community focused on community leadership.

The University has significant resources to contribute to the *Community-focused Leadership Program* in the areas of program design, instruction, research, marketing, and recruitment.

Whatcom Community College (WCC) serves over 6,400 students and offers Associate degrees, Running Start courses for high school students, and community education classes for life-long learners. Up to 250 Community Education courses are offered each quarter. These classes focus primarily on leisure activities with approximately 15 business courses each quarter. The course format is typically a one time, two to four hour session.

WCC is very community-based and highly perceived as such in the region. The Community Education Program is a self-supporting arm of WCC and not fiscally equipped to offer or administer a yearlong community-focused leadership program, though the program does have important instruction, facilities, and participant registration infrastructure in place that can support such a program.

Bellingham Technical College (BTC) is an important resource in the Northwest as the only state technical college outside of the Seattle area. The College provides technical training and specialized workforce programs to 3,500 students. BTC also offers adult education classes in addition to their technical training programs.

BTC has a long history as an incubator of programs in the community. The Bellingham Technical College Foundation may be appropriate for start up funding and logistical support. BTC can make important contributions in the area of program design, instruction, and recruitment for the leadership program. BTC is not a likely program administrator as the other educational marketing they conduct could diminish program visibility. In addition, the fiscal and human resource requirements associated with a public agency may not be appropriate for a community-focused, volunteer intensive leadership program.

Northwest Indian College provides post-secondary education opportunities to Northwest Indian people. Their programs include academic, cultural, educational, professional coursework. The College has valuable resources to offer in the area of program design, instruction, recruitment, and facilities. The College has significant resources to contribute to the *Community-focused Leadership Program* in the areas of instruction, marketing, recruitment, and facilities.

The Northwest Institute for Non-profit Excellence (NINE) is a new training organization in Whatcom County that is currently growing its program. NINE offers continuing educational courses for non-profit social service providers' staff, direct practitioners, and these organizations' governance boards and executive management.

The program is very new and has had great success in the past six months. The course format range from a half-day seminar to a six-week series of two hour long courses on specific topics. The first round of courses offered included non-profit fund development, supervision skills, and case management for youth service workers. NINE will expand its course listing, though the format will stay within the one time seminar to six-week series course format. The staffing needs would be profound for NINE to take on a yearlong leadership program at this stage of its development.

Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce is a member organization supporting area businesses with networking and information services. The Chamber has recently undergone a reorganization effort and a new director has been hired. The Chamber sponsors member programs and community forums, including two hour-long presentations on professional topics and business skills development. Some programs are open to community members.

The Chamber identified the need for a leadership program and has put their planning on hold to learn about opportunities to partner with other community organizations in developing a *Community-focused Leadership Program*. The Chamber is building relationships with other Chambers throughout Whatcom County and seeking to increase public perception as a countywide organization. The Chamber has significant resources to contribute to the *Community-focused Leadership Program* in the areas of program design, administration, marketing, and recruitment.

AgForestry Leadership Program is a statewide, two-year leadership training for selected applicants from the following industries: agriculture, forestry and fisheries producers, processors, marketers, as well as educators, legal, financial, and government service providers that have strong connections to agriculture, forestry, and fishing. Eligible citizens of Whatcom County can apply and participate in this program.

Washington State University Cooperative Extension Service is a valuable community resource for natural resource based businesses, research, and community education and action. In many communities, the Cooperative Extension Service is a host or sponsor of community-focused leadership programming. The local Cooperative Extension may be an appropriate administrative host or partner agency to work with in program development, program evaluation, and acquisition of funding for the *Community-focused Leadership Program*.

Community-focused Leadership Program Description

Program Description

The *Community-focused Leadership Program* is a year-long adult leadership training that brings together a mix of existing and emerging leaders from across diverse communities in Whatcom County to increase their knowledge on community issues and skills in the area of collaborative leadership serving the greater good of our communities.

The heart of the community-focused leadership program is training in the collaboration skills necessary for informed and inclusive leadership. The course will also present information on existing community systems (government, non-profit, health, safety, etc.), diversity of communities in the region (social capital²), identifying community resources (assets), and how these work together to create a community of purpose.

This politically neutral program is grounded in the best practices of community-focused leadership and delivered in an experiential format. A core element of this yearlong program is practical application –participants will practice new skills and community knowledge through a community service project selected and implement by participants during the course of the training.

The yearlong format will also cultivate a learning community that support participants' development of a common language across individuals, organizations and communities. Graduates will foster communication and bridge gulfs between urban and rural communities, and ethnic, socioeconomic, and educational groups, as well as the business and social service organizations. The *Community-focused Leadership Program* outcomes will contribute significant services to our communities and individual participants.

² Social capital refers to connections among individuals in which trust, reciprocity, and shared purpose make cooperative action possible.

Benefits

Community Benefits:

- Create relationships among participants that will add value to our communities over time as graduates call on each other to help resolve issues and build a community of purpose³.
- Broaden the base and diversity of leaders so more interests are represented at the leadership table and respectively more residents of the region will be called to engage in their communities.
- Increase civil dialogue on critical issues by connecting emerging and existing leaders in a healthy, informed exchange of ideas regarding the greater good of our communities.
- Provide skilled mentors for upcoming leaders in our communities, as well as catalysts for existing and emerging leaders to seize new opportunities

Participant Benefits:

- Training in community leadership theory and practical skills for collaborative leadership, such as communication and conflict resolution, and inclusive project design and planning.
- Greater knowledge and understanding of how different communities contribute to one another (geographic, ethnic, socio/economic, faith-based, social service, business, natural resource, government).
- Increase self-awareness regarding assumptions and stereotypes regarding leadership, diverse communities, and social, profit, non-profit sectors.
- Deepen appreciation for how individuals and various leadership approaches fit into and contribute to the greater good of our communities.
- Increase commitment and courage to engage in leadership activities and community engagement. Graduates are expected to bring their knowledge and experience back to their communities of home, work and service.

³ A community that values and connects all people.

Target Audience and Outreach Considerations

Target Audience

The target audience for the *Community-focused Leadership Program* is adults of all ages who self identify or are identified by others as emerging or existing leaders in their communities and wish to increase their knowledge of leadership practices, our diverse communities, and collaboration for the common good.

Participants can be nominated or self nominated on the basis of their own leadership interests and potential to use this training to further activities that contribute to their communities and organizations.

Adult community education professionals estimate approximately 2 percent of a community's population will participate in personal enrichment courses. For the Whatcom County area this percentage is approximately 3400 adults, based on a population estimate of 170,000.

A healthy mix of participants from diverse professional, educational, geographic, and ethnic communities is fundamental to the program's mission and guiding principles. To accomplish this, marketing and recruitment strategies will be developed to reach the following:

- Professionals in medical, social service, education, law, trades, faith, non-profit, and government organizations and institutions
- Individuals in established leadership roles, such as managers, supervisors, and other named positions in civic and community service organizations
- Community organizers, activists, and grassroots leaders
- Decision-makers and change makers in the private and public sectors
- Business owners of all kinds and from all communities
- Potential succession leaders and mentors for emerging and new leaders
- Geographically and ethnically diverse communities

Outreach Considerations

The *Community-focused Leadership Program's* perceived value and credibility is critical to its long-term success. The development of program partners and supporters must take place in year one and build on existing community assets and activities.

Outreach to diverse communities will take time. A beta program for 25 participants will be offered in year one. Participants will be selected from diverse organizations and areas of the county, as well as the Program Governance Committee. During year two, program outreach and recruitment will be targeted to reach increasingly diverse communities to assure a broad mix of diverse emerging and existing leaders and program supporters in the second year of the program. It is anticipated that the full range of participation from the target audience will take time to develop.

Proposed Operating Structure

The *Community-focused Leadership Program's* long-term success and viability is fundamentally linked to broad-based community understanding, perception, and value for the program. To develop such broad-based support, the Program will engage a diverse mix of community members in program design, promotion, and implementation.

The *Community-focused Leadership Program's* operating structure is comprised of two partnering bodies: the **Program Governance Committee** and the **Host Administrative Organization**. These two bodies will work in close relationship to develop and administer the Leadership Program. They will identify and develop an appropriate legal structure for the *Community-focused Leadership Program* that provides for the following roles and relationships between the bodies. The governance body for the program will be the Program Governance Committee, who will be responsible for developing program policy as needed to guide development and design of the program. The Host Administrative Organization will be responsible for administration and implementation of the program, including identifying and filling staff needs. The Host Administrative Organization and Program Governance Committee will develop a budget and fee schedule for each year. A Host Administrative representative will serve on the Program Governance Committee.

Program Governance Committee

The Program Governance Committee will assure diverse membership; it will be comprised of participants from the Leadership Work Sessions and additional participants from the broader community. One seat will be reserved for a representative from the Host Administrative Organization. This body will be responsible for development of the program's operational policies, leadership program design, and identification of an administrative host organization.⁴

Program Governance Committee membership should meet the following criteria:

- Assure a broad representation of interests across diverse communities through a mix of geographic, gender, age, ethnic, socio-economic, academic, and professional and social service affiliations on the Committee.
- Maintain continuity between Leadership Work Session participants and the Program Governance Committee
- Members possess and contribute technical skills to guide program development and implementation
- Members have community credibility, demonstrated leadership abilities, and model an ethical and transparent process
- Members commit time, assess participation, and serve for a set term
- Maintain communication and collaboration with the Host Administrative Organization.

⁴Work Session participants requested that WCHC continue serving as the organizing entity for the development of the Community-focused Leadership Program's Steering Committee and their initial work. A core group of Work Session participants are ready to assist in the development of the program and Steering Committee.

Host Administrative Organization

The Host Administrative Organization will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the annual leadership program in accordance with the program policy established by the Governance Committee. The host organization will adopt the program budget and fee schedule developed in coordination with the Program Governance Committee, and administer funds, including administrative support needs of the Program Governance Committee. This organization will evaluate staff support necessary to implement the program, hire and direct staff, and coordinate volunteers.

The Host Administrative Organization will be selected based the organization's capacity to fulfill the following criteria:

- Possess capacity to provide administrative support to the program
- Possess capacity to provide administrative support to the Program Governance Committee
- Ability to serve as the fiscal agent and handler of funds
- Capacity to lead marketing and promotion of the program
- Capacity to serve as implementer, responsible for coordinating implementation of the program staff, faculty and logistics
- Has standing across diverse communities that confers status, importance, and credibility to the program
- Has broad community relationships that reach throughout Whatcom County, organizational ability, and community reputation to bridge gaps across urban/rural/social/government/business communities
- Provides assurance that the decision-making body and mission statement of the organization has buy-in to the Community-focused Leadership Program's mission, program design and policies, and the role of Program Governance Committee

Committee Structure

The following Program Governance Committees will be developed: Fundraising, Curriculum, Marketing and Recruitment, Selection, and Program Assessment. A member of the Program Governance Committee who is responsible to report back to the Governance Committee and the Administrative Host Organization will chair each of the committees. Each committee will have a minimum of three members and be diverse in its make up.

Fundraising Committee

The program organizers are wise and attentive to the challenges of sustaining the program's mission, organizational and financial needs over time. The Fundraising Committee will develop a plan to raise money above and beyond the tuition to support the program. This plan will include a strategy for contacting businesses, member organizations, government agencies, and foundations to secure the funds to grow the program and develop a scholarship fund. Donations in cash as well as in-kind gifts such as meals, materials, and staff support will be solicited.

Curriculum Committee

The *Community-focused Leadership Program's* curriculum will support the development of a learning community and provide information focused on the interconnectedness of communities, best practices in leadership, and practical application of skills and knowledge. The Curriculum Committee will develop program learning objectives, curriculum guidelines, and an annual calendar for the training days. The Curriculum Committee will oversee the development of each day's training agenda and educational materials. In order to assure a diversity of input in program development and the integration of best practices, Curriculum Committee members will engage a diverse group of volunteers to assist in the development of the program's core learning objectives.

Marketing and Recruitment Committee

Broad-based community recognition and support for the *Community-focused Leadership Program* is essential for its ongoing success. The Marketing and Recruitment Committee will develop a communications plan that outlines an overall strategy and specific tactics for sharing the program's purpose, value, and successes to diverse communities and recruiting participants. The materials will include a brochure, participant application form, and other marketing materials as appropriate for the communications plan. The committee will be responsible for recruiting at least thirty applications each year.

Selection Committee

A diversity of perspectives and a broad mix of existing and emerging leaders is the foundation of this program's community-based focus. The Selection Committee will develop the policy that determines the program's participant demographics and assures consistency and fairness in application review and participant selection. Committee members will select participants from the applicant pool. They will review applications for participant selection and determine if tuition waiver requests will be granted.

Program Assessment Committee

Action, assessment, and evaluation of measurable results must be components in the program's implementation process. The Program Assessment Committee will develop participant evaluations and conduct them annually. The Committee will be responsible for review of the participant evaluations and development of recommendations to the Program Governance Committee for program improvement. The Program Assessment Committee will also conduct annual evaluations of the Program Governance Committee and Host Administrative Organization to identify areas for improvement and further alignment with the Program's mission and guiding principles.

Operating Core

The *Community-focused Leadership Program*'s operating structure is comprised of two partnering bodies: the **Program Governance Committee** and the **Host Administrative Organization**. These two bodies will work in close relationship to develop and administer the Leadership Program and are responsible for the following tasks:

Program Governance Committee

This body will:

- Develop vision and mission statement for the program
- Identify the target audience
- Create a one-page overview to introduce the program to the community
- Establish policy and direction for the program
- Identify legal structures, roles and responsibilities for Program Governance Committee and Host Administrative Agency entities
- Research existing leadership programs' outcomes and curriculums; review these for appropriate models to adapt for this local community-focused program.
- Identify the Community-focused Leadership Program outcomes
- Develop an overall business plan, including funding development and budget, marketing plan, and implementation and evaluation plan for ongoing program development.
- Identify an appropriate Host Administrative Agency to work in concert with the Program Steering Committee and implement the vision and mission of the program as it has been designed
- In coordination with the Administrative Host Organization conduct an annual evaluation and make recommendations for program changes

Host Administrative Organization

This body will:

- Establish an operational agreement with the Program Steering Committee
- Work in concert with the Program Steering Committee to implement the vision and mission of the *Community-focused Leadership Program* as designed by the Steering Committee.
- Serve as the administrative arm of the Leadership Program to implement the overall business plan developed by the Steering Committee
- In coordination with the Program Steering Committee, develop and adopt the annual budget
- In coordination with the Program Steering Committee, develop the leadership program's curriculum set
- Evaluate staff support necessary to implement the program, hire and direct staff, and coordinate volunteers
- In coordination with the Program Steering Committee, develop a recruitment plan, application, and participant selection criteria
- Implement the marketing plan
- Implement fund development plan
- Implement the program annually
- In coordination with the Program Steering Committee conduct an annual evaluation and make recommendations for program changes

Administrative Host Organization staff necessary to run the beta program has been estimated at 1.5 FTEs. This paid staff would be responsible for overall program coordination, Project Governance Committee administrative support, facilitation of the yearlong training, volunteer coordination, and marketing and recruitment.

The date, program development has been managed through WCHC and implemented by contractors, staff and volunteers. The following individuals, self-identified from the Leadership Work Session, will serve as the initial body to carry the program development forward.

Initial body to select and develop the Program Governance Committee

Greg Marshall, Whatcom Community College	Carole MacDonald, Foothills Chamber of Commerce
Lisa Boxx, Ag Preservation	Rebecca Johnson, Interfaith Community Health Center
Jerry Hunter, WCHC Leadership Council	David Webster, Northwest Youth Services
Sue Anderson, Power of Hope	Joy Monjure, WCHC Leadership Council
John Korsmo, NINE	Tom Dorr, Small Business Development Center
Dave Oreiro, Northwest Indian College	Mauri Ingram, Calumet Restaurant
Marge Laidlaw, WCHC Leadership Council	Dee West, WCHC Leadership Council
Mary Dumas, Dumas & Associates	Gerald Pumphrey, Bellingham Technical College
Ken Oplinger, Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce	

3 Year Outline of Program Development

Year One: May 2004 – June 2005

GOAL: Develop, Implement and Evaluate the Beta Program

Program Delivery

Year one of the program includes development of the organizational structure for the program, as well as design of the program. A beta program will be run from December 2004 through June 2005 for 25 participants.

The Program Governance Committee will develop the program design. A model program will be identified through review of sample programs serving communities of like size and demographics to Whatcom County. The Program Governance Committee will 'localize' the program design by developing regionally relevant learning objectives, curriculum topics, and learning day agendas.

The Host Administrative Organization, in coordination with the Program Governance Committee will prepare the curriculum set. The Host Administrative Organization will identify regional speakers and trainers to present the curriculum on a volunteer basis. The Program Assessment Committee will conduct evaluations of the course participants, Governance Committee members and the Administrative Host Organization, staff and governing body. Findings from these assessments will be used to make program and administrative improvements in keeping with Program policies, mission, and learning objectives.

Operations

The Host Administrative Organization will establish necessary fiscal structures to administer program funds. The Fundraising Committee will develop and implement a development strategy that will cover the administrative and program costs for the first two years. The Marketing and Recruitment Committee will develop and implement the communications strategy for the program in coordination with the Host Administrative Organization. The focus in year one will be to cultivate relationships with potential

sponsors and funders that can provide ongoing support for the program and convey program credibility to a broad range of community organizations and institutions.

Year Two: July 2005 – June 2006

GOAL: Develop, Implement, and Evaluate the Full Year Program

Program Delivery

The full year program will be launched during year two, September 2005 through June 2006. The Program Governance Committee will develop the full year program based on the results of the beta test and program evaluations. The Host Administrative Organization, in coordination with the Program Governance Committee will prepare the yearlong curriculum set. The Host Administrative Organization will identify regional speakers and trainers to present the curriculum on a volunteer basis.

The Program Assessment Committee will conduct evaluations of the course participants, Governance Committee members and the Administrative Host Organization, staff and governing body. Findings from these assessments will be used to make operational and program improvements in keeping with Program policies, mission, and learning objectives.

Operations

The Fundraising Committee will continue implementation of the development strategy. Long-term funding strategies will be the focus of year two. The Marketing and Recruitment Committee will continue implementation of the communications strategy, with special focus on reaching diverse communities for the full year program.

Year Three: July 2005 – June 2006

GOAL: Stabilize the Program and Conduct Overall Program Assessment

Program Delivery

The full year program will be offered to an increasingly diverse body of participants during year three. The Host Administrative Organization, in coordination with the Program Governance Committee will prepare the yearlong curriculum set based on year two evaluations. The Host Administrative Organization will identify regional speakers and trainers to present the curriculum on a volunteer basis.

The Program Assessment Committee will conduct evaluations of the course participants, Governance Committee members and the Administrative Host Organization, staff and governing body. Findings from these assessments will be used to make operational and program improvements in keeping with Program policies, mission, and learning objectives. Special focus will be placed on outcome-based evaluations of the beta test and year one participants.

Operations

The Host Administrative Organization and the Program Governance Committee will evaluate their partnership with special focus on organizational commitment over the next three years.

Research and Development

Overview

Community leadership programs have been in operation for over 40 years throughout the United States. Historically, the typical community leadership program was designed to educate participants on regional issues while providing a networking opportunity with fellow participants and community and business leaders (Galloway, 1997; Morgan, 1996). Continuing research on program effectiveness has led to a shift in program design and the emphasis of the learning experiences. While program evaluations found participant satisfaction high, the intended outcomes of increased community involvement, volunteerism, and service were found to have mixed results. As a result of this research community leadership programming is moving beyond regional information presentations and networking. Programs are increasing their focus on experiential learning that provides participants learning opportunities to link the theory and skills presented during the program with meaningful information from their own experiences. (Wituk, Warren, et al. 2003). Many community leadership programs are now emphasizing the development of personal insight and appreciation for the common good –servant leadership⁵, ethical leadership, collaborative leadership, peace leadership, transformational leadership are a few program approaches currently being offered (Dumas, 2003).

Program Design

Course format remained consistent across the various program types regardless of program administration structure. Participants engage in a full day of study once a month for a period of 9 to 12 months, accumulating to 72 to 84 hours total course time (Galloway, 1997; Morgan, 1996; Wituk, Warren, et al. 2003). Many programs start with a weekend retreat in a residential setting to provide participants a significant time to get acquainted with other participants. Others begin with a challenge course or team building task to engage learners in evaluating and understanding their own leadership style, as well as that of others (Dumas, 2003). Such group learning experiences contribute to the development of a cohesive work group for course projects and a vital connected learning community. All programs interviewed in the national survey strongly recommended a participant service project be included as part of the curriculum set.

Organizational Approaches

A member survey conducted by the Community Leadership Association, a national organization with over 400 members in the United States, found that community leadership programs are typically sponsored by Chambers of Commerce, run by Chamber staff, and serve business executives, educational and social service administrators, and key government leaders (Galloway, 1997). Other programs' were sponsored or run by Cooperative Extension Services, service organizations, and community colleges.

"Costs to participants in local community leadership programs ranged from \$125 to \$1100, with an average of \$400 per year (Wituk, Warren, et al. 2003). A 1995 Community Leadership Survey found the average cost to be \$1000 per participant with businesses covering most of the costs (Galloway, 1996). Many programs offer scholarships, some use corporate sponsorships, participant sliding fee structures, or foundation grants to help cover participants' costs.

⁵ One operates out of servant leadership when seeking to make sure others' needs are met ahead of promoting one's own self interest (Greenleaf, 1977).

National Scans

Evaluating Outcomes & Impact: A Scan of 55 Leadership Development Programs (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2002)

Purpose:

The Kellogg Foundation conducted this scan to better understand evaluation methods used by leadership programs and the impacts of intended program outcomes.

Method:

Seventy-six programs were identified, of these, 55 programs were contacted for intensive communication, including interviews with program staff. The community-based programs contacted for in-depth interviews included affiliated programs of the American Leadership Forum, Blandin Community Leadership Program, the Pew Civic Entrepreneur, and others.

Findings:

The following common community leadership program outcomes were identified in this scan of 55 leadership programs:

- Broadening leadership participation
- Collaboration, networks, and partnerships
- Community change
- Community decision-making
- Community leadership
- Engagement and participation in community
- Knowledge development
- Leadership development
- Public awareness
- Resource development
- Social capital

The short-term outcomes that are most often tracked are collaborative projects and resources leveraged. The outcomes of community leadership programs are difficult to evaluate, as community leadership capacity is not typically benchmarked at the beginning of the program. The programs “do not have well-articulated theories of change so it is difficult to know what outcomes to look for (Kellogg Foundation, 2002).”

Leadership Institutes: What Are We Leading For? (Dumas, 2003)

Purpose:

This survey was conducted to provide insight on how peer communities have formed and sustained leadership institutes.

Method:

Seventy-six programs across the United States were identified. A representative sampling of programs was selected for interview based on program type and geographic area; 34 programs were contacted; 26 participated. Program types included Chamber of Commerce, university-based, issue specific trainings, personal development trainings, for-profit, non-profit, and innovators. Whenever possible, programs or institutes were identified in peer counties, as well as large cities, and small rural towns across the United States.

Findings:

- Leadership programs vary in purpose, structure, affiliation, design, and objectives.
- Successful leadership programs find their niche in the community and fill it.
- Affiliations include independents, nonprofits, university and cooperative extensions, foundations, member organizations and coalitions.
- Structures include boards of advisors or directors, executive directors or program coordinators, and volunteer planning and design committees.
- Program designs vary from highly experiential, individual skills development to issues forums and networking opportunities. The majority of the programs have a full day session once per month for 6-9 months.
- Financial support is essential to accomplish the development phase.
- Successful programs focus on the relevant needs in the community and include a project implementation component.

Across the diversity of programs, geographic locations, and program objectives, the program staff heartily recommended the following to communities thinking of initiating a Leadership Institute:

1. Survey other areas and programs
2. Assess the current needs within the community around leadership training
3. Identify the target audience you wish to engage
4. Include applied leadership project requirement in the program design
5. Ensure a diversity of participants across all spectrums
6. Engage both existing and emerging leaders in the training
7. Find your niche in the community

Local Scan

Environmental Scan: Leadership Capacity Development in the Greater Whatcom County Area (Dumas, 2003)

Purpose:

The purpose of this local scan was to identify the existing programs and activities in the greater Whatcom County area that contribute to the development of leadership capacity in the greater Whatcom County area.

Methods:

The local scan was requested by the WCHC as an initial information step to further local discussions regarding development of a community-based leadership program. This scan included web research and phone interviews with program directors of a small sampling of existing programs. This is an initial scan and is not intended to be exhaustive of all training and educational programs and activities ongoing in this geographic area.

Findings:

- Numerous adult programs and activities exist in the Whatcom County area to support an individual's development of specific skills and knowledge relevant to his/her field.
- There are grass-root organizations and efforts that increase cooperation and take action to influence the greater good from a specific perspective, e.g., health care, nonprofit.
- The region lacks a community-focused leadership program that links individuals across sectors of the community and engages participants in a learning community focused on both individual skills development and social capital.

Community Input

Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities Leadership Work Sessions February – March 2004

Purpose:

The Leadership Work Session was designed to engage key stakeholders in program design and feasibility discussions regarding a community-focused leadership program that would train individuals from the Whatcom County, Lummi Nation, and Nooksack Tribe communities to more effectively serve their communities.

Method:

Participation in the Work Session was by invitation to insure people from a broad range of perspectives were engaged in the discussions, along with key stakeholders in the adult learning community. The 25 participants included individuals from business, education, social service, non-profit, faith-based, and government agencies and organizations. Day 1 explored program design considerations and Day 2 explored program administrative feasibility issues. The participants discussed key themes from participant discussions and initial program design and feasibility considerations

Findings:

The community input gathered through the Leadership Work Session has been incorporated into this Start Up Plan, specifically, the Recommendations, Guiding Principles, Community Assets, Program Description and Proposed Operating Structure sections.

Proposed Program Development Work Schedule

May – July 2004

Select and develop Program Governance Committee and implement the following:

- Member orientation on group tasks and schedule
- Develop vision and mission statement for the program
- Identify the target audience
- Create a one-page overview of the program to introduce the program to potential partners, sponsors, and participants.
- Identify potential host agencies and discuss organizational needs

June – October 2004

Program Governance Committee develops operational agreements for the Governance Committee and the *Community-focused Leadership Program* business plan

- Establish policy and direction for the program
- Identify legal structures, roles and responsibilities for Committee and Host Administrative Organization
- Research other programs' outcomes and curriculums. Identify program outcomes for local program. This work will be done in parallel with the development of the operational agreements
- Develop overall business plan, including fund development and budget, marketing plan, and implementation and evaluation plan for ongoing program development.
- Begin implementation of fund development plan

August – October 2004

Program Governance Committee identifies the Host Administrative Organization, develops curriculum, and participant application process.

- Select Host Administrative Organization
- Develop operational agreement with Host Administrative Organization
- Develop model program, includes learning objectives and curriculum set for the program
- Identify staff and volunteer instructors for each curriculum set
- Develop participant recruitment plan, application process, and selection criteria

December 2004 – June 2005

Selection of Class and launch of beta program

- Implement participant application and selection process
- Delivery of "teaser" programs

September 2005 Launch Program

Proposed Program Development Work Schedule – Year One

Tasks	May - July 04	Aug - Oct 04	Nov 04 - Jan 05	Feb - Jun 05	Jun - Sep 05
Develop Program Governance Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member orientation on group tasks and schedule ▪ Develop vision and mission statement for the program ▪ Identify the target audience ▪ Create a one-page overview of the program ▪ Identify potential host agencies and needs 					
Program Governance Committee Develop Operation and Business Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish policy and direction for the Program ▪ Identify legal structures, roles and responsibilities for Committee and Host Administrative Organization ▪ Research other programs' outcomes and curriculums ▪ Develop overall business plan ▪ Implement fund development plan 					
Identify Host Administrative Organization and Develop Program Curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Select Host Administrative Organization ▪ Develop operational agreement with Host Administrative Organization ▪ Develop model program, includes learning objectives and curriculum set ▪ Identify staff and volunteer instructors ▪ Develop participant recruitment plan, application process, and selection criteria 					
Teaser Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement participant application and selection process for "teaser" program ▪ Delivery of teaser program ▪ Evaluate Program and make changes 					

▪ Launch Program						→
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Critical Challenges

Timely Launch

Continued dialogue without action and results in 2004 is a critical risk this effort faces. Leadership programming discussions have been held by numerous organizations since 1997. A leadership program has not been formed at any time over the last seven years despite continued examination by community organizations, professionals, and proponents. The development of a community-focused program design and the operational agreements necessary for a durable structure will take time. These foundational elements are necessary to have in place before the program is marketed and launched to assure stability and increase the public's perception of the program's value.

Maintaining the Community-focus

Informed and well-developed program design and operational structures are critical elements of the program that will require time for development. If the *Community-focused Leadership Program* will truly fulfill Whatcom County's need for a leadership program that connects existing and emerging leaders from a mix of our diverse communities these elements will need to be informed by a diversity of perspectives.

Numerous program models are available to provide a foundation for the program. For the program to be perceived and implemented as a *community-focused* endeavor the development phase will require the involvement of more than a host organization. Building a coalition takes time. In particular, a bridge is needed to link the social benefit communities (non-profit, government, and education) and the business (goods and services) communities to assure the support and endorsement for this program reaches broadly across our communities.

Right Fit for Administrative Host and Program

The partnership between the Program Governance Committee and Host Administrative Organization is the critical element for success in the first three years of the program. These two bodies will work in close relationship to develop and administer the Leadership Program and each needs assurance that their unique roles and organizational needs will be respected and supported. The necessary legal structure and unique needs of both bodies present complex issues that will need to be addressed before an acceptable and durable operational agreement can be developed. This work is scheduled for completion within a six-month period, which may be ambitious.

Volunteer Driven

Given this project is currently operating on the basis of volunteer staff and labor, this proposed schedule may be challenging to maintain. Decision-making on the part of the Program Governance Committee needs to be informed and decisive for the initial development stage to be completed in the scheduled timeframe. Program assessment and adaptation is an important guiding principle that can assure a timely launch for the beta program will not override the long-term goals of a community-focused program.

Public Perception

A beta program, an abbreviated version of the full format could be launched in late 2004 through June 2005. Possible misperceptions by participants, funders, and sponsors that this is the final, long term program design and curriculum is a risk. The typical community leadership program is a yearlong comprised of seven to nine monthly sessions with participants (Dumas, 2003; Galloway, 1997) and should not be abandoned after the beta test of the program.

Perceived value for the *Community-focused Leadership Program* is essential for overall program success. Key organizations and institutions that confer credibility in the community will be targeted for program affiliation and sponsorship. It is critical that the *Community-focused Leadership Program* not be solely perceived as a business enhancement effort. This can be achieved through assuring the program engages a diversity of participants from a variety of communities. Effective marketing of the program is essential to accomplish these necessary steps in program development. Adequate funding to cover early start up costs will be critical.

Long-term Sustainability of the Community-focused Vision

Keeping the program focused on its original mission and purpose for a community-focused program will be an ongoing challenge for the program. Funding and participant sponsors should not drive the overall program design and approach. This politically neutral program seeks to mix people across sectors of perspectives and reach into diverse communities. To maintain this element of the community-focus for the program, the Governance Committee and Host Organization will need to maintain good connections across communities and seek out opportunities to work with a broad range of organizations, institutions and individuals. Building trust across communities of diversity takes time; the program needs to commit to the vision, assess performance, and continually re-adjust the program marketing and funding approaches to maintain alignment with the program's mission and guiding principles.

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