



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP PRIORITY USER NEEDS REPORT

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Leadership Development Partnership Members

Center for Ethical Leadership
501 Commons
Washington Nonprofits
Seattle University Nonprofit Leadership
University of Washington Nancy Bell Evans Center for Nonprofits &
Philanthropy
Nonprofit Network of Southwest Washington
Community Foundation of North Central Washington
United Way of Spokane County

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Executive Summary

To inform our work developing nonprofit and community leadership, we interviewed 40 leaders from underrepresented communities: people of color, immigrants and refugees, rural residents and LGBTQ people. The stakeholders we interviewed emphasized the following key themes:

- Current leadership development programs are not reflective of the diversity of community and nonprofit leaders in the field.
- Racism, ageism and geography impact people’s access to leadership learning opportunities.
- Underrepresented community members are ready to lead but are held back from formal leadership positions by a number of barriers.
- Mentoring and learning by doing are preferred ways to gain leadership knowledge and experience among the priority users we interviewed.
- A range of solutions, from informal network building and mentoring to formal leadership programs, is needed to develop leadership in Washington state.
- The new Learning Connections online catalog will be used more by underrepresented communities if the roll-out includes targeted outreach and relationship building with these communities.

Background

The Leadership Development Partnership (LDP) is a collaborative effort of a number of Washington state organizations that are committed to capacity building for nonprofits. LDP partners are:

- Center for Ethical Leadership
- 501 Commons
- Washington Nonprofits
- Seattle University Nonprofit Leadership
- University of Washington Nancy Bell Evans Center for Nonprofits & Philanthropy
- Nonprofit Network of Southwest Washington
- Community Foundation of North Central Washington
- United Way of Spokane County

The partnership came together in response to an RFP by the Statewide Capacity Collaborative to create an online catalog of leadership development resources in Washington. LDP partners share a commitment to making this online catalog as relevant and accessible as possible to a wide range of emerging and established leaders, so in addition to creating the catalog, we are reaching out to potential users to learn more about how we can increase access and relevance of our programs as well as gain feedback to increase utilization of the catalog itself.

This report provides insight about leadership development from “priority users”—people from communities currently underrepresented in community and nonprofit leadership. LDP has

defined leadership broadly, to include informal and formal leadership as well as community leadership inside and outside of nonprofit organizations. Our focus in this project is on listening to and centering the perspectives of people from communities of color, immigrant and refugee communities, rural communities and LGBTQ communities.

Methodology

This research was conducted via 40 telephone and in-person interviews in May-June 2018 by a team of interviewers from LDP partner agencies. Interviewees received a gift card as a thank you for participating. Thanks to Gabriel Cruden (Washington Nonprofits), Jeanne Kojis (Nonprofit Network of Southwest Washington), Brandon Johnson (Community Foundation of North Central Washington), Hla Yin Yin Waing (Center for Ethical Leadership), Lucinda Stround and Victoria Tseng (501 Commons). David Streeter of Washington Nonprofits helped to manage the project, and Laura Pierce wrote this report.

The report summarizes responses. Given the diversity of the sample, sometimes different participants gave conflicting input. Participants are quoted frequently to make or illustrate key points. The report is organized into sections related to the questions asked in the interviews, and the actual question(s) are shown below the relevant header.

Demographics of Participants

An effort was made to ensure that diverse voices were included in the interview pool. 64% of interviewees were rural residents (primarily from North Central and Northeast Washington), 59% were people of color, 18% identified as LGBTQ, and 10% were immigrants or refugees. Although 7 of the people interviewed identified as LGBTQ (among other identities), these individuals did not choose to comment specifically about special issues or barriers based on sexual orientation or gender identity, so additional work may be needed in the future to discern how to better engage and include these communities in leadership.

Defining leadership

What does nonprofit or community leadership look like in your community?

Community leadership is characterized by:

- Collaboration/acting as a collective
- Distributed leadership
- Relationship-based
- Uplifting other voices (especially those most affected) and bringing them to the table for key decisions to “shape and direct” what we are doing
- Respected, trusted messengers in communities
- Mentoring
- Civic leadership: engagement in local politics, elections and issue advocacy
- Advocacy

- Community voice and community engagement
- Resource sharing/connecting resources with needs
- Ability to make decisions to change and implement policies
- Inseparable from positional leadership/power dynamics/institutional power
- Hierarchy
- Hold systems and institutions accountable
- Based in nonprofit organizations/community hubs (many named specific organizations in their community)
- Mix of people coming together (private and nonprofit)
- Being of the community you are serving/bringing lived experience/linkage to community served

Individual leaders have some or all of the following characteristics:

- Dedicated/hard working
- Able to “rise above the drama”
- Thick armor
- Able to manage frustration
- Maintain focus on goals
- Have a clear sense of power systems/understand power dynamics
- People who are articulate and persistent in speaking for a community
- Willing to call out power structures
- Know how to leverage relationships
- Cultivate leadership in others
- Passionate
- Empathetic
- Big thinking/visionary
- Motivated
- Character
- Strength
- Humility
- Openness to learning from others
- Able to pivot quickly
- Self-reflective
- Collaborative
- Authentic
- Creative
- Inspirational

“I think it is fair to say that for a lot of communities of color, we don’t go by the same understanding of what leadership is. It doesn’t mean that it is the person who is kind of at the top in term of title or authority but instead looking at who organically demonstrates the ability to be a beacon for others in the community, who people naturally look to for guidance on

making decisions...Those are the kind of skills that no conventional leadership training ever really teaches people.”

“There are formal and informal types of leadership. There are people who are assumed to be leaders because they work in an organization and have a position and a title. There are people who have leadership because they do work in the community, on a volunteer basis, but they are effective at reaching people, and bringing people together, and working for change.”

“Anybody at any level who is making a difference and giving back is potentially a leader.”

At least 6 people spoke about a small, core group of people who are tapped to do a lot. This seems to be especially true for smaller, rural communities. One person described it this way: “A small group of people that has set out to do what they see needing to be done because there is nobody else to do it.”

A few challenges were mentioned as well:

- Leaders are under a lot of pressure and may be fatigued or burned out
- Current leaders may sometimes want to maintain control and be less open to new ideas
- Nonprofits are siloed and may be competing for the same money
- Currently leadership, including boards, is not always representative of the composition of the community
- Our communities need more collaboration across organizations and sectors
- Community leadership deserves more visibility with and respect from the general public

Pathways to Leadership

How do people in your community become leaders? What circumstances, activities or opportunities assisted you in developing as a leader?

The following were key themes, and they are listed in order by the frequency that the theme was mentioned.

Taking Action

The top way that people become leaders according to our priority user interviews is seeing a need and filling it or feeling compelled or passionate about doing something. As one person said, “Leaders are people who go out of their way and take the initiative to make something happen.” Another commented, “The mothers rise to leadership as they focus on their children to get them what they need.” A third simply said, “Show up, speak up, and help out!” Additional ways that individuals can take initiative to lead are: showing up at events or gatherings, talking with other community leaders, networking, asking for help and being open to what you learn from others, and getting involved with politics and meeting your legislators.

Mentors/connections

Mentors were frequently mentioned. Mentors and established leaders in the community invite the next generation of leaders to get involved. The invitation may be something as simple as being asked to turn the pig at a community pig roast or may involve being asked to accompany a leader to a key meeting or hearing. One person spoke about identifying people's passions and connecting them with tasks that need to be done. Several people talked about having personal connections to leaders, or even family ties. Leaders who are role models and mentors must be someone the individual can identify with. Personal connections are important, as is getting a foot in the door at an organization.

Learning by doing

Several people talked about working their way up in an organization and/or learning on the job. This work varied from administrative tasks to working political campaigns and community organizing. People talked about working side by side with others and learning from peers, as well as opportunities to observe and be a "fly on the wall." Others simply mentioned "listening and learning." This work can include volunteering or community work as well as paid work. Some organizations and volunteer groups make an intentional effort to bring potential leaders into the fold, while others "grab whoever is available at the time" and are not strategic about building leadership.

Formal leadership programs

Leadership courses were mentioned by a number of people in response to this question, in general and by calling out specific programs that they have benefited from or seen others benefit from (these programs are listed below under "skill-building opportunities"). A few people mentioned formal education or fellowships. People also mentioned experience and knowledge and being rooted in the history that came before you, which might be acquired via formal or informal education.

Power and access

People made comments about how power and access can affect who is tapped or allowed to lead. One person commented, "Our main street is owned by a very few families that have had a grip on it for decades, so that plays a pretty big role."

Another stressed that we need opportunities to lead that have money attached, observing, "When people are working multiple jobs, even free workshops come at a cost."

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

How does it vary depending on individuals' age, gender or race or other identities?

Many respondents commented that visible leaders in most communities are white—white men in formal leadership and predominantly white women in the nonprofit/community space, and older (over 50, and in some rural communities, primarily older retired people). This can often be self-perpetuating, as people tend to stick to their own silos or bubbles. "People who aren't

white men don't necessarily get the mentorship and connections from current leaders to help them grow."

Age-related or generational issues

Respondents indicated that some communities have a bias toward age and experience. In some cases, a small group of identified leaders has been holding leadership for a long time and may be resistant to ceding control or to new approaches. At the same time, older leaders report being tired and wanting fresh energy. Leadership succession strategies are needed to make space for and encourage younger and more diverse leaders to step up.

One person commented that in their community, "It's predominantly people that have retired and they don't want to quit working and so want to do something to better their community. They usually bring a lot of experience and knowledge and quickly move into leadership roles, especially as there is almost always room for them."

Younger folks have a hard time breaking in because they have young families or are still building their careers, so their time is at a premium. Many people underscored the importance of fostering younger leaders.

Racial issues

Respondents raised a number of issues related to race and ethnic identity.

- People from minority communities have to do the extra work of explaining their identity and how they are impacted negatively by policies and procedures. This can complicate or harm their relationships with colleagues and peers, who may be uncomfortable or unskilled at dealing with diversity and equity issues, leading to awkwardness or poor treatment.
- A few visible leaders of color are looked to again and again to lead or represent their communities at advisory and decision-making tables. One person commented, "The same identified people of color are the key group that others outside of the community look to and ask to participate on projects or boards or commissions. They are people who are blessed to have the time or resources that allow them to participate...But some of those currently serving are tired, this is affecting their health. People need to step off the road sometimes and just take care of themselves."
- Tokenizing takes place in recruitment of people of color to boards and commissions. One interviewee stressed that relationship development is needed before asking, as well as clarity about how the person would add value (beyond demographics).
- "If marginalized people aren't present in higher leadership, the gap between executive leadership, middle management, and hands-on staff is an even wider gulf to bridge. Blindness to institutional factors can mean that a person from a marginalized community is seen as having an intrinsic leadership deficit rather than observing any number of the systemic issues that would impact an individual's ability to lead effectively, i.e. institutionalized racism, sexism. This can result in individuals having fewer opportunities to lead at a certain scale and learn through practice, setting them up for a greater likelihood to be seen as failing when they do get an opportunity to lead."

- “Leadership is harder for people of color and requires more tenacity. There is more pressure not to mess up. They are going up against historical and modern-day biases.”

Those interviewed also proposed strategies to improve the ability of people of color to be seen as leaders and given more opportunities to lead:

- People of color have a hard time seeing themselves as a leader when there aren't people of color in leadership roles already. This can be countered with role models, mentoring, affirmation that their voices matter. Several people spoke about the need to build the confidence of people from marginalized groups.
- Leaders are developed differently in different cultures, and different cultures value different leadership traits. Individuals are going to have varied perspectives. We need to honor these different approaches to leadership.
- We need a new level of inclusion, e.g. stepping up from bilingual leadership to bicultural leadership.
- Education requirements should be dropped in order to include more local, diverse leaders.

Rural people are also marginalized

Rural people are marginalized geographically, making their communities and their issues less visible and making it more difficult to get to decision-making tables. As one person said, “Being from a rural area, I don't get past the “filters” of funders and other influencers, not having the social connections or connections to money. There's only so much a leader can do if they can't get the attention of people in power. Volunteer-run, non-professionalized orgs are run by people that don't necessarily have formal education for the expected tone, grammar, document layout, and other presentation elements. If that presentation of a message isn't just right, people in power don't pay attention at all to the content of that message or put in the time to build a relationship with the person/organization that sent it.”

Skill-building opportunities

What opportunities are available to build the skills of leaders?

Responses included general strategies and specific resources and programs. Generally, people mentioned online resources, leadership development programs, nonprofit skills-building workshops, industry-specific programs, higher education, collaborations on social media, and participation in ongoing networks and service groups.

One person spoke to the value of networks or work groups in developing leadership: “When I started working in the legislature, there wasn't really a network of people of color that were working down there, and there definitely aren't a lot of people of color-focused organizations or racial justice-focused organizations that have a lobbying staff or lobbying capacity. So, we started the Racial Equity Team, which started out as a group of lobbyists of color, and then we would represent our communities almost like on a volunteer basis. We knew it mattered to us

and our communities, but no one was paying us to do that stuff...people got leadership skills and it was really organic and not a very formal way.”

One person spoke to the value of catalyzing leadership activity through simple supports like providing food, a venue or interpretation equipment to allow the community to convene and to advocate for themselves, and added, “I think the coolest opportunities we have are to make people realize the power and leadership skills they already have and being able to kind of shift their perspectives a little bit in terms of how they see their own power.” Another said, “We need more opportunities to come together and break bread together, because it helps us understand each other, our problems, and possible solutions.”

Specifically, people mentioned to following resources and programs:

- Washington Nonprofits
- Community Foundation of North Central Washington events, NPI summit
- Chamber leadership programs
- Leadership Spokane
- Leadership Clark County
- Wenatchee Valley Chamber leadership development program
- Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Foundation
- 501 Commons
- WSU Extension
- Rotary training
- National conferences
- Minority Executive Director’s Coalition
- Jane’s fellowship (Russell Family Foundation, Tacoma)
- American Leadership Forum (Tacoma)
- Blue Avocado (online)
- Network for Good (online)
- Sector-specific:
 - Church programs
 - Empire Health Foundation
 - AgForestry leadership program
 - InterAgency Network
 - Executive Development Institute
 - Cambio Leadership Development Program (Progress Alliance) – no longer in existence?
 - Internal leadership programs at Confluence Health, Chelan PUD
 - ACRS initiative through Vibrant Democracy Initiative of Seattle Foundation
 - Weikert Center for Youth Program Quality
 - Tacoma Writes (youth)

It was noted that some mainstream leadership programs do not delve deeply into diversity and inclusion and could be improved to better serve a wider range of participants.

Barriers

What barriers keep people from taking advantage of these opportunities? Have you encountered barriers in building your skills or stepping into leadership?

Money, time and distance

Lack of money and lack of time are the two biggest barriers to individuals from underserved communities taking advantage of leadership development opportunities. 12 people mentioned cost or financial barriers, and 9 people cited lack of time or time pressure. Distance and travel requirements are also a barrier that was mentioned frequently. Distance and travel are a problem because of the time and cost associated with travel.

Scheduling and family demands

Scheduling during the work day can be a barrier for volunteers or others who can't get the time off of work easily. Family commitments or lack of childcare can be barriers as well.

Lack of effective outreach/publicity

Lack of awareness of what is available is also a barrier. The opportunities that do exist aren't communicated well or an invitation that clearly communicates that the individual is welcome is not delivered.

Mindset

Attitudes can be a barrier as well. Some may not realize they need to change and improve their leadership, while others lack the confidence or self-worth to identify themselves as a leader or potential leader.

"Sometimes you need those community elders who will recognize the drive and energy of some of the youth and be understanding of them, that they are going to make mistakes, that they are going to mess up sometimes, that they are not going to know the proper procedures, but being forgiving of that and helping them, not making them feel ashamed and hiding for making a mistake...giving constructive criticism that helps them grow without making them feel like they are stupid."

Nonprofit culture

A range of organizational culture issues were cited: lack of support from supervisor/organization, attitude of board, nonprofit culture of scarcity and silos. One person mentioned the persistence of the "Old Boys' Network."

Throughout the interviews, people brought up additional challenges that seem to be inherent in how many nonprofits operate:

- "Some people only grow in positional leadership by transitioning from one organization to another at a higher position. I've rarely seen other folks like me get internally promoted...some organizations see the worth of my leadership, but not the one I am currently at."

- “It’s more cost effective to run lean and cycle through people rather than invest in current staff, developing their skills, increasing their pay.”
- “There is a danger of volunteer leadership because it is not easy to replace them and there is not an established professional pipeline.”
- “There are many ways that people can learn but the culture of nonprofits doesn’t emphasize training except in rare cases, even if the training is free.”
- Several people mentioned lack of or inadequate investment in professional development by nonprofits.
- Many nonprofits are looking to hire people with high education or credentials but do not compensate employees for having put in the time and paid the money to get those credentials.

Cultural competency

Many leadership programs are not culturally competent or linguistically appropriate. Most programs are unable to accommodate speakers of languages other than English. Others present a dominant culture view of leadership that diminishes other cultural values or leadership approaches or fails to create an environment of trust for new voices.

“In our mainstream society, we see leadership in a certain way, and that people have to have certain qualities and characteristics in order to be a leader. They have to be assertive, to speak out regardless of whether they are right or wrong...that is quite challenging, because a lot of times other cultures are not like that. They methodically think about what to say and want to make sure it is correct. Mainstream society sees apology as a weakness, whereas in other cultures, they will own mistakes, and so therefore they are weak and they are not leaders...How we see leadership is a barrier because only certain types of people are seen as leaders.”

Institutional racism

Institutional racism that makes it hard for people of color to advance within organizations, or even to become part of an organization at an entry level where they have the opportunity to acquire skills and rise to positions of leadership. One person added, “You have barriers based on cost and accessibility, and then if you are a person of color, you still have to deal with microaggressions.”

“Racial justice work is seen as outside of the job or extra to the job, not the main focus...A lot of the larger organizations don’t know how to or don’t know what it means to really allow their staff to prioritize it.”

Gaps & Ideas

Are there activities, programs or experiences you wish existed to improve your own or others’ nonprofit or community leadership? How can we provide growth opportunities for leaders and potential leaders?

Desired Programming

People suggested that the following elements would be valuable in developing leaders, beginning with those elements that were mentioned most frequently:

- Effective mentorship programs
 - Assistance finding mentors from like backgrounds
- More workshops/leadership programs
 - A true Leadership Development Program (that is long-term, taken in smaller bites so it's digestible, with time for reflection/application, and set in specific skills like how to manage people, etc.)
 - Formalized leadership program that is accessible to numerous sectors
 - Better advertised
- Networking
 - Relationship building across different identity groups
 - Networking spaces that are inclusive of minority groups
- Caucusing/bridging/connecting
 - Support networks for minority groups
 - Peer-to-peer workgroups/networks to learn from each other/share challenges
 - Connect larger, more established organizations with smaller/informal groups
 - Bridge established and potential leaders
 - Cohort leadership programs
- Safe space for leaders/"Safe Table" conversations between leaders from a variety of organizations and backgrounds (the opportunity to talk about the central challenges that impact us all and tap into the knowledge of others)
- Civic engagement and advocacy
 - Build our local capacity to do voter registration training
 - Culturally competent and linguistically appropriate civic engagement training
 - Non-partisan training and support for young people of color to run for office
 - Cultural competency training for service providers
 - Understanding civics/how government works
 - "An organization that is people of color-focused, racial justice-focused that is working on those issues where you can have senior people who are running legislative campaigns or electoral campaigns, and you also have a fellowship or some sort of way to bring up and coming people who want to be working in those fields to be working on practical issues...People can get the skills to work on racial justice issues, and then go and get other jobs and push their own organizations to push racial justice."
- Pausing and reflecting deeply on what we are doing
- Starting with an internal assessment and acknowledgement of the existing capacity
- Greater focus on and respect for organizers, teaching organizing skills
- We need more people who are cultural translators – study abroad and cross-cultural opportunities to "get out of our own bubble."
- Establish a common language around equity and eliminating disparities

- Structured onboarding activities within organizations rather than being thrown in the deep end
- Learning opportunities that can be adapted/customized to learner's goals
- Self-awareness/viewing oneself as a leader
- More leadership on this topic by community colleges
- Unified/collaborative effort
- Advanced learning: "We need more resources and trainings that aren't targeted towards 'lowest common denominator' of experience level but can keep engaging and building on the skills for people who are experienced."
- Structured interaction
- Convening people with power to make chances for dialogue, a la "Great Minds" meetings at Gates Foundation

Topics

Specific training topics that people feel are needed:

- Training on organizational structure and roles, understanding/crafting good organizational documents as a foundation
- Building accountability
- A whole series of workshops on how to be better board members and leaders, addressing all the various components
- How to work with diverse groups of people
- Communications consulting to help individuals present in a way that they will be noticed and listened to by those in power
- Training in grant reporting
- Quick resources to skill up
- Frameworks to navigate existing structures, e.g. starting a nonprofit organization
- Workshops on finance, grantwriting, fundraising
- Diversity, equity and inclusion training
- Nonprofit 101
- Working with philanthropy
- Leadership for introverts
- Hiring/screening/interviewing

Increased access to leadership development

People called out a number of ways to improve access:

- Youth leadership opportunities/inclusion of youth and diverse populations in leadership programs
- Continuum of leadership development opportunities throughout the life span
- Programs that facilitate entry/open the door for folks, then support people with opportunities for capacity building, training, supportive networks and opportunities for advancement within organizations

- Support services so people with children can show up and serve in civic leadership positions, e.g. childcare
- A more flexible program, like a leadership program that required less or no time away from work and could be done online with some non-work time in-person events
- Free or cheap offerings
- Training in rural areas
- Evening training with childcare
- Shorter trainings because it is hard to spare time away from the office

Investment in leadership development

Respondents would like to see:

- Greater commitment and investment in leadership development for everybody—staff, volunteers and stakeholders—by nonprofits
- Organizational sponsorship/support
- More professional development opportunities

Cultural Competency

People delivering leadership programs should reflect the communities being engaged.

- “It is hard to get someone from the outside to come in and teach - people don't feel like they are understood and are suspicious. It's easier to have someone from here, who knows the culture and what it's like here.”
- Presenters need experience working with small-town dynamics where everyone knows everyone and is connected via friends and family
- Diversity trainings led by constituency that a service provider is serving

Expand the circle

“You get invited to be a part of certain conversations. Oftentimes I would see those same faces at the table. We would go, whoa, we just had three meetings together today! It’s important for all of us leaders to be saying, ‘Can someone else be sitting in this seat? It doesn’t have to be me. How am I helping to cultivate and open up those spaces for more leaders who aren’t already there?’”

Referrals

Where would you look if you or others in your community were hoping to learn more about opportunities to build their leadership skills? Would you go to a person, and agency you trust, or search online?

Approaching a respected and trusted person or organization was the top response, followed closely by searching online.

13 people mentioned asking elders, respected leaders, mentors or board members for advice. 5 mentioned personal connections or networks and interpersonal relationships. 7 said they would turn to other organizations with strong reputations for information.

Searching online was also mentioned frequently: 13 people mentioned this generally, 2 people mentioned social media specifically (with one noting specifically Facebook affinity groups for people of color and Instagram and Snapchat for younger people), and 2 called out 501 Commons' website specifically. Additionally, 3 people mentioned reading books and articles (online or offline).

The third most common theme was turning to capacity builders or "nonprofit association type groups." Specifically, people mentioned Washington Nonprofits, the Community Foundation of North Central Washington, WSU Extension, colleges and universities, and foundations. In addition, 3 people mentioned trainings and events, and 5 people indicated they would turn to sector-specific trainings, events and organizations.

Finally, a few people noted that volunteering and serving on a board were good pathways, and 2 people mentioned that they would turn to people within their own organizations.

Outreach Ideas

As you know, we are developing a new website that lists classes and programs for nonprofit professionals, community volunteers and activists across the state. What suggestions do you have to make people aware of this new resource?

General advice and strategies

- Word of mouth/testimonials
- Build relationships, go out and engage your target audience
- Co-create and build it with the people that you are thinking you are missing, then people will use your product
- Make sure it's mobile friendly and possibly consider an app (for the catalog)
- Provide frequent reminders (to stand out in a crowded field)

Outreach avenues/venues

- Facebook (most often mentioned)
 - Social networks like Brown & Down, People of Color Salon, other POC-centered Facebook groups
 - Targeted Facebook ads
 - Appropriate Facebook groups
- Other social media outlets
 - Instagram
 - What's app
 - Snapchat

- Twitter
- Email
 - Nonprofit Network listserv
 - Email from a trusted source
- Texting
- Snail mail
- Speak at local clubs/gatherings, get on the agenda of local meetings
- Local newspapers
 - Advertisements
 - Article
 - Local business journal write-up
- Post flyers
- Reach out directly to nonprofits and ask them to share information with their staff and volunteers
- Promotional cards
- Links to the catalog from the websites of trusted partners
- Hands-on demonstration at informal gatherings hosted by community partners

Partners/Influencers

- College campuses
- Area nonprofits
- Nonprofit board members
- WSU Extension
- Chambers of Commerce
- Library
- Community foundations
- Interagency networks
- Office of the Secretary of State

Website Review

We asked participants to view and comment on the beta site for the leadership catalog. Their detailed comments were provided directly to the developers to aid in adjusting the site. A number of people expressed appreciation for the ability to filter and search listings. What follows is a summary of suggestions by participants that may be of general interest to all our partners as we work to make our websites more appealing to people of color and other marginalized communities.

- **Be sure the site is mobile-friendly.** Many of our participants chose to view the site, which is optimized for mobile viewing, via their mobile phone and commented that they felt that many others would as well.
- **Use lots of appealing visuals and color.** “Go to the side of the spectrum where you are focusing the design and language around people of color...People [of color] are more used

to things not being for them, so if you want to be centering them, have it say through the design and everything that it is for them, that is the way to do it.”

- **Include pictures of leaders of color** that are relatable to the audiences you are trying to encourage to use your site.
- **Reduce complexity and the amount of text.** Simplify language where possible.

Conclusion & Acknowledgements

Creating the Learning Connections catalog is an important step to increase the skills and confidence of community leaders in Washington. This step needs to be complemented by outreach and relationship building with key audiences to ensure that they are aware of current offerings and can inform the development of additional offerings. These interviews provide guidance and can be a foundation for additional engagement of people of color, immigrants and refugees, rural residents and LGBTQ individuals. LDP partners can improve their practices based on this information, and the report will be made available to the Statewide Capacity Collaborative and others who are interested in nonprofit and community leadership development.

We appreciate the generosity of the individuals who shared their expertise with us to develop this report. We are not listing them by name because we indicated to them that their comments would not be attributed back to them, but we value their input greatly.

We also appreciate financial support from the Statewide Capacity Collaborative that enabled us to include this research as a part of the larger project of creating the Learning Connections Catalog.