



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES  **LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

RESULTS 6

CHANGES IN POLICIES AND PRACTICES 10

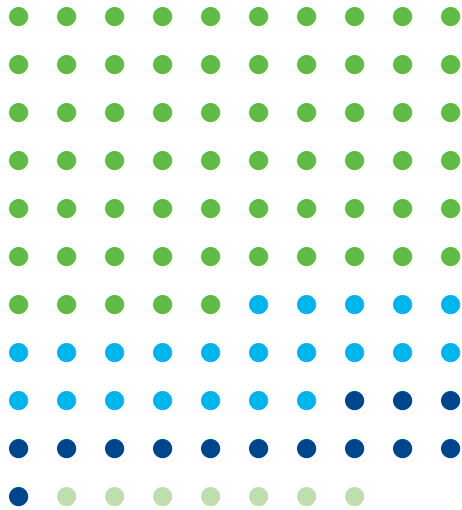
LESSONS LEARNED 13

Health Forward Foundation started the Healthy Communities Leadership Academy (the academy) in 2013 to build the capacity of grantees to engage in healthy communities policy, systems, and environmental change.

A yearlong cohort program, the academy helped participants build adaptive leadership skills and deepen their knowledge, understanding, and practice in civic leadership, policy, and system change that results in improved health choices for people without adequate access to healthy communities.

A mix of sectors and organizations were involved. Participants came from neighborhood groups, universities, hospitals, health clinics, and city and county agencies. Over the course of seven years, 101 individuals graduated from the program.

The purpose of this report¹ is to examine the impact made by the academy since its inception. This report explores the impact on building individual leadership, catalyzing organizational and community change for advancing healthy communities, and establishing a critical mass of change agents. The evaluation also explored lessons learned, opportunities for improvement, continuing leadership challenges, and areas for additional support.



PARTICIPANTS

- 65 White
- 22 Black
- 14 Latinx
- 7 LGBTQ+

¹ This multi-method process included performing literature and secondary source review, which entails studying information and materials about the academy and its alumni, and a stakeholder analysis, which included conducting interviews and an online survey. Information derived from these methods described the history, program, activities, and perceptions of the academy.

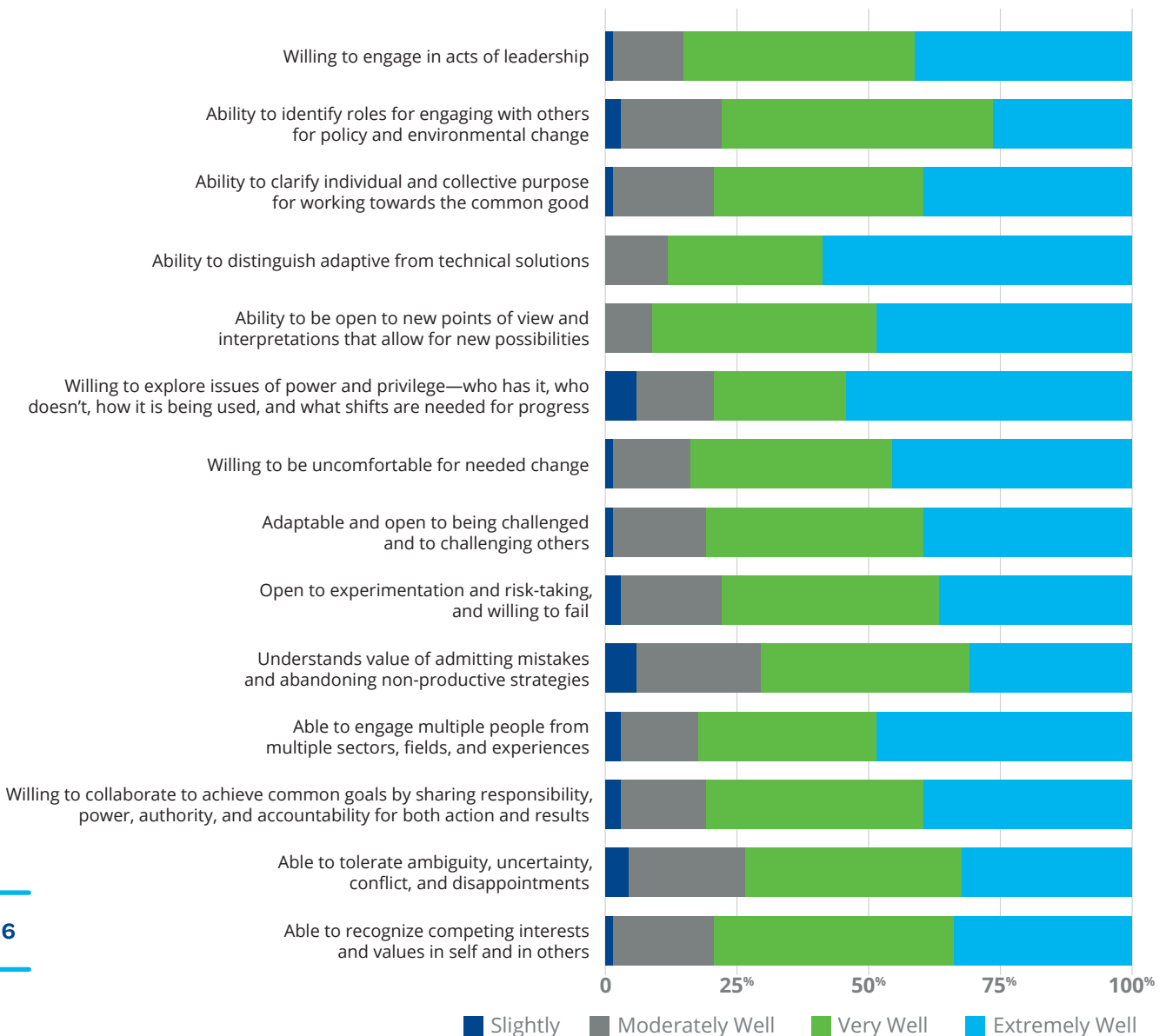
RESULTS



BUILD INDIVIDUAL ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP ABILITIES TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CHANGE AGENTS.

Alumni were asked how well the academy’s training strengthened 14 areas of adaptive leadership. A vast majority (71-91%) of you rated very or extremely well. None rated any of the leadership qualities as *Not At All*.

RATINGS FOR HOW WELL THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY STRENGTHENED ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

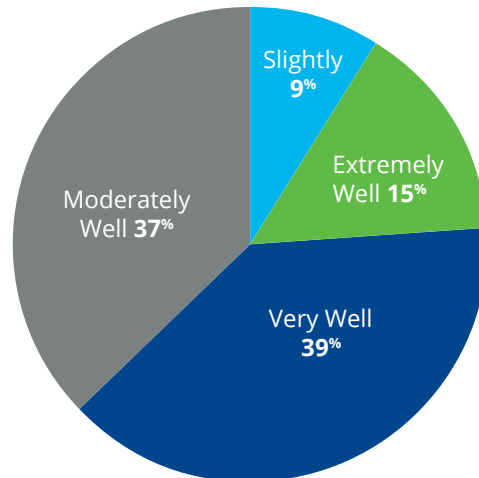




INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVITIES PROMOTING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES POLICIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE.

Alumni were asked how well they were able to capitalize on the academy's training and experience to engage in health equity, systems and policy change, or healthy community efforts within the organizations.

RATINGS FOR HOW WELL THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY STRENGTHENED ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE



None of the alumni gave a rating of *Not At All*. Reasons alumni gave for *Slightly* and *Moderately Well* scores included:

- Participants not being in roles where changemaking was the focus of their work (e.g., grantwriter)
- Internal culture or resistance to changemaking (e.g., more red tape)
- Lack of time, feeling ill-equipped to advocate for changes
- Healthy communities work is not the focus of the organization

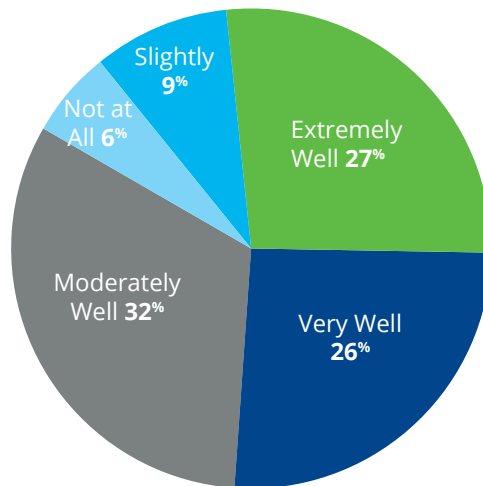
RESULTS

GOAL 3

INCREASE ENGAGEMENT BY UNDER-RESOURCED COMMUNITIES IN POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES THAT RESULT IN INCREASED HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.

When asked how alumni were able to capitalize on the academy to engage in health equity, systems and policy change, and healthy community efforts within neighborhoods and communities, your average response was 3.6 out of 5 (1=Not At All, 5=Extremely).

RATINGS FOR HOW WELL THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY STRENGTHENED COMMUNITY CHANGE



Some of the reasons given for *Slightly* and *Not At All* scores:

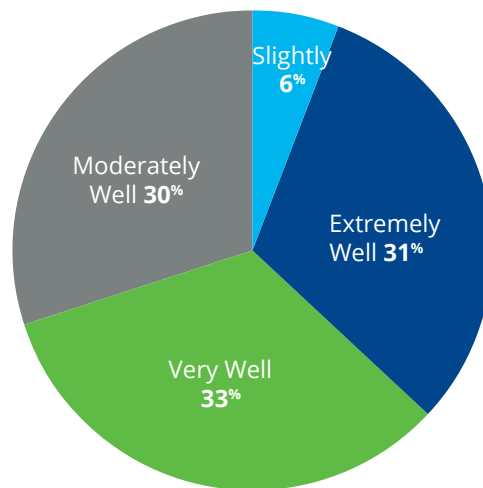
- Not enough time
- Community engagement was not the focus of their work
- Internal culture did not allow for this activity easily
- Disruptions created by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Wasn't much training or focus on community organizing for change in their particular academy year (one response)



DEVELOP A CRITICAL MASS OF CHANGE AGENTS, LOCAL EXPERTISE, AND FIELD CAPACITY TO EFFECT POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES.

When asked how well alumni were able to capitalize on the academy's training and experience to build further relationships and a network that supports their ability to be a change agent for health equity and healthy communities, the average response was 3.9 out of 5 (1=Not At All, 5=Extremely Well). None of the alumni gave a rating of *Not At All* scores.

RATINGS FOR HOW WELL THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY STRENGTHENED ABILITY TO BE A CHANGE AGENT



The reason given for the *Slightly* ratings was a lack of engagement and follow-up with academy alumni that could have furthered alumni advancing as change agents.

○ CHANGES IN POLICIES AND PRACTICE

Academy alumni identified the following policy changes in organizations and communities as a result of their participation.

○ ORGANIZATIONS

Administrative policies

- Adopted wellness policy

Building and energy codes

- Advocated for KCMO resolution to hold off adopting new building and energy codes

Food system policies

- Developed or changed policies about types of snacks that can be in school or if kids are allowed to have water bottles at their desks

Personnel policies

- Updated human resource policies to be more gender-neutral
- Created, adopted, and published human resource policies handbook
- Established parental leave

Tobacco policies

- Implemented tobacco-free policies in child care settings

Other policies

- Adopted organizational position on Medicaid expansion
- Adopted mental health policies in some schools



COMMUNITIES

Built environment policies

- Achieved KCMO approval for bike lane plan in the Longfellow Neighborhood

Clean air policies

- Adopted city-wide Clean Air Vaping Policy

Climate change policies

- Adopted climate change plan resolutions in KCMO
- Adopted tree protection ordinance and administrative regulations in KCMO

Food system policies

- Amended the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children to address labeling and access to allergy-friendly food alternatives to fish and eggs
- Changed ordinances to allow for a mobile food truck in KCK
- Updated ordinances in Wyandotte Co. regarding keeping hens in residential neighborhoods
- Achieved policies in KCK that allow neighborhoods to have shared community gardens

Tobacco policies

- Advanced Tobacco21 and tobacco density policies

Academy alumni identified the following policy changes in organizations and communities as a result of their participation.

ORGANIZATIONS

Environmental changes in schools

- Achieved built environment changes driven by youth, such as new playground equipment and new drinking fountains

COMMUNITIES

Environmental changes supporting the built environment

- Transformed vacant lots in the Ivanhoe Neighborhood into dedicated spaces for growing food, promoting physical activity, and supporting wellness
- Installed parks in KCK
- Expanded public access to parts of the levees in KCK for cycling, walking, and jogging
- Installed signage in five parks in KCK
- Placed locally created art on blighted buildings through Stories on Stories program
- Built walking and biking trails
- Built playgrounds in KCK and Allen Co.
- Established a new bus line
- Installed new sidewalks
- Improved infrastructure related to physical activity through the 20/20/20 Movement in Wyandotte Co.

Environmental changes

- Established Dotte Mobile Market to increase food access supporting the food system in KCK
- Created on-site pop-up food pantry
- Built community garden
- Built greenhouse and tool shed at Splitlog Farm in KCK
- Transformed empty lot into orchard in KCK
- Established more farmers markets in Allen Co. by adding more days and more locations

LESSONS LEARNED

Interview alumni were asked to consider the training they received and the subsequent application of that training, and identify any lessons they learned. Their insights were coded and organized into meaningful, recurring themes.

- The application of adaptive leadership skills made a difference. A large number of alumni identified that the adaptive leadership skills they learned through the academy gave them tools to look at their work through new perspectives and relationships.
- Numerous alumni shared how the academy helped them understand and believe in themselves more deeply. Some referenced how the academy's tests (e.g., Intercultural Development Inventory, StrengthsFinder 2.0™) helped them learn their default behaviors and how those impacted their work.



SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Interview respondents were asked to identify any improvements they'd recommend considering their own experience. Their feedback included:

- More diversity
- Improve racism, diversity, inclusion, and implicit bias lessons
- Coaching was critical, but action learning teams were not as effective as they could have been
- Do a better job communicating about the academy



