

What participants are saying about the EVOLVE Program:

It was one of the best courses of study I've ever engaged in, and a lot of fun! Leadership skills that I learned with EVOLVE have proven to be invaluable in both my professional and public life.

Thank you EVOLVE for the many community based experiences, which helped to broaden my understanding and opportunities. Many of these were contacts I could not have made without your assistance.

I have received many quality hours of interpersonal training through my employment. The EVOLVE series of classes rival this training. I would recommend it to anyone.

It has been almost 50 years since I have been in a classroom. Most of my education came from behind the barn so to speak – from experience and doing. After only two sessions of EVOLVE I realize what I have missed over the years. I already look forward to the next class!"

How Much Does It Cost? As in any true partnership, the cost is shared. Local funding is necessary to cover expenses such as travel, supplies and general administration of the program. Total costs vary depending on the program that is developed. Participants usually pay fees to cover about one-third of the program. The rest of the organizational costs usually come from local firms, organizations, and government groups.

How to Get Started (Partnerships/Resources): Formation of a local steering committee is a critical factor in developing and implementing a successful program. The steering committee is the heart, soul, and manager of the community leadership program. A local facilitator from the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service typically provides ongoing support and assistance during the process in collaboration with a community betterment organization, chamber of commerce, or other interested parties.

For more information, contact your University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service County Office or call the State Extension Office at 307-766-5124.

The University of Wyoming and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperate.
The University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.

E_{xtension}

V_{olunteer}

O_{rganization for}

L_{eadership}

V_{itality and}

E_{nterprise}

A community-based
Leadership Development Training Program

Developed by the
University of Wyoming
Cooperative Extension Service's
Enhancing Wyoming Communities and Households Initiative Team

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."
Margaret Mead*

Why invest in a community leadership development program?

- **Communities are dynamic entities requiring local attention and nurturing.**

Rapid and widespread change in the world around us is affecting our communities in dramatic and often unpredictable ways. If communities are to create a high quality of life locally, and to compete successfully in the new global social, political and economic realities, they must invest in the development of their people. A very important and basic part of this development is community education designed to build the capacities of people as involved citizens and effective leaders.

- **The practice of community leadership is changing.**

Effective community leadership is based on self-awareness, engagement, vision, empowerment, access to information, networking, collaboration and coalition building. Rather than being dependent on innate abilities, the knowledge and skills required to function effectively in the roles of citizen and civic leader can be learned. Furthermore, effective leaders understand that such learning is a life-long process. They continually look for opportunities to enhance their skills and broaden their associations.

- **Leadership development and civic engagement are key elements of successful communities.**

Why are some communities more successful than others at dealing with change, developing and implementing their vision and goals for improvement and/or sustaining their desired quality of life? Research identifies leadership development and civic participation as common characteristics found in successful communities. Having a community vision, being proactive, networking, and cooperation are also cited as critical factors for community success.

How does the EVOLVE Program work?

The **EVOLVE Program** is based on the premise that every citizen can function as a leader in some circumstance, and that the future of our communities depends on developing the human potential to assume this responsibility. The program provides civic education to foster an understanding of the processes of community decision making; to increase knowledge of the community, its structures, history, conditions and issues; and to develop such skills as problem solving, working with groups, enhancing cooperation, and dealing with conflict. The program is a process for community leadership rather than a prepackaged program. What distinguishes **EVOLVE** from other approaches to leadership development is its high degree of flexibility, local control, inclusiveness, and focus on the future of community governance.

Program Content: Each curriculum is determined by a local steering committee. Generally, it combines sessions on topics such as local government, economic development, education and community resources, with sessions on group process, action planning, issue identification and analysis.

Learning Methods: The program is highly participatory. It is based on the premise that adults learn best by being actively involved in the learning experience and by having an opportunity to practice new skills through simulation, role-playing, and similar techniques. A retreat held early in the program has proven to be a key ingredient in fostering an open climate for learning. The program strives to create interactive learning experiences and to avoid simply knowledge transfer.

Who Participates? Anybody who wants to develop strategies to help the community and improve his/her ability to: work with groups, discover what influences community politics, recognize the impact of cultural and socioeconomic values on the community, develop and implement action plans, and participate in community decision-making processes. Each participant is both a teacher and student. **EVOLVE** is an active experience in which participants are responsible for their own learning while sharing their knowledge with others.