



Action Learning Projects

Crafting Solutions for Community Dilemmas

What are Action Learning Projects?

Action learning projects bring LWS class participants together in a diverse team setting that fosters collaborative thinking and problem-solving. ALP teams explore complex problems or potential opportunities for non-profit organizations through a fresh set of eyes and work together to meet specific goals that impact how the organization impacts the community.

The Leadership Winston-Salem Action Learning Project program:

- Generates applications from non-profit community organizations who need support for their initiatives
- Coaches class participant teams who focus on both a deliverable and the leadership learning process itself through inquiry, reflection, and feedback
- Utilizes a trained coach who works with each group to ensure that the leadership learning takes place along with the work on deliverables

How do we benefit as an ALP Community Partner and what can we expect in this role?

Partnering agencies reap valuable benefits from this process that include more than the formal results of the project team's work. Other benefits include:

- Increased resource investment in the agency's work by the project team
- Heightened visibility in the community through the exposure of the agency among all members of the participating class
- Fosters and cultivates lasting relationships between non-profits and community leaders who are interested in volunteer service. Class participants invest themselves in these projects and often gain a personal connection with their partner agency that extends beyond the end of the project.

If your project is selected, you must ensure the ALP team has a consistent contact who is a decision maker for the agency. Your role will not require much time after the initial meetings with the team, but you must commit to the following:

Communication

- Connect with team members during scheduled meetings via telephone, email, or virtual
- Attend team meetings periodically during the 7-month project period, generally at the team's request
- Schedule three meetings with the LWS program director to discuss progress
- Offer constructive and practical feedback throughout the process

Access to Information

- Provide access to the organization's staff resources and pertinent materials, if applicable
- Assist the team with networking with other potential resources for information

Partnering and Engagement

- Understand that participants are volunteering time and talents during an intense program schedule
- Meet other project partners and LWS leadership periodically during the 7-month period to discuss progress
- Attend the final team presentation on Closing Day

Action Learning Projects

“The Winston-Salem Symphony’s Action Learning Team did an excellent job of providing deliverables that produced ongoing benefit and results. Their approach was thorough and very well organized, and they did an outstanding job summarizing the project and presenting results to the Symphony’s Marketing Committee and Board of Directors. I highly recommend both participation in Leadership Winston-Salem and hosting an Action Learning Team!”
–Merritt Vale, Winston-Salem Symphony

WHAT MAKES A GOOD ACTION LEARNING PROJECT?

Good Action Learning projects:

- A. **Enhance** the team’s understanding of practical leadership while striving for results that are of benefit to the community
- B. **Represent** any field; for example, education, regional planning, human services, economic development, the arts and culture, etc.
- C. **Provide** opportunity for research, planning, creativity, collaboration, and negotiation skills
- D. **Evolve** within a short timeframe between November and May by a small team working together for an average of 20-25 hours, resulting in a realistic end product or recommendation

Projects are not partisan, religious in nature or related to direct fundraising and must be funded by the project partner, if funds are required.

EXAMPLES OF ACTION LEARNING PROJECTS

Downtown Health Plaza	Develop Provider Process: Assist in developing a seamless process for providers to refer patients to the correct source for needed medications.
Family Promise of Forsyth County	Develop Partnerships: Assist in developing community partnerships to provide financial counseling and education to homeless families striving to be self-sufficient.
Forsyth County Aging Services Planning Committee	Recommend County-Wide Plan to Promote Activities for Older Adults: Evaluate existing resources; understand what seniors want and would use; recommend options for county-wide program that successfully engages older adults to adopt healthier lifestyles.
FCDSS LINKS Program	Program Development Guide & Focus Groups: Facilitate focus groups in addition to researching and developing guidelines for development of an effective mentoring model for older youth in foster care.
Habitat for Humanity ReStore	Process Review & Improvement: Review current flow of donated materials from receipt to sale and recommend improvements in process and equipment.
Hospice & Palliative Care Center	Strategies for Increasing Access to Hospice Care Services: Assist the organization in identifying barriers to earlier referrals to hospice care and offer recommendations and strategies to address those barriers and misconceptions in order to provide more people with the full benefits of hospice care.
Smart Start of Forsyth County	Strategic Plan for Services to Improve Childcare Provider Education & Retention: Conduct information gathering from educational service and childcare providers to identify efficient, effective and equitable methods for subsidizing and supporting childcare provider education and retention.
Winston-Salem Symphony	Promote Cultural Awareness: Create plan promoting awareness and ticket sales among non-traditional audiences.