



APLU

INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY UNIVERSITIES  
AWARDS PROGRAM

CASE  
STUDY  
2018

## ABOUT FAMILY LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE

The Family Leadership Training Institute (FLTI) of Colorado is a first-of-its-kind civics education program created with families, for families. Administered by Colorado State University Extension, FLTI delivers a nonpartisan curriculum that brings diverse family leaders together to explore their personal leadership goals and equip them with the vital knowledge and civic engagement skills required to create positive change for their families and communities.

During the 20-week training, leaders acquire the civic tools necessary to engage in action that addresses critical health and social inequities affecting their schools, neighborhoods, and communities. Leaders learn about the tenets of democracy and their right to utilize government resources optimally in the best interest of children and families. Government, public policy, media, network building, evaluation, and the change process are demystified and explored.

FLTI transforms communities as family leaders become more visible and engaged. Agencies and policy leaders begin to view families as assets and vital players in the change process, and family leadership is embedded in systems as the “way of doing business.”

FLTI intentionally recruits diverse, underrepresented and marginalized perspectives (racial, socio-economic, family status, language/culture, age, etc.) and seeks to reduce barriers to participation by offering the program at no cost to participants, often also providing evening meals and childcare assistance. Figures 2 and 3 show the racial/ethnic diversity and educational attainment of FLTI participants.

A variety of statewide partners contribute monetary and in-kind support to make this program possible, including nonprofit organizations, Children's Hospital Colorado, various Early Childhood Councils, Colorado Family Resource Center Association, and FLTI alumni.

The learning experience utilizes a proven implementation model grounded in diversity, shared leadership, and respect for the unique assets of each community. Facilitators come from the communities they serve and are often alumni



Figure 1: Participants in Family Leadership Training Institute

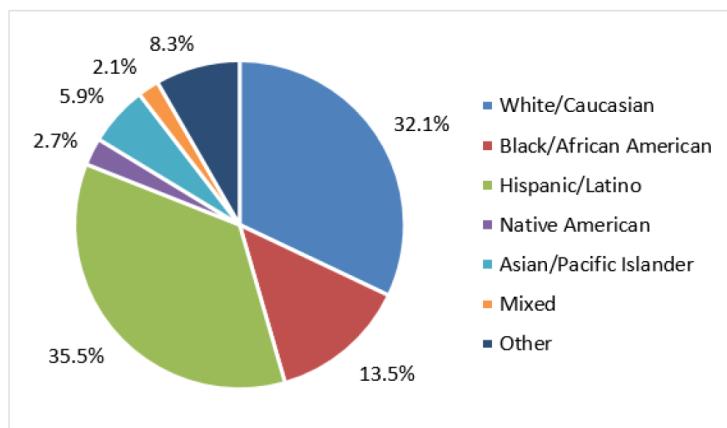


Figure 2: Races and Ethnicities of Family Leadership Training Institute Participants

of FLTI. A Civic Design Team of FLTI alumni, public servants, funders, parents, educators, and civic leaders oversee site planning, execution, evaluation and alumni support.

*The curriculum includes:*

1. A community-building retreat;
2. Two 10-week sessions focused on change processes, leadership skill-building, and civic engagement tools;
3. A visit to the state Capitol; and
4. A personally-inspired civics project.

*Examples of successful civic projects include:*

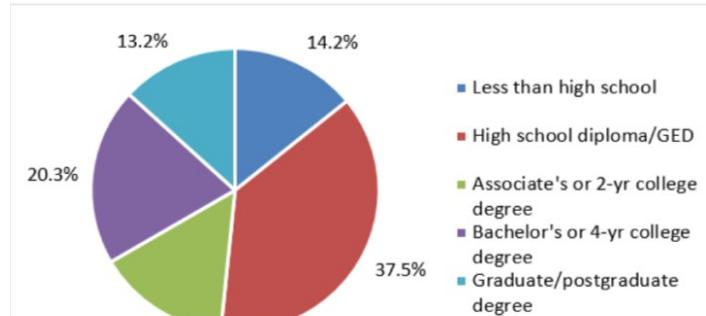
- A “[Youth and Cops Voice Opinions Event](#)” coordinated by teenage twin siblings in Denver to promote awareness and shared understanding among youth of color, police officers and the broader community;
- A support group for local grandparents, started by a grandparent raising her grandchild, to get support, training, and resources;
- A program that supplies students with after school transportation so they can attend free district-provided tutoring classes; and
- An education campaign to increase the use of safety belts among the Mexican immigrant community.

#### Extension’s Role in Program Innovation and Expansion

In 2009, FLTI of Colorado was adapted from a proven curriculum - The Connecticut Commission on Children’s Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) – and introduced a unique two-generation model integrating programming for youth. It has since been implemented in 14 communities and 22 cohorts (including four in monolingual Spanish), with eight additional communities in various stages of development.

CSU Extension, a longtime partner, assumed administration of the FLTI program in 2016. The university’s ongoing support and involvement is well-aligned with the CSU Office of Engagement mission to “connect communities around shared solutions through education, research, and leadership.”

In addition to serving as the local implementing agency of FLTI in several communities including Denver and Larimer County (home to CSU’s Fort Collins campus), CSU Extension advocates for the continued expansion of this program statewide, providing interested communities with community readiness, implementation guidance, and technical assistance resources. Additionally, CSU Extension provides an essential service in delivering local facilitator credential training - a



*Figure 3: Highest Levels of Education Completed by Family Leadership Training Institute Participants*

three-day program - at no cost to participating agencies, making the program accessible to lower-resourced communities.

### Community and Economic Impact

FLTI graduates join a growing network of more than 1,000 family and community leaders working to create positive change on behalf of children, youth, families, and their diverse Colorado communities.

A multi-method evaluation approach led by CSU Human Development and Family Studies Professor Emeritus David MacPhee continues to demonstrate that FLTI graduates are better positioned and more capable to advocate for and lead systems/policy change.

*Of the approximately 800 program participants evaluated as of December 2016:*

- 82% reported improved ability to be agents of change for their families
- 81% believed they can have a role in changing their communities
- 79% reported improved self-confidence
- 70% reported being able to work with professionals in their communities
- 69% were able to get information to help them understand issues in their communities

These changes in skills and self-efficacy translated directly into graduates becoming change agents in their communities, with 63% of graduates pursuing initiatives that benefited marginalized populations who traditionally do not have equal access to community resources.

Adult graduates' initiatives most often focused on programs that benefited children, which prevention science literature consistently shows to have a high benefit to cost ratio over a child's lifetime due to improvements in cognitive and emotional development, and academic achievement.

Less-educated FLTI graduates benefited disproportionately from the program, in terms of transformative civic engagement and seeking further education and better jobs. Long-term increases in youths' sense of purpose also were observed, and 82% of youth graduates said that FLTI influenced their goals for the future, including career options.

81% of graduates completed initiatives that aligned with public health priorities (Figure 4), translating into cost savings for communities in terms of increased safety and reduced health and human services costs.

FLTI graduates' engagement in the community policy-making process promises to have systemic impact, as research demonstrates that family-centered programs produce intended outcomes more effectively and efficiently.

| Project topic                             | %  |
|---|----|
| Preventive health                         | 43 |
| Child development                         | 37 |
| Healthful living                          | 21 |
| Health care                               | 14 |
| Prosocial development                     | 12 |
| Health coverage                           | 3  |
| Focus on at least one of the above topics | 76 |

*Figure 4: Health Foci of Family Leadership Training Institute Graduates' Civic Projects*

Along with countless success stories for **FLTI** participants and their communities, the program has also significantly strengthened its many community partners and aligned CSU Extension with key stakeholder organizations throughout the process.

## **ABOUT APLU**

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is North America's oldest higher education association. APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. The association's membership consists of public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations.

APLU's mission is to: expand access and improve student success to deliver the innovative workforce of tomorrow; advance and promote research and discovery to improve society, foster economic growth, and address global challenges; and build healthy, prosperous, equitable, and vibrant communities locally and globally.

Based in Washington, DC, the association's work is furthered by an active and effective advocacy arm that works with Congress and the administration as well as the media to advance federal policies that strengthen public universities and benefit the students they serve.

## **ABOUT THE IEP UNIVERSITIES PROGRAM**

APLU and its **Commission on Economic and Community Engagement (CECE)** established the Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) Universities Program to help higher education institutions codify, elevate, and advance their campus enterprise supporting economic and community development.

The **IEP designation program** recognizes institutions that have demonstrated a meaningful, ongoing and substantial commitment to economic and community development, growth, and economic opportunity.

The **IEP awards program** recognize exemplary and innovative projects in university-based economic and community engagement:

- **Talent** and workforce development
- **Innovation**, entrepreneurship, and tech-based economic development
- **Place** development through public service, outreach, and community engagement

Learn more at: [www.APLU.org/IEP](http://www.APLU.org/IEP)