

Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness

SUCCESS STORY

TAMPA, FLORIDA

Connecting the Dots: Using Meta-Leadership to Build & Support Local Community Leadership Teams

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“When we got to the Summit and began talking to the participants,” says Dave Rogoff, Director of the Center for Leadership in Public Health practice at the University of South Florida, “the stars began to align!” Patrick Gardner, Assistant Program Director for the Center, agrees. “The Summit was a catalyst for ideas. The right groups of people were being exposed to important concepts. We had to figure out how to move that forward.”

From Summit Participants to Post-Summit Planners

Rogoff and Gardner seized the moment; together they participated in planning the Post Summit Activity (PSA) for the Tampa Bay Area. Through the use of audience response devices, the PSA became an interactive session used to identify community vulnerabilities, and look at the associated needs in light of available resources, to describe local gaps. Attendees then participated in a discussion of each organization’s developmental stage – where they were in terms of various factors, such as political support, organizational maturity and connectedness. This exercise resulted in many “Aha!” moments. For example, an organization or group of leaders in a community might realize it has little political support and even fewer resources. Through the facilitated discussion, it became evident that a first step for that group had to be building a political base. Rogoff comments, “It’s fascinating what the assessment revealed. Some of our counties are pretty rural, and they may feel at a disadvantage compared to counties with more resources. But the truth is, the rural areas are often better networked than the metropolitan areas and are better able to respond with fewer resources because that is the environment that they operate in day-to-day.”

An Innovative Cross-Sector Work Plan

Gardner explains, “The assessment looks at 12 different points. We actually create a bar chart that makes the gaps obvious. Many organizations say this process helps them stay focused on a day-to-day basis. By working across time with teams, we can repeat the assessment and see where progress is being made and where we need to step up the efforts.”

The PSA also provided a forum through which local leaders learned about an innovative program at USF designed for cross-sector teams of 8-10 leaders. With the help of facilitators paired with their community, and through regular meetings, webinars and guided conversations, teams will collaborate to identify and connect resources, do strategic and succession planning, and focus on strengthening community resilience over a two-year period. The first group of teams, representing the counties that participated in the PSA, begins its work in March 2012.

The Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness empowered business, government and nonprofit leaders to act together in times of crisis. The five-year initiative connected 5,000 business, government and nonprofit leaders in 36 communities. For resources and more information about Meta-Leadership visit the [CDC Foundation Meta-Leadership Website](#).



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