

Extension facilitates diversity leadership and inclusion for neighborhoods leaders

Issue:

The 2000 census confirms that the Indianapolis metropolitan area is one of the most demographically dynamic in the Midwest. The data on Marion County indicate that it is racially diverse and is the hub for jobs and a burgeoning life science industry. It is also the area that continues to experience significant in-migration of people from other counties and states. This diversity in population and increased economic development activities has implications for infrastructure, education, social services and business. The Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center and Purdue Extension Marion County collaborated to create the Indianapolis Community Building Institute to help community members to improve their cultural, management and leadership skills.

Extension response :

Extension provided four workshops on building inclusive neighborhoods. The workshops included a facilitated focused conversation on exclusion and inclusion using the group consensus method. Other areas covered include ways to encourage full participation, empowerment and commitment to full inclusion. Extension's contribution to this leadership development model is process. We used consensus building processes and adult learning principles to design inclusive activities that invited broad buy-in and engagement. Class discussions included understanding cultural influences, and practical ways to foster inclusiveness through relational leadership. Four workshops were conducted and 64 community leaders have completed the 07-08 class sessions

Impact:

- Ninety five percent of participants moved from very unaware regarding diversity inclusive practices to very aware at the end of the session
- Eighty five percent of participants indicated that inclusiveness is a community assets development issue so they will use at least three skills gained to help champion diversity and inclusive activities in their neighborhoods
- Participants created a framework to understand needs analysis and indicated increased confidence on three action steps to promote neighborhood inclusiveness
- Ninety percent of participants indicated that they have the tools and understanding to propose specific strategy to promote minority views on their community boards
- All participants indicated increased knowledge of cultural differences
- Participants confirmed that putting the lessons learned into practice will reduced suspicion and increase participation on neighborhood boards and committees.

Partners: Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center

Contact: George M. Okantey
Economic & Community Development
Tel: 317-275-9263
E-mail: okantey@purdue.edu
Internet: www.extension.purdue.edu/marion

It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service that all persons have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a veteran. Purdue University is an Affirmative Action institution. This material may be available in alternative formats.