

Leaders in Health:
***Strengthening community health initiatives through introductory training in
public health research and science***

Request for applications: DUE Friday, August 23, 2019

Overview: Leaders in Health is seeking applications from community practitioners and residents who are striving to improve population health in Boston and surrounding communities. The program's goal is to build the capacity of our community partners by providing participants with an introduction to public health, including the fundamentals of community-based participatory research (CBPR) and program design & evaluation. Individuals who are currently involved with a health-related program or project (on either a work or volunteer basis) are eligible to apply. Participants will attend interactive training sessions, complete assignments, and receive support from faculty and current public health students to create an action plan to enhance their current work.

Why is this program important?

The Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) and Prevention Research Center on Nutrition and Physical Activity (PRC) co-sponsor the *Leaders in Health* program. The training is led by Bekka Lee, a research scientist focused on designing and evaluating community-based prevention interventions, and Ra'Shaun Nalls, the school's Director of Community Engagement, with support from masters and doctoral students who provide communication and organizing skills essential to the implementation, effectiveness, reach, sustainability, and dissemination of public health work.

Through our conversations with community partners, many organizations have asked for a program that will help them understand and use a public health approach, community-based participatory research methods, and the science underlying effective evidence-based prevention strategies. This program will benefit our work, the work of our organizational partners, and individual program participants. By working together, we can have a more significant impact on improving population health among Boston area residents, particularly children, youth, and elders.

You can find out more about the program and our past participants on our website at:

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/prc/community-engagement/leaders-in-health-community-training-program/>

Past participants say...

~The Leaders in Health Program allowed me to understand the supporting factors that assist with creating a healthy individual, neighborhood and community. Learning about environmental factors such as open space availability, access to reasonably priced healthy food, and the importance of developing programming and policies through research that is informed by the community were instrumental in helping me to truly understand health in a holistic manner.

~My participation in Leaders in Health has helped to go beyond just teaching fitness by allowing me to better understand the various components that lead to better health for a community at large.

What is community-based participatory research?

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is a joint effort that involves researchers and community representatives in all phases of the research process. The joint effort engages community members, uses local knowledge to understand health problems and design interventions, and invests community members in the processes and products of research. In addition, the researchers and community representatives are committed to the dissemination and use of research findings to improve community health and reduce health disparities.

Who is eligible to participate?

If you live or work in the greater Boston area and are currently involved with a health prevention-related program or project (on either a work or volunteer basis) you are eligible to apply. Topics might include nutrition and physical activity promotion, violence prevention, sexual health promotion, or tobacco control efforts. The program will be limited to 10 participants. Community-based work is at its best when all members of the community are represented: *Leaders in Health* encourages applications from participants of all ages, education levels, races, ethnicities, and gender/sexual identities.

What are the benefits of participating?

Individual participants will benefit from:

- Professional development, in areas including public health research methods, application of up-to-date evidence-based research, project planning, and evaluation
- Networking opportunities with leaders in the public health profession and other participants from local organizations
- Designing an action plan to set goals for improving a health prevention-related program or project you are currently working on
- Opportunity to present research and publicize your project
- Certificate of completion and help incorporating the program into your résumé
- Stipend upon completion (see below for more details)

Organizations that support an employee's participation will also benefit from the program. Participants' exposure to new research methods and skills will be directly applied to enhance organizations' current projects.

Program Structure and Timeline

Eight sessions will be held weekly on Thursdays from 12pm to 2pm, currently planned for September 17-November 7. The sessions will be interactive and discussion-based to provide opportunities for two-way learning and sharing among participants. Each session will include an overview of the topic, time for questions, and an opportunity for participants to discuss how they might apply the topic to their work. Participants will be expected to regularly complete small assignments applying new knowledge to a specific program or project of interest. They will also be asked to host a Harvard Chan student for one day in Fall/Winter 2019 to foster shared learning. The end products will be an action plan that will guide participants in applying the knowledge and skills they gain from the program to enhance their current work and a short presentation summarizing their progress and plans for a broader audience. Sessions will be facilitated primarily by Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health researchers, staff, and students. Training sessions will be held at the in the Fenway/Longwood neighborhood of Boston. Please take travel to and from the area into account when considering applying for the program.

Is there a cost to participate in the training program?

No, there is no cost to participate in Leaders in Health. In fact, upon completion of at least 7 out of 8 sessions in the program, participants will be provided a \$200 stipend.

Program Schedule (*subject to change*)

Session 1: An Introduction to Public Health Principles and Practice

- Public health approach
- Theoretical frameworks used in public health – social ecological model, theories of change

Session 2: Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) and Health Equity

- What is CBPR? What is the value of learning how to do it in my community?
- Learning how critically review research proposals

Session 3: Project Planning & Development

- Creating an action plan
- Specifying goals, aims, and outcomes

Session 4: Project Implementation

- Identifying and adapting evidence-based strategies

Session 5: Project Evaluation

- Study design and measurement
- Aligning work with grant opportunities

Session 6: Health Equity Application

- Evaluation examples that address disparities
- Communicating data to community for equitable impact

Session 7: How do you use your voice to make a positive impact?

- Presentation and facilitation skills
- Leadership development

Application Process

Please submit the following by email:

1. Completed application form found on the next page
2. Résumé or work/volunteer history
3. A one-page statement of interest including the following:
 - a. Description of a health prevention-related project you're currently working on and how this program would benefit your project
 - b. Ways in which your participation in this program would be meaningful to your personal and professional development
4. A one-page letter of support from your supervisor, board member, or other professional reference including the following:
 - a. How would this training program benefit the needs and interests of your organization/community?
 - b. Given the research needs and interests of your organization/community, why is the applicant a good candidate for this training program?

(Note: if you're planning to apply the training to a project you're working on with an organization other than an employer, you can get a letter of support from someone in the community instead).

If you have any concerns or questions about the program, please call or write to Bekka Lee at 617-384-5457 or rlee@hsph.harvard.edu.

Deadline is Friday, August 23, 2019.

Please e-mail the entire application to:

Bekka Lee, ScD

Research Scientist

Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

E-mail: rlee@hsph.harvard.edu

APPLICATION FORM

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Street Address (Home): _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Gender: _____ Age: _____ Race/Ethnicity (optional): _____

Health topic of focus: _____

Are you currently employed? YES NO

→ If YES

Name of Organization/Company: _____

What is your position there? _____

How long have you worked there? _____

Work Phone #: _____ Work Email: _____

What is your supervisor's name? _____

Supervisor's Phone #: _____

Supervisor's Email: _____

→ If NO

Who will be writing your letter of support? _____

Where do they work? _____

What is their contact information?

Phone #: _____ Email: _____