



Designed to strengthen leaders of organizations serving Bloomington Township residents, the Nonprofit Leadership Advisory Forum provides a structured program of eight half-day forums, partner consultations, and the creation of a community resource guide. Through collaboration, we are building a strong peer network, enhancing professional development, facilitating shared learning, and driving tangible goal achievement.

#### Partner Agencies

- Advocate for 708
- Alive Center - Hanover Park
- ABC Counseling
- Bloomington Township Youth Service Bureau
- DuPage Health Coalition
- DuPage Health Department
- ICNA Relief
- NAMI DuPage
- Northeast DuPage Family Youth Services
- Ray Graham Association
- Serenity House
- YWCA Metropolitan Chicago

#### Partner Feedback: Forum Experience

"Very valuable to meet with others facing similar challenges and learn from their experiences."

"Enjoying the forum and finding it very helpful."

"Appreciating the space to connect and learn from other leaders in the field."

#### Partner Feedback: Factors Influencing Support From Forum

"I feel supported when others share and participate in discussions and share their experiences."

"Having a forum of peers asking specific questions about individual jobs and problems to gain a better understanding of the issues being faced."

"Feeling listened to, validated, and offering solution-based thinking."

"Vast knowledge and experience represented within the group, with passion and concern present with all partners, and a sense of real investment by all members in being helpful."

#### Progress Made Toward Grant Application Goals

##### Goal #1: Build a Collaborative Network

**Activities:** Resource sharing forums, professional development, and partner presentations.

**Progress:** Four peer forums fostered positive network building and support, evidenced by active resource sharing and partner feedback indicating mutual learning and feeling supported. Initial surveys corroborate these positive outcomes.

##### Goal #2: Increase Resource Sharing and Promote Utilization of Community Resources

**Activities:** Facilitated forum discussions, email communication, rotating hosting, and resource guide development.

**Progress:** Agency spotlights highlighted service offerings (e.g., financial assistance options for individuals in recovery). The community resource guide is under development.

##### Goal #3: Leadership Capacity Building

**Activities:** Solution-finding sessions and peer support for key decisions.

**Progress:** Surveys show a desire for support and growth in connection. Forums effectively facilitated problem-solving and peer learning, leading to the sharing of valuable solutions.

#### Key Outcome from First Half of the 2025 Program



**Communication as a Focus:** Partners grappled with clear messaging, targeted outreach, cultural sensitivity, and utilizing storytelling. Training and consultations addressed these needs, with at least one partner directly implementing changes to their client messaging.



**Leadership Development & Growth:** Partners set and reviewed goals, discussed supervisory challenges, and engaged in skill training. Many benefited from learning from peers at other agencies.



**Building Community & Networking:** Each forum fostered a supportive environment, with surveys reflecting strong peer support. One partner felt more connected after hearing another share a relatable leadership challenge.



**Resource Acquisition:** Agency spotlights highlighted resources available to the community, which sparked new ideas for partnerships and service expansion.



**Well-being & Burnout Prevention:** The balance wheel exercise and discussions on work-life balance addressed this vital need, creating a space of vulnerability and support. Partners shared burnout struggles and exchanged self-care strategies.



**Community Resource Guide Progress:** The community resource guide saw significant progress through collaborative information gathering and planning efforts.

#### Lessons Learned & Conclusion

The Nonprofit Leadership Advisory Forum's initial six months of 2025 successfully met its goals. Key achievements involved creating a strong support network, providing relevant professional development, facilitating substantial resource sharing, and addressing key topics identified in discovery calls. Our ongoing work focuses on strengthening resource sharing, balancing the varied needs of agencies with different scopes and focuses, and refining survey methods for increased responsiveness. These efforts to enhance the growth and effectiveness of Bloomington Township nonprofits ultimately contribute to improved mental health and well-being for the Township's residents.

