



HISTORY OF BOONE COUNTY LEADERSHIP

The first community leadership training program was formed in 1959 in Philadelphia, and the second in Savannah in 1961. Since then, thousands of leadership programs have been formed in the United States, with nearly 100 active in Indiana.

Boone County Leadership (BCL) was first conceptualized by then-Mayor Ann Garoffolo in 1989. In looking at the leaders in the community, she became aware that the same people were in many leadership positions and that the number of those leaders were declining. After consulting with Ray Dearing of the Lebanon Chamber of Commerce, Janet Gordon of the Purdue Extension Service, and Kathy Willing, this core group researched, consulted, networked, and brainstormed with extension agents and existing leadership throughout the state to develop a leadership program that best fit Boone County.

The mission of BCL is to build a strong community by bringing together a diverse group of emerging and existing leaders to enhance their leadership skills, increase their community knowledge, and inspire commitment to serve. To this end, the 10 members of the initial board of directors designed a curriculum that covered leadership skills as well as information on the county. Early BCL classes met for 12 sessions on Tuesday afternoons.

Class members came from all reaches of Boone County – Advance, Dover, Jamestown, Lebanon, Lizton, Thorntown, Whitestown, and Zionsville. The first BCL class of 15 members graduated in 1991. Since that time, hundreds of Boone County residents and working professionals have successfully completed the Boone County Leadership program.

The strength of BCL remains in the firm foundation established by the initial board of directors and volunteers whose commitment to BCL continued for many years.

In 2015, BCL moved to a new home at the Community Foundation of Boone County, where it seamlessly integrates with our mission to create a thriving community for all. The program continues to evolve to better meet the needs and interests of Boone County, with employers, local government, civic groups, the faith community and nonprofit organizations enjoying the impact and benefit of Boone County Leadership and its alumni.