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Houston Area HIV Services Ryan White Planning Council Office of Support

2014 Project LEAP Final Report

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- 2014 Project LEAP Syllabus
- 2014 Pre/Post-Training Evaluation Form

Introduction

"Project LEAP" (*Learning, Empowerment, Advocacy and Participation*) is a locallydefined HRSA-funded Service Category for the Houston EMA. Its purpose is to "increase the number and effectiveness of HIV infected individuals and affected others who can participate in organizations, councils, and committees dealing with the allocation of public funds for HIVrelated prevention and care services," with an emphasis on increasing participation in the EMA's two local Planning Bodies, the Ryan White Planning Council (RWPC) and the Houston HIV Prevention Community Planning Group (CPG).

Project LEAP is currently designed as a weekly class spanning 16 weeks including classroom training, out-of-class time observation, and experiential community-based learning. Annually, the RWPC reviews and makes recommendations for the Project LEAP Service Definition based on program results and student needs. An External Advisory Panel consisting of representatives from the RWPC, CPG, Administrative Agents for Ryan White funds in the EMA, and Project LEAP alumni also advises Project LEAP.

Beginning in 2012, the RWPC Office of Support (OS) assumed responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating Project LEAP, including student recruitment, syllabus design, and course facilitation. In its pilot year as an Office of Support project, 29 students were enrolled in the program, and 24 students graduated (for a 83% graduation rate). Of graduates, 63% were HIV consumers, and 63% applied for either RWPC or CPG membership. The pilot was also conducted at a savings of over \$38,000 compared to prior contracted providers.

This report summarizes results from the 2014 Project LEAP cohort, including the ways in which the 2014 syllabus met the objectives outlined in the RWPC-approved Service Definition, the extent of the program's achievement in increasing the knowledge and skills of HIV infected and affected individuals, and lessons learned for future program implementation.

Obj. 1: Contact Hours Requirements

From the FY14 Project LEAP Service Definition:

Beginning in 2013, Project LEAP has been designed to include multiple experiential community-based learning opportunities, including direct observations of Planning Body activities. To ensure each Project LEAP student has the same opportunity for community-based learning activities, the FY14 Project LEAP Service Definition require contact hours for out-of-class time and service learning. The approved contact hours for Project LEAP are as follows:

- A minimum of two classes will be provided during the term of this [program]. Each class will include graduation and at least:
 - 1. 44 contact hours of classroom training;
 - 2. Six (6) hours of participation in RWPC and/or Committee related activities; and
 - 3. Six (6) hours of participation in HIV-related community activities;
- For a total of at least 112 hours (two classes at 56 hours per class).

From the 2014 Project LEAP Syllabus:

- Two classes were held each week from April 23, 2014 August 6, 2014 (See Figure 1). Each class included:
 - 1. 44 hours of classroom training;
 - 2. 8 hours of participation in RWPC and/or Committee related activities; and
 - 3. An estimated eight (8) hours of participation in HIV-related community activities;
- For a total of 120 hours of instruction (two classes at 60 instruction hours per class). This is 8 hours *more* than the Service Definition requirement.
- A graduation dinner and ceremony was also held on August 13, 2014.

Figure 1: Project LEAP Contact Hours, 2014

	FY14 Service Definition (approved 2-13-14)	2014 Project LEAP Syllabus (conducted 4-23-14 through 8-13-14)		
Requirement	Number of Hours	Number of Hours	Method	
Graduation	n/a	n/a	Graduation ceremony held 8-13-14	
Classroom training	44	44	11 weekly classroom sessions conducted at 4 hours/session	
PC participation	6	8	Student attendance at 2 RWPC/ Committee related activities	
Community participation	6	8	Student attendance at a CPG meeting (2 hr), 1 community meeting (2 hr), and participation in 1 volunteer shift at <i>Houston HITS</i> <i>Home</i> (4 hr)	
Total per class	56	60		
Number of classes	2	2]	
Total contact hours	112	120		

Obj. 1: Curriculum Requirements

How the FY14 Project LEAP Service Definition curriculum requirements were met by the 2014 Project LEAP syllabus:

- 1. Information on the sources and purposes of HIV service funds in the Houston EMA
 - Week #2 (4/30/14): Overview of Epidemiology and the HIV Surveillance Program (J. Meyer)
 - Week #2 (4/30/14): Overview of the HIV Prevention Program (H. Friday and C. Wiley)
 - Week #3 (5/7/14): Overview of Ryan White (RW) HIV/AIDS Program, All Parts (T. Williams)
 - Week #9 (6/18/14): Overview of Housing Opportunities for People with HIV/AIDS (M. Barr)
 - Week #11 (7/2/14): Review FY15 RW Allocations (T. Williams)

2. Structure, functions, policies, and procedures of the RWPC/CPG

- ☑ Week #1 (4/23/14): History of HIV in Houston Panel (D. Hughes, S. Vargas, B. Turner, T. Williams)
- Week #2 (4/30/14): Function of Policies and Procedures Activity (A. Alvarez)
- ☑ Week #3 (5/7/14): Training on the Ryan White Planning Council (RWPC) Needs Assessment (NA) (A. Alvarez)
- Week #3 (5/7/14): Training on How to Best Meet the Need (HTBMN) (T. Williams)
- Week #5 (5/21/14): Attendance at Community Planning Group (CPG) meeting (A. Alvarez)
- Week #9 (6/18/14): Robert's Rules of Order, Conflict of Interest (COI), and Quorum Part 2 (T. Williams)
- Week #10 (6/25/14): Training on the Priorities and Allocations (P&A) Process (T. Williams)
- ☑ Week #16 (8/6/14): Panel of Planning Body Members (R. Atkinson, N. Blue, E. Escamilla, J. Gillispie, M. Giwa, C. Ward)
- **3.** Training in needs assessments, parliamentary procedures and meeting management, presentation skills, accessing and utilizing resources and role models, and organizational participation and conduct
 - ☑ Week #1 (4/23/14): Introduction to Robert's Rules of Order, Part 1 (T. Williams)
 - Week #6 (5/28/14) Leadership Skills and Team Building (M. Alexander)
 - Week #6 (5/28/14): Training on NA Survey Skills (A. Alvarez)
 - Week #9 (6/18/14): Robert's Rules of Order, COI, and Quorum Part 2 (T. Williams)
 - Week #11 (7/7/14): Mini-NA Project Data Analysis (A. Alvarez)
 - ☑ Week #12 (7/10/14): Presentation of Mini-NA Project Results to RWPC
 - ☑ Week #14 (7/23/14): Community Meeting Report-Backs
 - Week #15 (7/30/14): Advocacy Training (D. Houston)
 - Week #15 (7/30/14): Training on How to Give an HIV Presentation (D. Houston)

Week #15 (7/30/14): Training on HIV Resources/Blue Book Treasure Hunt (D. Beck)

Ongoing: Weekly designation of meeting chairs, weekly practice with Robert's Rules and following meeting agendas, regular in-class small/large-group activities requiring student presentations

4. Training on HIV-related Standards of Care, quality assurance methods, and HRSA service category definitions

- \square Week #3 (5/7/14): Training on HTBMN (T. Williams)
- ☑ Week #4 (5/14/14): Attendance at Quality Assurance Committee meeting
- Week #7 (6/4/14): Training on Standards of Care and Outcome Measures (A. Alvarez)
- ☑ Week #7 (6/4/14): Overview of National, State, and Local HIV Plans (Comprehensive Planning) (A. Alvarez)

Obj. 2: Class Composition vs. Current HIV/AIDS Prevalence

From the FY14 Project LEAP Service Definition:

- Enroll a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 30 HIV infected individuals prior to the commencement of the training program.
- A maximum of 10 affected others may be included.
- The race, ethnicity, and sex composition of the classes must reflect current local HIV/AIDS prevalence data to the extent feasible.
- Endeavor to enroll individuals from groups that are disproportionally affected by HIV disease, including youth and transgender PLWHA.

From the 2014 Project LEAP Cohort (See Figure 2):

- 25 HIV infected individuals and 7 affected others were enrolled in Project LEAP in 2014 at the beginning of the program.
- Of graduating students, 18 (75%) were HIV positive, and six (25%) were affected.
- The race/ethnicity composition of enrolled students was largely representative of the demographic distribution of the epidemic in the Houston EMA, with race/ethnicity variation among enrollees within 10% of local HIV prevalence. African Americans make up 48.7% of the local epidemic, and 50% of Project LEAP enrollees in 2014 were African American, and "other/unknown" races/ethnicities had high representation among enrollees.
- Five youth (3 PLWHA, 2 affected) enrolled in the program and graduated, the highest enrollment and graduation rate among youth since the Office of Support began implementing Project LEAP in 2012.
- Despite considerable recruitment efforts targeting the transgender population, no transgender students enrolled in the program in 2014.

	EMA HI Preva		2014 P LEAP E	U	2014 P LEAP <u>P</u>	•	2014 Project LEAP	
	(as of 12	/31/13)	(as of 4/23/14) Enrollees (as of 4/23/14)			Graduates (as of 8/13/14)		
Race/Ethnicity	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
White, not Hispanic	5,239	21.9	6	18.8	6	24.0	4	16.7
Black, not Hispanic	11,644	48.7	16	50.0	14	56.0	11	45.8
Hispanic	6,182	25.8	6	18.8	2	8.0	5	20.8
Other/Unknown	849	3.6	4	12.5	3	12.0	4	16.7
Total	23,914	100	32	100	25	100	24	100
Sex	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Male	17,799	74.4	19	59.4	15	60.0	14	58.3
Female	6,115	25.6	13	40.6	10	40.0	10	41.7
Transgender	n/a	n/a	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	23,914	100	32	100	25	100	24	100
Age	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
13 – 24 years	1,322	5.53	5	15.6	3	12.0	5	20.8
Total	1,322	5.53	5	15.6	3	12.0	24	20.8

Figure 2: Project LEAP 2014 Class Composition, 2014

Obj. 2: Course Completion

From the FY14 Project LEAP Service Definition:

- Enroll a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 30 HIV infected individuals prior to the commencement of the training program.
- A maximum of 10 affected others may be included.
- Establish realistic training schedules that accommodate varying health situations of participants.

From the 2014 Project LEAP Cohort (See Figure 3):

- 51 individuals initially applied for the 2014 class of Project LEAP (more than any Project LEAP class since the Office of Support began implementation in 2012). Two applicants withdrew from the interview process. Of the 49 remaining applicants, 65% (or 32) were interviewed, accepted, *and* enrolled into the program.
- Out of the 32 students enrolled, 24 graduated from the program, for a graduation rate of 75%. Reasons for attrition included: relocation, conflicts with work and family, and illness.
- Average weekly attendance was 84% of currently-enrolled students. Weeks involving off-site locations, alternate days/times, or with inclement weather were correlated with higher absences. Nine students exceeded the allowable absences and completed the required "make-up" assignments, while another nine students had perfect attendance.
- 11 students (or 46% of the graduating class) submitted applications to RWPC and/or CPG membership. Additionally, a graduate from the Project LEAP class of 2013 submitted a RWPC membership application in 2014.

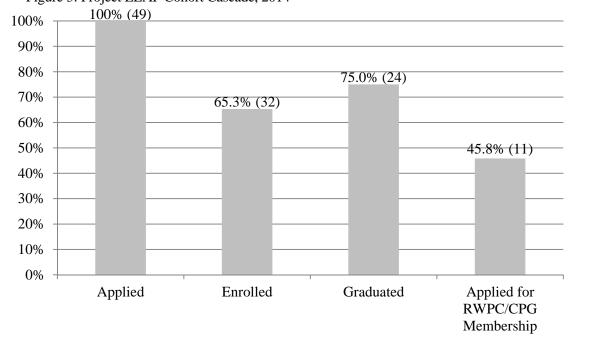


Figure 3: Project LEAP Cohort Cascade, 2014

Obj. 2: Pre/Post-Training Evaluation

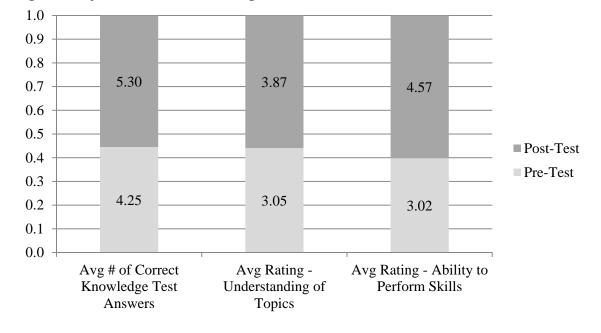
From the FY14 Project LEAP Service Definition:

- Conduct a pre-training evaluation to determine knowledge and beliefs concerning HIV disease and understanding of HIV-related funding processes.
- Conduct a post-training evaluation to measure change.

From the 2014 Project LEAP Cohort:

- A matched pre-training and post-training evaluation was conducted at Weeks 1 and 16. The evaluation tool included the following:
 - 1. A 10-item fact-based multiple choice quiz specific to Service Definition topics measuring change in knowledge;
 - 2. A self-assessment of understanding of Service Definition topics (1 = "not well"; 5 = "very well") measuring self-assessed change in understanding; and
 - 3. A self-assessment of ability to perform the skills or activities required by the Service Definition (1 = "not well"; 5= "very well") measuring self-assessed change in skills.
- 83% of the graduating class was evaluated at both pre and post with the following results (See Figure 4):
 - 1. The average number of correct answers to the fact-based multiple choice questions increased by 1.05, or a 40% improvement in knowledge.
 - 2. The average self-assessment rating of understanding increased from 3.02 to 4.57 (out of 5), or a 51% improvement in self-assessed understanding.
 - 3. The average self-assessment rating of ability to perform skills or activities moved from 3.05 to 3.87 (out of 5), or a 27% improvement in self-assessed skills.
 - 4. The greatest average improvements occurred in: knowledge of RWPC activities; understanding of HIV-related Standards of Care and quality assurance methods; and ability to use Robert's Rules of Order.

Figure 4: Project LEAP Pre/Post-Training Evaluation Results, 2014



Obj. 2: Process Evaluation and Lessons Learned

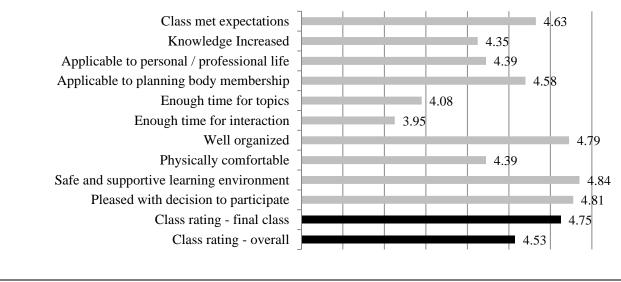
From the FY14 Project LEAP Service Definition:

- Enhance the participation of the HIV-infected and affected persons participating in this project.
- Provide both lecture and hands-on experiential class activities to enable participants to maximize opportunities for learning.

From the 2014 Project LEAP Syllabus and Cohort:

- A variety of teaching methods was employed to meet the Service Definition:
 - 1. *Lectures*: included 24 guest speakers (in addition to three Office of Support staff/facilitators)
 - 2. *Hands-on activities*: 100% of in-class sessions included an interactive activity (e.g., Robert's Rules practice, team-building activities, small group discussion and report-back)
 - 3. *Experiential activities*: Graduation requirements included a mini-needs assessment project, attendance at a community meeting, and a volunteer shift at Houston HITS Home. Three weeks of class occurred off-site at a RWPC, Committee, or CPG related function.
- Course instruction quality was assessed *weekly*. (See Figure 5)
 - 1. In general, average ratings were favorable, with no average ratings of "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree".
 - 2. High ratings were consistent with previous Project LEAP classes: feeling safe and supported in class (average 4.84/5), satisfaction with decision to participate in Project LEAP (average 4.81/5), and class organization (average 4.79/5).
 - 3. Lower ratings were also largely consistent with previous Project LEAP classes: time to interact with fellow students (average 3.95/5), time to fully address the topics each week (average 4.08/5), and increase of knowledge about weekly topics (average 4.35/5).
 - 4. Overall, classes received an average rating of 4.53/5. The final class received an average rating of 4.75/5.

Figure 5: Project LEAP Weekly Evaluation Results, Average Ratings (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree; Class Rating, 1=Poor, 5=Excellent) 2014



Obj. 2: Process Evaluation and Lessons Learned (Con't) Course logistics quality was assessed at *mid-point* and *end-point*. (See Figure 6) • 1. Course logistics elements showed improvement between the mid-point (not shown) and end-point evaluations: class day and time; class location; physical classroom; food; handouts/materials; and the class survey project (mini-needs assessment). 2. In general, average ratings were highly favorable, with all course logistics elements rated "Very Good" or "Excellent". 3. High ratings were largely consistent with previous Project LEAP classes: communication with Office of Support staff (average 4.76/5), guest speakers (average 4.76/5), and handouts/materials (average 4.76/5). 4. Lower ratings were consistent with previous Project LEAP classes: food (average 4.24/5), class length (average 4.33/5), and off-site activities (4.33/5). Figure 6: Project LEAP Logistics, Evaluation Ratings (1=Very Poor, 5=Excellent), 2014 4.67 Dav and time Class Length 4.33 Location 4 52 Physical classroom 4.62 Food 4.24 Handouts/materials 4.76 Audio-visual/Presentations 4.67 OS communication 4.76 Guest speakers 4.76 Class facilitation 4.57 Class discussion 4.48 In-class activities 4.57 Off-site activitites 4.33

• General impressions of course quality were also measured at the mid-point and end-point. As of the final Project LEAP 2014 class:

4.48

- 1. 86% of students felt better able to be productive planning body members following Project LEAP.
- 2. 95% of students said that Project LEAP met their expectations, were pleased with their decision to participate in Project LEAP, and would recommend Project LEAP to someone else
- 3. 100% of students said that Project LEAP made them more knowledgeable about HIV prevention and care services planning.
- Qualitative data were also collected at the *mid-point* and *end-point* with an open-ended question inviting students to suggest ways of making Project LEAP even better in the future:
 - 1. Increase time available for questions and answer sessions with guest speakers
 - 2. Consider an additional leadership and team building class session if possible.
 - 3. Include more opportunities for experiential ("hands-on") learning activities.
 - 4. Increase course content pertaining to the history of HIV, and modes of transmission.
 - 5. Consider scheduling longer breaks.

Class survey project

"I Find It Hard to Believe I Have Come So Far": The Life-Changing Impact of Project LEAP

Though difficult to capture through traditional evaluative methods, Project LEAP has had unanticipated and far-reaching effects in the lives of the students and program alumni. At many points throughout the implementation of Project LEAP in 2014, students came forward unprompted to share their stories of the powerful and transformative influence the class has had on their lives.

One student emailed Office of Support staff to express how Project LEAP 2014 gave her much-needed social support and helped her feel inspired and empowered to help her community:

I find it hard to believe I have come so far. I recently shared with Amber; this class has meant so much to me. Project LEAP has taught me so much more than HIV 101. I have learned to be tolerant and respectful of others by deciding to agree to disagree. At the church I attend, we have a motto and goal, which says, "Where the Spirit of GOD is, WE have FAMILY. Truly, I have found "family" since attending LEAP class.

I received my diagnosis September 19, 2012. I lost my cousin January 21, 2012 and 6 months later my mother on June 19, 2012. My cousin and I were more like brother and sister. Mama could be harsh at times, but she and my cousin were MY support system. Their loss and my subsequent illness took me to a very bad place. I was lost, confused, and afraid and not feeling very loved.

I disclosed to my friends who shockingly were supportive. They loved me in spite of my news and each one, in their own way asked...What do you need from me? How can I help? Even with that, I still felt alone. They did not know my struggle; they did not know my journey. They could not answer all the questions I had. Project LEAP did.

Project LEAP has given me new family! I have been introduced to people just like me who know my struggles and are on the same journey. I have looked forward to each week of class, because my knowledge has grown. In class, I did not feel quite so lost, confused or afraid. Each week I have indeed felt empowered and each week I have learned something new. I have not only learned about the community but I have learned so many things about myself!! I feel empowered to be able to go out into the world and in some small way give back what I have learned. I do not know what the future has in store for me, however, whatever it is; Project LEAP has given me the necessary tools to accomplish the task. Moreover, I know I will not be alone. I will have support and encouragement from former LEAP members once I figure out whatever it is I'm SUPPOSED to be doing with all this wonderful knowledge!!! I apologize for this lengthy email. I just needed to express my appreciation. I am so glad I applied to LEAP and even more thankful to have been accepted.

Project LEAP 2014 helped other students understand and adopt the life-preserving value of medication adherence and lifestyle changes. During the 11th week of class, a young student raised his hand and asked to make an announcement. He said that, though he saw a physician and received medication when he first learned of his positive HIV status, he was very resistant to taking his medication. During his first Project LEAP class, he carefully listened as students introduced themselves to the class. He said he was struck by how many students shared that they were also living with HIV, and had resisted getting help and making changes that could help them live longer. A number of students also discussed partners, friends and other loved ones who had passed away. The young man then shared that he went home after the first class and began taking his medication. He thanked his classmates for motivating and inspiring him to begin taking his medication, even though it was very hard for him. He committed to the group to keep taking his medication so that he too could live a long life with HIV.

"I Find It Hard to Believe I Have Come So Far": The Life-Changing Impact of Project LEAP (Con't)

Near the end of the course, the Project LEAP 2014 students were asked to share the impact of the program had on their lives. The quotes were displayed in a presentation that played during the graduation ceremony, which was the first graduation some students had experienced. The following quotes convey sentiments shared by many of the students:

- "LEAP has blessed me to meet wonderful people that have shown me that you can live a plentiful and long life with proper discipline. It also has taught me a wealth of information that I aspire to pass on to others through advocacy and community service."
- Project LEAP has given me the opportunity to better understand how Ryan White programs are funded and prioritized. It also has given me the opportunity to become a more effective Council Member. Also, I have met a very dynamic new group of friends."
- Project LEAP has given me knowledge that will help me be a positive contributor to the community. It has taught me to be tolerant and respectful of others even if I may not always agree. I feel empowered to be able to go out into the world and in some small way give back what I have learned.
- "[Project LEAP was the] source of knowledge needed to find and share my voice so I can continue to make positive changes so I can also be an active member in the cause."
- *To me Project LEAP is a*dvocacy, empowerment, [and] development. I could never imagine [graduation] day coming. Project LEAP has gave me the vision to see the work that God has for me to do. It has shown me that each and every one of us has a purpose in life. And by way of Project LEAP, I am able to move on and assist [those] in need of care and love, because as I was blind I now can see. And when you can assist others that [are] blind in life and bring to the light, that is the purpose of love for others and this is what I have received from Project LEAP. It has [given] me the knowledge to know my purpose in life Now I can assist someone to know their purpose and this purpose is love for others. Love for them in need. 'Advocacy, Empowerment and Leadership Development' Thank you Project LEAP!!'"
- "Project LEAP has had a huge impact on my life. It has opened up many doors for me mentally and physical. It has given me knowledge and experience I will carry with me for the rest of my entire life."
- "My main drives in life are my family and being able to help others/give back. I have been able to be a volunteer since I was 15 years old and been a HIV/AIDS advocate longer than that; after seeing an online posting of the LEAP Project, I knew I had to apply. With the support of my family and friends I have been able to participate in the 2014 LEAP Project and considered myself very blessed. I have been able to gain more knowledge and awareness in the different areas and needs of our Houston diverse communities. I look forward to continuing to be a strong advocate and meeting our community goals."
- "Project LEAP has helped me to open up and learn more about what was out there to offer me as I've been dealing with HIV for over 15 years."
- "Project LEAP has been a wonderful access point for information and insights into issues that impact my life. Equipped with knowledge and a new network, I'm now ready to better my life and the lives of those around me."
- "Project LEAP for me means learning to get out of self and help others. This program has also taught me that no matter what you go through there are people willing and ready to lend a helping hand."

Budget Information					
Ori	ginal Cost of the Program:	\$ 52,000			
	2014 Cost of the Program:	\$ 14,101			
	Total Savings:	\$ 37,899			
2014 Expenses:					
Supplies	\$ 523				
Facilities Rental	318				
Speaker Fees	0				
Student Reimbursement (mileage only – no	4,878				
dependent care needed					
Meals and Snacks	7,553 20				
Staff Mileage Miscellaneous	809				
(graduation shirts)	009				
TOTAL	\$14,101				

Acknowledgments

Project LEAP 2014 was a collaboration of the:

Houston Area HIV Services Ryan White Planning Council and the Houston Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of HIV/STD & Viral Hepatitis Prevention

Project LEAP 2014 was made possible by the following individuals:

Project LEAP Advisory Committee

Cecilia Ross, Chair Curtis Bellard Gene Ethridge Herman Finley Morénike Giwa Tracy Gorden Arlene Johnson Osaro Mgbere Kevin Moore Teresa Pruitt Venita Ray Robert Smith Steven Vargas

Guest Speakers

Antonio Aguries Legacy Community Health Services Cynthia Aguries

Chair, Latino HIV/AIDS Task Force Mike Alexander MLA Consulting

Ruth Atkinson Member, Ryan White Planning Council

Melody Barr Houston Department of Housing & Community Development

Nike Blue AIDS Foundation Houston Evelio Escamilla

University of Houston, School of Social Work

Hickmon Friday Houston Department of Health and Human Services

Jon-Michael Gillispie Houston Department of Health and Human Services

Morenike Giwa Positive Playdates/Advocacy without Borders

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Dena Hughes Community Activist

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Scot More Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County

John Nechman Katine and Mechman, LLP

Cecilia Ross Living Without Limits Living Large

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Steven Vargas Chair, Ryan White Planning Council

> Crystal Ward AIDS Foundation Houston

Keville Ware Montrose Center

Lou Weaver Community Activist

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Marlene McNeese, Bureau Chief Cathy Wiley, Training Administrator Jon-Michael Gillispie, Sr. Health Planner

Attachments

- FY14 Project LEAP Service Definition (approved 2-13-14)
- 2014 Project LEAP Syllabus
- 2014 Pre/Post-Training Evaluation Form