

1.8 Leadership Development

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Assessment Process	
A.	The assessment of needs, wants, and resources is achieved by surveys, town meetings, brainstorming, focus group studies, and advisory committees.
B.	In the early 1990's, the community identified the need for younger leadership in local civic and governmental organizations. Through a partnership with the University Outreach and Extension, the Chamber of Commerce utilized the university's EXCEL approach and launched a countywide leadership development endeavor in 1996. EXCEL stands for, "An Experience in Community Enterprise and Leadership."

Program Standards	
A.	<p>Organization:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chamber of Commerce is the primary entity responsible for the Barton County EXCEL Leadership Development program. 2. Chamber staff and a volunteer committee together manage the annual program. 3. The committee is comprised of representatives from community betterment, local government, social services, business, education, etc. 4. Barton County's University Outreach and Extension staff members provide curriculum support and coordinate an annual trip to Jefferson City for the program.
B.	<p>Mission Statement: The EXCEL Program of Barton County strives to promote both personal and professional leadership qualities. The program is dedicated to increasing the awareness of the participants to identify and address the individual and community needs, wants, and visionary growth.</p>
C.	<p>Program Elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal leadership development is attained through a curriculum that emphasizes personality profiling and adaptation, character, goal-setting, public speaking, and organizational planning. 2. The curriculum focuses on local aspects of education, community service, economics, government, culture, community pride, history, etc. Students participate in familiarization tours of key points of interest related to the curriculum. 3. Breakout sessions and group activities are provided at each EXCEL function to allow participants a practical opportunity to apply concepts of the program. 4. Offered on an annual basis, EXCEL is fully self-sustained through tuition with scholarships provided as needed through utilization of cash and in-kind donations.
D.	<p>Utilization of Newly-Trained Leaders :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An active alumni program places graduates with leadership openings in local government and civic organizations 2. The EXCEL-2/Character First program allows participants to gain advanced training and provides service opportunities in several aspects of county-wide character development.
E.	<p>Mentoring:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local leaders are active on the EXCEL steering committee and participate in EXCEL meetings and functions to mentor the students. 2. Mentors help the participants in self-assessment of talents and matching of local leadership opportunities available.

F.	<p>Committee Recruitment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At the end of each annual program, graduates participate in a focus group evaluation of the program. 2. During this meeting, participants are invited to participate on the committee in future years. 3. Typically, two to three students will join the steering committee and assist in the following year's program.
G.	<p>Leader Exchange :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As a countywide program, participants network among the county's three main communities 2. Each year, students participate in the Extension Day at the Capital to network with other community leaders 3. Several EXCEL graduates are active on the Lamar Community Betterment Council and participate in networking and development activities at the annual Missouri Community Betterment conference 4. Like Community Betterment, other non-profit organizations and governmental entities participate in state and annual conferences to share ideas with leaders in other communities

Program Evaluation

The success of Leadership Development endeavors for Lamar are addressed through:

- Annual focus group session of EXCEL Graduates to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for current and future programs
- Brief surveys are administered and compiled for each EXCEL meeting and event
- Monthly focus group sessions conducted by the Chamber of Commerce
- Annual Surveys of the local business community
- Annual Strategic Planning Retreat of Chamber Board Members and invited executives from other local civic organizations