

blue  of california  
foundation

# leading for change

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## **Putnam Consulting Group**

*Confident Giving • Dramatic Return*

authors: Elizabeth Russell  
Kris Putnam-Walkerly

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The mission of Blue Shield of California Foundation is to improve the lives of all Californians, particularly the underserved, by making health care accessible, effective, and affordable, and by ending domestic violence. Since 2002, the Foundation has awarded more than \$300 million in grants throughout the state.

### **Leadership: one piece of the puzzle**

While strengthening individual leaders is critical, more is needed to create long term change. BSCF's 2013-16 strategic plan includes an organizational logic model that incorporates four interconnected strategies:

- Adaptive leadership
- Capacity building
- Innovation
- Policy

# the need for leadership development

Since 2002, Blue Shield of California Foundation (BSCF) has worked to support the healthcare safety net for uninsured and underinsured Californians and to eliminate domestic violence. As BSCF has evolved, so has its strategy for supporting organizations that provide access to affordable care and ending domestic abuse. Today, BSCF strives to be an ally for change for the safety net providers that play critical roles in the health and safety of Californians through two core program areas: Health Care and Coverage and Blue Shield Against Violence.

In 2006, as BSCF weighed the impact of its work against the increased capacity it hoped to see in the community health center field, it found that organizations across the board faced a similar challenge: Evidence was mounting that both the community health and domestic violence fields were facing impending leadership crises as veteran leaders prepared for retirement, and there was little being done to prepare new leadership to take the helm.<sup>1</sup> As BSCF's leadership programs evolved, it also became clear that if community health centers were to survive and thrive in a rapidly changing environment, they would need to adapt and would need leaders who could guide them through transformation. As significant funding and policy shifts began within the domestic violence field, the need for leadership to help guide transformation became strongly apparent. BSCF realized that investing in leadership was an opportunity to advance the development of individual organizations and create field-level change.

As a result, BSCF began to explore the concept of creating a leadership pipeline as part of its efforts to increase capacity both within discrete organizations and across the entire community health center and domestic violence fields in California. By building a critical mass of leaders with solid skills in areas such as operations, data management, policy and change management, BSCF hoped to create the human capital required to innovate and strengthen both the community health center and domestic violence fields.

At the time, both fields were ripe for leadership support. While county-run public health centers had some leadership training programs available, opportunities for private, nonprofit community health centers were few and far between; for domestic violence service providers, they were practically nonexistent. In both fields, existing leaders and organizations were sometimes isolated from one another and disconnected from state and national movements and the opportunities they could leverage as a result. Through surveys and field research, BSCF learned that while leadership potential existed in both fields, individual leaders needed ways to improve skills, build connections, and think and work innovatively in order to transform their organizations into high-performing, well-networked operations.

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<sup>1</sup>*Daring to Lead*, CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, 2006

“Building adaptive leadership is essential to achieving the lasting change we wish to see in health care and domestic violence. When combined with enhanced organizational capacity, strong public policy, and innovative thinking, leadership is the catalyst for transformations to improve collaboration and efficiency across the safety net.”

Peter Long, Ph.D.,  
President & CEO, BSCF

# key elements of BSCF leadership programs

BSCF began its foray into leadership development with the creation of Clinic Leadership Institute (CLI) in 2007. Recognizing that community health centers would need new leaders who could help them survive and thrive in a rapidly changing environment, CLI focused first on an Emerging Leaders program for community health center staff who demonstrate executive potential and a long-term commitment to serving community health centers and the broader health care safety net.

Next, in 2010, came the Leadership Development Program of Blue Shield Against Violence's Strong Field Project, designed to serve emerging and veteran leaders of domestic violence service organizations. The Strong Field Project aimed to strengthen the entire domestic violence field, and its Leadership Development Program became a key component of that effort.

In 2012, BSCF added the New Executive Transition (nEXt) program to the CLI offering, designed to help new health center CEOs navigate the changes in the health care environment, such as the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Also in 2012, BSCF launched the Executive Excellence (Ex<sup>2</sup>) program, targeted toward five-member executive teams at larger community health centers to help them learn and develop together as a team in order to lead transformation efforts in their organizations.

In both fields, BSCF explored the possibility of using or adapting existing leadership programs but realized that, in order to target the types of leaders it wanted to serve and to concentrate on issues specific to community health centers and domestic violence service providers, it would need to create something new. BSCF needed programs that were tailored to the needs and current realities of each field, respecting the cultures while helping to create leaders who could navigate the changes in funding, demographics, and policy that were increasing in both.

## how BSCF creates leaders

### curriculum highlights

- Leadership and organizational values
- Leadership for change
- Strategy and business management
- Data-driven decision making
- Cultural competency
- Project management
- Financial management
- Managing relationships and conflict

### delivery methods

- Seminars
- Webinars
- Individual coaching
- Peer learning groups
- Personal leadership assessments
- Capstone projects



In particular, to thrive in these dynamic environments, BSCF's programs evolved to focus on *adaptive leadership* capacity, which it defines as the ability to adapt and thrive in the face of complex challenges and change.<sup>2</sup>

## program design

### informed by the field

BSCF did its homework to understand the histories and evolving social movements within the fields it serves. Foundation staff worked closely with advisory groups that included field leaders and consultants who were widely recognized and respected. Staff and advisors dove deeply into the history and traditions of each field in order to help program partners design leadership development curricula that would hold both resonance and relevance for participants. Throughout the design, delivery, and evaluation of each program, BSCF kept its advisors engaged in thinking about the curriculum and experiences of participants and ways in which to make continuous improvements.

This level of engagement with the field helped create buy-in and trust among the community health centers and domestic violence service providers that would eventually send participants to the leadership development programs. As a result, participants and existing leaders in both fields have ultimately embraced the leadership development programs with enthusiasm, and many have remained engaged as members of advisory teams.

### the right partners

Although BSCF had the interest and the funding to create tailored leadership development programs, Foundation staff knew that the expertise to design and operate each program needed to come from partners with much deeper knowledge and experience, as well as a willingness to collaborate and rethink their current programs to meet the specific needs of the community health center and domestic violence fields.

For its Strong Field Project Leadership Development Program, BSCF selected CompassPoint Nonprofit Services to lead/administer the program because of its reputation for extensive knowledge about and innovation in leadership programs.

For CLI's Emerging Leaders and nEXt programs, the Foundation chose the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) Center for the Health Professions because of its considerable experience operating leadership programs within the health field and its ability to connect CLI's leaders with leaders in other clinical networks. Also, UCSF was experienced in providing a rich program experience – including elements like coaching, mentorship, small group work for participants from the same geographic area, didactic teaching, and practical application – that would provide the comprehensive approach that BSCF desired.

“We knew that we needed to make sure our program would be accepted by the field, so we grounded it in the history and tradition of the movements and have stayed true to that over time.”

Brenda Solórzano, Chief Program Director, BSCF

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<sup>2</sup>Heifetz, Ronald, Marty Linsky, and Alexander Grashow, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and World*, Harvard Business Press, 2008





For the Ex<sup>2</sup> program, BSCF tapped the Anderson School of Management at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), drawing on Anderson's expertise in working with corporate and executive leadership teams.

### defining success from the start

Although one might argue that any leadership development program has value, the significant investment that BSCF made in leadership development demanded a clear picture of what success would look like. For each program, BSCF designed key measures to gauge its effect on the skills and actions of participants and the effect on their home organizations and the field. Program evaluations measure increases in individual management and leadership skills, improvements in organizational strength, and evidence of network growth within each field. For example, the CLI Emerging Leaders program set a goal of moving participants into an executive management position within five to eight years. The Strong Field Project's Leadership Development Program focused on creating a critical mass of leaders to guide the field forward.

By defining and measuring success at the outset, the Foundation was able to learn from and adapt its programs. However, those initial definitions were not set in stone. Ongoing evaluations provided a continual source of information about how the programs — and their expectations — could be improved to meet the needs of subsequent cohorts. As a result, BSCF has adapted its programs, expectations, and theories of change accordingly.

### thoughtful outreach

To ensure that each leadership program cohort has the right balance of participants in terms of geography, experience, ethnicity, and other factors, each of BSCF's partners carefully considered the types of leaders and organizations their programs should reach and conducted broad outreach to encourage applications. As the programs unfolded, partners periodically conducted special outreach efforts to encourage applications from underrepresented groups, such as community health centers in Southern California and the Central Valley for CLI or leaders of color from domestic violence organizations. As part of their outreach, each partner approached the groups it wished to attract to determine their leadership needs and desires and to identify barriers to participation — and then adjusted its outreach and offerings accordingly. BSCF believes that these outreach activities in early cohorts helped drive acceptance within the field and increase the number of applicants.

## program experiences

### more than just management

The leadership skills taught in the BSCF programs go beyond the mechanics of basic management. Participants explore the nuances of leadership — and adaptive leadership in particular — in order to understand their own leadership styles, how to lead others through change, how to engage in public policy, and how to think creatively about challenges and forge collaborations with other organizations. These skills are

"The curriculum taught me how to 'manage up' and how to work more effectively with different leadership styles and personalities. The coaching helped me think less programmatically and transition into thinking more strategically for the long term."

Nina Vaccaro,  
Executive Director, Southside  
Coalition of Community  
Health Centers

directly relevant to the issues that participants face in their day-to-day environments, and BSCF has adapted the curricula over time to ensure that its relevance remains intact.

### the value of coaching

One of the most highly rated aspects of BSCF's Emerging Leaders and Strong Field Project Leadership Development Program is professional coaching. Every participant in both of these programs is matched with a coach and receives both in-person and telephone follow-up sessions during the length of their program participation and beyond. For many participants, these programs offer their first exposure to coaching and the support it provides. Coaching adds particular value for BSCF's goal of developing adaptive leadership capacity, as coaches are available to advise and support program graduates as they work to bring needed changes to their home organizations. In addition, participants in the Strong Field Project Leadership Development Program also learn peer-to-peer coaching skills in order to manage the often difficult conversations that arise around domestic violence issues.

### building a network for change

The leaders who helped shape BSCF's leadership programs pointed to the importance of networks in helping them be successful in their roles and also strengthening the domestic violence and community health center fields. To help foster the growth of networks for leaders, BSCF selected a cohort approach for its leadership development programs, as opposed to funding individual leadership development experiences at discrete sites. This approach has indeed led to the formation of tight networks among each cohort, and those networks are still thriving among program alumni. The hope is that as these cohorts grow and mature and connect with other alumni cohorts, they will create new networks of leaders who will move their fields forward together.

The statewide reach of BSCF's leadership programs helps foster the sense of collaboration and shared identity as a cohesive field, rather than isolated organizations. Participants report building lasting bonds with their classmates throughout the state that continue to grow after the program has ended, fostering an ongoing sense of collective leadership for the benefit of the larger field.

Many participants and their supervisors report that the creation of these new networks has shifted the perspective within their organizations from that of working in isolation to being part of a broader field, and it has opened the door to new thinking and sharing of best practices with other organizations.

In an effort to continue the work of strengthening field capacity, BSCF has looked for ways to keep alumni connected to one another and engaged with leadership opportunities in the field, in addition to strengthening the roles they play within their own organizations.

"I think the biggest strength of the program is bringing together so many diverse leaders from the field. Many of us in rural areas are isolated, so being able to network and being reminded that we are not alone is vital for remaining inspired and less likely to burn out."

Strong Field Project  
Leadership  
Development Program  
participant

# return on investment: outcomes and benefits

## impact on the field

Documenting the effect of a single leadership development program on an entire field is difficult, but many of those associated with CLI or the Strong Field Project Leadership Development Program point confidently to evidence of impact.

**New leaders feel prepared.** Rising leaders in both fields have reported that they feel well prepared to take on more senior leadership roles, despite the rapidly changing environments that surround both community health centers and domestic violence service organizations. Existing executives who supervise leadership program participants also report notable increases in the participants' management and leadership skills and increased confidence in the participants' leadership abilities.

**Current leaders recognize both promise and need.** Current leaders in both fields recognize that there is a larger number of respected leaders – including a “critical mass” in the domestic violence field – to take on future challenges and help organizations transform. Furthermore, existing leaders report that they better understand the need to build “bench strength” in their fields and prepare for future transitions.

**Rising leaders are working together.** The networking practices that began as part of each leadership program are resulting in ongoing professional connections and networks after graduation. In many instances, leadership program participants continue to learn from one another and are working together to develop innovative ideas and practices. As a result, a new sense of collaboration is emerging within the culture of each field.

**Leaders are embracing field-level roles.** Graduates of CLI and the Strong Field Project Leadership Development Program are demonstrating their leadership and driving change for the field. Several of the projects that graduates have implemented in their own organizations have become state or national models. Alumni from both programs are taking active roles in statewide networks for innovation, and an increasing number have served as presenters at state professional conferences.

“[The Strong Field Project Leadership Development Program] helped build stronger relationships amongst the program directors. Before this program, there had been these walls built up where agencies didn't trust one another. [Now] we're a much stronger consortium . . . and so we've been finding more opportunities for collaboration with each other.”

Adriana Caldera, Director,  
Domestic Violence  
Department, YWCA of Silicon  
Valley

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<sup>34</sup>The Pathway to Leadership — CLI Evaluation Report,” 2011, Informing Change



## benefits for BSCF and lead partners

The CLI and Strong Field Project leadership programs have helped BSCF build strong relationships with and demonstrate its sincere commitment to the fields it serves. BSCF staff attend at least a portion of almost every leadership program gathering, allowing them to engage directly with groups of leaders from community health center and domestic violence service providers to create a two-way information flow between the field and the Foundation. This interaction also gives BSCF staff insight and connections to the issues health centers and domestic violence service providers face in various parts of the state. And, when participants see staff listening, engaging, and learning alongside them, it builds trust in BSCF's work.

That sense of intimacy, trust, and enthusiasm appears to be shared by the organizations that have participated in the leadership development programs. Staff report that health centers and domestic violence service providers respond to questions and ideas from BSCF with more openness, receptivity, and honest feedback.

Interactions between BSCF staff and participants in the leadership programs also inform the Foundation's other work by providing staff with a deeper understanding of the issues that community health centers and domestic violence service providers are facing and allowing BSCF to identify new options and grant programs to help them.

BSCF is not the only one to benefit from involvement. Many of the key partners who helped structure, lead, and evaluate the leadership programs report that the experience has strengthened their own work in the field, helping them think more creatively and learn more deeply about the fields they serve and about leadership in general. They also share that in working with BSCF, they feel heard and respected as valued allies, which has made them more willing to think innovatively about their work and take risks.

"The three staff I've sent through the Emerging Leaders program returned with more sophistication in terms of leadership and management skills. They gained confidence, too, and have more contacts and networks they can call upon. As a result, they are all more valuable members of our leadership team."

Marty Lynch, Executive Director, Lifelong Medical Care

# continuous improvements

The fluid and flexible structure of BSCF's leadership programs has allowed the Foundation to respond quickly and effectively to challenges. However, there are other challenges that have required ongoing program modifications – some of which BSCF is still working on:

## organization-leader relationships

While participants engage in leadership programs with great energy and enthusiasm, the rest of the team at their home organizations may not always mirror those feelings. In some cases, CEOs do not grasp the benefits that could accrue to the entire agency, do not buy into the value that the program offers, or do not prioritize it. In other cases, newly trained leaders return to settings where there simply isn't the capacity to take on the changes or improvements they are so eager to make. In response, BSCF modified programs to engage each participant's home organization more deeply in the leadership development experience, including small learning project grants or team coaching.

Graduates from the first two cohorts of the Strong Field Project Leadership Development Program – especially those who were not in executive director positions – encountered difficulties in applying what they'd learned upon returning to their organizations. As a result, the program began to screen applicant organizations more closely for evidence of support and capacity to embrace the participant's new skills and knowledge, and it also provided a small amount of financial resources for organizations so that they could support the implementation of a participant's new project or effort as a result of their leadership development experience.

## expanding definitions of “success”

One challenge that arose from the CLI Emerging Leaders program was how to define the “senior roles” that the program wanted participants to reach in five to eight years – a metric for success. While more participants than anticipated have moved into top-level “C-suite” roles (CEO, COO, CFO, etc.), BSCF also realized that there are many more levels of leadership within the community health center field than it had originally considered. As a result, BSCF has redefined its goal from seeing participants move to executive-level roles to seeing them move to higher-level leadership roles within five to eight years.

In the Strong Field Project, “success” was redefined in terms of numbers of Leadership Development Program participants. Although the initial plan was for two cohorts or 40 leaders total, the impact that evaluators and BSCF saw from the program led to a decision to add a third cohort for an additional 20 leaders, which reinforced the program's goal of obtaining a critical mass of leaders.

“If this program hadn't existed, we would continue to see long-standing executive directors leave the field without strong leaders to pick up the reins and take the field to the next level. [Instead], we have people who are poised to lead domestic violence agencies and support one another skillfully while they do it.”

Strong Field Project  
Leadership  
Development Program  
participant

## tailoring experiences

BSCF's leadership programs have continuously evolved and improved to serve the changing needs of participants. Over the past several years, community health centers and domestic violence service providers have experienced challenges in the wake of worsening statewide economic conditions and threats to public funding. More recently, both fields faced huge demands for implementing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) as it transitioned from concept to reality. In response, BSCF not only added ACA-related curriculum for Emerging Leaders and the Strong Field Project Leadership Development Program but also designed an entirely new program, nEXt, to specifically help new community health center CEOs understand and tackle the changes the new law requires. For the Strong Field Project Leadership Development Program, BSCF recognized that building personal confidence was particularly important to participants, so it embellished a strengths-based leadership approach that was enthusiastically embraced by participants. The Strong Field Project Leadership Development Program also added curricular emphasis on self-care and cultural competency, in response to focus group feedback after the first cohort. And, in response to the rapid changes facing both fields as a result of economics, legislation, and other factors, BSCF increased its focus on adaptive leadership and managing transitions in all programs.

"So much has changed in the community health center field just in the last few years. I wanted to learn new ways to bring our organization forward and think innovatively. CLI has given me the content, connections and confidence to help lead our team into the field's next phase — and to play a role in helping determine what that next phase will look like."

Inder Wadhwa, Executive Director, Northern Valley Indian Health, Inc.



# lessons learned

Over the course of its leadership development work, BSCF has learned a number of valuable lessons that will help inform its future thinking. These lessons may also be worthy of consideration by other foundations wishing to invest in leadership development.

- **Field-specific leadership programs increase relevance for participants.**

In its design phases, BSCF considered whether its programs should be just for leaders in the community health center and domestic violence fields, or whether it should send leaders from those fields to established, multi-field programs. Although the cost would have been relatively similar, BSCF staff recognized that the challenges faced by leaders in these particular fields were in many ways unique to those fields, and therefore they needed a forum in which they could share experiences with peers who understood and faced the same challenges. The advantages of allowing peers to extensively discuss issues within their field while strengthening their networks proved highly valuable.

- **Funders are learning partners, not experts.** Leadership development programs aimed at strengthening an entire field are well served by funders who enter the work respectfully and openly as partners in learning rather than experts. One key aspect of BSCF's success was the fact that the Foundation intentionally enlisted recognized leaders from the domestic violence and community health center fields to serve as advisors, learning and listening in tandem with Foundation staff. As a result, BSCF and its partners were better able to create programs that truly resonated within their target fields, which ensured greater interest and high rates of participation, as well as stronger relationships between the Foundation and the field.

- **One size does not fit all.** It is important to realize that all leadership programs can't be the same. Different fields and participants within them have different needs, and programs must adapt continuously to meet them. When considering the creation of a new leadership development program, planners should take care to gauge a field's appetite for leadership development and its capacity to take advantage of the opportunity. Even if appetite and capacity exist, creating a program that resonates with a target population – and fostering appropriate diversity within that population – takes a concerted and individualized effort. There is no one-size-fits-all approach.

- **Seek quality partners for quality programs.** BSCF did a great deal to vet its partners who are delivering its leadership programs, in order to test the cultural fit and make sure the expertise of each partner was aligned with the day-to-day reality of the participants. This went a long way in terms of preventing dissatisfaction or problems in curriculum design or delivery. One suggestion to explore potential partners' capacity even further might be to ask those bidding to run a leadership program to conduct a sample session, or allow potential program participants to sit in on the interview process.

“Working with leadership programs has given us access to deeper understanding of the issues that clinics and domestic violence organizations are facing and allows us to identify new options to help them. As we consider new grant programs, we are armed with a depth of knowledge and an intimacy with the field that will make a meaningful difference in our strategies.”

Brenda Solórzano, Chief Program Director, BSCF



- **Ongoing evaluation is powerful.** According to many, one of the wisest decisions made by BSCF in creating CLI and the Strong Field Project Leadership Development Program was to incorporate longitudinal evaluations, based on clear theories of change. This allowed Foundation staff, advisors, partners, and participants to follow the progress of each program cohort to see overall effects on individuals, organizations, and fields. In all cases, real-time evaluation results continually informed ongoing program design adjustments to ensure greater success.

- **A relatively small number of leaders can change the tenor of an organization — and a field.** While having one participant in a leadership program can make a difference for a community health center or domestic violence organization, having multiple participants has the potential to deliver exponential impact. Teams of leaders can deliver greater shifts in terms of innovative thinking and cultural change, as well as build “bench strength” for organizational leadership over the long term.

That notion of a relatively small number of leaders having an impact on a larger body is also proving true within the fields of community health centers and domestic violence service providers. Although CLI and Strong Field Project leadership programs have not come close to serving the majority of potential leaders working in their target fields, the programs have reached approximately half of the organizations in each field, and graduates of both programs are recognized as leading new, field-changing conversations and assuming leadership roles in their professional associations. While each field may still have a long way to go, a new cadre of leaders is clearly positioning to take the helm for the journey.

- **Organizational support can strengthen a rising leader.** If a funder only wants to fund leadership development, without the complementary field-building strategies used by BSCF (such as general operating support and other investments), it may be helpful to include an organizational component, such as organizational coaching or development that is tied to the leadership program participant's engagement. This can help strengthen the organization and its networks and also may alleviate some of the challenges that can come when leaders return to an organization that is not ready to support their continued growth and development.

- **Field-changing leadership development takes a big commitment.** While it's possible to provide support to individuals with discrete investments in leadership development activities, creating a program that can positively impact an entire field is expensive and requires a long-term effort. Creating and running a high-quality program that participants will find valuable can cost tens of thousands of dollars per person. In addition, creating the desired sea change will likely require a minimum of five to ten years of programming (and perhaps multiple types of programming) in order to reach a critical mass of leaders, in tandem with other capacity- or network-building strategies that can address multiple needs within an organization or a field.

“[The Strong Field Project Leadership Development Program] has brought out new leaders in the field who haven't been active in the statewide networks [before]. They are bringing about new ideas and challenging established norms, pushing the evolution of the field. Without the [program], the established leaders and founders of the movement wouldn't be as willing to open up the space to new voices and opinions.”

Strong Field Project  
Leadership  
Development Program  
participant

# stories from the field

## **assuming senior leadership**

Prior to beginning the CLI Emerging Leaders program in 2011, Nereida Morfin had already worked her way up from a receptionist at the Borrego Community Health Foundation to a regional operations director, where she was responsible for overseeing four clinic sites. Nereida has always had a particular knack for solving problems, but during the CLI Emerging Leaders program she added to her talents, developing greater operational insight, strengthening her understanding and use of data to inform decisions, and learning how to nurture staff relationships. Those talents were recognized, and before she finished the program, Nereida was promoted to Vice President of Operations, overseeing 10 sites and supervising all lead staff. "Thanks to the program, I am confident as a leader," she says. "I was able to build my relationships with my employees and other departments." Urged on by the program, and particularly by her leadership coach, Nereida is now pursuing a bachelor's in business administration to further her leadership and continue to advance her workplace.

Adapted from "Charting the Course: CLI Emerging Leaders Career Path Brief," 2013, Informing Change

## **cultivating shared leadership and teamwork**

When Jill Zawisza stepped into the executive director role at Women Organized to Make Abuse Nonexistent, Inc. (WOMAN, Inc.) during a time of significant crisis for the organization, she knew she wanted to be a different kind of ED than those she had worked under during her 20-year career. She'd seen many leaders take on a "heroic" role that left them too isolated from their coworkers and overburdened by responsibility, and she realized that shared leadership was a better way to secure the health of her organization. As a member of the Strong Field Project's Leadership Development Program in 2011-12, Jill learned about the Double Bottom Line Matrix, which helps organizations analyze mission impact and financial sustainability. The concept of working from strengths was also validating to Jill, as she had a natural inclination to support others' leadership. She engaged her team around what they most enjoy in their work and how they could develop that further and bring it actively to their job, which led to some significant shifts. Jill's new skills and approach have created a new stability at WOMAN, Inc., and she's leveraged relationships with other LDP alumni to pilot new, collaborative ideas to strengthen the entire field as well.

# opportunities for next steps

Now that CLI and the Strong Field Project Leadership Development Program are established, there are opportunities for both BSCF and other funders to leverage that investment.

Other investments that might complement BSCF's leadership development work include co-funding with other foundations, supporting strategic collaborations in the field, and investigating more effective ways of sharing work to gain some economies of scale. In addition, BSCF is examining the intersections between community health centers and domestic violence service organizations and the potential benefits of bringing the participants or alumni together from both programs to network on a regional level.

While BSCF acknowledges that its leadership development work is inspiring and rewarding, it is well aware that one foundation cannot propel sweeping change on its own. As with any worthwhile cause, strengthening leadership within California's safety net organizations and nurturing the capacity of the community health and domestic violence fields will require ongoing investment from multiple sources. It is BSCF's hope that this case study may spark conversation and inspiration among other funders who are interested in pursuing leadership development work.

"A single foundation can't build a movement — it has to be self-organized. But BSCF has created leaders with skills and networks, and it might be helpful to continue to support that infrastructure in some way. That could make the investment go much further. Creating the space takes a lot of time and resources, so this could be a way for other foundations to contribute without starting from scratch."

Hahn Cao Yu, Vice President,  
Social Policy Research  
Associates

**Blue Shield of California Foundation**

50 Beale Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

[blueshieldcafoundation.org](https://blueshieldcafoundation.org)  
email: [bscf@blueshieldcafoundation.org](mailto:bscf@blueshieldcafoundation.org)