

## **Summary – Albemarle County’s *Innovative Leaders Institute***

**Program Overview:** Like many other local governments, Albemarle County is anticipating a “retirement tsunami” in the near future and is looking at the potential loss of long-time senior leadership and significant institutional knowledge. At the same time, particularly difficult budget times have constrained training and required our employees to think and act more innovatively than ever by developing a stronger sense of “ownership of the whole” rather than working in departmental silos and embracing best practices and use of performance indicators. Creating the “Innovative Leaders Institute” (ILI) allowed our organization to stay focused on our values of innovation and learning at a time when funding for professional development has been very limited. ILI also provided structure and support to build organizational leadership capacity and retain high-potential employees, position the organization as forward looking and focused on excellence as we respond to our new budget reality, and support SPQA and high-performing organization values.

**Purpose/Benefits:** Focus on values of innovation and learning at a time of limited funding for professional development, provide structure and support for succession management/organizational capacity efforts currently underway, position the organization as forward looking and focused on excellence as we respond to our new reality, support SPQA and high-performing organization values, and identify innovations and efficiencies.

**Program Approach -** ILI has two components - classroom work and outside work:

- 1. Classroom Work** - ILI participants met six times (once a month, over a 6-month period) for 2-hr long sessions, topics include broad leadership themes (such as innovation, performance measurement, benchmarking, change management, and presentation skills) as well as organizational issues (such as understanding the County’s budget process, the role of the County’s elected officials, and inter-governmental relationships).
- 2. Outside Work** - shadowing assignments (requiring participants to shadow a fellow ILI participant and also someone external to the County), required reading, attendance at a Board of Supervisors meeting and capstone project (these projects are the cornerstone of the ILI program, giving participants a hands-on leadership opportunity on an important organizational issue)

**Measurement:** Participants and their managers complete pre- and post-ILI assessment surveys and also complete mid-term assessments during the ILI program to provide feedback that informs development of the rest of the program.