

UNITED WE STAND

A new model for how city collaborates with state



BINGHAM FELLOWS CLASS OF 2015

Drawing inspiration from our state motto – United We Stand, Divided We Fall – the 2015 Bingham Fellows are working to improve how cities like Louisville access state government.

UNITED WE STAND

A New Model for How City Collaborates with State

The urban-rural divide has become a national issue of increasing importance, but it's one that Kentucky and Louisville have been struggling with for centuries. On December 20, 1792, the first Kentucky General Assembly commissioned our state seal to depict "two friends embracing, with the motto: United We Stand, Divided We Fall." Over time, these two embracing figures have come to represent a statesman and a pioneer, together with a call to action that we must unite across the urban-rural divide, or else we will fail.

In many ways, the story of our community for the past 200 years has been this push and pull between town and country, as symbolized by the seal's embrace. As the 2015 Bingham Fellows, we have been charged to work to unite the Commonwealth for the betterment of all.



Bingham Fellows Class of 2015

We began in January as a class of 37 citizens of Louisville representing a diverse coalition: we include attorneys, teachers, CEOs, politicians, government workers, non-profit executives and corporate representatives. As with every Bingham Fellows class, our range of knowledge and experience is varied, so our time together began with significant information gathering around the topic.

Through in-depth discussions on the political landscape in Kentucky, candid conversations with current and past civic leaders, and exposure to successes in other states, we have

a much greater appreciation of the leaders of the city and Commonwealth who are charged with managing these issues.

We realized that our work should ensure that this conversation between city and state leans increasingly towards unity and away from divisiveness. It is also clear that to maximize our potential to become a world-class community, we must optimize the relationship between Louisville and other areas of the state. It is an idea as critical in 2015 as it was when the state seal was commissioned in 1792.

Because the urban-rural divide is a complex issue, there's no one solution to implement real community change. To meet our charge as a class, we have four separate strategies that range from the macro level with broad, statewide considerations, to the micro, grassroots level of change.

MACRO



UNITE KENTUCKY -- a broad, statewide project to research Kentucky's urban-rural divide, providing vital information that will serve as foundation for better collaboration.



THE COMMON WEALTH -- a more focused statewide project linking young leaders, business and civic organizations and individuals to encourage engagement on common interests.



LOUIE (Louisvillians: Organized, United, Informed & Engaged) -- a targeted project to improve outcomes in Frankfort on issues important to Louisville voters by better unifying the legislative delegation and improving constituent engagement.



GROW KENTUCKY -- a micro, grassroots project to connect young people in urban and rural areas through credit-earning classroom farming projects.

MICRO

37

Citizens

10

Months

4

Projects

1

Goal



UNITE KENTUCKY

Researching the attitudes and perspectives of citizens in both urban and rural regions in order to understand the specific nature of this urban-rural divide within, not just the city of Louisville, but within the entire state of Kentucky.

Through intensive study and conversations with government and community leaders inside and outside Kentucky, we found a significant barrier to Louisville bridging the urban-rural divide is the lack of understanding of perspectives of our rural neighbors.

Bingham Fellows' Unite Kentucky team believes that for our city to be successful and thrive, we must have effective working relationships with state government and leaders throughout the state. Essential to building these relationships is an understanding of how Louisville is viewed across the state, as well as the common concerns and values of Kentucky communities large and small.

To uncover this data, we vigorously studied and discussed the research methodology, partners and investment needed. It was decided that Unite Kentucky would conduct a proprietary research project that would include five focus groups, followed by a statewide phone survey. To be as effective and efficient as possible, the team hired professional research partners, Public Opinion Strategies and Global Strategy Group, to collect and analyze the data.

The Unite Kentucky team is raising funds for the \$150,000 investment needed to conclude the project. Already, we've received contributions from major partners fervently agreeing with the concept, method and potential impact of this study, as well as 100% participation from our team.

As this project moves forward, Unite Kentucky will be armed with research findings and will work with stakeholders to build pro-active coalitions and communication approaches that better speak to communities of all types. We envision this cooperative and collaborative approach serving as a model for urban-rural partnerships and being used by all governmental representatives throughout Kentucky.



THE COMMON WEALTH: COMMONALITIES UNITE US

Using the power of conversation and common interests to build trust and relationships that result in active networks and united action.

Kentuckians divide over UK or UofL, Woodford Reserve or Buffalo Trace, Churchill Downs or Keeneland. Yet, outside of Kentucky, without distinctions or preferences, the Commonwealth is recognized for championship basketball, the world's best bourbons, and as the home of thoroughbred horse racing.

Instead of allowing differences to divide us, The Common Wealth proposes using our commonalities to unite us.

In partnership with Leadership Kentucky, The Common Wealth plans to build meaningful connections that ultimately can strengthen the state.

We envision:

- Courageous and meaningful conversations over common topics that lead to understanding and appreciation of the concerns, needs, values and interests of all areas of the state.
- Active engagement of young leaders, who can build on new connections.

development. Leadership Kentucky alumni and other civic and business leaders will facilitate the conversations.

The program also will encourage strategic participant exchanges among leadership programs across Kentucky.

What will develop is an active network, coordinated through Leadership Kentucky, of local leadership program alumni, business, civic and other community leaders.

In time, these newfound connections, based on areas of common interest, can grow into coalitions to drive legislation, secure resources and support, and to ensure lasting, positive change.





LOUIE: A CITIZEN-LEGISLATOR ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Supporting a more unified Louisville legislative delegation, regardless of party, with better engaged constituents, to improve outcomes in Frankfort on issues important to Louisville voters.

LOUIE (Louisvillians: Organized, United, Informed & Engaged) envisions a future where our legislators collaborate across party lines and the people of Louisville are engaged in the legislative process. To realize this vision, LOUIE is working to:

- Increase collaboration among Louisville’s 28-member legislative delegation; and
- Improve citizen engagement by providing Louisville voters with better tools to engage with their legislators.

Louisville’s 28-member delegation needs to form a united Frankfort agenda and develop a shared strategy to promote and move this forward. As our first

step to facilitate this, LOUIE conducted a survey of the Louisville delegation to demonstrate that, despite their party registration or part of town they represent, Louisville legislators share a number of common interests.

Our next strategy to unify the delegation and work across party lines was to establish a series of networking opportunities, called Cafe LOUIE, for legislators to engage with key stakeholders in the community.

A key factor in having a unified Louisville delegation is citizen engagement. Therefore, LOUIE is partnering with iCitizen to beta test version 2.0 of their mobile app in Louisville legislative districts. iCitizen enables citizens and elected officials to easily interact.

To ensure its success, LOUIE will work to promote iCitizen in targeted districts. We’ll also capitalize on the Cafe LOUIE networking sessions to facilitate sustained grassroots engagement, as these offer regular coffee hours during the legislative session.

In addition, LOUIE developed a website to act as a home base for all of these engagement activities.



GROW KENTUCKY

A grassroots approach to the urban-rural divide, that connects high school students from Louisville and Appalachia by having them work on farming projects for classroom credit.

Grow Kentucky is working to improve relationships between the residents of Jefferson County and those in Appalachia by utilizing Project Based Learning as a tool for increased urban-rural collaboration.



Project Based Learning is a method of teaching and learning, sometimes referred to as learning by doing, that focuses on engaging students in investigation. Students work together to solve real-world problems in their schools and communities and can see the

concrete and practical impacts, which become a motivation for additional learning.

By connecting students in Jefferson County with students in Appalachia, we have a unique opportunity to introduce our next generation urban leaders to our future rural leaders. The students will get the chance to build an appreciation for their differences and similarities.

Grow Kentucky has identified teachers in both Jefferson (Fern Creek High School) and Breathitt counties for our pilot project and the curriculum is currently being developed by lead teachers at both locations. We expect 8-10 students in each area to collaborate on shared agricultural curriculum, both via technology and in-person through facilitated site visits. Both sites have existing programs around agriculture,

which is both transferable and scalable as an innovative industry rooted in the cultural heritage of our state.

This learning environment will encourage innovation and entrepreneurship. It will also allow students to explore new economic development models to help them be successful individually, and could ultimately benefit their community.

Ideally, the second phase of this project is to replicate it throughout Kentucky. Success with our initial pilot could open up an opportunity for a network that connects projects throughout the state. Benefits are two-fold, building initial relationships and partnerships between Jefferson County and Breathitt County, and promoting a scalable model for a deeper and more engaging way of learning for Kentucky students.

ABOUT THE BINGHAM FELLOWS

Bingham Fellows is the leadership-in-action arm of the Leadership Louisville Center. Created in 1988 through a \$500,000 endowment from the Mary and Barry Bingham Sr. Fund, the Fellows are social entrepreneurs who have the imagination and talent needed to gather critical resources and create social change. Now in its 23rd year, the Bingham Fellows have had an impressive track record providing emerging issues with visibility and momentum.

The Fellows don't ponder what might be. They roll up their sleeves, shine a spotlight on an issue and put new ideas to work. Last year's class implemented programs in West Louisville to improve early education and employment, as well as the creation of OneWest, a community development corporation. Other recent classes have contributed to the development of a long-term vision for our community, enhanced environmental responsibility through initiatives at the grassroots and policy levels, and helped form the Kentucky Indiana Exchange, a regional leadership coalition. The impact of the Fellows goes back to the 1990's with the creation of The Housing Partnership, construction of the Presbyterian Community Center, growth of local farmers' markets and numerous other positive outcomes.

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ABOUT THE LEADERSHIP LOUISVILLE CENTER

Created in 1979, the Leadership Louisville Center is the region's most valuable resource for leadership development and civic engagement. Its mission is to grow and connect a diverse network of leaders who serve as catalysts for a world-class community through dynamic programming and strong community connections. Over 6,000 community leaders have graduated from the Center's programs that include Leadership Louisville, Focus Louisville, Ignite Louisville, Encore Louisville and Bingham Fellows. In 2011, the Leadership Louisville Center was recognized as one of the top seven community leadership programs in the U.S. in a benchmark study by the Center for Creative Leadership, the "gold standard" global provider of executive leadership education and research.



Focus
Louisville



Ignite
Louisville



Leadership
Louisville



Bingham
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