



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 3, 2019.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

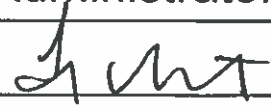
PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Loudoun
Program Title: Lead Loudoun - Leadership Development Program
Program Category: Organizational Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Tim Hemstreet
Title: County Administrator
Signature: 

Virginia Association of Counties Achievement Award Submission

2019 Achievement Program Award Category: *Organizational Development*

Lead Loudoun Leadership Development Program

Overview

LEAD Loudoun is a personalized leadership development program that promotes a culture of leadership at all levels of Loudoun County Government. The program consists of three phases. The first phase being **Maximizing My Potential**, followed by the second phase, **Promoting a Leadership Mindset**, and the ongoing phase, **Sustaining a Leadership Culture**. Approximately 120 leaders is set to complete the program's first phase which focused on leader self-awareness. In the first phase, **LEAD Loudoun: Maximizing My Potential**, leaders completed the Birkman Leader 360 assessment process which is designed to provide feedback and uncover "blind-spots" in nine key leadership competencies; took part in group interpretation and action planning sessions based on the feedback from the Birkman 360; worked with accountability partners; and had the option to participate in individualized coaching. Leaders also participated in workshops on Emotional Intelligence, Unconscious Bias, Leadership Presence, and Work-Life Balance.

Promoting a Leadership Mindset will have a specialized curriculum based on the County Leadership Team's Vision, Mission, and Values. Training will begin with our top leadership and be cascaded throughout the organization so all levels of employees are engaged in the values of leadership and share a common language on how to operationalize these values in daily work. The ongoing phase of the program, **Sustaining a Leadership Culture**, involves ongoing leadership opportunities through dialogue sessions, online resources, and informal leadership development activities.

The Challenge

The most critical need LEAD Loudoun satisfies is the need for self-aware, self-leading County leaders. The program was based on the premise that the leadership journey starts with self-discovery and self-awareness for the purpose of leading one's self first. Only then can a leader be prepared to lead others. Through discussions, climate surveys and general feedback, like most organizations, the County had leaders who were well versed in the technical component of their chosen career field and the technical aspects of leadership but not highly self-aware. LEAD Loudoun provides the tools and resources to assist leaders self-awareness, developing others, and managing outcomes and several other competencies critical to the management and leadership of a growing organization. Many programs encourage a leader 360 assessment, but few combine it with the specific workshops, support, and coaching opportunities that build on that awareness.

The length of the program also provides greater chances of success. Unlike traditional leadership development programs that inundate leaders with a curriculum over a limited time period and leave the implementation completely up to the participant, LEAD Loudoun meets leaders at their individual starting places, combines classroom learning with experiential learning, and allows for the ongoing support and accountability to sustain each leader's development. After many programs, leaders return to the work environment and don't have others to share their development with and to support them as they continue to develop. Through the 360 process, development of a leadership development plan, and the use of accountability partners and coaches, LEAD Loudoun provides a transparency to leadership development that begins to transform the culture. Leaders are encouraged to share their development goals with their teams and supervisor which helps them individually and encourages all to think about and share their own development goals, creating a culture of leader development.

Program Summary

LEAD Loudoun was designed by County Human Resources Staff in consultation with key internal stakeholders to advance and promote leadership as a mindset throughout the County. Due to the many facets of the program, the program design and development took approximately one year. During this time frame, the leadership needs of the County were assessed informally through discussions with Department Directors, County Administration, and feedback at County training classes and teambuilding activities. After developing the framework of the program, formal solicitations were done through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to select four coaching vendors to serve as partners with the ability to provide a diverse pool of certified leadership coaches. Together the firms create a pool of 38 certified leadership coaches. Human Resources Staff created an online coach request process to ensure a seamless process for leaders to be matched to an appropriate leadership coach. Additionally, time and energy was spent selecting the appropriate opening speaker for the program and the best trainers for the key topics of the program: emotional intelligence, leadership presence, and unconscious bias.

In addition to establishing the most effective external partnerships, internal support was also needed to ensure the program would be a success. This included support and involvement of County Administration and Department Directors. County Administration was committed to the program and the County Administrator directly expressed his support of the program at the opening event, sharing his own story and clearly stating his expectations of County leaders to continue to grow and challenge themselves as leaders. Another key step to ensuring the leadership mindset began at the top was having Department Directors participate in a pilot program called *LEAD Loudoun Lite*. This gave directors the opportunity to take the Birkman 360 themselves and articulate the competencies they thought were most important for County leaders at this time.

The pilot program with the directors helped formulate the objectives for the next level of leadership, in most cases Assistant Directors and Division Managers. Department Directors nominated leaders who they thought

would be strong candidates for the program. The program is designed for participants to walk away from the first phase of the program, **LEAD Loudoun: *Maximizing My Potential*** with:

- Increased self-awareness of their current leadership competencies based on the Birkman 360 leadership assessment.
- A leadership development plan that would guide their continued growth as a leader.
- Opportunities for personalized leadership coaching
- Better understanding of bias and what it takes to manage unconscious bias
- Strengthened emotional intelligence
- A solidified leadership brand and presence.

For purposes on this award, the focus is on **LEAD Loudoun: *Maximizing My Potential*** as the first cohort of 75 has completed the program in November 2018 and a second cohort of 45 is set to completed all the required classes and components of the program by June 21, 2019.

KICK-OFF EVENT: *The Power of Personal Leadership* (October 2017)

Lead Loudoun program “kicked-off” with a conference style event. The participants and their department directors were invited to take part in a program orientation hosted by Human Resources Staff, followed by a speech by the County Administrator on his own leadership journey. Following the orientation and the County Administrator’s speech, leaders attended a Leadership Coaching Fair/Exhibition. Each of the County’s coaching partners had their own table and had representative coaches from their firm available to talk with leaders about the coaching experience, selecting a coach and the benefit of leadership coaching. Following the Coaching Fair/Exhibition, Lead Loudoun participants and employees across the organization were invited to the General Session to hear the energetic and dynamic speaker, Sonia Aranza who spoke on the *Power of Personal Leadership*. She used humor and over 20 years of global leadership experience to encourage leaders to explore and enhance their own personal leadership in their daily work and life outside of the office. For employees who could not attend the General Session in person, Human Resources Staff worked with

Staff from the Department of Information Technology to webcast the General Session, allowing these employee to listen from their work location or via on-demand at a future date.

BIRKMAN 360 AND ACTION PLANNING PROCESS

The Birkman 360 process required leaders to provide a list of possible raters to include direct reports, peers, their manager(s), and others. They also designated the competencies that they felt were most important in their roles right now. The Birkman 360 was chosen as it best met the competency needs of the County. The nine competencies measured through the Birkman include:

Ensuring long term results	Leading Others	Building Strong Teams
Managing Outcomes	Delegating to Others	Developing Others
Making Decisions	Dealing with Conflicting Ideas	Personal/Professional Growth

The 360 process was administered by one of the County's coaching partners and included a follow-up group interpretation session and a separate action planning session. Both were offered five separate times to keep the classroom size to a maximum of 25. This was the first time many of the leaders had been through a 360 process and the intent of the experience was to open them up to new perspectives that highlight their leadership strengths and possible areas of growth. It also opened up the culture to being more feedback friendly. While the interpretation session allowed leaders to learn how to read their reports and absorb their feedback, the action planning session gave leaders the rare opportunity to create their own leadership development plan including a vision statement and overarching goals with realistic action steps. Leaders were encouraged to select an accountability partner from the session that balanced their own strengths and areas of growth and to check in with that individual throughout the program to help them stay accountable to someone on their progress.

OPTIONAL COACHING

The optional leadership coaching process is a strong enhancement to the program. As with the overall program, it was important to get Department Director buy-in on the value of leadership coaching for their leaders as the budget for the coaching sessions comes from each individual department. Two factors made this easier. The first is the quality of the chosen coaches and the set fee agreed upon through the RFP process. Each coach is certified with a minimum of ten years of experience as a coach. The second factor was the streamlined nature of the process. Again, Human Resources Staff worked closely with staff from the Department of Information Technology to develop an online approval process which goes directly to Department Directors and a separate online form that allows leaders to designate what they want to work on. This form goes to the coaching vendors and each recommends one coach that would best match the leader's needs. This way the leader can choose from four coaches rather than thirty-eight. To date, 52 leaders chose to participate in the process and are at various stages of completion.

REQUIRED WORKSHOPS

After completion of the Birkman 360 process, leaders had three required, interactive workshops to attend over the span of nine months. The workshops were offered multiple times and allowed leaders the flexibility to integrate the learning with their daily work. The below required topics solidified leaders self-awareness of who they are as a leader and equipped them with a strong foundation for the rest of the program.

Emotional Intelligence: This workshop focuses on the importance of being aware of, understanding, and effectively managing one's own emotions in the workplace, as well as the emotions of those he/she works with regularly.

Leadership Presence: This workshop is designed to assist leaders in creating their own leadership brand platform with guidance on being aware of how they show up to work (leadership presence) in positive situations as well as uncomfortable and stressful situations.

Unconscious Bias: This workshop enhances leaders' awareness of how their background, personal experiences, and societal stereotypes may influence their judgements of people and situations at work without them even realizing it. It also provides tools for managing bias when needed.

OPTIONAL LEADERSHIP CAFES (ongoing)

Throughout the year program, leaders had the option to attend informal leadership cafes. Topics ranged from enhancing the coaching experience, work-life balance, and TED Talk discussions on the 5 Levels of leadership. The informal nature of these sessions allowed leaders to have open dialogue around tough issues, to continue to support each other in their development, and to learn more practical tips for leadership.

COST

The total cost for the program is approximately \$1,450 investment in each participating leader. The cost per leader includes, attending the Kick-off conference style event, the Birkman 360 assessment; the 360 feedback interpretation session, attending the required workshops and a celebratory luncheon. Going forward, the cost per participating leader in subsequent cohorts is drastically reduced as the administration on the Birkman 360 is now being done a Human Resources Staff member.

In addition to the standard cost per participant, leaders who participate in the optional coaching sessions, incur an additional cost of \$250-\$310/coaching session. The average leader is approved for five coaching sessions.

RESULTS / SUCCESS

The investment of the County in its leaders both financially and through the personalized curriculum has led to a definite upgrade in the level of training offered. The success of the program can be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively, 100% of the program evaluation respondents rated the program as excellent or very good. In addition, each of the required workshops, received a rating above 90% as its overall rating with 98% of participants stating they would recommend the workshops to others. In

addition, having 52 leaders engage in the coaching process demonstrates significant interest in a program that only launched less than two year ago.

The greater success can be seen through the continued interest in the program and the willingness of Phase I program graduates to want to mentor and continue to pass on leadership development to others just starting the program. Hearing leaders share with others the tips they received through coaching truly begins the mindset shift needed to have a culture of leadership at all levels. Knowing that 120 County leaders can confidently state that they now have a leadership vision and a development plan to help them continue to grow as a leader speaks to the program success and seeing the appreciation of leaders for the County's investment in their development continues to increase the program's impact on individuals and the County as a whole.

Worthiness of the Award

LEAD Loudoun meets the eligibility and program criteria described in the award packet. Specifically the program began in October 2017 and is currently operational; the program was designed by County Human Resources Staff in collaboration with other key stake holders within County Leadership; the program offers an innovative approach to leadership development and self-awareness; and provides a model that other local government entities may learn from.

LEAD Loudoun is a personalized approach to leadership development with a continuous path of support and new development opportunities that go beyond traditional training methods. Through the cascading of the leadership concepts through all levels of the workforce, it provides an innovative outlook to leadership development that all leaders can grasp since it is specific to each leader and their role within the County. The combined use of the leadership development plan, accountability partners, leadership coaching, and targeted learning opportunities provides a blended approach to learning as the County works toward creating leaders at all levels of the organization.

Executive Summary

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