



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2020.** 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 Henrico

Program Title: Emerging Leaders: Professional Development for Non-Supervisors

Program Category: Organizational Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Victoria Davis

Title: Public Relations Specialist

Department: Public Realties


Telephone: 804-501-4933 **Website:** www.henrico.us

Email: dav127@henrico.us

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Brandon Hinton

Title: Deputy County Manager for Administration

Signature: 

Program Overview

Henrico County expects employees to resolve customer concerns without an abundance of red tape and to demonstrate leadership regardless of title. This requires an empowered workforce with the skills and support to step out of traditional hierarchical roles and take personal accountability for success. The Emerging Leaders (EL) program provides non-supervisors with the framework, tools, and experiences to strengthen their leadership skills, self-awareness, and initiative. Participants invest in their own development; support and collaborate with others; and make an impact at every level of the organization. Comprised of four challenging levels, EL became fully operational in 2018 with active, engaged participants in all levels.

The results are clear and resounding. We have received 687 applications – from every department, from diverse job titles, with six months to 40 years’ service, and with ages ranging from 20-71. Forty-nine employees have been promoted to supervisor and state that EL was pivotal to their success. Just as powerful, numerous current participants assert that EL has empowered them to speak up, share ideas, display initiative, and take leadership – a significant achievement both for them and for Henrico County.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

Henrico County has a vision of *Leadership at All Levels*. Non-supervisors and supervisors alike are expected to share their ideas and take ownership for providing innovative solutions as well as excellent customer service. While the county’s Leadership Development Program (LDP) focuses on developing supervisors’ leadership skills, there was no corresponding program for non-supervisors.

This needed to change. Not only would a leadership development program for non-supervisors help participants develop the skills and confidence to contribute even more in their current roles, it would also: 1) create a talent pipeline for succession management; 2) engage employees who had not previously accessed professional development services; and 3) give managers a tool for attracting, developing, engaging, and retaining high quality employees. Perhaps most importantly, it would demonstrate the county's commitment to the concept of *Leadership at all Levels*, providing front line employees with career development, recognition, and prestige.

How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

It is extraordinary how much impact a single idea can have. Now imagine those ideas coming from anyone in the organization. Having a truly engaged workforce, empowered to act where necessary and resolve problems at the lowest possible level, is priceless to our organization. Through the help of Emerging Leaders, Henrico County is a place where non-supervisors take personal accountability to lead and all employees are focused on service.

These values are what EL is all about: creating a workforce where all employees feel confident in their decision making; who are knowledgeable about county functions; who have a robust network of peers with whom to collaborate; and who take responsibility to lead for the betterment of our citizens.

Employees who take part in EL report that they feel connected to a greater whole, and they feel appreciated and empowered to share who they are, not just what they do. They truly embody the county's vision of *Leadership at all Levels* and other people notice: their peers scramble to join the program and their supervisors rave about how formerly hesitant employees now sign up to lead committees and rally their peers on challenging days. And while the program was not

designed to get people promoted, participants who had not previously thought of themselves as leaders now apply for promotions – and get them! – thanks to the increased confidence and knowledge gained from EL.

Best of all, this program is replicable for any locality. All it takes is dedicated staff who are willing to engage in a vision of *Leadership at all Levels*.

How Program Was Carried Out

As Henrico's County Manager consistently shared his vision and expectation of *Leadership at All Levels*, it became clear that we needed a program to support non-supervisors in their professional development. Demonstrating *Leadership at All Levels* herself, a non-supervisor in the Organizational Learning and Talent Development (OLTD) division of Human Resources led her team in creating a program with the objectives of: 1) enhancing individual leadership skills; 2) empowering employees to effectively serve customers; 3) creating a forum for non-supervisors to learn from others by engaging in experiential projects, discussion groups, collaboration, and classroom experiences; and 4) creating a framework for individual contributions that enhances the reputation and services provided by Henrico County.

Potential participants are required to apply to the program by outlining their goals for joining and describe how EL will help them achieve these goals. The application serves the dual purpose of putting accountability on employees to demonstrate effort and commitment to personal development right from the start, and of giving OLTD the information to ensure that the program is right for participants based on their stated goals. If applicants do not follow the application guidelines and cannot state their goals for joining, OLTD gives them feedback to help them be more successful the next time they apply. Applicants need to be non-supervisors and must have

been with the county for more than six months to allow them time to learn their job responsibilities prior to joining EL.

The program includes:

- A focus on distinct elements of effective leadership as participants progress through four levels of the Emerging Leaders process:
 - Level I: *Understanding the Business of Henrico County and Communication*
 - Level II: *Serving Customers*
 - Level III: *Self-Awareness and Leading and Influencing*
 - Level IV: *Empowering to Give Back*
- Discussion groups facilitated by an OLTD trainer and consisting of approximately ten people per group to allow for full participation, rapport, networking, and developing trust.

Some topics discussed in these facilitated conversations include:

- Communication Styles
 - Circles of Concern and Influence
 - Delivering and Receiving Feedback
 - Serving customers proactively
 - Defining Core Values
 - Emotional Intelligence
 - Resiliency
- Projects in which participants apply their learning to a current challenge they or their sections are facing, or in which they can grow their skills. Some examples include:
 - Meet with someone in a similar role and share best practices
 - Shadow someone in another role
 - Crosstrain with another employee

- Identify and interview stakeholders about how they advanced in their careers
 - Read a NACo Award submission to discover innovative programs and ideas
 - Write an article or web content related to a professional specialty or a service
 - Serve on a committee or become a department representative for a cross-functional team
- Classes in various professional development topics to prepare participants for leadership success, such as:
- What it takes to be a leader
 - Presentation skills
 - Conflict management
 - Inclusive leadership
 - Engaging in difficult conversations
 - Generational differences
- Reflection is a big part of the program. In the Spring of each year, participants meet with all others in their level to have in-depth discussions about the following:
- Learning and successes
 - Highlights from classes or discussion groups they attended
 - Projects they completed
 - Application of learning to their workplaces
- In the final level, participants read their original program application and reflect on how they have met their goals and grown in all four levels of the program. They also choose a personal leadership goal to work on in this level, such as improving a process, improving self-management, or actively taking leadership on the job. Finally, they do group presentations for the members of Levels I-III that highlight their creativity and collaboration and that focus on an element of leadership.

OLTLD completed the final design of all four levels of Emerging Leaders on July 1, 2017, and the program became fully operational in 2018 with participants in all four levels and the launch of an awards ceremony to officially celebrate the Level IV participants. During the ceremony these employees eat lunch with the county manager and engage in informal conversation, which is a valuable opportunity for these accomplished non-supervisors to share insights and learning, and for the county manager to share his thoughts and appreciation with them. Inspired by the concept of class valedictorian, a member of Level IV elected by his or her peers then presents a short speech to attendees – which include the department heads of each participant – sharing insights discovered throughout the four EL levels.

Financing and Staffing

There was no capital cost incurred in the development of this program, and operating costs consisted primarily of staff time. Program coordinators are salaried employees in HR, and facility costs are nonexistent due to meeting at county sites. Program materials are available online and require only that each employee complete and print two pages per level. Level II participants each receive binders in which to store materials at a cost of \$1.06 per binder. Two of the required classes use outside vendors at a cost of \$1080 for one and \$1400 for the other. These vendors bring specific expertise that adds depth to the program, although the content could be taught internally if these costs become a burden. The program culminates with an Award ceremony/luncheon costing \$2,800. Maintaining the program does not cost the county any additional money.

Program Results

OLTD has received a total of 687 applications from every county department, and 81% of applicants have been accepted into the program.

The first graduating class raved about all they had learned in the program, including:

- *Each of us had to work more independently. We had to learn how to listen, follow, lead, and work as a team, and know when to be a leader and when to be a supporter.*
- *I feel I now have a voice. I have learned how to appropriately share my thoughts and I find myself pushing myself out of my comfort zone more often.*
- *My colleagues inspired me and contributed to my growth with their heart, wisdom, and insight.*
- *I learned to recognize my own and others' value, so that we can all step up and lead in the right time.*
- *I discovered that I am an important part of a complex organization that wants me to think above my job title and understand the bigger picture.*

Participants from all levels have reported significant application of learning:

- *I became more self- and socially aware and have made a conscious effort to be less critical.*
- *I have gained political astuteness, which has been instrumental in my development.*
- *I have improved my customer service, both internally and externally.*
- *My confidence level is off the charts compared to what it was when I started.*

A significant theme echoed by participants is the benefit of networking with peers:

- *Receiving feedback on how others have handled situations helped me turn challenges into successes.*
- *I have been able to contact people from other departments to better serve customers.*

- *My peers have provided perspective and given me different viewpoints to consider.*
- *I have been with the county for over 19 years, and this program is the first opportunity I have had to learn what other agencies do.*

While EL is not designed expressly for this purpose, 49 participants have been promoted and shared the following about how EL prepared them for formal leadership:

- *EL has helped me ask questions to prioritize what's important; give clear directions regarding deadlines for assignments; and work with my staff to get things done.*
- *Without EL, I'm not sure I would have gotten promoted. I am now much more self-aware, and I take the time to respond and act differently than I would have before.*
- *I have learned SO much about myself and the type of leader I am, like how to receive constructive feedback to strengthen my leadership. I'm grateful to have participated in EL and know the skills I've developed will be a huge asset as I take on this new role.*
- *The leadership skills I learned in the program became a part of my everyday job performance.*
- *Without the lessons learned through my experience in EL, I would not be where I am today.*

Participants' supervisors have acknowledged performance improvements such as: taking on more projects, stepping up to lead committees, and altering communication. For example, a supervisor reported that one EL participant now "asks questions before speaking." This type of feedback has resulted in positive performance appraisals and recommendations that more of their employees apply for EL.

Brief Summary

Henrico County has an expectation of *Leadership at All Levels*, which means having empowered employees who take responsibility to lead for the betterment of our organization and our citizens. This requires that employees have the confidence and knowledge to make decisions and solve problems without being limited by their titles. EL was created to meet this need, providing non-supervisors with the framework, tools, and learning experiences to strengthen their leadership skills, self-awareness, and initiative.

EL is made up of four challenging levels, and participants have invested in their own development; learned about diverse county functions; and created a robust network of peers with whom to collaborate. Applications continue to increase, and participants come from all departments and represent a wide variety of ages and years of service. The first class graduated in 2018 and since then, emeritus members have offered to come back and volunteer their time mentoring current EL members. Forty-nine participants have been promoted to supervisor and state that EL was pivotal to their success.

The program has been transformational and there's a genuine excitement about a leadership program designed expressly for non-supervisors. Participants have had a profound impact on the organization, sharing multiple stories about pushing themselves out of their comfort zones and displaying initiative; having a voice and the confidence to share their thoughts and ideas; raising their self-awareness and strengthening their leadership skills; and feeling appreciated, empowered, and connected to a greater whole – a significant achievement both for them and for Henrico County.