LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the goal of the Program?
A: The program goal is to connect, empower and equip a participant’s ability to take on leadership roles in community, business, and civic arenas. The course provides a solid foundation for understanding the three E’s of sustainability: Equity, Environment and Economy. Through speakers and trainers, participants examine systemic barriers to achieving sustainability and how to grow their influence in identifying and respectfully implementing solutions at a personal, community, and policy scale.

We accomplish this by providing current and historic information about a broad range of issues that impact sustainability (meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs), personal resilience (the quality that allows a person who has faced challenges in life to come back at least as strong (or stronger) as before), and transformative action (intentional shifts in awareness, patterns of thinking, and habits of action made for positive personal and social change).

Perhaps most importantly, the program provides a network of associates with whom to remain in contact and thereby continue the lively exchange of ideas that characterize the Leadership Institute program.

Q: What makes this program unique?
A: Our training approach integrates head and heart with the need to address the complex and interconnected issues of heightened polarization, extreme inequity, racial violence, and the deadly impacts of climate change.

We do this by combining mind body medicine practices, inspirational speakers, and trauma-informed self-care with tools for nonviolent communication, stress management, and systems thinking. We begin the year by celebrating the cultures and wisdom of local Indigenous Tribes, upon whose land we live. We start each class with an acknowledgement of the land we are on as a practice to begin much needed repair of relationships with our local Indigenous Tribes.

Our three-pillar framework holds this holistic approach, starting with Personal Leadership to clarify and operate from your purpose and strengths, moving into Civic Engagement to learn how to use your power to take civic action, and culminates in Collective Power as we provide community and relationship building skills to collaborate across differences.

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” – President Barack Obama

Q: What knowledge, skills, or experience should I already have to make the best use of the course?
A: To make the best use of the course you will come with good study habits and some experience in leading groups: e.g. setting priorities, analyzing problems, exploring possible solutions, and communicating ideas clearly through various methods. It will help if you have some basic knowledge of local and regional sustainability issues and current efforts to mitigate them.

Q: What knowledge, skills, or experience can I expect to gain?
A: For a complete view of the curriculum, visit our website dailyacts.org/leadershipinstitute or click here.
Q: What involvement, if any, is expected after completing the training?
A: Upon completion of the course, you will have the opportunity to participate in the Fellows Network which provides educational opportunities, informal gatherings, and other forums for exchanging information and discussing current issues. You will be encouraged to stay engaged with the Leadership Institute and contribute your knowledge and other resources to our on-going curriculum development and outreach.

Q: I already know about sustainability and regenerative systems, so why should I take your course?
A: Wherever you are in your knowledge of sustainability, you will be able to expand that knowledge and apply it to the local civic and business environment. You will learn more about the people who are making a difference in our communities, and you will have the opportunity to discuss the most urgent issues with them. As Covid allows, you will see first-hand, the venues – organic farms, schools, and/or community hubs– that serve as models for local sustainability.

Q: How will this course help me better serve my organization?
A: All organizations benefit from connected and networked leadership with increased access to intellectual, political, and social resources. This course will help your organization understand how you can collaborate with local governments or grassroots organizations to establish local policies and programs.

Q: How will this course help me better serve my agency?
A: This program helps folks who work for local government to better understand their communities and develop more well-rounded programming. It strengthens and creates new relationships with grassroots organizations, allowing for more impactful community engagement and outreach. Additionally, it offers space to explore diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) work through the lens of building relationships and collaborating across difference.

Q: Will this program help me get a job?
A: The old adage says “It’s not what you know but who you know” that matters in job selection. This program offers both information (the what), and access to decision-makers in a wide range of fields. The rest will be up to you.

Q: What is the estimated time commitment in addition to the scheduled class times?
A: There will be 5-10 hours of additional time outside of class required for readings, homework and the project.

Q: Where will the classes be held?
A: Once permitted by Covid Health Orders, each class is held at a different location throughout Sonoma County. The sites are chosen to highlight or reflect the topic of the day. The classes are held in comfortable classrooms which encourage a collaborative learning environment. Until we are able to meet in person, classes will be held via Zoom.
Q: What does a typical class day look like?

A: Generally, inspirational subject matter experts join in the morning to present and engage in dialogue on the topic of the day. Presentations are given by local experts on current issues and are mixed with guided tours to illustrate the topics covered. After lunch, we focus on interactive skills building, self-care practices, small group activities, facilitated peer-learning, and/or project work.

Q: I’ve heard there is a project required for this class. What does that involve?

A: The leadership project teams are formed at the start of the program. Topics are chosen based on the unique interests of each group, and the teams will meet for a portion of each of the remaining class days to design and implement their own project or projects. There is a great deal of flexibility within these groups, and the students are responsible for coming up with the most effective ways and means to address the specific topic(s) they choose to work on. Each team defines the project’s scope and implementation methods, and how often they meet outside of class depends on the needs of the team and the requirements of the project. Our graduation in June will showcase the accomplishments of the project groups through displays and presentations.

Q: When will I have time to interact with and learn from Institute fellows and classmates?

A: The small group activities, leadership projects, and social hours provide time in class for interaction and networking. We encourage you to talk to as many people as possible during the breaks and lunch and to attend or organize additional Leadership Institute functions to get the most out of the Fellows Network.