



National Association of
Conservation Districts



Guide to Leadership Development Training Programs

March 2025

Introduction

Conservation districts and partners need strong leaders as we navigate new challenges every day. To stay engaged at every level of these challenges and emerging issues, it is important to train new leaders and provide continued growth opportunities for existing leaders in the field of conservation.

This guide compiles leadership development training programs from across the country that offer opportunities for personal and professional growth to individuals. NACD does not endorse any specific program in this guide but provides them as a resource for individuals looking to build or refine their leadership skills.

The programs in this guide are listed in alphabetical order of the states or territories that conduct these programs. Each program listing includes the program title, a link to the website for more information, and a brief description of the training.



Please consider submitting any additional programs to NACD by emailing Beth Mason, North Central Region Representative, at beth-mason@nacdnet.org. This guide will be updated as more programs and training opportunities are submitted for inclusion.

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Alaska

[The Foraker Group](#)

The Foraker Group is a 501(c)(3) organization whose core purpose is to strengthen nonprofits in Alaska. The organization provides Leadership Development Programs, which include Leadership Consultation, Mentoring and Coaching, Interim Executive Directors, Rasmuson Foundation Sabbatical, Staff Facilitation, Leadership Development Courses, a Leadership Summit, and much more. The Alaska Association of Conservation Districts is a member of the organization and provides their training, services, and resources to conservation districts in Alaska. The Foraker Group is active only in Alaska.

Arkansas

[Leadership Arkansas](#)

Leadership Arkansas is a unique program designed to take a comprehensive view of the economic and political challenges in Arkansas. Through this program, participants experience first-hand the dynamic interactions between cities, industries, governmental units, and the people they serve. Sessions include an annual educational, issues-oriented nine-month class program held as eight day-and-a-half sessions within various communities throughout the state. Successful applicants will be seen as most likely to use their leadership abilities and skills for the long-term benefit of the State of Arkansas.

Alabama

[Leadership Alabama](#)

Leadership Alabama is a statewide nonprofit organization that brings together a class of 60-70 participants for four two-day retreats each fall. The program's objective is to present a series of issues-oriented forums based on the belief that knowledge is a key element and prime motivator of leadership. Class members visit communities across the state, and as they seek a mutual understanding of the state's problems and priorities, they also seek to invent vital solutions to the challenges that define the future of Alabama.

Arizona

[Arizona Center for Rural Leadership](#)

Arizona Center for Rural Leadership is all about cultivating passionate educated leaders who provide a voice for and serve rural communities in Arizona. Arizona Center for Rural Leadership has been shaping our state since 1983 through *three dynamic programs*.

1. The flagship program, Project CENTRL, is a twelve-month, experiential-learning leadership development program.
2. Alumni in Action: a network of over 700 alumni working at the grassroots, local, county, state, and national levels to improve the quality of life in rural Arizona.
3. Make a Difference projects: identify needs, gather teams, and influence change by training leaders, inspiring action, and getting things done to transform rural Arizona into a vibrant, healthy, and sustainable place.

[Flinn Foundation: Arizona Center for Civic Leadership](#)

The Flinn Foundation's Civic Exchange (CivEx) is a program that helps Arizonans deepen their commitment to public service, grapple with complex problems, and explore different viewpoints.

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Participants include individuals who may be running for office or work in government, individuals who seek to help strengthen their organization to make a greater difference in the community, and individuals who want to deepen their personal civic engagement and leadership outside their day jobs. All sessions are virtual, with nonprofit executives, government agency heads, academic researchers, and private-sector innovators as presenters.

Colorado

[Leadership Colorado Program](#)

Leadership Colorado is a nine-month program that offers exclusive insight into the workings of prominent Colorado companies through business tours and policy-based forums with key Colorado executives and officials. Participants learn about policy issues impacting their business and community while developing a working understanding of business advocacy. Tours will be fascinating “insider” looks at businesses while integrating policy issues focused on Healthcare, Labor & Employment, Tax, Energy & Environment, Manufacturing, and Federal Affairs. The Colorado Chamber staffers, key legislators, and congressional staffers may be brought in for specific expertise.

[Colorado Change Leader Program](#)

The Colorado Change Leader Program builds effective and ethical leaders and leadership pipelines for stronger Colorado creative communities and industries.

The program is made up of:

- A Change Leader Institute
- A Change Leader Implementation Project
- An annual Change Leader alumni convening at the CCI Summit
- An alumni network
- Opportunities for funding to support alumni professional development and mentorship

Georgia

[Georgia Tech Professional Education \(GTPE\): Professional Leadership Certificate](#)

The Professional Leadership Certificate is focused on assisting emerging leaders to accelerate their careers by differentiating their leadership skills and business acumen through education and self-discovery. The certificate will generate high-value returns and practical results for organizations while preparing leaders for today's ever-changing business environments. You will gain a broader understanding of core business operations while enhancing critical leadership skills to navigate business environments driven by innovation and global markets. Required courses are segmented into three focused areas of learning: leading from within, leading others, and leading organizations.

Guam

[Guam Community College: Leadership Training and Development](#)

The Center for Student Involvement assists students in realizing their leadership potential through training and development opportunities tailored to fit the needs of students. Through leadership development, students are empowered and equipped with the additional skills they can utilize in the classroom and in the workplace.

Idaho

[Leadership Idaho Agriculture \(LIA\)](#)

Leadership Idaho Agriculture (LIA) is recognized as a premier leadership development program in the state of Idaho. LIA is the only leadership organization in Idaho that works to directly cultivate leaders in agriculture - the state's biggest and most influential industry. Since 1985, LIA has been offering a concentrated, hands-on learning experience to enhance and build leadership qualities, while developing advocates for agriculture and rural communities who will serve as a voice for the industry for generations to come.

Illinois

[Illinois Agricultural Leadership Foundation \(IALF\): Illinois Ag Leadership Program \(IALP\)](#)

This 19-month program takes a holistic and immersive approach to addressing the most critical and urgent food security and sustainability issues through a series of seminars featuring leading practitioners in business, education, and government.

What you will gain through IALP:

- Develop essential tools to enhance leadership skills and strengths.
- Acquire strong communication skills.
- Deal effectively, competently, and confidently with complicated issues and challenges that affect Illinois and national agriculture.
- Understand, articulate, and confront different perspectives on issues or challenges.
- Respond proactively to challenges that affect organizations, businesses, and communities.
- Learn to convert a vision into action through effective and appropriate planning, communication, and motivation.
- Strengthen effectiveness in organizing and utilizing teams.

Indiana

[Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy](#)

The Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy, organized by Purdue University with support from conservation agencies, trains individuals such as watershed coordinators, teachers, and volunteers to lead efforts that improve water quality in Indiana. Participants learn about leadership, watershed science, communication, and policy, while gaining practical skills, networking with peers, and earning a Professional Certificate in Watershed Management.

[AgriInstitute](#)

AgriInstitute prepares leaders to advance agriculture and serve the industry's related communities. AgriInstitute serves a robust network of agriculture and rural leaders through leadership development and meaningful dialogue on matters that enhance the capacity of the industry's most important asset – People. Programming to support leadership and communication about important agriculture and rural community topics is at the core of all AgriInstitute initiatives.

Indiana Agricultural Leadership Program

This program offers seminars to enhance leadership and personal development for those in agriculture and related industries. Since 1983, ALP has helped participants improve leadership skills, understand

agricultural issues, and prepare for leadership roles in public and private service. The program includes 12 seminars and travel opportunities, such as a week in Washington, D.C., and international study, to broaden participants' perspectives on social, economic, political, and cultural issues.

Leadering Essentials

Led by expert consultants, the interactive programs help participants gain new skills or improve existing ones for greater success. While focused on agriculture and related industries, the training is applicable to any sector. With a maximum group size of 30, the programs ensure a dynamic and effective learning experience that can be immediately applied in both work and community settings.

Thought Leaders' Luncheons

The Thought Leaders' programs bring together industry and business leaders from across Indiana to discuss important agricultural topics. These programs aim to foster thoughtful dialogue to advance Indiana's key economic sectors. They cover a variety of subjects and occasionally include tours. Open to anyone interested, the programs provide an excellent opportunity for networking with professionals from the agriculture and related industries statewide.

Iowa

[Iowa Association of Business and Industry: Leadership Iowa](#)

Leadership Iowa is Iowa's premier issues-awareness program promoting leadership and civic responsibility in Iowa. Through an integrated series of eight monthly sessions, participants are provided with a wide range of eye-opening experiences and insights that highlight the opportunities and challenges facing Iowa.

The diverse topics of Leadership Iowa sessions typically include agriculture, education, government, healthcare, economic development, advanced manufacturing, workforce, and other pertinent subjects. Each session features unique interactive experiences, discussions with industry experts, collaborative group activities, industry tours, networking opportunities, and more.

[Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute](#)

The Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute prepares leaders from across Central Iowa to be effective stewards for the community's future. The nine-month curriculum offers a view of Greater Des Moines from different vantage points, heightens participant awareness of current community conditions and issues, enhances individual and group leadership skills, and helps class members see themselves as partners for change.

The curriculum includes leadership development training and exposure to community issues through experiential learning, expert presentations, and class discussions. The three pillars of the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute includes: Issues and Opportunity Awareness, Leadership Development, and Creativity for Change.

[Iowa Farm Bureau: Ag Leaders Institute](#)

The Ag Leaders institute prepares leaders for the Farm Bureau, agriculture, and rural Iowa now and into the future. This is an opportunity for Farm Bureau members of all ages who care about the future of agriculture and want to make a positive impact, have the potential for providing exceptional leadership in their community, county, and state, and are interested in advancing in leadership positions within

Farm Bureau and agriculture. Participants learn about the latest information and insights on issues important to agriculture, practice in developing the leadership skills needed to deal with issues critical to agriculture and leading change, and develop a statewide network of leaders in Farm Bureau and agriculture who are committed to the future of rural Iowa.

Kansas

[Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership \(KARL\) Program](#)

KARL identifies, prepares, and connects aspiring leaders to spark action that will positively impact Kansas agriculture and rural communities.

Through a two-year leadership program comprised of up to 30 individuals from across Kansas, participants are challenged to think differently and are connected to the people and resources that can help them transform organizations, communities, the state, and the world.

[The Kansas Chamber: Leadership Kansas Program](#)

Leadership Kansas is a statewide program designed to enhance and motivate future leaders from various Kansas communities. This training emphasizes leadership skills and development. Class members meet with recognized experts from a vast array of fields and professions to engage in educational and informational training sessions in six different Kansas communities. Discussion topics are diverse and may include business, education, agriculture, public policy, societal health and development, economics, and government — all of which contribute to the personal and professional development of each class member.

Kentucky

[University of Kentucky: Kentucky Agricultural Leadership Program](#)

The Kentucky Agricultural Leadership Program (KALP) is an intensive two-year program designed for young agricultural producers and agribusiness individuals who want to further develop their leadership skills.

The program consists of eleven sessions devoted to important/timely issues affecting agriculture and focused on improving participant's communication, leadership, and management skills. Seven seminars will be held in varying regions of Kentucky to compare and contrast challenges and solutions in agricultural practices. Classes also visit Frankfort, Washington, D.C., another area of the United States, and other nation(s).

[Leadership Kentucky](#)

Their goal is to prepare participants to take an active role in advancing the state for the common good.

Through a series of seven monthly, two-day sessions held in various locations in the state, participants are educated about the state of Kentucky and its challenges. They meet and talk with Kentucky's current leaders and, through a systematic educational program, explore the state's opportunities, needs, and resources. Kentucky's rich cultural heritage and its unique diversity are woven throughout the curriculum, which features the state's economy, education, health and human services, law and justice, and environment. In addition, Leadership Kentucky provides a thought-provoking experience focusing on the attributes of leadership and what it means to be a leader. By visiting various regions of the

Commonwealth, the participants develop an enhanced view and a new meaning to the word community that spans the entire state.

Maine

[Maine Development Foundation \(MDF\): Leadership Maine Program](#)

The Leadership Maine curriculum is designed for leaders from all sectors and all regions of Maine to learn individually and as a cohort. Participants travel together to different regions of the state to learn from each other and from host businesses/communities in real time through on-the-ground sessions. In the process, they also hone relationship/team building and collaboration skills. Each Leadership Maine class is given real-life challenges to address. Participants work in teams to address the assigned issue, connect with key stakeholders, organizations, and groups, and develop a solution-oriented path with the goal of improving the economy.

Michigan

[Michigan State University \(MSU\) Extension: The Great Lakes Leadership Academy \(GLLA\) Emerging Leaders Program \(ELP\)](#)

The mission of the Great Lakes Leadership Academy (GLLA) is *“to promote positive change, economic vitality, and resource conservation, and to enhance the quality of life in Michigan by encouraging leadership for the common good.”* The GLLA Emerging Leader Program (ELP) pursues this mission through a series of three, four-day sessions during a calendar year. The ELP is a journey down four intertwined paths: understanding self, navigating differences with others, working in groups, and exploring the Common Good.

The ELP provides both classroom-based and experiential learning. Participants spend time together practicing what they learn as a group; interacting and focusing on common as well as individual goals; and collaborating on projects that require networking over distance, sharing ideas, solving problems, and holding each other accountable. Each participant is matched with an ELP Alumnus as a mentor.

[Michigan State University \(MSU\) Extension: Facilitative Leadership Program](#)

The three-day Facilitative Leadership workshop helps build the capacity of groups or organizations to use the collective talents of their members to coordinate actions, strengthen relationships, and enable the group to meet its goals.

The program is designed to build and strengthen the skills and personal confidence necessary to lead and facilitate productive meetings. MSU Extension offers the program twice each year, in the spring and fall. The goal of Facilitative Leadership is to provide participants with practical, hands-on experience using group facilitation tools and techniques to work more effectively with business work teams and community organizations. During this all-inclusive retreat, participants will practice leadership strategies, using the tools, techniques, and verbal skills necessary to lead group discussions, reach consensus, set outcome-based goals, and use flip charts and other recording tools. Process tools for brainstorming, analyzing ideas, decision-making, and planning will be shared.

Minnesota

[MASWCD Leadership Cohort Institute](#)

The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) Leadership Institute offers a research-based curriculum designed for new leaders who want to develop their leadership skills, as well as established leaders who want to gain skills in leading today's diverse workforce. In this program, participants will prepare to become an authentic, purposeful leader. This dynamic, educational experience aims to help participants build leadership skills, confidence, and professional networks. This program is a one-year commitment with seven in-person sessions.

Key leadership concepts featured in this program include:

- Understanding your motivational drivers, emotional intelligence, and communication methods to establish a personal leadership style
- Creating a vision and moving to action
- Dealing with dilemmas ethically
- Strengthening team leadership
- Taking charge of your professional development as you navigate the challenges of transitioning from an individual contributor to a leader

Missouri

[Missouri Chamber Foundation: Leadership Missouri](#)

Through the Missouri Chamber Foundation, the Leadership Missouri program was created on the belief that Missouri communities, just as any business or organization, require strong leadership to improve and grow. Founded in 1990, Leadership Missouri aims to identify current and emerging leaders throughout the state, enhance their leadership skills, and deepen their knowledge of the state's opportunities and challenges. In May of each year, the selected participants begin a series of seven monthly, two-day sessions.

[The Greater Missouri Leadership Foundation: The Greater Missouri Leadership Challenge](#) (for women)

Established in 1990, the Greater Missouri Leadership Challenge is the marquee program of the Greater Missouri Leadership Foundation. The Challenge is a year-long, statewide traveling symposium that provides women leaders with education and experiences to assist them in addressing critical issues facing Missouri. The sessions begin in March and conclude in November of each year.

Participants meet for four three-day sessions combining:

- Continuing education in leadership development
- Discussion of statewide policy issues
- Exposure to the philosophies and thoughts of the state's business, cultural, educational, and political leaders
- Expanding professional networks and channels of communication

Montana

[Leadership Montana](#)

A collaboration of leaders from all sectors coming together to form a strong partnership for the betterment of the state, Leadership Montana offers participants a program that strengthens leadership skills while fostering personal growth and reflection. Participants gain a deeper awareness of issues affecting Montana, all while building powerful and personal connections with their classmates and network of committed alumni.

Montana Farm Bureau: ACE Program

Montana Farm Bureau's ACE program is designed to empower Farm Bureau members to be confident, effective leaders in their county Farm Bureau and local communities. Advocacy follows leadership, and with practiced, ever-evolving leadership skills, participants will be prepared to actively advocate on key industry issues.

Armed to communicate industry issues, participants will be able to represent Farm Bureau interests and agriculture at a local, state, and national level. ACE participants will receive an in-depth approach to leadership and how to apply it. More than that, ACE participants will learn to identify the needs of their own communities and the role they and the Farm Bureau have in serving those needs.

North Carolina

Leadership North Carolina

The mission of Leadership North Carolina is to inform, develop, and engage committed leaders by broadening their understanding of and involvement in issues and opportunities facing the state. This program works with individuals across the private and public sectors to develop leaders who want to drive improvements and influence outcomes. The program takes a comprehensive, integrated approach that showcases how its six focus areas are deeply intertwined. Program participants collaborate on solving real challenges, and they roll up their sleeves to volunteer in ways that enrich and support citizens across the state.

North Dakota

University of Mary: Leadership North Dakota Program

Leadership North Dakota was designed to train strong leaders who can effectively guide our state's private, public, and non-profit sectors to ensure that we continue to grow and sustain a prosperous future. Connected, informed, and forward-thinking, participants gain advanced leadership skills, explore major issues facing leaders today, and participate in high-level networking opportunities.

The Leadership North Dakota Institute is presented by the Leadership North Dakota Board, the Gary Tharaldson School of Business, and the University of Mary Workforce Development.

North Dakota State University Extension: Lead Local

This one-day training will help participants:

- Feel better prepared to serve as an effective board, council, or committee member
- Recognize the components of an effective meeting
- Learn basic parliamentary procedure and how to use it
- Understand different personality styles and how they can work together effectively
- Use effective tools when dealing with conflict

North Dakota State University Extension: Rural Leadership North Dakota

The Rural Leadership North Dakota (RLND) Program is an 18-month dynamic leadership development program offered through NDSU Extension. The program curriculum is designed to be immediately applicable to both active and inexperienced leaders. Each seminar features a mix of personal development, leadership study, and location-related subject matter. The RLND Program is designed for

those dedicated to strengthening the agriculture community, their community, and the state of North Dakota for the future.

Nebraska

[University of Nebraska-Lincoln: Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources Nebraska LEAD Program](#)

The Nebraska LEAD Program began 42 years ago to develop agricultural leaders from Nebraska's future generations. The constant changes that occur in agricultural policy, marketing, economics, and technology point to the need for strong leaders to advocate for the heart of Nebraska's economy-- agriculture. Now in their fourth decade of forming pioneering agricultural leaders, Nebraska LEAD has evolved into one of the nation's premier agricultural leadership development programs.

New Hampshire

[Leadership New Hampshire](#)

Leadership New Hampshire's mission is "*building a community of informed and engaged leaders.*" LNH fulfills this mission annually by gathering a select cohort of talented and accomplished individuals, and then providing them with an opportunity to learn about the complex issues facing the state, to connect with one another, and to serve their communities and the state in positions of leadership and responsibility.

The LNH experience broadens each participant's perspective by providing a deeper understanding of the issues facing the state and by building connections with fellow classmates, a diverse group of emerging influential leaders. This program was designed to improve leadership skills and development through issues education. The LNH experience also exposes participants to new opportunities to serve their communities and the state.

New Mexico

[Leadership New Mexico](#)

Leadership New Mexico was founded in 1995 to identify current and emerging leaders throughout New Mexico, enhance their leadership skills, and deepen their knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing the state. Leadership New Mexico is dedicated to the development of informed leaders who understand issues, define problems, develop solutions, and achieve positions of higher responsibility in New Mexico.

Leadership New Mexico currently has three leadership programs:

- CORE PROGRAM - brings together a group of influential leaders from around the state for an educational and inspirational experience that is unlike any other organization.
- LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM - seeks to prepare local officials with the background and knowledge necessary to undertake their civic responsibility with a passion for effective and ethical public service.
- CONNECT NEW MEXICO - created to offer young professionals the opportunity to develop personal leadership skills, learn how New Mexico's systems and structures work, and explore the issues facing the state.

[New Mexico Agricultural Leadership Program](#)

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This program is an 18-month leadership experience for those in the agriculture, food, and natural resource industries of New Mexico. For an industry to remain dynamic, well-informed leaders must emerge. New Mexico has one of the most unique cultural and agricultural identities in the nation – there is a need for individuals who have a firm understanding of the issues, policies, practices, history, and challenges that surround agriculture. This program enables you to improve your leadership skills, enhance your professional network, and broaden your industry awareness.

Nevada

[Washoe County Leadership Academy](#)

The Washoe County Leadership Academy, or WCLA, is a nine-month educational and leadership program unlike any other, promoting knowledge of local government and providing training to hone leadership skills in conjunction with the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) Cooperative Extension, and Western Industrial Nevada (WIN).

One full day per month from August until the following April, participants of the WCLA will be exposed to various aspects of Washoe County services, from the Sheriff's Office to the Libraries and just about everything in between. Learn how community partners are preserving Lake Tahoe, what makes Washoe County unique with a visit to Gerlach and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe Museum and Visitor Center, who Eilley Bowers really was with a tour of her historic mansion, and how Washoe County is leading the way to better outcomes with investments into wraparound homeless and behavioral health services. This program sheds light on the inner workings of local government and provides insight on how to get more involved in your community. Best of all, participants will forge friendships, make memories, and learn skills that will last a lifetime!

Each WCLA cohort will also design and complete a county-based class project to put their skills into practice, all the while developing their personal and professional networks.

New Jersey

[Lead New Jersey](#)

Founded in 1987, Lead New Jersey (LNJ) fosters and promotes a robust network of informed and prepared leaders - the LNJ Fellows - who work to make New Jersey a better place to live and work. Through real world leadership training, seminars with leading professionals, and thought-provoking civic engagement opportunities, LNJ informs, transforms, and empowers the next generation of leaders from the public, social, and private sectors.

LNJ Fellows spend a year engaged with professionals and thought leaders across various backgrounds, exploring pressing issues from diverse perspectives, crossing boundaries between sectors, and working in a spirit of shared commitment to our future.

LNJ brings together individuals who are already leaders in their companies, organizations, communities, and professional fields. However, in this fast-paced, ever-changing world, even experienced leaders need to continue honing their skills and expanding their horizons.

[New Jersey Agriculture Leadership Development Program](#)

The purpose of the NJ Agricultural Leadership Development Program (NJALDP) is to provide educational programming for individuals involved in farming and agribusiness, guiding them to become informed,

articulate leaders. Every few years, a new cohort of participants is invited to join the program, taking the first step to becoming the leaders of tomorrow!

The two-year program, hosted in collaboration with Rutgers University, consists of ten residential seminars in NJ (two to three days each) and two out-of-state trips. Participants learn from experts in their fields, meet with government and business leaders at every level, and take field trips for a first-hand view of the issues at hand. Throughout the process, participants are provided opportunities to hone their own leadership skills.

Ohio

[Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts: Tom Spellmire Academy of Conservation Leadership](#)

Today's challenges are significant for soil and water conservation districts (SWCD) throughout Ohio's 88 counties as a result of economic stress, rapidly changing land use, water quality, nutrient stewardship issues, and a renewed urgency to address energy needs. However, for Ohio to succeed in economic development, education, environmental stewardship, agriculture and energy production, and so much more, conservation must be a top priority.

To help address these challenges and to build toward future success, the OFSWCD's leadership academy was developed with the assistance of Ohio State University and the ODNR Division of Soil and Water Resources. This program was initially designed for SWCD supervisors; however, it is now open to SWCD employees and conservation partners with a stronger focus on day-to-day issues impacting districts, offering decision-making tools, and providing better direction towards tomorrow's challenges.

This program combines supervisor training with leadership training components.

[Ohio Farm Bureau: AgriPOWER Institute](#)

AgriPOWER is an elite program designed specifically for farmers and agribusiness professionals. This yearlong program focuses on public policy issues confronting agriculture and the food industry, such as consumer relations, regulations, energy, and trade policies. It helps individuals develop the skills necessary to become effective leaders and advocates for agriculture by learning from experts in these fields.

This leadership and advocacy development program typically consists of seven multi-day institutes. Topics covered during institute programs will include public policy matters facing local communities, Ohio, the nation, and the world. Additionally, specific sessions will help class members develop important skills necessary to become an effective leader and advocate for agriculture. Two of the institute sessions will be held out of state (one in Washington, D.C. and the other location will be decided at a later date) to help class members gain a valuable understanding of national and global issues.

[Ohio Agribusiness Association \(OABA\): Leaders Achieve Unexpected New Career Heights \(LAUNCH\)](#)

LAUNCH is a transitional training – empowering employees to meet higher-level goals, going beyond the scope of their current position. Agribusinesses continually compete with all industries to recruit and retain the best talent, but there is also a need to invest in those who are already passionate about agriculture.

Program topics and skills practiced include personal insight, next-level leadership skills, and decision-making, including strategic planning, critical thinking, change management, goal setting, and organizational skills; communication and presentation skills; global issues in agriculture; sales and marketing principles; Ohio/regional trends in agribusiness; state and local government; and a personalized capstone project.

[The Ohio State University \(OSU\) Leadership Center: AgOne](#)

The Ohio State University Department of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership (ACEL), the Max M. Fisher College of Business, and the OSU Leadership Center have joined forces to launch a new elite leadership training with the goal of cultivating the “next level” of leaders for Ohio’s agriculture-related organizations by fostering individual leadership and strengthening board members and top tier leaders. Through leadership workshops and individual coaching sessions, AgOne is built to cultivate the future of Ohio’s agriculture leaders to amplify their impact. It is a 12-month long, individualized leadership development program that is designed to transform individual influence for industry impact through leadership and service on boards.

Oregon

[Oregon Department of Agriculture: SWCD Trainings](#)

The Oregon Department of Agriculture Soil and Water Conservation District Program offers training to help support district operations, directors, and staff. Staff are also available to provide operational technical assistance by phone, email, or in person. Below are areas of leadership development training with PDF resources linked.

Time and Stress Management for Managers: Learn simple tools for managing your time and stress! The emphasis is on small changes you can make for your workday to be less stressful and more efficient. There will be time for managers to discuss issues at their district and get advice and guidance from their peers.

- [Stress and Coping Strategies](#)
- [Ten Tips for Creating Balance](#)
- [The Paired Comparison Process](#)
- [Time and Stress Management](#)

Employee Coaching for Managers: One of the most important and yet challenging jobs for managers is providing the support for your employees to do the best job possible, yet many of the soil and water conservation district managers have no experience or training in employee coaching. This session will provide some simple and useful skills and tools to help you coach your employees. There will be time for managers to discuss issues at their district and get advice and guidance from their peers.

- [Employee coaching](#)

Puerto Rico

[Foundation for Puerto Rico: The Community Leadership Academy \(CLA\)](#)

The CLA was an innovative hybrid educational program with online and in-person courses focused on strengthening the skills and core competencies of community leaders, small and mid-size business owners, policymakers, and leaders of non-governmental organizations. The program aimed to advance

their personal and professional growth and foster and accelerate projects and initiatives focused on Puerto Rico's socioeconomic recovery. Participants were required to live in Puerto Rico, be a community leader, business owner, government staff, or NGO leader, and apply by June 30, 2022. By the end of the Program, they had to work on a Transformative Impact Project, with mentorship and guidance provided during the Academy.

Even though the program has ended, the courses are available online for everyone looking to learn more. Please visit the foundation's website, linked above.

Rhode Island

[Leadership Rhode Island: The Core Program](#)

The Core Program is not a starting point for leadership development but rather a process for leaders to refine and enhance their commitment to shaping Rhode Island's future.

Each year, Leadership Rhode Island selects a diverse group of established and emerging leaders to participate in the Core Program - an experiential community leadership program framed around statewide issues. Class members engage in shared experiences, events, socials, community-engaged projects, strengths-based coaching, and individual learning opportunities. The program consists of an overnight retreat, ten monthly daylong sessions, and a small-group project.

[Rhode Island Foundation: Equity Leadership Initiative](#)

The Equity Leadership Initiative intends to cultivate, mentor, and seek access for individuals who identify as Black, Hispanic or Latino, Indigenous, Asian, and multiracial from across sectors to build a pipeline of leaders of color in positions of influence in Rhode Island. The program's goal is to inspire a deeper commitment to social justice and racial equity in Rhode Island by working with existing leaders of color on their leadership journey.

South Carolina

[Leadership South Carolina](#)

Leadership South Carolina, established in 1979 by the Governor's Office and the South Carolina business community is the oldest and most respected of the statewide leadership programs, providing gifted and highly motivated South Carolinians an opportunity to advance their leadership qualities while broadening their understanding of issues facing the state.

Each year, 50 highly motivated candidates are selected from hundreds of possible applications for Leadership South Carolina's nine-month core program (September to April). The organization's goal is to develop and inform the best and brightest so they can serve on statewide boards and commissions, run for public office, and find a non-profit passion that will positively impact their community. Leadership SC develops leaders who will advance the state of South Carolina from various economic, social, and business vantage points.

Leadership SC is a comprehensive leadership development organization with a statewide focus reaching across all employment sectors, geographic areas, and demographic segments.

South Dakota

[Leadership South Dakota](#)

The future success of South Dakota depends on our development of homegrown leaders, passionate, and diverse citizens from every corner of the state. Leadership South Dakota's mission is to attract engaged citizens from across the state, then provide them with the background, unique experiences, and insights necessary to assume leadership positions at the community, state, and national levels.

Leadership South Dakota builds leadership, critical thinking, and public speaking skills through instruction and experiences participants won't get anywhere else. Leadership South Dakota provides class members with the knowledge and skills to become the next generation of leaders in the state.

[South Dakota Agricultural and Rural Leadership \(SDARL\)](#)

The South Dakota Agricultural and Rural Leadership Program (SDARL) takes a group of individuals on an 18-month leadership journey, with a new class starting every two years. Participants emerge from the program prepared to lead their communities and the state, making significant contributions to agriculture nationally and globally.

Through a series of educational seminars, participants grow in their knowledge of the broad scope of agriculture and agribusiness in South Dakota, the nation, and the world. Most of the seminars are three days in length and are held at locations across South Dakota. One seminar is being held in Washington, D.C., to gain insights into policymaking at the national level. The class also visits a foreign country, examining the global nature of agriculture and the challenges of feeding the world.

Vermont

[Snelling Center for Government: Vermont Leadership Institute](#)

The Snelling Center for Government created the Vermont Leadership Institute (VLI) in 1995 with the goal of stimulating citizen enthusiasm for and participation in public service. The Institute gives participants the information, tools, and inspiration to make greater contributions to their organizations, communities, and Vermont.

VLI is an intensive program consisting of eight overnight sessions, totaling nineteen seminar days between September and June. Each session is held in a different region of the state to convey a sense of Vermont's rich historical, geographic, and cultural diversity.

VLI's staff and faculty strive to create a learning environment that is psychologically safe and inclusive to develop self-awareness and acquire knowledge and skills that result in strong and effective leadership. Participants delve into evaluation of "the self" in relation to the world by asking probing questions and exploring modern-day problems.

Virginia

[Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute \(VNRLI\)](#)

The VNRLI is a professional development program for leaders confronted with Virginia's most pressing natural resource issues who seek new skills in conflict resolution and collaborative problem-solving. The institute offers six three-day sessions in different locations around Virginia, focusing on a variety of environmental issues. VNRLI uses a proven mix of mini-lectures, experiential role plays and exercises,

stakeholder panel discussions, and field trips on current environmental topics to build participants' competencies and:

- Enhance conflict resolution and collaborative problem-solving skills,
- Sharpen personal and professional leadership skills and expand participants' network, and
- Gain an understanding of key emerging environmental issues in Virginia.

Washington

[The Washington State Leadership Board](#)

The Washington State Leadership Board, a trustee agency of Washington State, specializes in delivering equity-focused leadership programs for the state of Washington. It is best known for bestowing official honors on behalf of the state, such as the Washingtonian of the Year, as well as the following free youth leadership programs. These include:

- Washington World Fellows, a study abroad and college prep program for high school students
- Boundless Washington, an outdoor leadership program for young people with disabilities
- Compassion Scholars, an experiential travel program aimed at promoting compassionate leadership
- Team S.A.M (Sports and Mentoring), a grant-based program designed to enable community-based organizations to provide opportunities for underserved youth to participate in sports

[AgForestry Leadership Program](#)

Recognized as the premier leadership development program in Washington State, AgForestry offers experiential learning for people working in agriculture, forestry, and other natural resource-based businesses. Over 18 months, 11 multi-day, in-state seminars are presented on topics related to communications, social services, government, industry, crime and corrections, and transportation. Participants also spend one week in Washington, D.C., and up to two weeks in a selected foreign country.

The AgForestry Leadership Program features more than 250 expert speakers, a vast network of industry partners, and over a thousand program participants. Many serve in leadership positions throughout the state, nationally, and internationally.

Wisconsin

[Wisconsin Philanthropy Network: Wisconsin Leadership Development \(WiLD\) Project](#)

The vision behind this pilot project is to explore what it would look like to draw upon Wisconsin's greatest resource – its people – as a source of renewal for the city and state. This leadership development effort will teach people how to engage others around their own core values, structure effective leadership teams, and make strategic choices that lead to measurable, effective action for change. In year one, 200 new leaders will be trained through intensive 2.5 days of training, ten trainers developed, and seven existing organizations engaged.

[Wisconsin Philanthropy Network: Leadership Advanced](#)

In times of rapid change and increasing challenges, nonprofits need leaders with the ability to adapt to and take advantage of changing circumstances. This program is designed to support outstanding nonprofit leaders as they seek to strengthen their organizations by creating a network of empowered, innovative, and resilient leaders capable of navigating change with the skills and tools necessary to move their organizations toward greater impact.

West Virginia

[West Virginia Community Action Partnership: WV Emerging Leaders Institute \(WV ELITE\)](#)

The WV Emerging Leaders Institute is a year-long program designed to strengthen the leadership capacity of the West Virginia Community Action Network. The program incorporates formal training, peer networking, and individual exploration.

The eight modules of interactive learning include Leadership, Public Administration, Fiscal Integrity, Human Resources, Strategic Planning, Advocacy, Cultural Competency, and Performance Evaluation.

The components of the program include Leadership Assessment, Leadership Activities, Peer Networking, Building Knowledge and Skills, and Reading.

Wyoming

[Leadership Wyoming](#)

Leadership Wyoming is a nine-month program for leaders across the state to learn about the industries, communities, challenges, and opportunities facing Wyoming. Graduates of the program become part of an alumni network of close to 1,000 leaders in the state with continued leadership and networking opportunities.

Every month, from August to May, the class of about 40 participants meets in a new Wyoming community to learn about the successes and struggles within that area, connect with local alumni, and, most importantly, continue to grow as leaders and develop relationships with their classmates.

Each session features speakers, tours, and discussion on a specific topic, as well as personal leadership development. Together these experiences create the Leading in Wyoming curriculum. All participants are able to take the Hogan Personality Inventory and receive personalized coaching.

Wyoming LEAD

The Wyoming L.E.A.D. program is designed to develop and train a network of leaders who can speak forcefully and articulately for agriculture and Wyoming communities.

Participants gain confidence through group discussions, personal presentations, networking opportunities, and a leadership component during each seminar.

The program consists of nine in-state seminars, plus a seminar in Washington, D.C., and a regional or international study tour. Topics are varied and include communication, family business planning, leadership, agricultural policy, programs, and trade, rural economics and marketing, natural resources and energy, state and national government, and value-added agriculture.

National

American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Program

Women are essential to agriculture as leaders on and off the farm, from running a farm or ranch business to advocating on Capitol Hill. The American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership program provides women with opportunities for growth and development to sharpen their skills and strengthen their ability to inspire change.

Some of the programs/opportunities for women include Women's Communications Boot Camp, Women's ACE (Advocate, Cultivate, Empower) Summit, and AG ConnectHER.

Regional

Northeast Agricultural Education Foundation, Inc.: Ag Leadership Development Programs

Agriculture leadership development programs place an emphasis on the development and refinement of leadership skills while providing a broad education in agriculture and the life sciences. Students and farming professionals will study an array of subjects and courses that place common agriculture principles and practices in broader economic, scientific, and social contexts.

National/State/County

American Farm Bureau Federation: Young Farmers & Ranchers Program

The American Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmers & Ranchers program includes both men and women between the ages of 18-35. The objective of the Young Farmers & Ranchers program is to surface, grow, and develop young Farm Bureau members and provide them with opportunities and experiences to strengthen their leadership and ensure effective Farm Bureaus.

The program is focused on personal growth in the following areas: public speaking, issue advocacy, business development, networking, service leadership, media training, and telling the story of agriculture.

Higher Education

- All universities engage in research and teaching, but the nation's [112 Land-grant Universities and Colleges](#), including [Historically Black Land-grant Universities](#) and [Tribal Colleges](#), have a third critical mission—Extension. “Extension” means reaching out and extending university research and resources to meet public needs through non-formal educational programs at the community level. The Cooperative Extension System (CES) engages people in these educational opportunities to help them solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future where they live and work. To find a CES near you, [visit the Extension Foundation’s website](#) and explore what programs and opportunities are in your area.
- Universities, colleges, community colleges, and many other educational institutions offer courses in leadership development. Some of this coursework may even apply towards an advanced degree.