

Aspiring/Team Leader Program

Program Summary

This sequential, four-course, 8-day program is designed based on the Office of Personnel Management Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) and provides participants with ideas, techniques, experiential exercises, and contemplative reflections to apply those competencies directly to driving the challenges they face in a complex federal workplace. Learners are challenged to grow their thinking capacity from a technical foundation to a more adaptive perspective as they seek to inspire and connect with others. The program is particularly appropriate for those leaders at any level who are looking to take on a larger role to enhance their leadership abilities and hone their capacity to create psychologically safe environments focused on mission accomplishment.

Orientation

The program begins with an Aspiring/Team Leader Orientation, which introduces participants to each other and provides an overview of the program and coursework. Participants will also have team-building opportunities and create their cohort norms, which will be designed to create a culture of trust. The confidential environment created during the Orientation session will benefit participants by enabling knowledge transfer among the cross-functional mix of participants, encouraging honest feedback, and enhancing confidence in their ability to recreate a similar environment with those they lead. It will also provide participants with a career-long support group.

During the Orientation, Aspiring/Team Leader Development Program participants are exposed to the principles grounded in the American founding and the virtues of public service. They also work to grow and expanded and holistic perspective on well-being, mindfulness meditation practices to develop their resilience and non-judging awareness to their experience and patterns of behavior, skills on developing formal mindfulness habits for daily life, and information on how to stay balanced and resilient irrespective of external circumstances.

Participants also receive a journal to use for self-reflection practices incorporated into their program. A natural extension of mindfulness meditation practice, journal writing is a well-established way to record, reflect, and continue to learn from experience. It supports both informational learning including the acquisition of course content, skills, and behaviors, as well as transformational learning including reflection on one's habitual patterns and the values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations that underlie one's actions.

Courses

The courses are designed to reexamine leadership concepts in today's complex environment and how they may be directly applied to the challenges faced by the agency. Classroom dynamics are participative, experiential, and relevant to the issues faced by federal leaders in the workplace today.

Aspiring Leader/Team Leader Program (8 Days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning the Leadership Journey (2 days) • Achieving Results Through Others (2 days) • Leadership and Accountability (2 days) • Leading With Integrity (2 days)
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Executive Coaching

Executive coaching is an option in this program. An Executive Coach uses the ESCI results to enhance a student’s potential to create higher engagement, personal development, and performance for themselves and others—the core qualities needed of today’s change-adept leaders through the creation of a Personal Leadership Development Plan that is regularly updated. The coach’s role is to engage the participant in a dialogue in a way that leads the coachee to self-discovery, empowerment, and choice so that the coachee is more able to contribute to their organization and find meaning in what they are doing.

Executive coaching services provided include:

- Scheduled conversations on a regular basis conducted in person and/or by telephone
- Assigned reflective activities to aid in learning and development
- Occasional as-needed support, such as email exchanges between scheduled conversations

Course Descriptions

BEGINNING THE LEADERSHIP JOURNEY (2 DAYS)

ECQS: DRIVING EFFICIENCY, MERIT AND COMPETENCE, ACHIEVING RESULTS, LEADING PEOPLE

Participants are encouraged to explore their assumptions about management and leadership, review well-known theories of leadership, and recognize that leadership is not a single, unified concept. They will examine how thinking about leadership has changed in recent years, moving away from a simple focus on leadership traits and characteristics towards a view that sees leadership as shared, relational, and part of a complex social dynamic involving mindfulness, resilience, emotional intelligence, humble inquiry, and constructive dialogue. Looking through the lens of their own organization, participants will apply different approaches to leadership and followership in terms of their relevance to the challenges they currently face.

Students will also explore who they are as leaders and who they wish to become by building the emotional intelligence fabric that makes for successful leadership. As part of the cohort experience, and especially in this first course, learners construct a safe, supportive, and collaborative learning community. They are then challenged to use their skills to replicate the environment within their workplace. Finally, participants learn how to leverage their emotional and social intelligence to influence, inspire, and promote teamwork.

Discussion topics include:

- The distinction between management and leadership.
- Leader and follower perspectives on leadership.
- Current challenges in leadership and motivation.
- What it takes to play a leadership role in organizations today, including coalition building, varied perspectives, belonging, agility, resilience, and a customer focus.

ACHIEVING RESULTS THROUGH OTHERS (2 DAYS)

ECQS: DRIVING EFFICIENCY, MERIT AND COMPETENCE, ACHIEVING RESULTS, LEADING PEOPLE

This course focuses on developing aspiring leaders/team leaders' interpersonal skills, oral and written communication skills, team building and conflict management skill. Participants will address these fundamental building blocks at all levels applying them directly to challenges they face in the workplace.

Discussion topics include:

- **Interpersonal Skills:** The aspiring leader/team leader will be able to interact with peers in a diplomatic manner; demonstrate empathy and respect to employees; demonstrate openness and approachability to employees at all levels; examine and correct employee mistakes in a courteous manner; respond appropriately to the needs, feelings and views of different people (including senior leaders, stakeholders, and customers) in different situations; apply and practice effective listening strategies and techniques; and foster an atmosphere where employees are included and able to voice their opinions, concerns, or ideas without fear of criticism, ridicule, or retaliation.
- **Oral Communication:** The aspiring leader/team leader will be able to identify his or her own communication style; identify barriers to effective communication and identify ways to overcome them; conduct regular meetings to discuss initiatives and current events; actively listen to and show understanding of oral communication from employees, customers, and other stakeholders; understand how to defuse intensity during difficult conversations and interactions; orally present ideas and facts in a clear, organized, and convincing manner and in a style, tone, and level appropriate to the audience and the occasion; and communicate agency goals and initiatives to employees in a clear and concise manner.
- **Written Communication:** The aspiring leader/team leader will be able to examine various writing styles and formats and understand the appropriate contexts in which to use them; express facts and ideas in writing in a clear, convincing, and organized manner that is appropriate to the audience and occasion; write documents using clear terminology and a concise format; and review technical reports, edit materials, and provide suggestions to improve clarity while ensuring documents are targeted to the intended audience.
- **Team Building:** The aspiring leader/team leader will be able to identify the stages of team development; establish behavioral norms with teams; describe approaches to building effective teams; clarify team purpose and goals; utilize team building exercises to improve team dynamics; demonstrate how to encourage employees to share skills and abilities within work groups to facilitate completion of challenging tasks; and organize teams to identify and address agency concerns.
- **Conflict Management:** The aspiring leader/team leader will be able to identify conflict management styles and situations where they are most appropriate; describe the nature of conflict and its effects; identify causes of conflict; identify and address employee grievances; implement changes to ensure the work environment is fair and equitable based on employee concerns; and manage and resolve conflicts and disagreements in a constructive manner.

LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY (2 DAYS)

ECQS: MERIT AND COMPETENCE, ACHIEVING RESULTS, LEADING PEOPLE

This course focuses on developing aspiring leaders/team leaders' technical credibility, problem-solving skills, accountability, and decisiveness.

Discussion topics include:

- **Technical Credibility:** The aspiring leader/team leader will be able to interact with employees to understand technical aspects of job duties, gather technical information from internal and external stakeholders, provide employees with feedback and support on technical issues, and formulate technically- sound recommendations to develop effective work products.
- **Problem-Solving:** The aspiring leader/team leader will be able to determine possible causes of workforce problems and recommend corrective action; identify solutions to improve customer satisfaction; collect and analyze pertinent data/information and seek ideas/feedback from all stakeholders; assess routine organizational problems by leading a team to brainstorm potential solutions; and establish guidelines to clarify complex and/or controversial processes.
- **Accountability:** The aspiring leader/team leader will be able to understand areas of accountability for work products, services, and results; encourage employees to take ownership of work products, services, and results; monitor programs and activities and take corrective action when necessary; delegate work to employees to ensure employees meet key requirements; develop written policies and procedures to ensure consistent adherence by employees; investigate claims of employee violations and encourage employees to take responsibility for actions; develop goals and assess workgroup progress towards goal achievement; and, assure that effective controls are developed and maintained to ensure the integrity of the work.
- **Decisiveness:** The aspiring leader/team leader will be able to develop meeting agendas and determine topics for group decision-making; understand the importance of involving others in decision-making; determine the appropriate individuals needed for a decision-making process; seek out best practices when making organizational decisions; understand the importance of making sound and timely decisions for a project, team, or work unit; effectively manage decision-making as a process; and utilize awareness of personal decision patterns when making decisions.

LEADING WITH INTEGRITY (2 DAYS)

ECQS: COMMITMENT TO RULE OF LAW, MERIT AND COMPETENCE, ACHIEVING RESULTS This course focuses on developing aspiring leaders/team leaders' integrity/honesty, and motivation for continual learning and public service.

- **Integrity/Honesty:** The aspiring leader/team leader will be able to demonstrate an increased awareness of the Code of Ethics for Government Service and other laws governing ethical behavior; establish open and honest communication with employees, customers, and other stakeholders; recognize available options in analyzing and resolving ethical situations; discuss ethical problems with

employees, and respond appropriately; maintain fairness and objectivity when selecting team members based upon skill sets needed for projects; address employee conduct issues in a confidential and respectful manner; instill a climate of trust, openness, and honesty by admitting own mistakes and taking responsibility for one's actions; and display fortitude to support ethical actions that may negatively impact self or stakeholders.

- **Continual Learning:** The aspiring leader/team leader will be able to recognize opportunities for self-development, solicit periodic feedback to continually improve the quality of their own work, recognize areas needing improvement and take training to increase skills, develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP) to address developmental areas; integrate acquired knowledge or skills (e.g., team/work unit sharing, lessons learned, sharing information databases) into day-to-day work; and engage in systematic, self-directed training and development activities aligned with the strategic needs of their agency.
- **Motivation for Public Service:** The aspiring leader/team leader will be able to understand the importance of treating the public with deep respect and tact – maintaining a reputation for public service devotion, respond promptly and accurately to public inquiries about agency policies, reviews unit policies and procedures on a regular basis to ensure they are consistent with public needs; emphasize the adherence of spending activities to legal requirements and established procedures to ensure appropriate use of public resources; cultivate relationships with community stakeholders to validate usefulness of proposed products and services; and create and foster a culture that encourages a commitment to public service.