



CFLeads Executive Leadership Institute for Community Foundation Vice Presidents (VPs)

Application Due Date: May 1, 2019

The Promise of Community Foundations

Strong communities depend on good jobs and a healthy citizenry to thrive. A strong community also requires engaged residents as well as public and private institutions – including community foundations - that work together effectively to address the community’s challenges. Every single day, our communities face new and growing challenges—as long-standing issues become more complex, and inequities worsen.

That’s why community foundations matter. With missions focused specifically on tackling pressing local issues and seizing important opportunities, they are in a unique position to rally the people and organizations needed to make lasting impact.

Now more than ever, residents in communities across the country need their community foundations to use every resource available to create equitable outcomes – and to help build just and inclusive communities where all residents participate and prosper. They need community foundations to lead change—change that builds strong, resilient communities where all people can thrive.

The Need for Effective Leaders

To drive positive change, community foundations need to mobilize all of the resources in their community—including resident voices, data about community challenges, and financial support. And they need to create relationships across every facet of the community—from the interconnected groups that serve the area to the policymakers who shape the daily lives of residents.

For years, community foundations have been working for the greater good of their communities. But to create real, measurable and equitable change, community foundations must build their capacity to rally community resources and build strong relationships. The CFLeads Executive Leadership Institute (ELI) reflects a growing recognition in the field that the practice of community leadership requires specific skills and strategies.

Today, vice presidents at community foundations must be able to draw upon the full breadth of tools at their disposal to have the most impact in their community, recognizing that grants alone will not build vibrant, healthy places to live. Their ultimate objective – the overall well-being of the community - is immense and not easily defined or measured, but it is what makes their institutions so uniquely valuable. Effectively engaging in community leadership requires thoughtful strategy and deliberate action. It also requires a culture, relationships, resources and skills within the foundation to exercise community leadership.

The Executive Leadership Institute for VPs

To help strengthen their skills to lead change - CFLeads offers an executive education program specifically for community foundation vice presidents. This year-long learning opportunity focuses exclusively on the numerous challenges vice presidents face daily at community foundations. It reflects the recognition in the field that the practice of community leadership is critical and requires specific skills and strategies -- beyond grantmaking. ELI also incorporates a peer learning approach, which helps participants quickly identify and adopt effective practices that are relevant to their work.

What Past Participants Say about ELI for VPs

The ELI experience renewed my commitment to the community foundation sector as a place where leadership and resident engagement will build the communities of tomorrow.

Jacky Alling, Chief Philanthropy Officer, Arizona Community Foundation

This has been the most on-target, impactful professional development experience of my career. CFLeads continues to challenge me and my foundation to step up our game for bigger community impact.

Chris Barge, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, The Community Foundation Serving Boulder County

For someone new to the field of philanthropy, ELI was a superb way to meet new colleagues and learn about valuable tools and lessons learned. ELI was the fast lane to meeting new colleagues who have already helped me enormously and who I know will continue to be trusted advisors and learning partners.

Judith Bell, Vice President of Programs, The San Francisco Foundation

As a VP of "Advancement," I have found ELI to be tremendously valuable to me and my community foundation. The diverse mix of participants provided a very rich learning environment.

Betsy Constantine, Vice President, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

Program Description

ELI is an exclusive one-year intensive learning opportunity tailored specifically for community foundation vice presidents – from all departments -- who are eager to help

their foundations more effectively address difficult challenges in their communities. Through three, small group, face-to-face meetings, supplemented by one-on-one sessions with special advisors with significant experience in the field, it is designed to help community foundation vice presidents address a number of challenges, such as:

- Identifying the internal practices that are important to advancing a community leadership agenda;
- Integrating and aligning departments to more effectively advance the foundation's mission;
- Making the most of the tools that make the most community impact;
- Making and measuring results; and
- Communicating impact both internally and externally.

The focus of ELI is institutional, not individual. It is intended to help VPs build the community leadership capacity of their foundations.

Objectives for Participants

- Create a better understanding of the key elements of community leadership for community foundations;
- Advance specific community leadership practices at participating VPs' foundations;
- Build peer connections and seed potential collaboration through peer learning and collaborative problem solving; and
- Make progress on a self-identified community leadership challenge.

Core Activities

- Three two-day in-person meetings where participants will assess their foundation's community leadership practice, identify the practices that are most important to their work, hear stories from colleagues from across the field about successes and false starts, and engage in structured peer advising on self-identified challenges. Meetings are conducted in a confidential environment that encourages candid discussion.
- Individual work by VPs between meetings on a challenge particular to their organization and strategic plan.
- Advice and consulting support from past ELI for VPs alumni: Rose Bradshaw, President & CEO of North Texas Community Foundation, and Isaiah Oliver, President & CEO of the Community Foundation of Greater Flint, who assist participants with self-identified challenges.
- Homework assignments and/or readings prior to each meeting. (These assignments/readings should take approximately 2 hours to complete prior to each meeting.)
- Optional site visits in the cities where the meetings are held.

Institute Make-up / Eligibility

Up to 15 community foundation VPs will be selected to participate. VPs from all departments in the foundation are welcome to apply. More than one VP from each foundation may apply.

Selection to participate is competitive. Applicants interested in aggressively pushing their practice, open to questioning their own assumptions, and eager to learn from their peers are strongly encouraged to apply.

Cost

The fee is \$6,950 with a 5% discount for 2018/2019 investors in CFLeads. (Community foundations with two VPs selected to participate will receive \$500 off the fee of the 2nd VP.) Participants are also expected to pay for their own travel and accommodations. The fee may be paid in two installments in 2019.

Timing of Application Process

Applications are due May 1, 2019, and should be submitted to Caroline Merenda, Director of Operations and Program Services, at cmerenda@cfleads.org.

Decisions will be announced by May 13, 2019.

Timing of Meetings

The following are tentative meeting dates and locations:

- Meeting #1: July 30 - 31, 2019 in Boston
- Meeting #2: November 12 - 13, 2019 in Fort Worth, TX
- Meeting #3: Week of March 2, 2020 (Location TBD)

Please note that each meeting lasts 2 days and meals are included. Meetings will begin by 9:00 a.m. on Day 1 and conclude by 3:00 p.m. on Day 2

Application Materials

The following information is requested to ensure the creation of a diverse cohort. Please provide in a Word document.

Information About You

- Name
- Title
- Organization
- Address
- Phone
- Email

- Years with current organization
- Prior community foundation experience (list positions)
- Your bio (no more than 1 page)
- Race/ethnicity
- Gender
- Age
- Will you require an accommodation due to a disability?

Information About Your Community Foundation

- Geographic area being served
- Staff size
- Number and positions of staff reporting to you
- Asset size
- Percentage of assets that are discretionary (restricted to broad community betterment)

Reference from Your CEO

When a community foundation takes a community leadership role, there must be a strong level of commitment from the CEO as well as the board. Please provide a one-page recommendation from your CEO that:

1. Outlines his/her commitment to pursuing a community leadership strategy at your foundation;
2. Identifies how your position is important to advancing the community leadership work of the foundation;
3. Explains why your participation in ELI will be helpful to your foundation; and
4. Articulates a commitment to work with you as necessary to advance your learning from ELI.

Short Answer Responses

Please answer the following questions in FOUR PAGES OR FEWER. Bulleted or numbered responses are encouraged.

(Please note this information will remain confidential except to the CFLeads Resource Team.)

1. Why are you interested in participating in ELI? What do you hope to learn? What do you hope to contribute?
2. How would you define/describe community leadership?
3. Does your community foundation engage in community leadership activities? If so, describe up to 2 different areas of work. Describe internal actions the VP (either you or your predecessor) took to help ensure the success of the work (i.e. particular ways you engaged your board or aligned internal resources around a project or staffing decisions you've made).

4. Why are you interested in strengthening your foundation's community leadership practice?
5. Describe any specific internal challenges (such as board composition, organizational culture, staff capacity, budget constraints, etc.) you've faced or anticipate facing as you do more community leadership. Indicate any steps you may have already taken or plan to take to address these challenges. Note: Internal challenges or barriers identified are in no way considered a negative in reviewing your application.
6. What do you hope to accomplish in your role as a community foundation VP?
7. What are your community foundation's 2 most significant community accomplishments? Can you point to specific improvements in the quality of life of people in your community? What was the role of the VP in this work?
8. Have you worked on an issue involving the public sector, public policy, or public resources? Briefly describe the issue and your role as VP.
9. Describe how your role in the community leadership activities of the foundation is different from the role of your CEO?

By applying, you are agreeing to all of the commitments and expectations set forth below:

Commitment to Full Participation

1. Attend all in-person meetings. Substitutes are not permitted.
2. Prepare in advance by completing reading and other assignments.
3. Arrive on time for all in-person meetings and stay through the program end time.
4. Be willing to serve as resources to each other inside and outside of network meetings.
5. Commit to participating in evaluation by CFLeads staff and/or outside evaluators.

Expectations of Environment

1. Engage in respectful peer interaction and commit to creating a confidential, trusting environment.
2. Come prepared to share, listen, learn and be willing to push yourself.
3. Report candidly on progress, mid-course corrections and challenges.
4. Have fun.

Submission of Applications

Applications (submitted as a Word document) must be received via email. Please send all applications to Caroline Merenda at cmerenda@cfleads.org.

Please direct your questions to:

Caroline Merenda
Director of Operations and Program Services
cmerenda@cfleads.org
(800) 292-6149 ext. 610