



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

**Application Due Date: March 26, 2018**

### **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.

Helping communities attain their ideals is at the core of America's community foundations. At their best, community foundations build thriving communities by working with people of all backgrounds on their common concerns. They pursue cross-sector solutions to tough issues and they marshal the needed resources to address them. They improve education systems, clean up the environment, strengthen the arts, create safe play spaces, foster job growth, improve public health, and lift up diversity.

Community foundations are perfectly positioned to address these issues. Their independence, permanence, public charity status, and local relationships give them the clout and ability to reach far beyond their walls to strengthen their communities.

### **The Need for Effective Leaders**

As local needs grow, community foundations are stepping up and using their many assets to work with residents and partners across sectors to tackle tough issues. They are taking on a community leadership role. 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. They must be able to partner with a broad array of people throughout the community - donors, public officials, corporate leaders, nonprofit managers, researchers, private foundations, residents – not to mention staff throughout the foundation – and leverage the resources from allies across sectors. 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 - 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

*I came to every meeting eager to hear about the progress of my peers and grateful to share the steps in my journey.*

Isaiah M. Oliver, President and CEO, (former Vice President of Community Impact), Community Foundation of Greater Flint

*I would recommend this type of professional development to all foundation leaders doing work in the community. It's great to know that we share similar beliefs and challenges especially in the area of race, equity and inclusion.*

VP from Class of 2017

## **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:

- Selecting issues for foundation attention, resources and impact;
- Aligning around a common mission in an effort to eliminate siloes within the organization;
- 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.
- Individual sessions with Special Advisors Doug Jansson, retired CEO of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, and Kathy Merchant, retired CEO of The Greater Cincinnati Foundation, 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 from community foundation staff 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 \$6,800 with a 5% discount for 2017 investors in CFLeads. (Community foundations with two VPs selected to participate will receive \$500 off the fee of the 2<sup>nd</sup> VP.) Participants are also expected to pay for their own travel and accommodations. The fee may be paid in two installments in 2018.

## **Timing of Application Process**

Applications are due March 26, 2018, and should be submitted to Caroline Merenda, Director of Operations and Program Services, at [cmerenda@cfleads.org](mailto:cmerenda@cfleads.org).

Decisions will be announced by April 20, 2018.

## **Timing of Meetings**

The following are tentative meeting dates:

- Meeting #1: Week of July 30, 2018
- Meeting #2: Week of November 5, 2018
- Meeting #3: Week of January 28, 2019

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](mailto:cmerenda@cfleads.org).

Please direct your questions to:

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