

July 2021

# Executive Leadership Institute (ELI)

For community foundation VPs



**CFLeads**

Community Foundations  
Leading Change

# Background

## 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 explicitly focused on tackling pressing local issues and seizing important opportunities, they are in a unique position to rally the people and organizations needed to make a 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 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 a thoughtful strategy and deliberate action. It also requires a culture, relationships, resources and skills within the foundation to exercise community leadership.

# Executive Leadership Institute

To help strengthen their skills to lead change, CFLeads offers an executive education program specifically for community foundation vice presidents called the **Executive Leadership Institute (ELI)**.

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.

The Executive Leadership Institute includes individuals from large, medium-sized and small communities from across the country who sit at the helm of community foundations of all different sizes and asset mixes.

ELI creates the space for VPs to learn from their peers while working towards their own community leadership goals. This program is a great fit for any community foundation leaders who are:

- Looking to step up their game and deepen their foundation's impact
- Seeking information on the practices that have shown promise elsewhere
- Interested in exchanging ideas with their peers and getting advice from colleagues who understand their challenges

## WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

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“ 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.

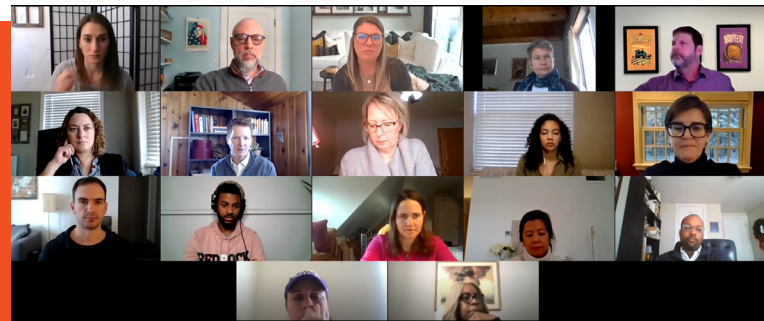
Chris Barge

*Vice President of Strategic Initiatives  
The Community Foundation Serving Boulder County*

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

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

Isaiah Oliver  
President & CEO  
Community Foundation of Greater Flint  
Participated in former role as VP, Community Impact



ELI for VPs | Class of 2020



ELI for VPs | Class of 2018



ELI for VPs | Class of 2017

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

“ [ELI] was exactly the experience I needed as I began my community foundation journey, especially during this time of significant transformation. Thank you for providing me with the tools, resources, and a network of peers who challenged me to grow and learn.

Pamela Gray Payton  
Chief Impact and Partnerships Officer  
San Diego Foundation

# Program Overview

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, two-day small group meetings with facilitated peer advising, and an additional two 1-1.5 hour discussions interspersed between the core gatherings, this program is designed to help community foundation

vice presidents address a number of challenges including:

- 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.

| PROGRAM OBJECTIVES   |
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| 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; |
| Make progress on a self-identified community leadership challenge.   |

| CORE ACTIVITIES  |
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| Three meetings, held over two days each, where participants assess their organization’s community leadership practice, exchange stories about their organization’s successes and challenges, and debate and explore the appropriate role of community foundations in building vibrant, welcoming places to live. |
| Meetings are conducted in a confidential environment that encourages candid discussion.  |
| Individual work by VPs between meetings on a challenge particular to their organization.   |
| Homework assignments and/or readings prior to each meeting. These assignments/readings should take approximately two hours to complete prior to each meeting.  |

# Eligibility & Cost

Vice presidents 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 assumptions, and eager to learn from their peers are strongly encouraged to apply.

The fee to participate is \$5,850, with a 5% discount for 2020 or 2021 investors in CFLeads, plus travel and accommodation for the in-person meetings.

Participants will need a strong internet connection and the ability to use video and audio to participate fully in the first meeting, which will be held virtually.

## WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

“ 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.

Judith Bell  
*Vice President of Programs  
San Francisco Foundation*

Ready to apply? Visit [cflleads.org](https://cflleads.org) to get started.