The Allstate Foundation Nonprofit Leadership Center Emerging Leaders Program

Frequently Asked Questions

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CENTER FOR
Nonprofit Management

Allstate Foundation

About the Program

What is the Emerging Leaders Program?

The Emerging Leaders Program is a leadership development educational experience created by The Allstate Foundation Nonprofit Leadership Center in collaboration with the Northwestern University Kellogg School Center for Nonprofit Management. The program is designed to help nonprofit professionals take the next step in their leadership journey and prepare for broader organizational leadership.

Why is the Kellogg School Center for Nonprofit Management the academic partner?

The Kellogg School Center for Nonprofit Management at Northwestern University brings extensive experience in educating nonprofit leaders at all stages of their careers. Through academically rigorous, practical education led by Kellogg faculty and nonprofit sector experts, the Center helps nonprofit professionals strengthen their leadership and management capabilities. This expertise provides the academic foundation for the Emerging Leaders Program, combining research-based insights with learning that participants can apply to the challenges and opportunities facing their organizations.

What will I gain from participating in the program?

Participants will strengthen their leadership effectiveness, build core nonprofit management capabilities, enhance their strategic thinking and decision-making, and develop skills they can immediately apply within their organizations. The program also provides an opportunity to build relationships with a national cohort of nonprofit professionals and learn from peers with different perspectives, experiences and organizational challenges.

Will there be an opportunity to learn more before I apply?

Yes. The Allstate Foundation and the Kellogg School Center for Nonprofit Management will host two hour-long Virtual Information Sessions during the application period. These sessions will provide prospective applicants with an opportunity to learn more about the program and application process.

The Virtual Information Sessions will take place on:

- Thursday, Dec. 3, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. CT (registration closes on Dec. 2 at 11 a.m. CT)
- Wednesday, Dec. 9, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. CT (registration closes on Dec. 8 at 1 p.m. CT)

Both sessions will cover the same information, so there is no need to attend both sessions. Attending a Virtual Information Session is not necessary for consideration for the program.

Registration links are available here.

December 3 Session:
https://web.cvent.com/event/ef05dcdf-48aa-4752-aea7-d070790d9325/register

December 9 Session:
https://web.cvent.com/event/9262552d-0f39-4fdb-bf83-e455b64afee4/register

Eligibility and Fit

Who should apply?

The program is designed for nonprofit professionals who are preparing for broader leadership responsibilities within their organizations. Competitive applicants will typically have approximately 3–10 years of nonprofit sector experience and 1–3 years of leadership experience. To be eligible to apply for the program, applicants must work at a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is based in the United States and serves constituents in the United States.

What types of roles are a good fit for the program?

Participants may hold titles such as Associate Director, Senior Manager, Assistant Director, Deputy Director, Regional Manager, Site Director, Department Manager, Development Manager, Development Director, Team Lead, Supervisor, or a comparable position. Titles vary significantly across nonprofit organizations, so an applicant's responsibilities and leadership experience are more important than having a particular title.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to currently manage staff to apply?

Not necessarily. Leadership experience may include managing people, but it may also include leading projects, coordinating cross-functional initiatives, supervising volunteers, or influencing organizational decisions.

What if I have less or more than 3–10 years of nonprofit experience?

Experience of 3–10 years represents the typical profile of a competitive applicant. Applicants should consider whether their current responsibilities, leadership experience, professional goals, and readiness for broader organizational leadership align with the program.

Do I need to work for an organization funded by The Allstate Foundation?

No, you do not need to be a partner of The Allstate Foundation to apply.

Application and Selection

When can I apply?

The application period is Nov. 9, 2026, through Jan. 15, 2027.

What will the application include?

Applicants will provide information about their professional background and leadership experience and respond to questions about their motivation, a current leadership challenge, leadership growth goals, readiness to apply their learning, and what they would contribute to the cohort. Applicants will also be asked about their ability to participate fully in the program and the support they have from their organization.

What are you looking for in a strong application?

The application is designed to assess four primary areas: readiness, leadership potential, fit with the program, and potential contribution to the cohort. Thoughtful reflection, self-awareness, clear growth goals and a demonstrated willingness to learn and contribute to others' learning are important.

Can I complete my application in more than one sitting?

Yes. You will be asked to create an account in Submittable and, once you start the application, your work will be automatically saved. If you can't complete the application in one sitting, then you may log out and, the next time you log in, return to where you left off.

When will applicants be notified?

Applicants will receive an auto-reply notification confirming receipt of their application. No additional communications will be sent until early March 2027, when applicants will be notified of their application status.

Program Experience and Commitment

What is the format of the program?

The program includes a virtual orientation followed by three in-person, three-day sessions in Chicago.

What are the dates of the program?

Program Orientation: March 18, 2027, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. CT on Zoom
Session 1: April 13–15, 2027, in-person in Chicago
Session 2: July 13–15, 2027, in-person in Chicago
Session 3: Oct. 5–7, 2027, in-person in Chicago

Attendance at all sessions is mandatory.

If I can't attend one of the listed sessions, should I still apply?

No. If you have a work or personal commitment that prohibits you from attending any of the sessions, you should not apply for the program this year.

What does a typical in-person session look like?

Participants arrive on Monday, with programming beginning Tuesday morning at 8 a.m. CT. Tuesday and Wednesday are full program days, and Thursday concludes at approximately 3 p.m. CT. There will typically be one evening event per session. Participants should plan return travel for 6 p.m. CT or later on Thursday of each in-person session.

Do I need to attend every session?

Yes. Applicants must be able to attend all program sessions and fully participate in all program components. Virtual attendance of in-person sessions is not allowed.

What are the program objectives?

During the Emerging Leaders Program, participants will:

- Strengthen leadership effectiveness by developing greater self-awareness, communication skills and the ability to lead and develop others.
- Build core nonprofit management capabilities in areas such as team leadership, financial management, stakeholder engagement, cross-functional collaboration, fundraising and board governance.
- Enhance strategic thinking and decision-making to better align day-to-day leadership with organizational priorities and long-term mission impact.
- Apply new knowledge immediately by addressing real leadership challenges and identifying opportunities to strengthen team and organizational performance.
- Expand professional networks through a collaborative cohort experience that encourages peer learning, diverse perspectives and lasting professional connections.

What are the specific components of the program?

• Academic learning in the classroom program orientation

Participants engage in three-hour interactive learning sessions focused on leadership development, management skills and nonprofit expertise through lectures, case studies, group discussions and peer learning.

• Applied learning

Participants translate program insights into actionable leadership goals, develop implementation plans and share key takeaways and next steps with peers throughout the program.

• Learning circles

Participants engage in facilitated peer groups that foster networking, accountability, collaboration and leadership coaching through active discussion and ongoing relationship-building.

• Leadership assessment and executive coaching

Participants receive a 360-degree assessment and personalized executive coaching to create and achieve a tailored leadership development plan with ongoing support and accountability.

Will The Allstate Foundation or the Kellogg School schedule my 1:1 coaching sessions with my executive coach?

No. Each participant will be paired with a seasoned executive coach, and it is the participant's responsibility to schedule all sessions with their coach. The Kellogg School Center for Nonprofit Management will provide educational materials to the class focused on how to best work with an executive coach. Each class member is responsible for managing their relationship with their executive coach.

Will there be work between the in-person sessions?

The program may include additional components between sessions. There are typically pre-reading materials that are assigned two weeks in advance of each in-person session. The leadership assessment and executive coaching sessions will take place between in-person sessions. Specific expectations and time commitments will be communicated to selected participants.

What accommodations are available for participants with disabilities or accessibility needs?

The Allstate Foundation and the Kellogg School Center for Nonprofit Management work to provide a learning environment that affords full participation, equal access, and reasonable accommodation.

Cost and Logistics

Are there any costs associated with participating in the Emerging Leaders Program?

This program is fully funded by The Allstate Foundation at no cost to participants. Travel and accommodation will be provided.

What are the hotel arrangements?

All participants will receive three nights of hotel accommodations, including Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights. The hotel will securely store luggage until the Thursday evening departure.

The hotel is within walking distance of Northwestern University's downtown Chicago campus, making it convenient for program activities and events.

If I am local to Chicagoland, will a hotel room be provided?

Yes, hotel rooms will be provided to all participants in the Emerging Leaders Program.

How will participants book airfare and hotels?

Travel booking information will be provided upon admission to the program. Participants will receive details and instructions for arranging their airfare and hotel accommodations.

Where will the Chicago sessions take place?

The program sessions will take place on Northwestern University's downtown Chicago campus.

Additional Questions

If I have additional questions, who should I contact?

Please attend one of our Virtual Information Sessions if you have further questions about the program.