



LEAD Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is LEAD?

LEAD is the knowledge sharing partnership between the cities of Batavia, Elgin, and St. Charles, whose mission is to develop leaders through collaborative learning to build a stronger community. This replaces the program formerly known as Supervisory Modules in Leadership Excellence, aka SMILE.

2. What kinds of learning opportunities are offered through Lead?

LEAD is comprised of an annual representation of:

Professional Speaker Events - these are 3-4 hour large group learning sessions featuring speakers on a variety of topics that can apply to most positions in our organizations.

Leadership Book Clubs - these are 1.5 hour breakfast meetings where employees from LEAD cities discuss a featured book (or topic). Books are often chosen from the current popular leadership non-fiction topics or fiction books based upon topics that impact the workplace. Discussion groups are typically held in restaurants in each of the LEAD cities with 6-8 people per table.

LEAD 'N LEARN (new in spring 2019) - these are smaller group and shorter learning opportunities (2-2.5 hours) with topics chosen by each particular city based on that City's current needs. Employees from each of the cities may attend the LEAD 'N LEARN sessions hosted at other cities.

3. What does Lead stand for?

It is not a specific acronym, but it can stand for Learning, Education, Appreciation, Development, or Leadership, Excellence, Application, Determination -- whatever you like. It could also just be a verb -- to lead.

4. Who runs Lead?

We *all* do. LEAD, has always been, and will continue to be an evolutionary and collaborative learning initiative. Utilizing an invaluable framework whereby we regularly solicit staff feedback, two committees work in tandem to ensure LEAD meets the changing needs of our staff and our communities.

The Executive Committee oversees LEAD policies, finances, and communication and is comprised of one decision-making representative from each city (typically from the city administrator's or human resources departments). The committee members communicate regularly with Department Directors and City Managers/Administrators and help to ensure LEAD remains a low-cost, high-return learning initiative for their respective cities.

The Curriculum Planning Team is responsible for researching and evaluating speakers, reading and recommending leadership books, and providing assistance at events. This team is comprised of a dedicated group of lifelong learners representing a variety of department cultures throughout each city.

The LEAD Coordinator helps to manage all of the operational aspects of LEAD and serves on both committees. Both committees meet about every other month, or as needed.

5. Where can I get more information about Lead?

Check out the web site at www.strongercommunity.net, or contact committee members from each of the cities. New employees from each City receive a welcome letter and explanation of LEAD upon hire.

Participation

6. Is LEAD mandatory?

LEAD is not mandatory (unless designated otherwise by the management team of a LEAD City). One of the LEAD goals is to help staff understand the intrinsic link between self-development and community success. Self-development is vital to achieving an individual's personal and professional goals, while at the same time benefiting both the employee and the City. Employees may choose the LEAD events that they feel will benefit them.

7. Who is eligible to attend?

All regularly scheduled full and part-time employees are invited to attend all events, based upon supervisor approval and staffing needs.

8. Our department is always so busy. How can I justify going to Lead?

In order to meet the recurring and ever growing complex challenges in our communities, it is vital that our staff supplement institutional and organizational training and education with continuous, planned self-development. Taking advantage of attending LEAD events offers employees the potential for maximum personal and professional growth with a *very* minimal time investment. Each City has a vested interest in creating an adaptive and resilient workforce in *every* level of the organization.

9. I am already technically competent and have received leadership training in my field of expertise. Why should I attend Lead?

Many of us believe ourselves to be good leaders just because we know *how* to lead. We already went through *leadership training*. LEAD is different in that it focuses on the intrinsic link between self-development and community success. Self-development is defined as planned, goal-oriented learning that reinforces and expands the depth and breadth of an individual's knowledge base, as well as self- and situational awareness. Self-development will complement what we have previously learned in the classroom and on the job, enhance our personal competence and help us meet our objectives, both personally and professionally.

Enrollment & Attendance

10. When can I enroll?

You can enroll into any event once it is announced by way of email or by other postings. Enrollment periods usually last between 6 and 8 weeks.

11. How will I know when something is offered?

Enrollment announcements are mainly communicated through email and *The Leader* newsletter. Reminders will also be included in City newsletters and with posters throughout each city.

12. How do I enroll or register for an event?

Once you see an enrollment announcement, you can:

- Register online by visiting the LEAD website at www.strongercommunity.net;
- Ask your supervisor to register you online; or
- Contact Jennifer Kuhn, LEAD Coordinator, at 630-762-7090 or via email at jenkuhn@strongercommunity.net, and she'll get you registered.

13. When do I attend these events? On my own time, during my regular shift, or will I get paid overtime?

Generally speaking, in order to be as fiscally responsible as possible, you should attend during your regular shift. However, this is a voluntary program, so if you are a part-time person and an event is scheduled during your off hours, you might plan to attend on your own time or see if schedule adjustments are possible. All situations requiring LEAD attendance should be directed to your supervisor

14. Since this is voluntary, why do I have to enroll? Can't I just show up?

It is important that we have head counts at least 10 days prior to an event date to ensure we have enough room, food, and seating for everyone. If a cancellation is needed, please contact the LEAD coordinator ASAP.

15. Will my supervisor know I've signed up? Or do I need to contact him/her to let them know of my upcoming absence from work?

Non-supervisors will require their supervisor's approval to attend each event. It is important to ensure coverage during your absence. As long as operational needs are met, approval to attend should not be an obstacle to attending.

16. Since this is voluntary, is it a big deal if I don't show up?

We expect a cancellation 10 days prior to an event date in order for us to have enough food, facilities, tables, and materials for the event. Not showing up will create a negative financial and logistical impact.

17. Will there be make-up sessions if I miss the first one?

This depends on the LEAD component. Speaker events are scheduled for two dates in order to allow the opportunity for everyone to attend. If you miss the first date, you are certainly welcome to attend the second one, again, dependent on your division's operational needs and subject to approval from your supervisor. Leadership Book Clubs are scheduled for three dates per book, allowing ample opportunity to attend the third discussion group if you miss the first or second session.

18. How do I enter LEAD events in my timesheet?

Usually, LEAD is entered under training just as you would enter any other seminar or conference. However, each City may have some other procedures associated with LEAD. Please check with your Human Resources Department.

About the Speaker Events

LEAD Speaker Events feature professional speakers whose leadership sessions are meant to be engaging, informative, and thought-provoking.

19. How are speakers and topics selected?

Topics and speakers are selected by the LEAD Curriculum Planning Team based on needs assessment, recommendations from staff, and relevance to the LEAD goals. The LEAD Curriculum Planning Team is comprised of representative staff from a variety of departments from all three cities. They routinely research speakers, watching speaker demo videos or attending speaker keynotes to evaluate a speaker's

energy, depth of content, and topic relevance to make each learning experience a positive one for our attendees. We find speakers mainly through staff recommendations or with the help of a national speakers' bureau.

About the Leadership Book Club

The Leadership Book Club presents an opportunity to meet over breakfast with a small group of peers to discuss and/or debate leadership concepts presented in a featured book. The book clubs are a popular forum for informal discussion, relationship-building, idea sharing, brainstorming, and mentoring. Three books are featured annually.

20. How are books selected for the book club?

Books are selected mainly based on staff recommendation or because of a topic of interest for local government. The LEAD Curriculum Planning Team is always busy reading various books, trying to find books that are relevant to the goals of our learning initiative, as well as to a broad base of readers.

21. Where are the book clubs held?

LEAD Book Clubs are held at various restaurants in the LEAD cities. Announcements will include all the details for each date.

22. Where can I obtain copies of the featured books?

Each city maintains a lending library in their Human Resources Department. A number of copies of the featured book are purchased for each city, and books are lent out on a first-come, first-served basis.

About LEAD 'N LEARN Sessions (Coming spring of 2019)

This is new initiative (spring 2019) to cover topics of interest identified by each of the LEAD Cities allowing for different topics and formats chosen by the hosting City (In person presenter, TED talk, facilitated discussion, webinar, etc.)

23. What topics are included in the LEAD 'N LEARN sessions?

Any topic of interest to the hosting city is encouraged, and these sessions may be focused on a particular group of employees or topic that applies to a segment of the work group (supervisors, public safety, a topic that applies to just one or a few departments, etc.).

24. Who attends the LEAD 'N LEARN Sessions?

Attendance is geared toward employees that would most benefit from and utilize the content. Supervisors may recommend that an employee attends, based upon the topic or learning goals. As with all LEAD programs, supervisor approval is needed and often based upon work group responsibilities.

25. Where are the LEAD 'N LEARN Sessions held?

Each LEAD City will choose when (usually spring or early summer) and where (usually at a facility in their own City) to hold their own LEAD 'N LEARN session.