



Frequently Asked Questions About Leadership Anchorage

What IS Leadership Anchorage? In two paragraphs...

Leadership Anchorage is designed to expose the “emerging leaders” of non-profit, neighborhood, and ethnic organizations to the larger power brokers of Anchorage and Alaska. These individuals have already demonstrated a commitment to their community, have already shown leadership skills, but they benefit from intensive leadership training to give them – and their communities – the access to mainstream movers and shakers. Our goal is to make sure these emerging voices are heard – are at the table – in the mix of Anchorage decision-making.

Consequently, group diversity is essential. Twenty individuals proceed through ten rigorous, full-day sessions of interviews and group activities, reading and skills-building. The keystones of the program are a one-on-one mentorship program, a group project fulfilling an already-expressed need in the community, and a series of readings in the humanities. When a Leadership Anchorage class graduates, the community is enriched with individuals who know how to get things done, know how to operate in a diverse world, and think carefully about the ethical and personal demands of leadership.

How long has it been around?

Leadership Anchorage started in 1997 as a program of the Pew Partnership for Civic Change. Pew started ten Leadership Name-of-City programs that year. After two years, the Pew funding ended, but Leadership Anchorage had enough local support and interest to develop the financial base to continue.

Why was Leadership Anchorage created?

Several individuals and organizations perceived that Anchorage needed more representatives of its diverse populations at the table, for their voices to be heard. Non-profit boards of directors as well as Municipality boards and commissions were lacking representation by significant portions of the community. By exposing diverse leaders to these other arenas, it was hoped two things could happen: Anchorage would gain their voices, and their communities would receive the exposure to operate more effectively on a city-wide level.

What do you mean by participant diversity?

In the past ten classes, participants have included representatives of every ethnic group, a wide range of ages over 24, individuals who were blind or deaf, recent immigrants. Employed by the public, the private, or the non-profit sectors, individuals come from every political party and interest. Each year's class of twenty has mostly minority members, and recent classes have included residents of the MatSu Valley, Fairbanks, and Juneau.

How is Leadership Anchorage scheduled?

Each class consists of a retreat and ten full-day sessions. Most sessions occur on Saturdays, but two occur on Thursdays. The full training schedule for the next class will appear on our website (www.akhf.org, click on "programs") by mid-May. In addition to the sessions, participants spend about 100 hours outside of class on their group projects, meetings with mentors, and readings for the class.

What is the cost?

The cost to an individual, due on the first day of class or by agreement to be paid in installments, is \$1,250. Many participants can usually arrange sponsorship by their employer, their Native Corporation, or another group; and the Alaska Humanities Forum provides some scholarship assistance. No one has not been able to participate because of lack of personal finances, but everyone is expected to provide all or some portion of the fee as a demonstration of commitment and leadership potential. While the full cost to put each Leadership Anchorage participant through the program is about \$5,000; the Alaska Humanities Forum, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Alaska businesses and organizations provide the bulk of all contributions.

What is an "emerging leader"?

Leadership Anchorage is not for beginners. Participants have already established their leadership skills and have already demonstrated a commitment to their community, usually in one arena. What Leadership Anchorage provides is the exposure to mainstream movers and shakers in Anchorage, providing the opportunity to expand the reach of their effectiveness.

If, for example, someone is a leader in health care, after a while their contacts become limited to other health care practitioners. Same with individuals in the social services, trade associations, etc. By bringing together individuals from many arenas, Leadership Anchorage bridges different sectors, provides a larger community overview, and enables mutual collaboration to get things done.

What do participants gain?

Leadership Anchorage offers four things to its participants:

- exposure to established leaders
- the opportunity to work within a diverse group
- personal development of leadership skills
- reading and discussion in the humanities

What are key elements of the program?

- **Mentors:** Each participant has the opportunity to select a mentor from a pool of high-level and supportive leaders. This mentor will meet with them at least every other week, guiding them in meeting their goals for leadership development and community contribution.
- **Group Project:** Each participant will work within a smaller group to complete a group project by the end of the class.
- **Presentations by Leaders:** In an intimate and confidential environment, participants spend time with established leaders, engaging in dialogue about leadership development as well as various timely issues.
- **Giving back to the community:** Leadership Anchorage is not another career development program. Skills are developed and connections made to improve an individual's ability to give back to the community and/or his or her constituencies.

Where do the Group Projects come from?

United Way agencies, non-profit organizations, and individual Leadership Anchorage participants are asked if they have any projects that would benefit from the expertise and talent of a group from Leadership Anchorage. The intent is to fulfill a specific and existing need with the group projects. At one of the Leadership Anchorage sessions, presentations are made for each project proposal and individuals select the one they want to work on.

What are the requirements of the program?

The first rule of leadership is to show up, so punctuality and attendance is critical. Usually, a maximum of one missed session is excused. Completion of the readings and of the group project are required. This is a rigorous program, and it is not designed for those who think they might “wing it.” A point system is being developed to determine graduation requirements.

Why is Leadership Anchorage part of the Alaska Humanities Forum?

A distinguishing feature of Leadership Anchorage is its roots in the humanities, the study of society and the “human condition” as it spans different cultures. Leadership Anchorage includes readings in the humanities, such as Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” Raymond Carver’s short story “Cathedral,” *Endurance: Shackleton’s Incredible Voyage*, and Jon Krakauer’s book about the deaths on Mt. Everest, *Into Thin Air*.

Can I get college credits for Leadership Anchorage?

Yes. With a reading list and curriculum, professors usually approve it for credit.

Who is the Director of the Program?

Barbara Brown has been the director since November 2001. She is a graduate of a year-long, full-time national leadership program called the Coro Foundation Fellowship in Public Affairs, and her Stanford degree is in Philosophy and Humanities. Here in Anchorage, she has served as the Manager of Operations and Maintenance for People

Mover, the public relations officer for the Library, Museum, and Parks & Recreation, and operations manager at FedEx. She is also a writer, commentator on KSKA public radio, and a playwright.

Do Leadership Anchorage connections continue after the program?

One of the definite pluses to Leadership Anchorage is the bonding and connection that takes place within each group. For years afterwards, individuals can turn to other alumni when putting together ideas, building networks, etc. There is an informal alumni organization, and all Leadership Anchorage participants are connected by a group ListServ and informal, monthly get-togethers.

Okay, you've convinced me. What is the timetable for applications?

Beginning in May, applications are accepted throughout the summer. Once there are enough to convene an interview panel, interviews can be scheduled. Otherwise, applications are screened by a selection committee and individuals chosen for interviews soon after the August deadline. Decisions should be made by mid-September, and the opening retreat is scheduled for October 12/13 (overnight), 2007. For the class of 2007-2008, the admission deadline is **August 17, 2007**.

Training dates and applications will be available on the website at www.akhf.org, click on "programs." Interested applicants are invited to call Barbara Brown at (907) 272-5324 or via email at leadership@akhf.org.