



Frequently Asked Questions About Leadership Anchorage

What is Leadership Anchorage?

Leadership Anchorage strives to provide a “full experience” in leadership training. Diverse participants build a network of peers, are nurtured through a mentor relationship that often continues beyond the program, prepare and implement a community service project and apply their leadership training throughout the program. Participants emerge from the program prepared to fill leadership roles, filled with the desire to tackle a diverse array of community problems and challenges. The program seeks to ensure that the leadership of our city represents *all* of its citizens.

Leadership Anchorage is designed to introduce the “emerging leaders” of non-profit, neighborhood, and ethnic organizations to accomplished professionals and civic leaders in Anchorage and Alaska. Our goal is to make sure these emerging voices are heard and 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, speaker presentations, readings and group activities designed to facilitate the development of critical leadership skill sets. The keystones of the program are a one-on-one mentorship program, a group project fulfilling an 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.

What’s the program’s history?

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 Municipal boards, and commissions were lacking representation by significant portions of the community. By exposing these individuals to 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 is meant by participant diversity?

In the past thirteen classes, participants have included representatives from a variety of Anchorage's ethnic communities, a wide range of ages from 24 on up, individuals who were blind or deaf, and recent immigrants. Employed by public, private, small business and non-profit sectors, individuals come from every political party and interest.

What's the program's format?

Leadership Anchorage consists of one two day retreat and nine full-day sessions. Most sessions occur on Saturdays. The full training schedule is available on our website (www.akhf.org, click on "programs"). 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 is \$1,250. Many participants can usually arrange sponsorship by their employer, their Native Corporation, or another group. The Alaska Humanities Forum does provide some scholarship assistance. As a rule, however, participants are expected to provide all or some portion of the fee as a demonstration of their vested commitment.

What is an "emerging leader"?

Emerging leaders are individuals who have begun to establish their leadership skills and demonstrated a commitment to their community, usually in one arena. What Leadership Anchorage provides is the exposure to organizations to accomplished professionals and civic leaders in Anchorage and Alaska, providing the opportunity to expand the reach of their effectiveness. By bringing together individuals from many different arenas, Leadership Anchorage bridges a variety of sectors, provides a larger community overview, and enables mutual collaboration to get things done.

What do participants gain?

Leadership Anchorage provides opportunity for development in four core areas:

- exposure to established leaders
- access to diverse working environment
- personal development of leadership skills
- reading and discussion in the humanities

* Past participants also note they have gained access to tremendous networks of information and resources, and have made valuable professional and personal contacts across the community and state as a result of their completion of the program.

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.
- **Community Service Group Project:** Each participant will work within a smaller group to complete a project designed to address a community need by the end of the class.
- **Presentations by Leaders:** In a collegial environment, participants spend time with established leaders, engaging in dialogue about leadership development as well as various timely issues.
- **Community Leadership Skills:** Leadership Anchorage endeavors to provide an environment where skill sets 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 Community Service Group Projects come from?

Projects are solicited from the Community, and often come from non-profit organizations and semi-governmental entities. Community Service Project Sponsors 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 community 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. A maximum of two missed sessions are excused. Completion of the readings and the community service group project are core requirements for graduation from the program.

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 the cultural, political, and civic landscape of our world. Leadership Anchorage includes varied readings in the humanities, such as Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “The Drum Major Instinct,” Franz Kafka’s “Fellowship,” and John Steinbeck’s “Grapes of Wrath.”

Is it possible to receive college credit for Leadership Anchorage?

Yes. With a reading list and curriculum, participation is generally approved for credit.

Who is the Director of the Program?

Jim MacKenzie, Deputy Executive Officer of the Alaska Humanities Forum, is the director of Leadership Anchorage. Jim also coordinates the Alaska History & Cultural Studies Project and Summer Teacher Institute for the Forum. Born and raised in Anchorage, Jim graduated from the University of Puget Sound in 1986 with a Bachelors of Art in English Literature. He is also a recent graduate of UAA’s Masters of Public Administration Program and worked for more than a decade as Special Assistant for the Consulate-General of Japan in Anchorage. Past professional experience includes positions as Rooms Division Director at Alyeska Resort and Prince Hotels, and Assistant Operations Dispatcher for Japan Airlines at Ted Stevens International Airport. Fluent in Japanese, Jim has worked in Japanese organizations for more than twenty years, and also served as international guest liaison at the Akasaka Prince Hotel in Tokyo from 1990-1993, graduated from the Fujitsu-sponsored Japan–America Institute of Management Science in Hawaii in 1990, and taught English in Japanese public and private secondary schools as a Monbusho English Fellow in Fukui prefecture from 1986-1988.

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.

Timetable for applications

Beginning in May, applications are accepted throughout the summer. Applications are screened by a selection committee and individuals chosen for interviews after the August deadline. Interview panels include program alumni. Final selections are announced in mid-September, and the program begins with the opening retreat in late September. For the class of 2010-2011, the application deadline is August 20.

Training dates and applications will be available on the website at www.akhf.org, click on “programs.” Please direct all inquiries to Jim MacKenzie at 907-272-5324 or email at jmackenzie@akhf.org.