TOOLS *for* EQUITABLE CLIMATE RESILIENCE

FOSTERING COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

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River Network connects and strengthens local water protectors nationwide, empowering them with tools, training, resources, and mentoring.

For over 30 years, we have expanded, trained, and supported a Network that works collaboratively to protect and restore both communities and the waterways that serve them. Key areas of our work highlighted in River Network's strategic plan—**The Power of Our Network: 2018-2022 Strategic Plan**—are "Build Strong Champions" and "Resilient Cities and Communities." We do this work by building and sustaining the capacity of our member organizations and by providing resources, tools, training, and technical assistance.

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With the support of the Kresge Foundation, River Network embarks on the journey of exploring climate resiliency strategies and equitable engagement of communities in climate resilience work. This two-part toolkit presents Community-Led Research (CLR) and Leadership Development as essential tools for addressing the diverse risks posed by climate change; each respective tool provides case studies regarding CLR and Leadership Development, as well as comprehensive descriptions of the theory and practice of each strategy (see **Community-Led Research**, the accompanying tool. This research is grounded in showcasing the experts who are already implementing such strategies successfully in their communities, and bringing their experience to the table for the benefit of other community leaders who are championing similar efforts.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

As communities continue to respond to and plan for the risks posed by climate change, it is increasingly important to learn from those community leaders who are approaching climate resiliency in intentional ways.

Urban and rural communities alike are bearing the burdens of flooding, water scarcity, and droughts, with impacts experienced disproportionately by marginalized populations. These burdens are intensified by climate change and threaten local economies, communities, and cultures. The opportunities for local nongovernmental organizations to play a role in advancing equitable solutions to such challenges are abundant, and the role of community partners to elevate their expertise is critical. This collaborative approach is key to building momentum toward equitably resilient communities; that is, communities where climate change solutions are accessed equally by everyone and barriers to such access are considered and addressed.

Through this toolkit, River Network aims to build the capacity of organizations to serve as catalysts in supporting members of their communities stepping into leadership roles, as well as engaging them meaningfully in defining the scope of local climate change risks and impacts, and formulating and implementing equitable solutions alongside key partners. The research compiled in this tool includes over 20 leadership development programs from across the country that can serve as models for organizations who aspire to embark on this important work themselves, or hope to adapt existing programming to better meet the needs of community members and emerging leaders.

This guide was developed using qualitative data collected through a series of interviews with experts from around the country who are designing, managing, and implementing community-based leadership development programs. Although not all of these programs directly address climate change and environmental justice, this collection of diverse programming illustrates the broad ways in which communities address leadership development and grassroots engagement in local decision-making. This tool provides a comprehensive picture of training and capacity-building theory and practice, and showcases programs that are diverse in content, audience, geography, outcome, and practice.

Researching such a wide variety of programs necessitated a fully open mind and heart to all of the valuable work happening throughout the country. The interviews and conversations we conducted shaped the format of this tool and the delivery of the information within it. By allowing this resource to be fully informed by on-the-ground practitioners of leadership development, we hope to offer an authentic collection of engaging ideas on the topic.

PART 1:
THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Relevance & Context

The threats of climate change and pollution are greatly exacerbated in under-resourced and under-represented communities, generating a legitimate need for those experiencing the impacts firsthand to be involved in developing sustainable and creative solutions for mitigation, adaptation, and recovery. Community members' active roles in decision-making helps to discover locally informed approaches and outcomes to developing a resilient community that reflects diverse perspectives and expertise.

The urgency of working at the intersection of water, equity, and climate change, in particular around issues of urban flooding, is well established. According to the 2017 report from the Union of Concerned Scientists, "**When Rising Seas Hit Home**," over 12% of the U.S. population is exposed to flood risk, with nearly 170 coastal U.S. communities living at risk of reaching or exceeding the threshold levels for chronic inundation by 2035.These risks are disproportionately borne by the most vulnerable members of a community, who are often the hardest hit and slowest to recover from disasters. Solutions that advance climate and community resilience must be generated through the full participation of community members in ways that amplify their voices and uplift their priorities.

Marginalized communities are typically underrepresented in local government as well as on boards, commissions, and other decision-making bodies at the local, state, and regional levels. In addition, many local decision-making and advisory bodies have elected or appointed seats that are simply not being contested or challenged. The Community Water Center (CWC) in California's San Joaquin Valley documented this lack of engagement in their 2018 report "**Untapped Opportunity: Local Water Boards and the Fight for Water Justice.**" CWC highlighted that from 2017 to 2018, nearly 500 water board directors in the San Joaquin Valley held uncontested seats, meaning that no local residents had filed for candidacy to challenge them in an area that is increasingly water insecure.

Diverse Leadership Roles

Serving on such a local water board is just one way that community members can step into local leadership. Community organizations can provide training and support to help prepare residents for different leadership roles; there are countless ways community members can be a part of decision-making processes. While not exhaustive, **Table 1** (on the following page) provides a sampling of the types of leadership roles through which community members can influence issues related to climate justice and resilience.

> "
> *Any job that you hold, and any identity that you hold, makes you enough for the position you want [to run and campaign for]."*
>
> – Maria Elena Garcia of Vote Run Lead (**page 24**)

TABLE 1: **Types of Leadership Roles to Influence Local Decision-Making**

LEADERSHIP ROLE	DESCRIPTION OF ROLE
Elected Official (local, state, federal)	Provides different levels of decision-making and representation to affect change through policy-making.
Public Board, Commission Seat, Advisory Boards	Supports decision-making at the local level and oversees how systems function, and can be filled by elections, applications, or appointments; candidate selection varies by county/city/region.
Member of Nonprofit Board of Directors	Directs and oversees the work of non-governmental organizations in a community to ensure their mission, vision, and operations are equitable.
Community Steward (i.e. volunteer)	Provides opportunities to learn and practice new skills, and to lead by example in a low-risk capacity. Many organizations will "promote" volunteers to take on more formal leadership roles over time.
Community Policy Advocate	Can champion local policies and ordinances that advance equity and resilience in their communities by being present at local decision-making meetings, petitioning or gathering letters of support, or organizing residents around policy issues.
Neighborhood Ambassador, Trainer	Stays informed on specific issues and shares knowledge with neighbors/neighborhood groups. This leadership role is informal yet critical and allows community members to lead on specific topic areas.

WHAT DO EFFECTIVE LEADERS DO?

1. Communicate openly and transparently
2. Establish common goals with stakeholders
3. Build consensus
4. Recognize intersectionality and diverse identities
5. Invite everyone to the table
6. Set boundaries for respectful interactions
7. Practice cultural competence
8. Engage in personal and professional growth

"

Organizations [and leaders] should work with *communities, not* for *communities," in creating more resilient and sustainable neighborhoods.*

– Alicia Smith, Freshwater Future/Junction Coalition

Benefits of Leadership Development Initiatives

Leadership development programs are diverse in their approach to preparing individuals to serve in leadership roles as well as their target audiences; however, they generally generate similar positive outcomes for communities:

- **Equitable representation and outcomes:** uplifting the voices of those with local knowledge ensures diverse perspectives are included in defining a problem and developing a responsive set of locally-informed and culturally-relevant solutions.

- **Cohesive and effective coalitions:** training community members to cultivate new coalitions helps bring focus and secure resources in support of shared goals, contributing to more sustainable and effective management of local issues.

- **Meaningful civic engagement:** community members who feel represented and heard by local leaders are more likely to engage in civic processes, develop relationships with community leaders, and bring their own experiences forward in decision-making spaces.

- **Long-term and multi-generational community engagement:** engaging an entire community taps into knowledge from community elders, as well as the innovation of younger generations; this cross-generational sharing and collaboration builds investment in solutions to be carried well into the future.

PART 2:
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Leadership Development Program Types & Purposes

To help the reader navigate the various examples of successful programs compiled in this tool, we have organized them into discrete categories. We recognize that particular initiatives often don't fall neatly into one single category, but we hope this approach provides a structure that will help the reader understand how programs function, based on a number of common themes. Refer to **Appendix 1** for a matrix that summarizes program details, and **Appendix 2** for full program summaries and examples of each program type below.

PROGRAMS GROUPED BY TARGET AUDIENCE

Grassroots programs activate community members to participate in training, resulting in meaningful leadership experiences. These programs often focus on building coalitions, activating individuals to champion specific community issues, and elevating marginalized people into positions of power within decision-making and advisory bodies.

Youth Development programs are focused on engaging young adults and children in their community to create sustainable and long-term stewards of local issues and resources. These programs help establish standards for meaningful community participation and civic engagement, as well as increase access to career paths and educational paths for developing leaders.

Candidate Training programs help prepare individuals to campaign for elected and appointed positions, with emphasis on challenging traditional power structures and engaging diverse communities in the policy-making process.

Professional Development* programs are tailored for working professionals and aim to introduce new perspectives, management practices, and ways of leading to individuals already immersed in their careers. Occasionally these programs also offer technical expertise to individuals who have careers that intersect with multiple sectors.

*While professional development programs do not function as community-based leadership development initiatives, such as those we highlight in this tool, we have included examples that incorporate useful program components and structures that can be applied to community-based programs.

PROGRAMS GROUPED BY GOAL

Prescriptive programs have definitive paths to specific roles and outcomes for participants (such as being appointed to a local advisory board or completing a green infrastructure project) and often focus on specific issue areas or leadership opportunities. These programs recruit participants with an outcome already in mind.

Agnostic programs provide tools, resources, and guidance for individuals to define their own goals and identify leadership positions that are accessible and comfortable for them. The outcomes for participants are dependent on each individual.

For a full summary and categorization of all the programs researched in this tool, please reference **Appendix 2**.

Characteristics of Effective Leadership Development Programs

This tool features over 20 leadership development programs that use a variety of tools and approaches to strengthen community leadership. The success and effectiveness of many of these programs can be attributed to various characteristics of their design, implementation, and approach to partner engagement.

PROGRAM DESIGN

• Program is easily and broadly accessible

• Clear goals are established early on in the process, both for participants and the program as a whole

• Program curriculum is relevant to or defined by the community

• Program and participant evaluation and follow-up strategies are established and verified with participants

PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

• Strategic partners and local experts are engaged to contribute expertise and hands-on learning opportunities to the program content

• Programs utilize existing organizations and coalitions to engage their participants in active learning

• Funders and program sponsors are in alignment with the outcomes of the program and understand the value of compensating individuals for local knowledge (i.e. values-based funding is centered as a funding mechanism; learn more at right)

PROGRAM DELIVERY

• Mentoring and one-on-one/group consulting opportunities are available for participants

• Small peer groups are established within larger program cohorts to enhance learning and build more comfortable spaces for vulnerability and growth

• Place-based experiences are incorporated into the curriculum to establish further relevance for local participants

Accessibility Considerations for Program Content

• **Physical Accessibility** — e.g. transportation options, choosing relevant meeting spaces, virtual options/call-in options/makeup classes, ADA accessible spaces

• **Financial Accessibility** — e.g. scholarships for program costs, stipends for participants, childcare options, intentional scheduling of events around work schedules, meals provided

• **Cultural Accessibility** — e.g. translation services available, cultural relevance built into content

Values-Based Funding and Its Relevance to Community Leadership Development

Values-based funding is an approach that applies a program's or organization's programmatic and ethical values to the ways in which it seeks, accepts, and utilizes funding. This framework helps in aligning funding procedures and protocols with an overarching set of values that can create trust, consistency, and more sustainable funding relationships for the long-term.

Examples of practicing values-based funding may include...

• Not accepting funds from a specific industry or foundation that is counteractive to an organization's mission;

• Seeking funding from foundations and private donors who have histories of stewardship or justice work; and

• Using funds to balance the needs of program participants alongside the program's operational costs.

PART 3:

BUILDING A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Whether you plan to design a leadership development program from scratch or re-tool an existing program to address new needs, this section will guide you through a series of important steps you will need to follow to create a program that will have lasting impact on strengthening local leadership. The information in this section of the tool will be most relevant to those engaged in the design and early implementation of a leadership development program. For sample resources, please reference Appendix 2.

CONVENE A PLANNING TEAM

Before the design and planning process begins, it is important to determine who will be engaged in building a leadership development program. New programs benefit from a dedicated planning team in their early stages, including piloting the program with participants. To determine who is involved, think about your organization's current capacity and existing relationships. People with experience to contribute to the planning and design process may exist within a volunteer program, your board of directors, current staff or interns, or partner organizations and outside stakeholders. Below are two specific examples to provide guidance on this stage of the process.

Huron River Watershed Council

Jason Frenzel, Stewardship Coordinator for the **Huron River Watershed Council** in Ann Arbor, Michigan, specializes in building and cultivating effective volunteer programs. Frenzel emphasizes the importance of looking internally at existing groups of people engaged with an organization when it comes to developing new programs, and shares the following thoughts:

"Volunteers [and other people engaged with your organization] need to be given some level of decision-making power to remain engaged, develop long-term investment, and establish an emotional attachment and connection to issues the organization addresses. When we have groups of people participating in programs to start with, it's safe to assume that there are individuals who exist in those groups who can become good leaders in the future—providing decision-making opportunities helps identify and elevate those individuals."

Frenzel recommends creating a pilot program with individuals already engaged in programming and who have an existing connection with your organization or issue area. Durable relationships come from the early stages of program development and it's likely that these pilot participants will become highly invested and take an interest in cultivating a more successful program long-term.

Self Help Enterprises

A nationally recognized community development organization, **Self Help Enterprises** embarked on developing their own leadership development program focused on regional water management in 2018. With grant funding from a variety of partners, Self Help Enterprises was able to facilitate a stakeholder scoping process to collect input on three core considerations of their future program: the content of the Institute, the design of the Institute, and challenges/opportunities for Institute participants to implement their new knowledge and skills in regional water management forums.

Over 50 people participated in the scoping process including rural community residents, drinking water system representatives, nonprofit representatives, state agency staff, water district board members, and local government officials. A combination of surveys and in-person focus groups were utilized to collect information. Participants at each focus group shared their experiences with regional water management and provided input and suggestions on a variety of topics, from their favorite learning styles to factors preventing or limiting participation in specific programs. Surveys were distributed in-person and via email to other relevant stakeholders. This stakeholder engagement process not only identified key components of the planning process, but individuals who were invested in participating in the process, as well.

To view the full stakeholder report, please visit **Appendix 2**.

ASSESS YOUR COMMUNITY'S NEEDS, GAPS, AND INTERESTS

The following approaches will help your program team evaluate your community to develop a leadership program that is genuinely equitable and addresses real expressed needs:

1. Research demographic data for your community, and assess whether local decision-making bodies and leaders who are in a position to address issues of climate risk, adaptation, or mitigation reflect the community's make-up. Such an assessment can help you clarify the needs for a leadership development initiative and define your target audience.

2. Schedule deep listening sessions with the community your organization serves in order to understand local perspectives and knowledge on different issues. Structure the session around a set of open-ended questions that allow members of the community to share their thoughts and opinions uninterrupted and without rebuttal or responses. **The Listening Post Collective** has a toolbox of ideas to facilitate this kind of engagement, including **a guide on how to craft great questions** to create meaningful conversation with community members. These sessions will help you design a leadership program that incorporates training to address your community's top priorities.

3 Attend community forums and meetings to learn more about local concerns, what actions are being taken, who is engaged, and what needs remain. You might identify emerging leaders via specific issue areas, or identify ways in which the current leadership structures are lacking. Participating in such meetings will help you identify the gaps a leadership program can address, as well as community members who may be interested in helping to design, facilitate, or participate in your future program.

4 Survey other local nonprofits and academic institutions in your area about what leadership development and training opportunities already exist. You may identify other programs that can be built upon, re-tooled, or complemented with additional resources. Other programs can be valuable assets and partners in your own work, and complement, rather than compete against, your organization's own efforts.

DEFINE A MEASURABLE GOAL

Based on the community's needs, articulate a goal for your program. This could be a single desired outcome, or a set of outcomes that your program can accomplish. Identifying a set of metrics that will help you measure your success as you are designing the program will help guide the rest of the choices you make. Consider the following two questions as you select your evaluation metrics:

Two questions can help guide this decision:

1 **What will it mean for your future program to be successful?**
   Example: The program will be successful if participants apply for and are appointed to a public board or commission upon completion of the program.

2 **How will you measure that success?**
   Example: The program will utilize a follow up survey 6 months after participants graduate to track progress in being appointed to public boards and commissions, and additional surveys every year after to track long-term participation.

Many programs utilize a variety of tools to measure the metrics associated with their programs, including:

• Pre-and post-surveys to measure participant growth

• Participant storytelling/collecting narratives

• Quantitative data (how many participants completed something, participated in something, achieved something)

• Program evaluations/feedback surveys

• Capstone projects to demonstrate learning and growth

• Annual follow-up surveys to track long-term impacts on participants

IDENTIFY COMMUNITY PARTNERS & RESOURCES

Working with a better sense of your target audience and goals, consider what other expertise or resources you will need to implement your initiative and who you can partner with to make your program a success.

Start by making a list of the assets your organization or community has at hand; be sure to include:

- Physical resources, such as teaching tools, transportation, or locations to host training sessions.
- Technology, such as communication tools or a website to host program information.
- Knowledge, such as expertise in topics relevant to training or cultural knowledge.
- Relationships that may be valuable to your program, such as academic institutions or consultants.

Once you have exhausted that list, start a similar list of needs and gaps.

With others in your organization and established partners, consider other entities who you can partner with to fill those gaps. These may include local nonprofit organizations, public libraries, local chambers of commerce or business associations, municipal departments, academic institutions, neighborhood associations, cultural institutions, or faith-based institutions. Note the costs associated with these resources and services in order to develop an accurate budget for your program.

You are now ready to begin meeting with prospective partners to explore their interest in collaborating with you on a leadership development initiative, being mindful of their existing obligations to the community and respectful of any associated fees for their time and resources.

DESIGN THE PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM

The programmatic goals and target audience will dictate both the content delivered to participants and how that content is presented. Many of the programs featured in this tool include two types of content in their curriculum: technical skills (i.e. abilities and knowledge for performing practical tasks) and soft skills (i.e. attributes and practices that allow someone to interact effectively with others). Table 2, below, lists examples of each.

TABLE 2: **Examples of Leadership Skills by Type**

TECHNICAL SKILLS	SOFT SKILLS
• Performing Stream Sampling	• Communication Strategies
• Installing Green Infrastructure	• Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Practices
• Advocacy & Community Organizing	• Effective Meeting Management
• Project Planning	• Cultural Competency
• Writing Legislation	• Conflict Management

Soft skills training strengthens emerging leaders' emotional and cultural intelligence, helping them navigate complex spaces intentionally, efficiently, and compassionately. Many programs utilize existing tools and experts to facilitate training on these soft skills topics, including personality assessments, previously developed modules, professional coaches, and trained counselors.

Technical skills are built through a variety of hands-on learning opportunities paired with classroom-style instruction. Often this kind of content is best introduced in a controlled environment, and then applied through a simulated scenario or during a field trip or site visit.

Table 3 introduces different content-delivery methods that can be adapted to strengthen participants' technical and soft skills.

Ensuring your program content is accessible:

1 Are the facilitators delivering the content representative of those engaged in the program, and culturally competent?

2 Is the content accessible to all participants/target audience members (language, literacy level, available to persons with disabilities)?

3 Can transportation be provided or reimbursed if content delivery takes place outside of a central location?

4 If a participant misses a training session, how easy will it be to make up/catch up on missed content?

TABLE 3: **Description of Training Methods Deployed by Leadership Development Programs**

TRAINING METHOD	TRAINING METHOD EXAMPLES & DESCRIPTIONS
Classroom-Style/Workshops	Lectures, simulations, worksheets, games, and other traditional teaching methods.
Field Trips & Volunteering	Exposure to real-life examples of issues, their related impacts, and/or effective and functional solutions; sometimes incorporates learning-by-doing in a volunteer capacity to gain entry-level expertise in specific topics.
Project-Based Learning	A culminating project to apply learned skills, similar to a capstone project or academic thesis.
Job-Based Training	Paid, on-the-job training and certifications to advance individuals beyond entry-level experiences.
Hands-On Civic Engagement	Participation in the legislative process, including calling/meeting with elected officials, delivering testimony, canvassing, etc.
Summits	Conference-style learning that allows individuals to network outside of their training program with other program alumni or community members; provides a venue to showcase their own learning.
Local Expert Panels	Panels in which local leaders and experts share their own knowledge and experience in a discussion-based forum.
Mentoring/One-on-One Coaching	Matching trainees with issue-area experts for individual and customized attention to trainees' growth.
Alumni Networks	Utilizing program alumni as real-life examples of success, inspiration, and accessible storytelling.

RECRUIT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Before recruiting participants, it is critical to have the entire program schedule and logistical information available (e.g. dates, times, locations, and overall expectations). All of the programs surveyed agreed that providing this information ahead of time leads to higher retention rates throughout the duration of the program. Setting clear expectations helps potential participants assess their capacity to participate, and allows them to troubleshoot potential conflicts with program staff ahead of starting the program. Provide all logistical information for your program alongside any application or registration information.

In addition, successful programs all share handful of recruitment strategies:

• **Word of Mouth:** Soliciting direct referrals and recommendations from program partners, program alumni, and community leaders is by far the most effective way to recruit participants. Above all other strategies, this method of advertising was emphasized as the key resource for recruitment year after year.

• **Professional/Partner Networks:** Utilizing email listservs, monthly newsletters (digital or print), online groups, digital discussion platforms, and member communications all stood out as the easiest and cheapest way to recruit participants.

• **Social Media:** Creating social media events and using creative publishing tools that are shared by local partners is another effective strategy, in particular when coupled with paid advertisements. First consider if your target audience is likely to access social media frequently and, if so, which platforms they are most likely to utilize.

More unique methods for recruitment emerged for specific program types, and are detailed below.

• **Grassroots Programs**

  – Direct Mailing: applications or information about the program were mailed directly to homes in target audience areas.

  – Print Media: placing printed advertisements in locally circulated newsletters, newspapers, and magazines (specifically those with cultural significance for certain communities) has been helpful for programs that serve Black, Indigenous, and Communities of Color.

  – Canvassing: utilizing volunteers or paid staff to make home visits in areas with target audience members to share information.

• **Youth Programs**

  – Direct Outreach in Schools: engaging school administrators, teachers, club leaders, counselors, or board members to help distribute information directly to students.

  – Posters: dropping flyers, posters, or literature about the program on academic campuses for distribution.

Most programs utilize at least three different advertising methods to reach potential participants. Finally, although not targeted, community events such as information fairs, block parties, resource fairs, or other public gatherings may also serve as good avenues to distribute information and reach potential participants.

CONSIDER PROGRAM COSTS & ACCESSIBILITY

When considering program costs, there are two separate costs to identify: the cost to facilitate the program and the cost for individuals to participate in the program.

The cost to facilitate the program includes staff time, content development, hired facilitators, renting facilitation space, meals, reimbursement, materials, and more. When developing a program and totaling these costs to your organization, determine how much of the cost should be assumed by participants, versus covered by other funding sources.

In general, programs that focus on youth, grassroots development, and candidate training are typically provided at little to no cost to participants; the majority are free. Of the programs we researched that had a charge for participants, these were typically under $100. Many organizations offer financial assistance or scholarships to offset participant costs, often covering the entire cost of the program.

> **Nourishing Emerging Leaders**
>
> Many programs feature half-day or all-day sessions to deliver content. A sentiment from the program manager at Amherst Wilder Foundation's Community Equity Program offers guidance here: "Offer a full meal for participants—don't mess around with snacks; support local businesses and showcase different cultures. People need to be nourished to learn and grow."

Other Participant Costs

Beyond program fees, participants face external costs such as child care and transportation. Both of these may be barriers to accessing a program. A variety of the programs reviewed include public transit passes, childcare services, childcare vouchers, or a general reimbursement into their program budgets to alleviate these extra burdens on participants.

Another concern shared by leadership program managers we interviewed is participants' lost income while they participate in the program. Participants may be changing work schedules, using time off, or sacrificing a second or third source of income to be able to fully participate in training. It is becoming increasingly common for leadership development programs to offer compensation to participants in the form of paid stipends. The amount ranges significantly based on a program's funding, but it is common to see rates around $50–$100/training session attended. Sometimes stipends are offered in addition to transportation, childcare, and other reimbursements; other times the stipend is meant to act as a reimbursement for all external costs assumed by participants.

Additional Accessibility Considerations

• Meal service

• Translation and/or interpretation services

• Choosing locations that are ADA accessible

• Choosing locations nearby public transit routes

• Choosing locations that are culturally sensitive

• Call-in/virtual learning options for participants who are unable to travel

• Make-up opportunities for missed sessions

Many accessibility concerns can be addressed through the application or registration process, before a program begins. Amherst Wilder Foundation's Community Equity Program includes an accessibility section on their application, with a disclaimer that expressed needs can be accommodated and do not affect participation or candidate selection. The form includes a handful of questions specific to transportation and childcare needs, and provides space for open-ended responses to questions about physical accessibility and other concerns. The Community Equity Program also offers workshops and one-on-one assistance to help individuals apply to the program.

Structuring program funding to address accessibility needs is the most proactive way to ensure socioeconomic barriers do not interfere with participants' engagement in the program, and demonstrates recognition of the diverse needs of emerging and potential leaders.

FUND THE PROGRAM

The majority of the programs in this tool are funded through three major funding mechanisms:

1 Fee-for-service

Participants assume a portion of the program cost through registration fees, structured as either a single fee or in tiered rates (for private versus public sector, income-based, etc.). Many programs with fees offer scholarships to offset costs for participants.

2 Sponsorships

Private business or agency partners allocate funds or in-kind donations for specific program costs/ needs. Many programs turn to their local business communities when seeking sponsorships, and tailor requests accordingly. Items that are often sponsored include scholarships, meal service, transportation, or field trips.

3 Grants

Grants often cover the bulk of program costs, including staff, program materials, contracted professionals, and operating costs. Common funders include local community foundations, state departments, federal foundation grants (like **National Fish & Wildlife Foundation**), networks (such as **Urban Waters Learning Network**) or federal agency grants (including **US Environmental Protection Agency**).

A combination of these three funding sources, as well as pulling from general operating funds and private donations within an organization, provide the dominant funding structure for leadership development programs. Keep in mind the values-based funding concept introduced on **Page 7** when approaching funders, sponsors, and other program partners.

CONCLUSION

There are many efforts underway across the United States to help communities prepare for and invest in climate change: mitigation, adaptation, and resilience efforts alike.

Through the efforts of nonprofit organizations to build local capacity and power, community members are finding it easier to access leadership roles through which they can help assess risks and find solutions to local issues related to climate change. Elevating community members into leadership positions helps bring novel perspectives that inform more equitable solutions to common issues like flooding and sea-level rise. The opportunities for more diverse leaders to engage with such issues are numerous.

New efforts to support emerging leaders can benefit from engaging with existing networks and coalitions (e.g. the **Urban Sustainability Directors Network** or **Urban Waters Learning Network**) and fostering valuable partnerships with community institutions in their region. Whether the focus of a program is engaging community members in local advisory boards or building networks of advocates for specific policy changes, a focus on accessible programming and elevating local expertise is critical to the success of any leadership development initiative.

As rural and urban communities continue to experience the measurable effects of a changing climate, River Network is committed to building local power and supporting emerging local leaders by working with organizations to design new leadership development programs or strengthen existing initiatives. As a nationwide network, we are available to provide technical assistance to such programs, connect experts across our network, and continue learning from local practitioners of this work. This work aligns with our mission to empower and unite people and communities to protect and restore rivers and all waters that sustain life.

For more information about support for leadership development programming, contact River Network's Community Organizing Associate, Hannah Mico
hmico@rivernetwork.org | 720-640-2163

APPENDIX 1:

MATRIX OF FEATURED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

PROGRAM NAME	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	PROGRAM TYPE	PRESCRIPTIVE/ AGNOSTIC?	COST TO PARTICIPANT?	TRAINING METHODS	PROGRAM LENGTH	PAGE
Atlanta Watershed Learning Network	EcoAction	Atlanta, GA	Grassroots	Prescriptive	No (with compensation)	CW, LOCAL, PBL	6 months	18
Commissions Training Program	Liberty Hill	Los Angeles, CA	Candidate Training	Prescriptive	No (with compensation)	CW, CV, ALUM	6 months	18
Community Equity Program	Amherst Wilder Foundation	St. Paul, MN	Grassroots	Agnostic	No	CW, FTV, CV, ALUM	9 months	19
Community Leadership Academy	Humble Independent School District	Humble County, TX	Grassroots	Prescriptive	No	CW, FTV, 1-1	7 months	19
Community Leadership Institute	Puget Sound Sage	Seattle, WA	Candidate Training	Agnostic	No (with compensation)	CW, CV, LOCAL, ALUM	6 months	20
Environmental Leaders	Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council	Providence, RI	Youth	Prescriptive	No	CW, FTV, PBL	1 academic year	21
Flood Fighters	Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council	Providence, RI	Grassroots	Prescriptive	No (with compensation)	CW, LOCAL, CV	1 year	21
Foundations for Leaders Organizing for Water and Sustainability (FLOWS)	University of Colorado, Boulder	Boulder, CO	Youth	Prescriptive	No (with compensation)	JBT, FTV, LOCAL	variable	21
Fresh Coast Ambassadors	Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District (MMSD)	Milwaukee, WI	Youth	Prescriptive	No (with compensation)	JBT, 1-1	1 year	22
Great Lakes Leadership Academy	Michigan State University – MSU Extension	Lansing, MI	Professional Development	Agnostic	Yes (scholarships available)	CW, FTV, 1-1, LOCAL, ALUM	18 months/ 6 months	20
Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership	Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership (IGEL)	Georgia (various)	Professional Development	Prescriptive	Yes (scholarships available)	CW, FTV, LOCAL, ALUM, SUMMIT	9 months	22
Neighborhood Water Watch	Chatahoochee RiverKeeper	Georgia (various)	Grassroots	Prescriptive	No	FTV	variable	23
Oregon LEAD	Native American Youth & Family Center	Portland, OR	Grassroots	Agnostic	No	CW, LOCAL, 1-1, ALUM	6 months	23
Proctor Creek Watershed Council	West Atlanta Watershed Alliance	Atlanta, GA	Grassroots	Prescriptive	No	CW, CV, LOCAL	N/A	24
Run As You Are	VoteRunLead	Nationwide	Candidate Training	Prescriptive	Yes (scholarships available)	CW, 1-1, CV, ALUM	variable	24
Rural Communities Water Managers Leadership Institute	Self-Help Enterprises	Visalia, CA	Candidate Training	Prescriptive	No	CW, LOCAL, FTV, ALUM	6 months	25
School of Political Leadership	HEAL Food Alliance	Nationwide	Grassroots	Prescriptive	No	CW, PBL, FTV, CV	9 months	25
Water Fluency	Water Education Colorado (WEco)	Colorado (various)	Professional Development	Prescriptive	Yes (scholarships available)	CW, FTV, ALUM	4 months	26
Water Leaders	Water Education Colorado (WEco)	Colorado (various)	Professional Development	Agnostic	Yes (scholarships available)	CW, 1-1, ALUM	6 months	26
Water Warriors	Chatahoochee RiverKeeper	Atlanta, Georgia	Youth	Prescriptive	Yes (scholarships available)	CW, SUMMIT, ALUM	2 days + events	27

TRAINING METHODS KEY:

Field Trip/Hands-On Volunteering = FTV
Project Based Learning = PBL
Job Based Training = JBT

Classroom & Workshops = CW
One-on-One Consulting/Mentoring = 1-1
Civic Engagement = CV

Local Expert Panels/Presentations = LOCAL
Alumni Network/Support = ALUM
Summit Opportunities = SUMMIT

APPENDIX 2:

DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF FEATURED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

This appendix offers detailed summaries of the various leadership development programs featured in this tool. Each summary describes the program type, provides a program overview, and includes relevant links to the organization's website or major program partners. The "Exceptional Resources" included in some summaries link to relevant program websites, sample documents, or other resources that we feel are exemplary. Summaries are listed in alphabetical order by program name, followed by the name of the host organization.

Atlanta Watershed Learning Network: Environmental Community Action

Program Type: Grassroots, Prescriptive

Environmental Community Action (ECO-Action) has collaborated with a variety of partners to build the **Atlanta Watershed Learning Network**. The Network provides free cohort-style training which takes place over a six-month period, with participants completing one learning module per month. The outcomes of this training include soft skills and relationship building, as well as technical skills from the modules and a capstone project.

The modules covered in the training program include the basics of watersheds, watershed management and policy, stormwater and green infrastructure, urbanization and gentrification, environmental justice, and water quality monitoring. The capstone project serves the purpose of having participants apply their new knowledge before they exit training.

Participants are recruited for this program mostly by referrals and word of mouth, as well as ECO-Action's presence at community meetings and in other public spaces. Individuals can submit an application for the program; 22 participants

are selected to complete training based on an interview process. Participants receive a paid stipend for completing the program.

The training program currently services three watershed in Atlanta, but also features training modules online for others to access.

Exceptional Resources: **Online Learning Modules**

Commissions Training Program: Liberty Hill Foundation

Program Type: Grassroots, Prescriptive

Los Angeles County in California has over 250 public boards and commissions. Historically, Liberty Hill Foundation trained individuals to work outside of government systems to organize and incite change; in 2013, they adopted an inside-outside approach to organizing and started training residents through the **Commissions Training Program,** which accepts up to 15 residents per cohort and spends six months.

Many applicants come to the program through referrals, as well as through community partners, direct outreach, and community meetings/townhalls. Once selected, participants meet once per month in-person for full-day classroom-style trainings, and are tasked with projects and additional learning in between sessions to complement their development. Common session topics include exploring existing commissions, forming new commissions, the legal obligations of serving on a commission, how to balance authority and community, navigating systems of power, and inside-outside organizing approaches for social change. The cohort works together to explore how their interests can be represented on a commission, and how to find a good fit when researching opportunities to serve.

This program operates bi-annually: one year serves a training cohort, and the following year serves alumni who are seated on commissions/alumni applying to commissions. This rotating program schedule allows Liberty Hill Foundation staff to support alumni in finding opportunities, navigating the application process, and being effective when they start serving on a commission. This program is free of cost for applicants and is funded primarily through grants and the Foundation's general operating funds.

Community Equity Program: Amherst Wilder Foundation

Program Type: Grassroots, Agnostic

The **Community Equity Program** (CEP) is Minnesota's only BIPOC-focused public policy program. The purpose of the program is to inform participants how public policy and governmental and legislative systems work, and to build capacity within BIPOC to drive social change. Individuals are recruited to participate through marketing on social media, BIPOC-specific online groups, and word of mouth. Fifteen applicants are selected to participate in the program annually.

The nine-month program features 17 sessions including an all-day kick-off retreat in September, and a two-night retreat in January (other sessions are 5-6 hours in length). Topics covered in the program include government systems, the legislative process, policy and advocacy, media and communications, storytelling, coalition building, preparing testimony, and authenticity in identity, among many others. Participants are tasked with real hands-on experiences such as attending coalition meetings and bill hearings, tracking legislation, and visiting lawmakers. CEP supports participants' immersion experience through making strategic connections to lobbyists, coalitions, and lawmakers.

CEP strives to be a widely accessible program by allowing call-in options for sessions, make-up opportunities for missed sessions, and allowing children to accompany parents who are enrolled

in the program. Additionally, funding is allocated to help with transportation costs, childcare (for participants who don't want to bring children with them to sessions), and meals. The program is free of cost to participants, helping to further alleviate financial barriers that might keep an individual from applying.

Exceptional Resources: **Program Website**

Community Leadership Academy: Humble Independent School District

Program Type: Grassroots, Prescriptive

The Humble Independent School District (ISD) is 90 square miles with 43 individual schools—the **Community Leadership Academy** is meant to activate individuals in the many communities the district serves as advocates and ambassadors of education. Each year, a cohort of 30 individuals is selected to participate in the hands-on program; they meet for six half-day sessions over six months at locations within the district for experiential learning. Topics covered include district finances and the Board of Trustees, academic programs and curriculum, district services such as transportation and nutrition, and the School Board and associated committees. Participants will visit locations such as the bus depot, school cafeterias, and individual classrooms to experience operations of the district first-hand; they are even engaged in activities like serving lunch and student-led tours. One session invites School Board members to serve on a discussion panel, so participants can ask questions about the district and about running for School Board positions.

Graduates of this program have run for School Board seats, joined bond committees, joined curriculum committees, and functioned as community ambassadors to distribute knowledge and news about the district. The overall goal is to have well-informed advocates throughout the many communities the district serves. The Community Leadership Academy is funded internally by Humble ISD, and there is no cost to applicants to participate.
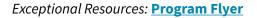

Community Leadership Institute: Puget Sound Sage

Program Type: Grassroots & Candidate Training, Agnostic

The **Community Leadership Institute** (CLI) at Puget Sound Sage is a free six-month program that focuses on power-building within low-income and BIPOC communities. The CLI cohort meets once per month on Saturdays to deliver content on the nuts and bolts of local government processes such as municipal budgeting, parliamentary procedures, and lawmaking; as well as power-building skills such as advocacy, story-telling, and communication strategies. These technical topics are tied into sessions highlighting specific issue areas like housing, land use, transit, climate, and economic development. The curriculum helps build knowledge on the active intersections between topics.

Fifteen to eighteen CLI Fellows are recruited annually through state and national partners. There is an active alumni network associated with the Institute that hosts informal talks, presentations, and networking through the Alumni Oversight Committee. Eighty percent of alumni serve on boards and commissions, while the other 20% are serving in leadership roles in community organizing and the nonprofit sector.

Stipends are available for CLI Fellows which vary annually based on inflation and funding availability. In addition to stipends, the organization is able to provide childcare, meals, and transportation support to eliminate any economic barriers that could prevent fellows from fully participating.

Exceptional Resources: **Program Flyer**

Emerging Leader & Leadership Advancement Program: Great Lakes Leadership Academy

Program Type: Professional Development, Agnostic

Michigan State University's (MSU) Extension houses two programs for advancing professionals: The **Emerging Leader Program** (for early career professionals) and **Leadership Advancement Program** (for mid-to-advanced career professionals). Both programs focus on the interpersonal skills and emotional resilience needed to be an effective and inclusive leader.

The Emerging Leader Program (ELP) is a six-month program that meets for three 4-day sessions, whereas the Leadership Advancement Program (LAP) takes a deeper dive over 18 months and meets for 12 multi-day sessions (a total of 40 days). Both programs utilize three levels of leadership to stimulate growth in participants: "Who am I as a leader?", which addresses intrapersonal growth and identity; "Who am I with others?", which looks at interpersonal ideas, relationships, and connection; and "Who are we together?", to evaluate how to work together for the common good. Within each level there is a mix of soft skills and technical skills training, including (but not limited to) meeting management, conflict management, effective engagement, **appreciative inquiry**, group management and decision-making, active listening tools, emotional resilience, communication strategies, and equity, diversity, and inclusion principles and practices.

Each program accepts about two dozen participants for each cohort through a competitive application process. Individuals are invited to apply via direct

referrals and recommendations, as well as through marketing channels like nonprofit networks, events and presentations, and through MSU Extension. ELP tuition is $3,500, whereas LAP tuition is $5,000; scholarships are available for both programs. The Great Lakes Leadership Academy has an established program endowment to help fund their missions, and tuition makes up a significant part of program funding as well.

Environmental Leaders: Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

Program Type: Youth Development, Prescriptive

Each year, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council (WRWC) in Providence, RI, facilitates "Environmental Leaders," a program that takes tenth-grade high school students through a year-long environmental science curriculum. The program includes an environmental science 101 module and interactive field trips before transitioning to independent research.

Student projects seek to engage the broader community in education and discussions about climate change, and may include community presentations and on-the-ground research projects. Examples include implementing green infrastructure projects, using GIS software to map instances of local flooding, and using social media & videos to educate the community on emergency preparedness for natural disasters. Students who want to continue their projects past the typical school year care supported through a stipend by WRWC.

In addition, students who complete Environmental Leaders are eligible to participate in the "Environmental Mentors" program for twelfth-grade students. Seniors in this program work as a paid teacher's assistant to support the Environmental Leaders program. Both programs are largely funded by EPA and New England Grassroots Environmental Fund grants.

Flood Fighters: Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

Program Type: Grassroots, Prescriptive

Flood Fighters, a new year-long program currently being developed by the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council (WRWC), uses a cohort model to increase community engagement with **Providence's Climate Justice Plan and Racial & Environmental Justice Committee**, a committee that reports to the City's Sustainability Department and Mayor's Office. Cohort members will participate in six learning and planning sessions, covering topics such as climate change, local flooding, and related public health concerns. Members will also partake in visioning activities such as "**Future Stories**" with the Providence Racial & Environmental Justice Committee. The program will engage 30 community members, who will receive a stipend to participate in this program.

Flood Fighters are being recruited through community presentations, community projects and events, as well as call to action videos and social media outreach. It is expected that at least 2 cohort members of will apply to serve on the Providence Racial & Environmental Justice Committee, which offers specific paid roles in the community.

The Flood Fighters program is funded by EPA Education/Environmental Justice grants.

Foundations for Leaders Organizing for Water and Sustainability (FLOWS): University of Colorado, Boulder

Program Type: Youth Development & Grassroots, Prescriptive

The FLOWS program is a partnership between the City of Boulder and the University's Environmental Center that seeks to build leadership capacity within students and the Boulder community. Each year, students are matched with residents to perform free energy and water upgrades in low-income housing and facilitate conversations about utility use. This program is structured to train low-income residents alongside university students on the nexus of energy, water, justice, and environmental racism.

Many of the residents being reached and recruited for this program are immigrants and people of color, and the program seeks to acknowledge the already low carbon footprint of these communities, their understanding of access, and their organic expertise in conservation. "These might be people who haven't participated in their community since migrating to the US, haven't spoken publicly…they're being elevated through this program and learning alongside neighbors…allowing them to be leaders during society's transition into a greener space."

Students are recruited for this program through the Environmental Center's website, and are paid as employees; residents are compensated with stipends. Residents are often identified for training and participation through home-visits and word of mouth.

Fresh Coast Ambassadors: Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District

Program Type: Youth Development, Prescriptive

Fresh Coast Ambassadors is a program partnership between the Milwaukee Metropolitan Seward District (MMSD), **Employ Milwaukee**, and **Cream City Conservation**, that seeks to expose young adults to careers in the water industry as well as workforce development opportunities. Piloted in 2019, the Ambassador program seeks to build healthy relationships between youth, their communities, and nature.

Employ Milwaukee, as well as local school counselors, help identify young adults aged 14-24 to apply for Fresh Coast Ambassadors; applicants go through a job hiring process to be selected for paid ambassador positions. The program features classroom content focused on water issues as well as field experience (such as invasive species removal and maintaining or installing green infrastructure projects) to provide hands-on learning. Certification programs such as chainsaw certification, CDL training, GIS training, and pesticide application are available for participants. Other program opportunities include touring the local academic institutions and professional facilities to highlight water industry careers. MMSD works with a

local workforce development agency to deliver training on professional skills, and a local youth conservation corps that provides equity, diversity, and inclusion training for the ambassadors.

Making this program accessible for young adults requires working closely with support agencies, keeping transportation barriers in mind, and flexibility to work with school and other part-time work schedules.

Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership

Program Type: Professional Development, Prescriptive

The Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership (IGEL) is comprised of five multi-day sessions that take place over nine months across the entire state. The program seeks to incorporate both rural and urban issues related to the environment, and demonstrate intersections between various issues. Examples of topics include land use, energy, biodiversity, agriculture, science & technology, sustainability, and marine resources & coastal development. These on-site technical sessions are complemented with leadership skills training such as collaboration, systems thinking, active listening, managing conflict, and addressing diversity. Local experts and industry professionals often teach the technical topics during site visits, and IGEL staff help to facilitate the soft skills learning.

Each cohort can accommodate up to 35 participants, which are selected via a competitive application process. Most recruitment for this program is by word-of-mouth, as well as distributing the application through email newsletters. Tuition for the Institute is $4,300 for private sector professionals, and $3,600 for nonprofit sector professionals; there are a limited number of need-based partial scholarships available every year to help offset costs.

Exceptional Resources: **Detailed Program Schedule**

Neighborhood Water Watch: Chatahoochee Riverkeeper

Program Type: Grassroots, Prescriptive

Neighborhood Water Watch (NWW) is a volunteer water quality monitoring program that is building leadership in the community that it serves. With 190 active sampling sites and over 100 actively engaged volunteers, this program is engaging individuals from all over the Chatahoochee River's watershed in environmental stewardship. NWW is all about gathering valuable data and actually acting on that data: they connect community resources and community interests with government action, and take the traditional concept of volunteer monitoring a step further by engaging volunteers beyond collecting samples.

Chatahoochee Riverkeeper staff personally train each volunteer in the program using EPA quality assurance techniques for stream sampling. After sampling at assigned sites, volunteers deliver samples to one of many drop-off sites to be processed in a water lab. If there are contaminants detected in a sample, the results are communicated back to them along with follow up steps for addressing the issue. This empowering feedback system lets volunteer samplers engage with every step of the process, and allows them to be ambassadors of the waterways in their neighborhoods. Volunteers from low-income communities in the watershed are offered stipends to increase access to participation.

NWW serves as a launch point for individuals to become more confident and informed on environmental issues; the program helps lift people in the community who are ready to

be advocates for their water resources and gives them a platform to voice concerns and take action. One NWW volunteer joined the Chatahoochee Riverkeeper Board of Directors and is now impacting the organization's work in a more formal leadership position, and contributing a diverse perspective to the organization's governing body.

Oregon LEAD: Native American Youth and Family Center

Program Type: Grassroots, Agnostic

The **Oregon LEAD Program** offered through the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA Family Center) in Portland, Oregon, exists to elevate natural leaders into places of influence, and create positive change throughout Oregon's Native communities. This program adopts the Relational Worldview Model, which seeks to offer balance between one's spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical health, to deliver culturally relevant and effective training for anyone who identifies as indigenous.

The LEAD Program is a free six-month leadership intensive that meets twice per month to address a variety of topics, many of which are unique to the indigenous community. Many participants in this program come to NAYA Family Center in a needs-based situation, seeking other services, or by word-of-mouth. LEAD trainings include elders' conversations, discussions of dismantling systems of oppression, effective advocacy and organizing, intergenerational conversations, cross-cultural meetings, values-based budgeting, and cultural conversations. Cohorts can accommodate up to 25 participants, which are selected through an application process.

It is required that participants attend 80% of the scheduled sessions in order to graduate from the program. To overcome barriers to participation, the program is free of cost and childcare is often provided (or children come to sessions with their parents). Additionally, sessions are scheduled at intentional locations that promote access. One session is hosted in the City Hall Board Room, specifically so participants can partake in a simulated Council meeting: they practice delivering testimony on relevant issues, acting as Council members, and facilitating different parts of the meeting. The program content is focused on building power so participants can pursue their own path of leadership, rather than directing them to filling specific roles in the community.

Proctor Creek Watershed Council: West Atlanta Watershed Alliance

Program Type: Grassroots, Prescriptive

The Proctor Creek Watershed Council provides a platform for citizens in 38 distinct Atlanta neighborhoods to receive training, share their stories, and advocate for their community and its natural resources. An original group of 12 citizens helped develop the Council's mission, charter, and structure with help from Environmental Community Action (ECO-Action) and the West Atlanta Watershed Alliance (WAWA) in 2012, and has since become independent.

The Council has elected board members, as well as general members, who meet to discuss and vote on issues related to the watershed. Meetings are open to the public so any citizen can engage in discussion and bring forward their own concerns. WAWA continues to provide opportunities like access to regional conferences and community science guidance for the Council; in conjunction with ECO-Action, WAWA brings classes on water literacy and other such topics to the community to continue educating the public on environmental topics. This allows residents to engage in multiple levels of leadership and stewardship.

Anyone in the watershed is welcome to join the Council as a voting member through a basic onboarding process, and can join Council Committees to help lead initiatives and carry out the Council's decisions. Stipends are available through WAWA to compensate Council members for their time.

Run As You Are: Vote Run Lead

Program Type: Candidate Training, Agnostic

Vote Run Lead is a non-partisan organization training women from all over the country to run for public office and win. The Run As You Are training model emphasizes that all women are qualified to run for office and have enough experience to win. Topics covered in a training event include campaign fundraising, networking, identifying personal expertise, locating resources, and developing a story and narrative as a candidate. These trainings can be completed online, or in-person through a local organization. Recruitment for this program generally happens through referrals and organizational partnerships.

Vote Run Lead utilizes elected officials and candidates that ran for public office (all women) as the trainers for this program. This brings authenticity to the training and offers real stories of how to manage a campaign as a woman. The curriculum is developed internally and informed by the real experiences of women running for office, as well as research and statistics from **The Center on American Women in Politics** and the **Barbara Lee Foundation**, among other sources.

The cost for participants receiving Run As You Are training varies: single-day training events range from $25-$50, and two-day training events usually cost $100. Vote Run Lead is able to offer scholarships for larger two-day training events to cover travel, accommodations, child care, and registration costs. As of 2020, over 35,000 women have been trained by Vote Run Lead to Run As They Are, with 60% of those women identifying as women of color.

Rural Communities Water Management Leadership Institute: Self Help Enterprises

Program Type: Grassroots & Candidate Training, Prescriptive

In the heart of California's San Joaquin Valley, Self Help Enterprises offers the **Rural Communities Water Management Leadership Institute**. The Institute is a six-month program that meets once per month and focuses on regional water management, and seeks to elevate residents to apply for and serve on local water boards.

Self Help Enterprises utilized a series of focus groups and surveys during program development to narrow down the topics delivered in the Leadership Institute. Content delivered during the program includes groundwater issues, water agencies and management bodies, effective participation in water management, funding and planning water projects, and applying for boards and commissions. Each session is a six-hour classroom-style training that uses guest speakers, breakout groups, simulations/mock events, and games and activities to illustrate different water issues in California. One session includes a bus tour to different water-focused sites in the San Joaquin Valley.

Forty participants are recruited annually through direct outreach into rural and underrepresented communities in the Valley as well as through media and press releases,

advertising through organizational partners, and mailing out applications to certain districts. Participants are paid stipends at the conclusion of the Institute to reimburse them for costs such as transportation and childcare. The Institute itself is free to participants, and offers translation services for each session to accommodate ESL participants. The Leadership Institute is funded by grants from Central Valley Community Foundation and the State of California.

Exceptional Resources: **Program Stakeholders Report (research phase), Program Evaluation Report**

School of Political Leadership: HEAL Food Alliance

Program Type: Grassroots, Prescriptive

HEAL is an acronym for Health, Environment, Agriculture and Labor—the **School of Political Leadership** (SoPL) was born out of an observed need for those sectors to work collaboratively to address societal needs, instead of working in silos. HEAL is a coalition of member organizations addressing the intersectional issues around food systems, primarily working with communities of color who are on the front lines of urban and rural spaces. The School of Political Leadership invites these individuals, who are often left out of the decision-making conversations about their industry, to learn about and participate in systems of governance.

SoPL utilizes a team-based approach to training groups around the country in implementing approaches to sustainable and equitable food systems in their communities. Teams of 2-4 people apply as a group to participate and four teams are accepted to participate each year. Selected teams participate in the free nine-month program and meet for 8 sessions (4 in-person, and 4 virtual trainings) to discuss campaigns to address their policy goals. In-person trainings are hosted in each team's community, and the team assumes responsibility for finding culturally relevant

experts to help present on topics, as well as leading sessions utilizing their own expertise. "The participants in this program are already leaders in their own right, and help teach sessions and deliver content."

Much of the program content is guided by each team's own goals, centered on their policy campaign plans. Teams might need representation in public office, legislative action, representation on a local board or commission, or another policy-related action to accomplish their goal; the program is dictated by these outcomes. Topics covered regularly include **power-mapping**, campaign development and planning, digital organizing, cultural perspective and relationships with food, digital storytelling, communicating with decision-makers and legislators, and community organizing strategies. Some cohorts have requested training in topics like fundraising or coalition building, which can be added in as needed. Outcomes for teams participating in SoPL include a finalized campaign plan for accomplishing their policy goals, as well as identified resources to accomplish the plan.

Water Fluency: Water Education Colorado

Program Type: Professional Development, Prescriptive

Water Fluency is a four-month program designed for non-water sector professionals to learn the technical aspects and "language" of water issues. The target audience includes elected officials and their staffers and city/county level municipal staff, as well as professionals from almost every business sector. This annual program serves 35 participants on a first-come-first-served basis, and scholarships are available each year to offset program fees.

Water Fluency features four in-classroom sessions covering Colorado's water resources, legal and institutional frameworks for the water sector, water resource management, and planning for Colorado's water future. These topics are supplemented with water-focused site visits, webinar-based trainings, online discussions, and reading assignments. Much of the focus within the program is to build intersections between the variety of sectors represented in each cohort, and water issues.

Evaluations are sent out to all program alumni on an annual basis to track long-term impacts of the program for individual participants and the communities of Colorado.

Water Leaders: Water Education Colorado

Program Type: Professional Development, Agnostic

Water Leaders is a six-month program that serves a cohort of 16 people. The program's focus is mainly on developing the emotional intelligence of water sector professionals: "Most professionals have the technical knowledge they need to advance and perform well, but often lack the emotional intelligence skills necessary for good leadership."

This program utilizes many assessment tools to hone in on participants' emotional intelligence development: **Daniel Goleman**'s assessment tools, **Myers-Briggs** Type Indicator assessments, **The Enneagram**, **Harrison Assessments**, 360 Feedback tools, and related books and readings. There are four 2-day sessions throughout the six-month period, and in between each session participants meet in smaller groups for "cohort calls" to discuss more in-depth topics, as well as executive coaching. The 2-day sessions often feature local water leaders and program alumni as guest speakers.

Alumni of this program are engaged through an email newsletter with job opportunities, further professional development opportunities (facilitated by WEco or other organizations), and surveys to assess alumni growth after completing the program. An annual survey is sent out to evaluate long-term impacts of the program on alumni and the water industry.

Water Leaders cost to participants is $3,660, and offers both full and partial scholarships made possible through grants and the Colorado Water Conservation Board.

Water Warriors: Chatahoochee Riverkeeper

Program Type: Youth Development, Prescriptive

2019 was the 25th anniversary of Chatahoochee Riverkeeper; the organization wanted to celebrate its progress while looking to the future and centered its celebration on youth. The **Water Warriors Summit**, piloted in 2019, was a gathering of 175 individual youth, from middle school to college level, centered on protecting water. The Summit Committee did outreach directly to teachers, environmental clubs, school administrators, college campuses, and on social media to recruit attendees.

The one-and-a-half-day event focused on the theme of reducing plastic and trash in waterways, and featured programming from the **Captain Planet Foundation**. On the first day of the Summit, youth learned about the science of plastic use and pollution. The second day of the Summit was about finding solutions to plastic pollutions and featured a 3-hour **Ocean Heroes Bootcamp**. After the Summit concluded, youth were engaged throughout the remainder of the year in stewardship events with Chatahoochee Riverkeeper, such as a youth river clean-up and a river sampling event. The goal was to see youth quarterly after the Summit, for a total of four events, to continue building their relationship to the environment and capacity for stewardship.

The Summit had a $25 cost per student, which was heavily subsidized by sponsorship dollars. This cost was low enough that a student could pay for it on their own, if they chose. About 75% of the registrants paid the fee, and the remainder received scholarships to attend.

Thank you to the following organizations for the photographs used throughout this toolkit: Chatahoochee RiverKeeper, Great Lakes Leadership Academy, Humble Independent School District, Native American Youth and Family Center, and Vote Run Lead.