

# LEADERSHIP FORUM FOR NATIONAL SERVICE EXECUTIVES



## Background Information

The Leadership Forum for National Service Executives was created in 2001 by the Washington Commission for National & Community Service in partnership with the University of Washington's Evans School of Public Affairs to offer a unique learning opportunity designed specifically for AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve program staff. Attendees complete masters-level coursework designed to enhance their skills building a sustainable organization; performance-based budgeting; and program assessment in an environment that values shared experiences and insights from fellow attendees and faculty.



This innovative curriculum is comprised of three one-week courses that take place over consecutive summers. Classes are purposely kept small (20–25) so attendees have an opportunity to dialogue with award winning faculty on issues facing their national service program. An AmeriCorps case study is but one of the true-life issues participants work with as they ponder if expansion was truly the right choice at the time proposed for the program. In the performance-based budgeting session, participants utilize newly learned techniques as they develop their CNCS budget. Program assessment goes beyond the logic model and challenges participants to apply newly acquired skills to more clearly demonstrate outcomes to various constituencies - whether a board of directors, government legislative body of executive or prospective donors. See page two for course descriptions.



Those who complete the course series earn a Certificate in Nonprofit and National Service Management from the University of Washington. A heartfelt graduation ceremony with peers from all walks of national service helps conclude the week.



The evaluations from each class have rated the course work, overall design, the teaching methodology and the quality of the faculty to be outstanding. For veteran national service executives, as well as relatively new executives in our profession, this experience has proven to be a most worthwhile investment of time and effort.

## Questions?

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## SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

### **Program Assessment (June 25-29, 2012)**

This course is designed to help practitioners apply a wide variety of analytical tools to their examination of program options and their evaluation and improvement of program performance. Modern day performance measurement looks at outcomes, as well as inputs and outputs. This requires managers to interpret elements of performance for which data is not readily available. Students will examine the records of several organizations to determine what can be understood about their performance. They will review unit costs and efficiency, and multiple means of measuring and communicating program impact. The course will also examine the application of interview protocols and survey instruments to organizational assessment. In all cases, examples will be derived from the students' on the job experiences.

### **Building the Sustainable Organization (Summer 2013)**

Students examine characteristics that lead to organizational success; programmatic vitality, expansion and replication; strategic focus; organizational life-cycles; integration of volunteers to sustain direct service activities; use of measurement to ascertain program success and future options; fiscal capacity; entrepreneurial approaches to developing new resources; shaping of new and creative partnerships; and innovative program design and service delivery. They explore the role of the leader in mapping the organization's future and determining which action steps are necessary. In small groups and individual projects, they complete intensive work devising new program design and development strategies for selected organizations.

### **Performance-Based Budget Management (Summer 2014)**

This course is intended to focus students on the role that budgets and fiscal management strategies play in the management of nonprofit organizations and government agencies. Students gain a solid knowledge of the elements of building and monitoring a budget, including the use of computer-based tools. Students explore resource allocation; allocating and accounting for costs among multiple programs; and the fiscal context in which program managers operate. They will examine the early warning signs of fiscal distress and the specific steps organizations can take to prevent such distress from emerging. Using selected organizations, students will complete intensive work using fiscal tools to measure program progress and recommend program improvements.

