

Times of Complexity – a VUCA world

Oregon’s current and emerging challenges are numerous and amidst an environment that is increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA). Success for our organizations and all people in Oregon depends on our ability to refine and transform ourselves, relationships, and services. We need to produce results in a way that meets the public’s need for greater equity, transparency, and service.

Leadership requires vision and action.

The new future that we want includes **adaptable and inclusive systems; diverse and collaborative partnerships and communities; creative and sustainable relationships; and personal responsibility.**

The big question is HOW?

How do we produce these desired results in times of immense change and complexity, and diminishing resources?

A different approach

We’ve heard the definition of *insanity* – doing the same actions and expecting different results. It’s like following an ‘old blueprint’ and being annoyed with the familiar results. Our success in producing a new future depends on increased awareness, new thinking, and new actions. Transforming ourselves, systems, and relationships in our current environment requires a different skill set. We need to build capacity for what matters most.

Evolving role of the “leader”

In these times, leaders are responsible for more than maintaining current performance. Leaders are being called upon to lead transformation of systems, processes, and work cultures. More specifically, Leaders are being called to:

- Lead in a way that promotes greater inclusion and belonging, invites people to think, grow, learn, collaborate, and create in different ways.
- Engage others – teams and partners – to envision new ways of delivering even better results.
- Reinvent relationships with and among employees, partners, and customers. This goes beyond being friendly to inviting all voices to influence and co-create outcomes.

Only with new perspectives, awareness, thinking, skills, and actions can we begin to produce new results.

ASCENT’s Transformational Leadership Program (TLP)

is a rigorous and intensive multi-month leadership development experience held from January 2024 thru September 2024. Participants will learn the awareness and skills to transform workplaces by focusing persistently on outcomes that matter most, despite increased complexity and change, to create the desired new future. Leadership development (self-development) is the key to greater effectiveness in relationships and achieving outcomes.

The expected results

Participants who engage fully and intentionally will apply practices and tools outside of workshop sessions and can expect the following outcomes:

- Greater capacity/skill in leading themselves and others.
- Improved individual and collective performance in work and their life.

KEY OUTCOMES

SELF

1. Clarity of individual purpose, vision, and values and the role of leadership in teams and systems.
2. Improved self-awareness and understanding of leadership impacts, strengths, and opportunities for growth.
3. Greater consciousness of the beliefs and assumptions that drive our behaviors and stimulates lasting behavioral change.
4. Deploying performance mindsets for greater ownership of results.
5. The ability to articulate the future you envision for your work and life.

OTHERS & SYSTEMS

1. Knowledge of models and the processes for teams and systems transformation.
2. The ability to navigate through change, risk, and complexity.
3. Strengthen communication and conscious understanding of the needs and feelings of self and others.
4. Understanding the methods for building and maintaining trusting relationships and the ability to identify one’s own contribution to the challenges that hinder relationships.
5. Assessing, building, and acting on opportunities for greater influence and ability to navigate 21st century complexity.
6. Building a community of leaders from many other state agencies.



Program Approach

The ASCENT Leadership Program focuses on developing transformational leaders. The curriculum is an integration of multiple aspects of leadership effectiveness and research from developmental psychology, organizational development, neuroscience, emotional intelligence, and social science. The multi-month program blends intellectual exploration and reflection, dialogue, and practices that invite participants into real-life application, moving from theory to action. The course invites practical application and discovery of action that participants can put into immediate use in and outside of work.

Eligibility Requirements: Any state government supervisory/management employee, in good standing, is eligible to apply.

Components & Commitments

Four major components of the program support participant learning and opportunities to practice new skills. Active participation is the key to achieving expected results. **Commitments:** Participants are invited to participate fully in each component of the program with the full support of their sponsoring manager, who helps to arrange coverage to support the investment in their employee who is away at ASCENT.

1. **Workshop sessions** – sessions are two consecutive days per month, conducted in open-space conversations and a coaching style engagement, shaped by participants’ concerns and interests.
Focus – Learn concepts, models, theory, methods, and tools. Choose action steps for application outside of workshop time and process lessons learned within the cohort milieu.
Time – 144 workshop hours (dates listed on last page).
2. **Coaching** – Coaching occurs monthly in small groups or “PODS” to create the opportunity for a ‘deeper dive’ into powerful insights and learning. Coaches support and guide the group learning.
Focus - Learning occurs from both successes and failures resulting in increased capacity and capability.
Time – 2-3 hours per month
3. **Action Learning** – Action learning is the practical application of the workshop experiences, reading and concepts. Targeted actions are designed to

help participants apply concepts and take new behaviors in the workplace. Structured assignments include reading, journaling, reflection, assessments, and conversations with cohort members and ASCENT staff and coaches.

Focus – Apply concepts at work and in life. Build skill and confidence in concepts. Practice risk.

Time – Average time is 8-10 hours between workshop sessions. Personal discretion is encouraged.

SPECIAL NOTE: Action Learning is intended to be incorporated into regular work time and activities, where possible.

4. **In-depth assessment** – A personalized 360-degree assessment designed to provide a comprehensive picture of leadership strengths, behaviors, inner assumptions, and preferences. Personalized feedback data is used to guide improvement. Certified 360 coaches support understanding and development planning.
Focus - Define a leadership development plan and continue to get ‘real time’ feedback on progress.
Time – 90-minute one-on-one coaching session. 25-30 minutes to complete the assessment.
5. **Mentoring (Optional)** – If desired, participants are matched with a mentor near the end of the program to support ongoing growth. They mutually arrange and manage the mentor engagement.
Focus – Explore career development, lessons learned, and practices for continued learning and sustained passion.
Time – time and frequency determined by the participant and mentor.

Attendance Policy

Each participant is expected to be at all sessions. Generally, any participant who has a planned event that requires you to miss workshop time will be asked to apply for the program in a different year. Exceptions to this attendance policy, largely due to health or illness events, will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

“No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.”

- Albert Einstein



Application & Selection

Transformational Leadership Program (TLP) – the focus of this program is the development of transformational leaders. Transformational leaders are purposeful, values-based, visionary, inspiring, ethical, and self-aware leaders. They seek feedback from all sources and integrate it into their development. They recognize needed change in organizations and enroll others into creating outcomes that matter.

Strong Candidates

It is important that applicants and their managers clearly understand the focus and expectations of the program. Strong candidates have a high willingness and readiness to fully participate in this challenging program. They have demonstrated leadership in prior roles and desire to bring value back to their team/agency. ASCENT is not looking for perfect people. Rather, we are looking for those who want to invest in personal growth and development and are seeking greater effectiveness with others. The ideal participant freely chose to apply and is seeking an authentic and purposeful growth experience. They are:

***“Leadership and learning
are indispensable
to each other.”***

- John F. Kennedy

- Committed to enhancing their personal effectiveness; actively reflect on personal performance and seek to improve.
- Committed to full and productive participation in workshops sessions, coaching, assessments, and action learning.
- Willing to consider different views and experience the discomfort sometimes associated with learning and unlearning.
- Seeks to engage others, to learn, contribute, collaborate, and perform at a high-level.
- Willing to actively experiment with new approaches to improve individual and organizational performance.
- Committed to the transformation of themselves, their team, agency, and state government.
- Willing to generate and offer ideas about ways to improve and innovate to greater effectiveness.

Ideal Cohort

The ideal cohort is diverse in all aspects; in thought, background, identity, and life experience. We strive for greater equity and inclusion in the application and selection processes. We strive to build a cohort of socially and culturally diverse individuals who will foster an openness, acceptance, and willingness to learn from each other. We also attempt to build a cohort made up of both newer and longer-term employees coming from varied agencies, ‘business’ lines, regions, programs, and expertise.

How Participants are Selected

All applications received by the deadline will be reviewed by an Evaluation Committee comprised of a diverse group of ASCENT alumni from various State agencies. Each application will be read, scored, and evaluated by the Evaluation Committee, who will recommend a cohort and alternates. The ASCENT core team will then consult with agency leadership to confirm validation and select a cohort prior to notification of and obtaining confirmation from participants.

Application Questions

This application must be completed online and will open Friday September 1, 2023, at 8:00 AM PST.

The application form can be found at our webpage. <https://www.ascentoregon.org/transformational-leadership-program>

The application has three sections.

- Applicant Information** - Your name, contact information, agency, etc.
- Commitments** - This section confirms your availability to 1) attend all the monthly workshop sessions and small learning groups; 2) affirms you have immediate supervisor support to apply for the program; and 3) that all sessions are intended to be in-person, in Salem, OR.
- Essays** - There are five essay questions. Please provide complete answers to all five questions.



The Essay Questions

1. What motivates you to apply to the program?
2. List three specific areas that you would like to develop and why?
3. Explain how the development (of the three areas from Question #2) would impact your work area, program, and/or agency?
4. What new result(s) would you create within your agency and/or state government and why?
5. How do you see yourself contributing to the cohort?

Applications Due

- Online applications are due:
On or before Saturday September 30, 2023, at 12:00 PM noon PST.
- Only completed applications received by the deadline will be considered.

Tuition

Tuition for the program is **\$3,600***.

Tuition Assistance (Scholarship)

Program sponsors want to ensure that cost is not a barrier for any individual who is selected to participate. Tuition assistance may be available. If an applicant is selected, options can be discussed.

How to Apply

Application due date: Online applications are due on or before **Saturday, September 30, 2023, at 12:00 PM noon PST.**

Recommended Approach:

1. **Reflect on the program and the commitment required.** Consider your interest and your “why”. To be clear, we are not looking for “perfect” people. The program is looking for ‘ideal candidates’ to create an ‘ideal cohort’. A key factor of ideal candidates is that they choose to participate and desire personal growth and greater leadership effectiveness.
2. **Review cohort dates.** (See Cohort Schedule) Attending all workshop sessions is one major commitment of the program. You must be available for **all** workshop dates (*this includes Graduation*).

IMPORTANT NOTE: **Workshop location for all sessions will be in Salem at: Chemeketa Center for Business & Industry (CCBI) 626 High Street NE, Suite 203, Salem, OR 97301.**

Cohort Schedule

8:00 – 5:00	January 17 & 18, 2024
8:00 – 5:00	February 14 & 15, 2024
8:00 – 5:00	March 13 & 14, 2024
8:00 – 5:00	April 10 & 11, 2024
8:00 – 5:00	May 8 & 9, 2024
8:00 – 5:00	June 12 & 13, 2024
8:00 – 5:00	July 10 & 11, 2024
8:00 – 5:00	August 14 & 15, 2024
8:00 – 5:00	September 18 & 19, 2024
Graduation	2:00 - 4:00 pm Sept 19, 2024

3. **Converse with your manager.** We recommend that you discuss your application with your manager, and you **must** get pre-approval before applying.
4. **Complete the application.** You must complete the application online. Application questions are listed at the top of this page. Limit your responses to each question to 300 words.

TIPS: *Draft your responses to each essay question in a separate document.* Then, copy and paste your responses into the online application which will be available on the ascentoregon.org website, or click the link above. Google Chrome is recommended.

Strongly Suggested: Complete your online application in one session.

Notice of Selection: Successful applicants will be notified in late October 2023.

*The Chemeketa Center for Business & Industry (CCBI) administers the ASCENT Leadership Program and is responsible for invoicing participating agencies. CCBI will contact successful participant’s agencies to determine specific billing information.

