



## Community Leadership Programs: Empowering Future Leaders

Community-based leadership programs build skills and support the development of emerging leaders through a series of seminars, workshops and other local projects. The programs seek individuals who want to improve their community and give a voice to traditionally underrepresented community members.

Community-based organizations often provide leadership development programs, which are open to the greater community or designed for specific underrepresented populations. Such programs offer an opportunity to invigorate civic engagement.

### How Leadership Programs Can Help Your Community

The social capacity building provided by these programs can benefit both a local agency and its community. Leadership development programs help cities to:

- **Identify Issues of Community Interest.** Leadership groups may tackle community concerns as “class projects” that have a wide range of topics, from neighborhood beautification to modifying school lunch menus;

- **Build Skills to Support Engagement.** The typical program curriculum emphasizes fundamental skills. Some leadership programs provide specialized training in personal and organizational budgeting; and
- **Foster New and Inspired Leaders.** The underlying goal commonly shared by community leadership programs is to inspire new leaders and create leadership opportunities. Programs encourage the development of confident individuals who represent their community. Often groups serving in underprivileged communities understand the intrinsic value of these programs and their ability to build confidence.

Leadership programs can help local agencies build relationships with community-based organizations and encourage residents to become more involved in local government, either through volunteering or by participating on boards or commissions.

For more information about developing community leadership programs, visit [www.ca-ilg.org/developing-resident-leadership](http://www.ca-ilg.org/developing-resident-leadership).

## Finding Community Leadership Programs

The Institute for Local Government maintains a roster of community-based leadership programs in California. See [www.ca-ilg.org/CitizenAcademiesRoster](http://www.ca-ilg.org/CitizenAcademiesRoster) for more information about nonprofit, community and local agency leadership programs. To find resources in specific areas, consider reaching out to your local community foundations, chambers of commerce or regional nonprofit organizations that focus on civic engagement.

## Featured Example: City of Long Beach Neighborhood Leadership Program

This five-month multilingual program, conducted by the city's Neighborhood Services Bureau for Long Beach residents, provides participants with skills, knowledge and resources to help make a positive difference in the community's quality of life. Participants in the leadership program improve their communication skills, connect with diverse community members and work together to create solutions that enhance neighborhoods. Visit <http://bit.ly/LBprogram> for more information.