



Transformational Leadership Program

2026 Application Packet

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2026 TLP Application Packet

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The ASCENT Transformational Leadership Program (TLP) is a 9-month comprehensive leadership development experience. The learning journey includes discovery of purpose, core values, vision, awareness, and insights into how they are experienced by others. Participants learn how to transform their workplace relationships and systems to achieve their desired goals and outcomes.

2026 Schedule

Class times are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

Month	Days	Month	Days
January	14 - 15	June	10 - 11
February	11 - 12	July	15 - 16
March	11 - 12	August	12 - 13
April	8 - 9	September	16 - 17*
May	13 - 14		

**Graduation is September 17, 2026, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.*

WORKSHOP LOCATION:

All workshops will be in person at the
Department of Administrative Services
Executive Building

**155 Cottage Street NE
Salem, OR 97301**

Program Cost

Tuition for the program is \$3,600.

How to Apply

Applications must be submitted online <https://forms.gle/CreZzqCJ94HsSDxD7>. Please see the Application Section of this document for further information.

September 1, 2025, at 8 a.m. PT applications open.

September 30, 2025, at noon PT applications close.

November 26, 2025, successful applicants will be notified.

Only completed applications received by the deadline will be considered.

Eligibility Requirements

Any non-supervisory state government employee, in good standing, is eligible to apply. Employees in management services without direct reports can also apply

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.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

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

Times of complexity – a VUCA world

Oregon's current and emerging challenges are numerous and in an environment that's 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 must produce results that meet the public need in ways that are transparent, ethical, and equitable.

Leadership requires vision and action

The new future 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, with diluted and diminishing resources?

A different approach

We've heard the definition of *insanity* – doing the same actions and expecting different results. What is the new 'blueprint' to help us breakthrough? Success in producing the new future depends on new awareness, thinking, and actions. Transforming ourselves, systems, and relationships in our current environment requires a different mindset as well as new actions.

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, creating networks that can respond in real time. This goes beyond seeking harmony and general comfort, to hearing from all the system voices to influence and co-create outcomes that will make the difference needed.

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.

Expected Results

Participants who engage fully and intentionally will apply learnings outside of workshop sessions and can expect the following 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.

COMPONENTS AND COMMITMENTS

Four major components of the program support participant learning and skill development. Active participation is the key to achieving expected results.

Commitments

Participants are invited to engage fully in each component of the program with the support of their sponsoring manager, who reinforces the investment in their employee by working out coverage for them while away at monthly workshop and POD meetings.

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1. **WORKSHOP SESSIONS:** Sessions are two consecutive days per month, conducted in open-space conversations and coaching style engagement, shaped by participants' input, perspectives, and questions.
Focus: Learn concepts, models, theories, methods, and tools. Choose action steps for application outside of workshop and process lessons learned within the cohort setting.
Time: 135 workshop hours.
2. **COACHING:** Coaching occurs throughout, including monthly small group or "POD" meetings 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 content. Targeted actions are designed to help participants apply concepts and try new behaviors in the workplace. Structured assignments include reading, journaling, reflection, assessments, and conversations with managers, team members, and other contributors. Cohort members, ASCENT leaders, and coaches support all facets of learning. Action learning is intended to be incorporated into regular work time and activities, where possible.
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.
4. **IN-DEPTH ASSESSMENT:** A personalized 360-degree assessment, Leadership Circle Profile, 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 growth and sustained passion.
Time: Time and frequency determined by the participant and mentor.

CANDIDATE SELECTION

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 sponsoring 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, the program is 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:

- 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.
- Seeking 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 endeavor 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 eligible applications received by the deadline will be reviewed by an evaluation committee comprised of a diverse group of ASCENT alumni from various state agencies. Essay questions from each eligible 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 and/or sponsoring managers to validate approval before notifying and confirming participant selection.

APPLICATION

The application has three sections:

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

Essay questions

1. What motivates you to apply to the program?
2. List three specific areas of development and growth you are seeking from the program and why.
3. Explain how growth in these three areas (listed in Question #2) would impact your team, program, and agency?
4. What new results are possible and will you help create within your agency and state government and why?
5. How do you see yourself contributing to the cohort?

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).
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.
- Copy and paste your responses into the online application which will be available on the <https://www.oregon.gov/das/HR/Pages/ascent-tlp.aspx> website, or click the link above. Google Chrome is recommended.
- Strongly suggested: Complete your online application in one session.