



TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (TLP)

Overview

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

Program Purpose

Oregon faces complex and changing challenges. Agencies must work in new ways to meet community needs. This requires leaders who are adaptable, self-aware, collaborative, and committed to equity.

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

You can imagine doing the same actions and expecting different results may not lead to meaningful change. 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 supports inclusion and belonging. Create space for people to think, grow, learn, and collaborate. Encourage new ideas and different ways of working.
- Bring people together, including teams and partners to imagine new and better ways to deliver results.

- Build stronger relationships with employees, partners, and customers. Create networks that can respond quickly to changing needs. This means listening to all voices in the system and working together to shape solutions that make a real difference.

Program Approach

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. A clearer sense of your purpose, values, and vision, and how your leadership supports your team and the larger system.
2. Stronger self-awareness and a better understanding of your strengths, your impact on others, and opportunities for growth.
3. Greater consciousness of the beliefs and assumptions that shape your actions, helping you make lasting, positive changes.
4. A mindset that supports taking ownership of your work and the results you create.
5. More confidence in designing the future you want for your work and your life.

Others and Systems

1. Knowledge of tools and processes that help teams and larger systems make meaningful change.
2. Stronger skills for navigating change, uncertainty, and risk.
3. Strengthen communication and a clearer understanding of your own needs and feelings of others.
4. Knowledge of how to build and maintain trusting relationships, including recognizing your own role in challenges that may affect trust.
5. The ability to identify opportunities to increase your influence and take effective action in today's complex and fast-changing environment.

Training Details and Commitments

Participants are expected to take part fully in every part of the program. Each participant should work with their manager to ensure work responsibilities are covered during monthly workshops and POD group meetings. This support helps participants stay focused on learning and growth.

- 1. Workshop Sessions:** Workshops take place over two consecutive days each month. These sessions use open discussions and a coaching-based approach. Participants help guide the conversation by sharing their perspectives, questions, and experiences.
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: Approximately 144 total 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 helps participants use what they learn in the workshops in real situations at work. It gives them the chance to try new skills and behaviors. Activities include reading, journaling, reflection, assessments, and talking with managers, coworkers, and others who support their development. Participants receive help from their cohort, ASCENT leaders, and coaches. When possible, action learning is built into regular work tasks so participants can practice new skills during their normal workday.
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. Leadership Circle Profile:** Participants complete a personalized assessment. This tool gives a full picture of your leadership strengths, behaviors, and beliefs that guide actions. You receive detailed feedback to help you understand your results and plan your next steps. A certified coach meets with you to explain the information and support your development.

Focus: Define a leadership development plan and continue to get ‘real time’ feedback on progress.

Time: 25-30 minutes to complete the assessment, and a 90-minute one-on-one coaching session.

5. **Mentoring (Optional):** Near the end of the program, participants may choose to be matched with a mentor. A mentor is someone who supports your continued growth and helps you think about your career. The participant and mentor decide together how often to meet and how to structure their conversations.

Focus: Explore career goals, lessons learned, and practices that support ongoing growth and long-term motivation.

Time: The schedule and frequency are set by the participant and mentor.

Candidate Selection

The ASCENT program is designed to develop transformational leaders. These leaders act with purpose, follow their values, and make ethical decisions. They are self-aware, open to feedback, and able to inspire others. Transformational leaders recognize when change is needed and work with others to create results that make a real difference.

Strong candidates

Both applicants and their managers should understand the goals and expectations of the program before applying. Strong candidates are ready to engage fully in this challenging and rewarding learning experience.

The program does not expect perfection. Instead, the program looks for participants who want to invest in their personal development, improve their effectiveness, and strengthen how they work with others. Ideal participants choose to apply because they want a meaningful and authentic growth experience.

They are:

- Committed to improving their personal effectiveness and willing to reflect on how they perform.
- Ready to fully participate in workshops, coaching, assessments, and action learning.
- Open to different viewpoints and able to work through the discomfort that can come with learning and unlearning.
- Interested in engaging with others, contributing ideas, collaborating, and performing at a high level.

- Willing to try new approaches to improve their own performance and support organizational improvement.
- Dedicated to growing themselves, their team, their agency, and state government.
- Ready to share ideas and look for new ways to innovate and increase effectiveness.

Ideal cohort

The ideal cohort includes people with a wide range of backgrounds, identities, experiences, and perspectives. Our goal is to bring together a group of participants who are open, respectful, and willing to learn from one another. A cohort with diverse experiences and viewpoints strengthens learning for everyone.

How participants are selected

All complete applications submitted by the deadline are reviewed by an evaluation committee. The committee includes ASCENT alumni from different state agencies. They read and score the essay responses for each eligible application.

Based on these scores, the committee recommends a cohort and alternates. The ASCENT core team then checks with agency leadership and sponsoring managers to confirm approval. After that, applicants are notified of their status.

Tuition Cost

\$3,600

How To Apply

[Applications must be submitted online.](#) Please see the About the Application section of this document for further information. Only completed applications submitted by the deadline will be considered.

- Applications open on **September 1, 2026, at 8 a.m. PT**
- Applications close on **September 30, 2026, at noon PT**
- Applicants will be notified by November 25, 2026

Eligibility Requirements

Non-supervisory (including management service managerial) state government employees in good standing are eligible to apply.

About the Application

The application has three sections:

1. **Applicant Information:** Your basic personal and work details.
2. **Commitments:** Confirm you are not a manager; that you can attend ALL monthly workshops; that your supervisor supports your application; and that you understand the tuition and cancellation policy.
3. **Essays:** Please provide complete answers to all five questions.

Essay Questions

Please keep responses to 300 words or less.

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. How will growth in these areas enhance your effectiveness within your team, program, and the broader agency? Please be specific about expected impacts or changes.
4. Looking ahead, what positive changes or innovations do you hope to champion?
5. How do you see yourself contributing to the cohort?

Recommended Approach

- Reflect about the program and the commitment it requires. Consider why you want to join. The program is not looking for “perfect” people, but for strong candidates who want to grow and become more purposeful leaders.
- Look at the cohort dates. You must be available for every workshop session, including Graduation.
- Talk with your manager. You should discuss your interest and get approval before you apply.
- Complete the application. The essay questions are listed above. Keep each response to 300 words or less.

Tips:

- While we understand that AI may be used as a resource; however, we appreciate responses that represent your true thoughts and experiences.
Please ensure your submissions are authentically yours.
- Draft essay answers in a separate document, then copy them into the online application. Recommended to complete the entire application in one session.

Attendance Policy

Participants must attend sessions one and two as scheduled. Missing either session will result in cancellation from the program and loss of payment. All participants are expected to attend every session.

In most cases, if you know ahead of time that you will have to miss any workshop time, you will be asked to apply in a different year. Exceptions, mainly for health-related reasons, may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Important: Use the program schedule to verify that you can attend all workshop dates.

Cancellation Policy

A learner may cancel their participation without penalty until December 7, 2026. If cancellation is made later, or if attendance requirements are not met, the full registration fee will still be due or at the discretion of the program given extenuating circumstances. In these cases, payment cannot be transferred to a future enrollment as each year is a new application process.

Questions

If you have any questions about the program, please contact the ASCENT Leadership Program team at ascent.program@das.oregon.gov

2026 Timeline

Milestone	2026 Dates
ASCENT Program information sessions	August 7; August 18; August 31; September 23
TLP Application open	8 a.m. on September 1
TLP Application close	Noon on September 30
Application review by alumni evaluation committee	October
Notice of application status by	November 25
Participation approvals and confirmations	November
Pre-workshop assignments and pre-program survey	Late November
Participant material pick-up	Early December
Last day to withdrawal with refund	December 7

2027 Cohort Workshop Schedule

Location: Department of Administrative Services 155 Cottage Street NE Salem, OR 97301

Time: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sessions	2027 Dates
1-2	January 13 -14
3-4	February 10 -11
5-6	March 10 -11
7-8	April 14 -15
9-10	May 12-13
11-12	June 9 -10
13-14	July 14 -15
15-16	August 11 - 12
17-18	September 15 - 16

The program graduation ceremony will be held September 16, 2027, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.