

NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Workforce Development and Continuing Education

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3 Factors When Seeking a Leadership Training Program

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One of the things that is often overlooked when establishing a new nonprofit organization is that the entity incorporates as both a business and a community benefit entity. Just like any business, all nonprofit organizations are corporations and those who lead these organizations need to be versed in general business operations. Additionally, these organizations also hold a special 501c tax status designation issued by the IRS which demands a focus and accountability to community health and wellbeing.

Nonprofit staff often look for the essential management and leadership development skills necessary to successfully operate the organization. While many of the skills are often identical to for-profit leadership skills, they often need to be applied differently and augmented in a non-profit, community-benefit oriented entity.

Some of the essential skills necessary in nonprofit leadership include:

- Values and outcomes-based decision-making
- Public speaking and other communication skills
- Strategic planning, problem solving and innovation
- Relationship building, team building and empowerment of team members
- Fiscal management and budget allocation

The skills any leader brings or develops should be guided by the organization's mission, vision, and values. Additionally, nonprofit organizations rely heavily on the ability to embody collaboration within the community and with other organizations. There are an endless number of nonprofit leadership training programs that are offered through universities, capacity building organizations, human resource management firms, government agencies, philanthropic organizations and through independent consultant training. So, you now want to know how to choose. A few tips are outlined for you below.

- Is the program you are considering cost effective and affordable for your budget? The best programs may not be the most expensive and likewise, may not be the longest in terms of time commitment. Look at the options available and decide if the time commitment and the cost is reasonable for you and your organization.
- Will the program or consultant help to encourage strategic thinking, innovation, and action? Leadership training programs will help you build your critical thinking, create vision for the future of the organization, and instill out-of-the-box thinking allowing you to be as creative as possible.
- Does the curriculum help you focus on developing others as well as your own personal development? John Quincy Adams said, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." A quality program will encourage you to learn and galvanize your skills and developing leadership qualities to focus on developing others through situational leadership, building on your communication skills, adaptability, coaching and mentoring, demonstration of resilience, and ability to make genuine connections.

Justin Pollock, the Founder and Principal of Orgforward, has extensive experience in nonprofit leadership and organizational design. He works with people focused on leading agencies and capacity building efforts to encourage and ensure meaningful community benefit and sustainability. He says, "the ultimate integrity in our work is to be intentional about the connection between our vision of a healthy, thriving community and the organizational leadership and structure needed to be effective at advancing that vision. We know these leadership skills are accessible and can help emerging leaders grow in their confidence, creating new trailblazers in organizations and communities."

Make sure the program you seek will provide the coaching and skills development, as well as additional resources that are a good fit for you and your organization. Remember, that you should never stop learning and you may need different training at different points of your career.

