



## **Building Professional Capital to Lead State Early Childhood Policy Reform Overview of the NASLEE Leadership Academy November 2023**

On behalf of the NASLEE Executive Committee, we are pleased to announce the launch of the inaugural NASLEE Leadership Academy. One of NASLEE's [strategic priorities](#) is to build leadership capacity of state early education leaders through leadership development opportunities and supporting equitable pathways to leadership at the state and national levels.

Ensuring improved learning outcomes for young children necessitates leaders with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to effectively navigate and promote program and system goals. The NASLEE Leadership Academy (LA) will provide the selected LA fellows with new skills, new experiences, and new friends to address the opportunities and challenges of transformative change for young children and families.

**What is the NASLEE Leadership Academy?** It is a 12-month executive leadership program tailored to state early education administrators.

**Who is eligible to apply to the Leadership Academy?** Individuals at the state level with responsibility for one or more programs in early childhood education, serving children prenatal to third grade in state departments of education or other state early childhood education agencies. Membership in NASLEE is not required to apply to the LA but will be required of all those accepted.

**How Much Does the LA Cost?** There is no monetary cost to participants. All travel to the in-person meetings will be covered by NASLEE.

**What is the goal of the Leadership Academy?** The goal is to increase leadership and organizational capacity of state early education leaders to implement effective early education programs and policy. Selected state early education leaders will increase their knowledge and competencies in various dimensions of leadership. In turn, these increased leadership skills will result in more effective policy implementation and stronger impact on teachers, administrators, and ultimately children.

**What will we study and learn?** The Leadership Academy is designed as a customized executive leadership development program and will include training to learn new skills, guided reading, journaling, discussion and peer learning, as well as guest speakers. The core competencies of the LA are built upon three pillars of leadership:

**Personal Leadership.** This pillar focuses on deepening self-awareness and personal change in the exercise of leadership and crafting personal visions for achieving high quality early learning teaching and learning environments. This includes representing the voice and expertise of early childhood educators in developing prenatal to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade policies and extending one's competence in articulating and building collective commitment around a shared vision.



**Program Improvement.** The second pillar attends to coherent implementation of multiple policy initiatives in conjunction with data from children, families, communities and schools to (a) accelerate early learning across diverse learners and programs and (b) prevent and ameliorate early learning disparities and inequities.

**Organizational Leadership.** The third pillar addresses leadership in the context of state governance of early childhood policy, legislatures, state boards of education, early childhood professional and advocacy organizations. Navigating state agency bureaucracy, cross-agency collaboration, and the political process of state policy and budget development are focal topics of interest.

The curriculum of the Leadership Academy will provide learning experiences that will weave these three pillars of leadership, and related skills and competencies throughout the LA. The content is embedded in adult learning principles and will be woven throughout the in-person meetings, interim webinars, personal reflections/journaling, peer learning, coaching and mentoring.

**What are the expected results of participation in the Leadership Academy?** By the conclusion of the Leadership Academy, we strive for the following impact on you, your role and your organization:

- *Increased self-knowledge of their leadership and management and apply this knowledge to the exercise of leadership.*
- *Improved implementation of the state's publicly funded programs for children from birth through third grade.*
- *Strengthened partnerships with state leaders and organizations to build a more unified, equitable, and efficient state birth-3rd grade early childhood system.*

**Who are the staff, faculty and coaches?** [Lori Connors-Tadros](#) as a consultant to NASLEE and [Mandy Sorge](#), Executive Director of NASLEE will oversee the Leadership Academy. We have identified core faculty with significant expertise in critical aspects of leadership and experience in early childhood education. The core faculty will also provide individual coaching on applying skills learned to the fellows' unique application. The faculty are:

- Tracy Benson, [Waters Center for Systems Thinking](#)
- [Nicole A. Johnson](#), Annie E. Casey [Results Counts](#) Facilitator
- Lori McClung and Scarlett Boudier from [Advocacy and Communication Solutions](#)

We also plan to provide fellows with mentors from a Mentor Corp of current NASLEE members. Mentors will provide peer support tailored to the unique roles of state early education leaders.



**What are the time commitments?** The 2024 Leadership Academy is approximately one year in duration, beginning in January 2024 and concluding in December 2024. Participants will have five opportunities to meet in person. Four of the meetings will be 2.5 days, not inclusive of travel time and 1 meeting will be a 1-day pre-conference session at the NASLEE Roundtable and fellows are expected to participate in the NASLEE Roundtable. This requires the ability to secure release time and permission to travel out of state. Participants also will be expected to meet regularly by phone with their coach and mentor and commit time to preparing for in-person meetings, interim webinars, and completing a capstone/job-embedded project.

The timeline includes recruitment and selection; four 2.5 day in-person meetings plus attendance at the NASLEE Roundtable and 1 day pre-conference, and 4 interim webinars. The specific dates (except for January and February as noted below) and locations of meetings will be finalized once the Leadership Cohort is selected. In-person meetings in February, April, July/August and December will begin on Sunday afternoon and conclude on Tuesday by 5PM.

- Week of November 6- Application for NASLEE Leadership Academy released.
- November 30- Applications Due
- December 1-20- Applications Reviewed, Semi-finalists interviewed.
- January 4, 2024- First Cohort of Up to 10 Fellows Selected and Notified
- January 16, 2024—Introductory Webinar for 2024 Leadership Fellows Cohort
- February 11-13, 2024—First In-Person Meeting
- March 2024—Interim Webinar #1
- April 2024—2<sup>nd</sup> In-Person Meeting
- May 2024- Interim Webinar #2
- July or August 2024—3<sup>rd</sup> In-Person Meeting
- September 2024-- Interim Webinar#3
- October 2024- 4th In-person meeting at NASLEE Roundtable, and pre-conference 1 day meeting with Fellows
- November 2024- Interim Webinar #4
- December 2024- 5<sup>th</sup> and final in-person meeting

We propose to identify space in one of the Fellows states or our partners for in-person meetings. This will allow us to add an experiential component to our methods of learning and get to know the context of the fellows or our partners work environment.

**What is the application process?** Applications will be available on **Monday, November 6, 2023** on the [NASLEE website](#). NASLEE will be hosting a **Question and Answer Session on Monday, November 13, 2023 at 2:00PM EST. Register [here](#) for the Q&A session.**

Applications will be **due on November 30, 2023 by 5pm EST**. Up to 10 individuals will be selected via a competitive application process managed by the project directors. Please note that though more than one application can be submitted from a state, just one person per state will be selected. Semi-finalists and their references will be contacted for follow-up phone conversations in December. Final decisions on the first cohort of NASLEE's Leadership Academy will be made the week of January 4, 2024.



**We will consider the following in selecting the NASLEE Leadership Academy 2024 Cohort:** In addition to the eligibility criteria as noted above - Individuals at the state level with responsibility for one or more programs in early childhood education, serving children prenatal to third grade in state departments of education or other state early childhood education agencies. Membership in NASLEE is not required to apply to the LA but will be required of all those accepted.

- Personal dedication to leadership development including willingness to explore the role of equity in their personal, program and organizational leadership journey.
- Ability to articulate personal and professional goals for their leadership academy experience.
- Commitment to building human/organizational capital to move forward the agency's early childhood policy agenda.
- Presentation of a strong proposal for a policy-related implementation project encompassing prenatal to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade or prek-3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
  - Evidence of approved release time for in-person meetings; and approval for out-of-state travel for in-person meetings.
  - Formal commitment to regular phone meetings with the assigned faculty and/or mentor based on a mutually acceptable schedule.

#### **KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE NASLEE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

- THERE IS NO COST TO PARTICIPATE IN THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
- THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY IS OPEN TO ALL WHO MEET THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA
- MEMBERSHIP IN NASLEE WILL BE REQUIRED OF THOSE ACCEPTED
- MULTIPLE PEOPLE FROM A STATE MAY APPLY, BUT WE WILL SELECT JUST ONE FROM EACH STATE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2024 COHORT
- YOUR COMMITMENT TO PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITHIN AN EQUITY FRAMEWORK IS MOST IMPORTANT
- YOU WILL BECOME PART OF A VIBRANT NETWORK ON STATE EARLY EDUCATION LEADERS

