

**2009 Innovations Awards Program
APPLICATION**

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 09-MW-06MI

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: **Michigan**

Assign Program Category (applicant): **Natural Resources (all subcategories)
Workforce Development**

1. Program Name: Leadership Academy for Michigan Departments of Environmental Quality, Agriculture and Natural Resources

2. Administering Agency: Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

3. Contact Person (Name and Title): Rebecca Patrick, Program Coordinator

**4. Address: Financial and Business Services Division
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
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9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program. The purpose of the Leadership Academy is to identify and develop 1) existing skilled leaders who desire to further develop their leadership ability, or who desire to move up in these agencies; and 2) qualified potential leaders who desire to move into positions of either formal or informal leadership.

10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on March 2, 2009 to be considered. This program has been operational since April, 2006.

11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address? The program was created to address the need of these 3 state agencies to create a pool of qualified people who could fill leadership roles at all levels in the agencies. The agencies estimate that 50-75% of their senior leaders are eligible to retire in the next 5 years, with a significant percentage of other staff in key leadership positions also eligible to retire. Furthermore, the challenges of public service continue to increase and require leadership skills from staff members at all levels of the organization. These challenges include working with stakeholder groups who have diverse, and sometimes conflicting, desired outcomes; budgetary challenges; legislative relations; and navigating ambiguity.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.

A. Development of the program: January, 2004 – May, 2004 - – DEQ Director Steven Chester established a Leadership Academy workgroup charged with developing recommendations for a Leadership Academy program/curriculum. The workgroup reviewed

existing best practices and presented its recommendations to the DEQ Senior Management Team in May, 2004.

B. Approval of the program: The DEQ Senior Management Team approved the recommendations of the workgroup in May, 2004.

C. Broadening scope of the program to include multiple state agencies: The DEQ broadened the scope of the Academy to include employees from the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from May, 2004 – September, 2005. These 3 agencies often work together on projects, and/or depend on each other's work in order to conduct their own work. Working together to develop emerging leaders allows the agencies to leverage resources and to gain mutual benefit and understanding of each other's programs, and fosters the development of good working networks between employees.

D. Implementation of the program

1. Request For Proposal development and issuance of contract. The DEQ developed and issued an RFP for the needed contractor assistance in January, 2005. The contract was awarded and issued to the selected contractor in September, 2005.

2. Establishment of Steering Committee and Selection of Members. The DEQ assembled a team of 12 senior leaders from the DEQ, MDA and DNR to serve on a Steering Committee to oversee final Academy curriculum development and syllabus development, in order to ensure top executive support and relevance to agency needs.

3. Development of program elements and curriculum – the Steering Committee worked with the contractor from September, 2005 – December, 2005, to identify the elements of the program and to develop the program curriculum and final syllabus

A. Development of a Success Profile – the list of competencies, skills, knowledge and experiences that leaders need in the 3 agencies involved in this project.

B. Personal assessments (as compared to the Success Profile) – each participant is assessed by their peers, supervisor and self as to their strengths and developmental needs, as compared to the Success Profile.

C. Preparation of an Individual Development Plan – each participant prepares a development plan after reviewing the results of assessments. Each participant selects at least one leadership competency to develop, and at least one knowledge/experience area to develop based on the results of the Assessments.

D. Assignment to a Mentor; orientation for Mentor/Mentee pairs – each participant is paired with a mentor who has skills/expertise in one or more of the Mentee's desired development areas. The Mentor/Mentee pairs attend a ½ day orientation session to identify mutual goals and expectations, learn troubleshooting techniques, and outline a meeting schedule and agree on other details of the relationship.

E. Assignment to a 6-person Action Learning Team and sponsor; orientation for Action Learning Teams and sponsors. Each participant is assigned to an Action Learning Project Team and given a project that consists of real problems or developmental issues of interest to the agencies' senior leaders. Each project team makes a concise (15 minute) presentation on the results of the project at the end of the Academy, in front of a meeting of the joint senior management teams of all 3 agencies.

F. Development of the classroom sessions which consist of agency case studies and exercises, conducted by agency senior leaders which expose Academy participants to real problems and cases faced by current senior leadership so that they can learn from current leaders' experiences.

4. Approval of Final Curriculum and Syllabus by Agency Directors and Senior Management Teams – December, 2005.

5. **Recruitment and Selection of First Class – December, 2005 – February, 2006.** Selection is done on the basis of a written exercise in which the applicant outlines in specificity the way(s) in which he/she has demonstrated leadership competency. People who score well on the written exercise are invited to participate in interviews with senior management team members. The highest scoring applicants (written score plus interview score) are selected for participation.

6. **Conduct First Academy – April, 2006 – February, 2007**

7. **Evaluation of First Academy – May, 2007**

8. **Program Adjustment Based on Feedback – June, 2007 – March, 2008**
(training activities were prohibited during most of 2007 due to Executive Order on budget reductions)

9. **Conduct Second Academy – March, 2008 – January, 2009**

10. **Program Adjustment Based on Feedback – February, 2009 – March, 2009**

11. **Conduct Third Academy – (tentative) August, 2009 – May, 2010**

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method? **This program is new and creative in 3 ways:**

A. **3 state agencies are working together to develop emerging leaders, leverage their resources, and improve employee working relationships and networks.**

B. **it is specific to developing leaders in these agencies; it does not teach abstract leadership principles, but instead is almost totally comprised of case studies, experiential learning and conversations with senior leaders and stakeholders about the real-world leadership issues in these 3 agencies.**

C. **it develops people to “lead where they are” as well as aspire to higher positions of formal leadership; participants are encouraged to begin implementing leadership “takeaways” immediately, and encouraged to find ways to lead in their current positions, as well as encouraged to aspire to positions of senior leadership.**

14. What were the program’s start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.) **We paid a one-time cost of approximately \$88,000.00 to a contractor to help us define the elements of the program and prepare some re-usable training materials.**

15. What are the program’s annual operational costs? **After that initial one-time start-up cost, the annual expenses of the program are about \$33,000.00 for 36 people to participate. This equates to a per day, per person cost of \$50.00. This amount includes all supplies, materials, meals and approximately 4 nights’ accommodations for all participants. It does not include mileage costs of participants’ travel to meeting locations. The program also requires part-time involvement of one senior professional level employee to administer the program.**

16. How is the program funded? **Organizational units who have staff members participating in the Academy pay a per person cost out of existing training budgets.**

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number. **No.**

18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program? **We use standard equipment, technology and software to operate the program, such as e-mail, an Intranet site, an Intranet “team room,” etc. We have also used a “webinar” (seminar conducted over the Internet to communicate with staff at remote locations) to introduce staff to the application and selection process.**

19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator’s name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address. **Yes. While many public and private entities conduct “leadership training,” this program, as it has been**

developed, is completely unique and customized for the needs of these 3 state agencies. The customization includes:

A. the integral part that current agency senior leaders play by serving as mentors, team sponsors, and session facilitators, and;

B. the integral part that our stakeholder leaders play in terms of interacting with participants during Academy sessions, in facilitated discussions, so that participants truly understand their views and concerns, and;

C. the projects on which Academy participants work during the Academy, which are real problems or developmental issues of interest to the agencies' senior leaders, and;

D. the classroom sessions which consist of agency case studies and exercises, conducted by agency senior leaders which expose Academy participants to real problems and cases faced by current senior leadership.

The DEQ/MDA/DNR Leadership Academy was developed at the direction of DEQ Director Steven E. Chester. It is governed by a Steering Committee of 12 senior leaders from the 3 involved agencies. It is administered by an employee of the DEQ. Please contact her with questions at the following address:

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20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ? **No. We are not aware of other Academies with this level of customization and hands-on involvement by senior leadership.**

21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken? **Yes. We have conducted two sessions of the Academy, each lasting about one year. The first session began in April, 2006, and concluded in February, 2007. The second session began in April, 2008, and concluded in January, 2009.**

22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.

A. Pro:

1. **Participant feedback:** Feedback from all participants in the 2 sessions of the Academy has overwhelmingly indicated that participants feel the program helped them understand "the big picture," understand stakeholder perspectives, understand the perspectives of senior leaders, has made them more confident in speaking up and taking the initiative to solve problems, and has made them more likely to lead and more confident leaders in their current organizational units. Participants also state that the interagency aspect of the Academy immediately resulted in new networks of people to call on to resolve interagency issues and brainstorm.

2. **Senior leader feedback:** A recent survey (January, 2009) of senior managers from all 3 agencies involved indicated that 100% of them feel that the Academy is effective at developing the leadership qualities needed by the DEQ, MDA and DNR. The survey also revealed that 100% of senior leaders feel the Academy is a good value for the cost.

3. Feedback from Supervisors of Participants: A recent survey (January 2009) of supervisors of participants indicates that supervisors also overwhelmingly support the Academy and have identified ways in which the employees have increased their leadership skills and abilities.

4. Anecdotal Feedback: Anecdotal feedback from managers and staff who have observed Academy participant behavior has indicated that participants appear to be more satisfied in their jobs, more productive, and more understanding of all the perspectives that go into leadership decision-making on any given issue.

5. Project Implementation: The 3 agencies have implemented, to varying degrees, 6 of the 12 Action Learning Project Teams' recommendations, indicating that project team work is useful to the agencies and to the agencies' missions, and that the Project Teams have learned to effectively identify and address agency leadership issues.

6. Participant Promotion: Although this is not a stated goal of the program, 13 out of the 65 total participants (20%) have been promoted during or since participating in the Academy.

B. Con:

1. There continue to be a number of leadership developmental needs that are not addressed in the Academy due to time and financial resource limitations.

2. Due to the selective nature of the Academy, there is a negative aspect for those who are not selected for participation, as there is with any selective process.

3. Some supervisors of participants have expressed concern with the amount of time Academy participants spend on Academy activities during their participation.

4. This customized approach requires "hands on" participation in the Academy of a broad spectrum of the agencies' senior managers, including Department Directors (the agency heads). To date, obtaining this level of involvement and commitment has not been a problem. However, some may see it as a "con" to this approach to leadership development.

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception? The program routinely seeks feedback from participants and management. Mid-course corrections are made when possible in response to feedback, but if not, changes are made for subsequent Academies. One example of a change made in response to feedback is to significantly modify the materials developed by the contractor relative to mentor/mentee training and Action Learning Project team training. Another change for this next Academy involves a change to the selection process, to put more weight on applicants' verbal skills, and less weight on applicants' writing skills.

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program? This program is incredibly cost-effective in terms of actual monetary costs vs. benefits. An organization doesn't need an appropriation or huge funding source to conduct a program such as this. However, some people may say that the "cheap" out of pocket cost is offset by the amount of senior leader involvement needed to make the program a success. The success and uniqueness of the program lies in the ongoing commitment of senior leadership to continue their hands-on involvement. This requires ongoing commitment at the very top of the organization in order to implement a program such as this one. It cannot be "contracted out" or delegated. Some organizations may find this level of senior management involvement to be difficult. It also requires the assignment of at least one relatively high-level employee with good communication and organizational skills to oversee the program.

2009 Innovations Awards Program Program Categories and Subcategories

Use these as guidelines to determine the appropriate Program Category for your state's submission and list that program category on page one of this application. Choose only one.

Infrastructure and Economic Development

- Business/Commerce
- Economic Development
- Transportation

Government Operations

- Administration
- Elections
- Public Information
- Revenue

Health & Human Services

- Aging
- Children & Families
- Health Services
- Housing
- Human Services

Human Resources/Education

- Education
- Labor
- Management
- Personnel
- Training and Development
- Workforce Development

Natural Resources

- Agriculture
- Energy
- Environment
- Environmental Protection
- Natural Resources
- Parks & Recreation
- Water Resources

Public Safety/Corrections

- Corrections
- Courts
- Criminal Justice
- Drugs
- Emergency Management
- Public Safety

Save in .doc or rtf. Return completed application electronically to innovations@csg.org or mail to:

CSG Innovations Awards 2009
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Contact:

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This application is also available at www.csg.org, in the Programs section.

Deadline: March 2, 2009