



Minority Leadership Program

Purpose:

Persons of color working in health departments and other government agencies face myriad challenges pertaining to job advancement, leadership development, and growth opportunities in these institutions. NASTAD recognizes the need to increase the capacity of emerging leaders in health departments and seeks to equip them with skills, mentors, and introspection to help them advance in their varied personal career trajectories. NASTAD's Minority Leadership Program (MLP) serves as a space rooted in social justice for health department staff of color to engage in critical conversations about job advancement; overcoming institutional barriers to equity; managing emotions and burnout; identifying racial and gender-based microaggressions and triggers; successful staff and project management; effective communication; and more. MLP is specifically designed to increase partnerships among staff of color working in state or CDC directly funded city/county health department HIV, viral hepatitis, or drug user health programs.

Outcome:

MLP participants hone and develop both hard and soft skills that assist them as they advance through their careers in public health. Participants complete two weeks of trainings and are paired with peers in their cohort and with professional coaches for support, accountability, and practice in between training dates.

Additionally, participants build meaningful professional relationships with members of previous cohorts, forming a national presence of active professionals of color working towards equitable public health practice. Furthermore, cohorts help further the mission to eliminate stigma by telling their stories about the fears, challenges, successes, and growth experienced as persons of color working in health departments, at times under very difficult and challenging political and organizational constraints. Participants delve into the vulnerability and trauma that arises when representing marginalized communities impacted by health inequities while simultaneously remediating disparities.

“MLP is definitely the fire that ignites a level of confidence you never thought you had. This program allows you to tap into a space where you can clear your thoughts from the negativity that clouds your self-esteem, your self-belief, and your self-determination by learning how to acknowledge, manage, and exude power as a Minority Leader.”

– Dr. Tangee Summers
Ryan White & HOPWA
Program Services Manager

Process:


MLP participants engage in two-weeklong trainings at the start and end of the program. Before attending the first session, participants complete a 360-assessment to identify personal and professional gaps, strengths, areas for change, and readiness to take risks. The 360-assessment also incorporates feedback from various colleagues and peers to provide participants with a comprehensive perspective on how they see themselves and how others perceive them.

In the first weeklong training, participants are introduced to key foundational concepts rooted in a social justice-oriented framework that will help them uncover more about themselves as leaders, advocates, and public health experts. Facilitators guide participants on an interactive and personal journey that requires them to identify and address triggers, be ready and willing to take risks, give and receive feedback, and be open to experiential learning.

Recognizing that we stand on the shoulders of giants, the second weeklong training and final convening will help participants channel the ancestral resilience and motivation that helps guide their passions for social change. Participants will further develop core skills and values, pushing them further into thinking about their evolution as leaders.

MLP participants practice identifying their vision for leadership and sharing it with their cohort for feedback and recognition. Participants also develop planning tools and sustainability goals to keep the momentum and partnerships going when they return to their respective health departments.

When MLP participants are not engaged in trainings, they conduct accountability check-ins with peers and attend individualized coaching sessions to increase their capacity to work more effectively in health departments and further expand on skills learned during training. Additionally, MLP cohorts from across cycles will have opportunities to engage meaningfully, mentor, learn from, and share resources with each other, creating a coordinated, national network of public health professionals of color striving for health equity and an end to HIV and viral hepatitis.



“MLP offered a family support system I never thought I was missing or needed. This experience allowed a space where I could walk in my power and truth. Through transformative sessions and conversations with my cohort and trainers, I discovered a newfound peace and renewal to continue the work as a person of color for health equity and social justice.”

– Nikki West, MSPH

Health Services Program Director

Please note that MLP sessions may be virtual this year as we prioritize safety, caution, and public health while navigating the COVID-19 pandemic.