

Aspiring Leaders



APPLICATION TIMELINE

Application Becomes Available:
August 25, 2021, 12:00 AM ET

Application Close Date
October 15, 2021 11:59 PM ET

Selection Announcement Date
January 2022

ELIGIBILITY DETAILS

- Applicants should have an aspiration to serve as president of a federally-designated Minority Serving Institution.
- Applicants should be mid to senior career and approximately 5-8 years out from pursuing a college presidency.
- Ideal candidates will have some upper-level administrative experience and/or have experience in supervision of staff and/or managing of budgets.

Supported by grants from ECMC Foundation and The Kresge Foundation, MSI Aspiring Leaders is a program developed by the Rutgers Center for Minority Serving Institutions (CMSI) that brings together prominent leaders from Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) to engage with mid-career aspiring leaders from education, non-profit, and business sectors in an effort to prepare the next generation of MSI presidents.

MSI Aspiring Leaders includes both a leadership forum and mentorship program and has been designed to help promote diversity among higher education leadership, where nearly 60% of sitting university presidents are over the age of 60, and where many see a lack of opportunity for women and people of color.

By providing professional development workshops focused on 21st-century skills as well as two years of post-forum mentorship, MSI Aspiring Leaders cultivates future MSI presidents by strengthening pathways to leadership and building connections between peers with similar aspirations and abilities. The forum includes discussions and workshops on topics such as the presidential nomination process, managing relationships with faculty, using data to make decisions, fiscal management, strategic fundraising, crisis management, and engaging the media. After the forum, mentors and their mentees participate in a one-on-one mentoring relationship with a current or recently-retired MSI president. CMSI facilitates these relationships and provides benchmarks to be completed at various points throughout the two years.

The MSI Aspiring Leaders Forum will be hosted at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ. In our effort to encourage attendance and minimize financial burden, MSI Aspiring Leaders will be hosted without program fees for all invited participants. In addition, all meals and materials will be provided by CMSI. Participants will only have to cover the cost of their personal travel and lodging.

ONLINE APPLICATION
AVAILABLE HERE

APPLICATION DETAILS

Online Application

Application will be available beginning **August 25, 2021** [here](#).

Components of a Completed Online Application:

- Personal Information
- 3-minute Personal Narrative Video
- Completed Leadership Inventory
- Contact Information for 3 Individuals Serving as Recommenders
- Submitted Recommenders' Materials (completed leadership inventory and responses to questions pertaining to applicant)

An Ideal Applicant is:

- Someone with a passion for serving students.
- Someone who has held an upper-level management or upper-level administrative position (E.g. Vice President, Provost, Dean, Department Chair, Senior Level Faculty, Non-Profit Leader, Senior Advisor of Tribal or Indigenous Council, etc.).
- Someone who has demonstrated experience managing systems, processes, budgets, and people.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION

Below we have included a few guiding tips on things to consider when working on the various portions of the MSI Aspiring Leaders program application. Following these guiding tips will help ensure you put forth a strong application for consideration.

- For your personal narrative video, we recommend the following:
 - Use high-definition video for best quality
 - Do not record video in "selfie" mode
 - Use bright lighting
 - Ensure good sound quality
 - Maintain professionalism
 - Provide a response to all the questions in the prompt
 - Be mindful of the 3-minute limit for the video
 - Avoid having a script that is visible to the viewer and/or from which you are clearly reading
- When confirming your recommendations, consider the following:
 - We encourage you to read the instructions regarding recommenders thoroughly to ensure you are meeting the application requirements. The application requires three recommendations from the following three categories:
 - A current/past supervisor
 - A current/past supervisee
 - A mentor who can comment on your leadership potential
 - Inform recommenders in advance of your intent to apply to this program as the recommenders' role is substantial (i.e., completion of a leadership inventory and responses to questions pertaining to applicant).

- Provide sufficient time for recommenders to submit their portion of your application:
 - Recommenders will only receive the link to submit their materials about the applicant once an applicant submits their completed application. We encourage all applicants to apply early to ensure recommenders have ample time to complete our recommendation form.
 - Applications are only considered complete when an applicant and their three recommenders have successfully completed all relevant materials.
- Timely Submission
 - Unfortunately, no late applications will be accepted.
 - Selected applicants will be required to attend the MSI Aspiring Leaders Forum from **Friday, April 29, 2022-Sunday, May 1, 2022**. Please make sure you will be available during these dates before submitting an application.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How do I apply for MSI Aspiring Leaders?

You can submit your application online by clicking this [link](#). To be considered for this opportunity, you must submit a completed application by **October 15**. A completed application will contain all of the materials requested in the application details section located above.

2. Is this a program only for those who already work at a federally-designated Minority Serving Institution?

This program is not just for those working at an MSI. However, applicants should have interest in becoming president of an MSI in the future.

3. Is this program for undergraduate or graduate students?

Ideal candidates will have already completed their undergraduate, graduate, and terminal degrees. Ideal candidates are not currently enrolled in a graduate program at the time of participation. However, if an applicant is currently enrolled in a graduate program but already possesses upper-level management or upper-level administrative experience and is within 5-8 years from pursuing a presidency, they should apply.

4. Does the applicant need to be from a 4-year institution or can educators from 2-year community colleges apply for consideration?

Applicants do not have to come from a 4-year institution. In fact, this program is open to individuals from other fields outside of education such as the business and non-profit sectors.

5. Is this a program for mid-career administrators only?

This program is open to applicants from various roles. The ideal candidate will have already gained significant experience and should be within 5-8 years from beginning a presidency. This means that the most successful applicants may be those who have some experience as Department Chairs, Deans, Provosts, etc.

6. Is a background within the professoriate or university administration a prerequisite for eligibility?

Applicants do not have to come from traditional pathways such as the professoriate or administrative roles within university settings. Eligible applicants may have backgrounds in other fields and may have established careers outside of academia.

7. What kind of financial support does CMSI provide selected Aspiring Leaders?

CMSI subsidizes the cost of program registration fees and meals during the event.

8. Does my current institution have to provide financial support if I am accepted into the program?

Institutions are not required to provide institutional support for accepted applicants. However, please note that while this program does not charge for registration and program fees, each selected Aspiring Leader must cover their personal travel and lodging. These costs must be covered by the individual, but some may choose to ask their institution for support. However, it is not required of the institution.

9. May I begin the application and finish at a later date, or must it be completed and submitted in one sitting?

Yes, you are able to begin the application, save it, then finish it at a later date.

10. Is there a way for me to submit the names and information of my recommenders so they can begin working on their recommendations prior to me submitting my application?

Unfortunately, you cannot submit the names of recommenders in advance. The entire application needs to be submitted first, with the recommenders' information as a part of that application. For this reason, we encourage you to start working on this application as soon as possible so that your recommenders have sufficient time to submit their portion of your application before the deadline. Your application is considered incomplete until all recommenders' materials are submitted.

11. Do my recommenders need to fill out the "Perspectives on Leadership" survey and write a separate letter of recommendation? Or, will the survey, with comments, be considered the complete letter of recommendation?

The recommenders will need to complete the survey. Recommenders will not need to submit a separate letter of recommendation.

12. Since recommenders are unable to receive the link for recommendations until after the application is submitted, is it possible to receive the details as to what is required for them to submit?

Recommenders will be asked to complete a "Perspectives on Leadership" survey where they will be asked to respond to a series of statements regarding their perspective on applicants' leadership and work style. Recommenders will also be asked to reflect on the following prompts:

- In what capacity they have known you
- Qualities that make you a viable candidate to lead a university or college
- Your areas of further development prior to attaining a senior leadership role at a university or college

13. The program is set up as a leadership forum (MSI Aspiring Leaders Forum) with subsequent mentoring relationship that will last for 2 years. How will the mentorship relationship be established? How will mentor-mentee pairs be initiated? What are the expectations for follow-up?

Aspiring Leaders will be assigned a mentor prior to the Forum. Each mentor is a current or recently-retired president of an MSI. Our Center assists with facilitation of the mentoring relationships by keeping them on track, providing training to mentors on being an effective mentor, and providing training to the Aspiring Leaders on how to get the most out of the experience.

14. When is the MSI Aspiring Leaders Forum?

The MSI Aspiring Leaders Forum for Cohort 3 will be hosted in New Jersey from Friday, April 29, 2022 to Sunday, May 1, 2022.

15. Is attendance at the MSI Aspiring Leaders Forum mandatory?

Attendance at the MSI Aspiring Leaders Forum is mandatory for all selected Aspiring Leaders. This event is a major component of the program as we will cover important topics pertaining to MSI presidencies. We will build community among the Aspiring Leaders cohort and provide valuable time for mentorship between the Aspiring Leaders and the MSI presidential mentors of the program.

16. Who will lead the various sessions at the MSI Aspiring Leaders Forum?

All sessions will be led by the mentorship team, which consists of current and previous sitting presidents. Other presenters include representatives from our various program affiliates such as search firms, media specialists, crisis management specialists, and foundation leaders.

17. Are there expectations for the completion of a capstone project? By the cohort of Aspiring Leaders? By the mentor-mentee pair?

There are no expectations of an end-of-program capstone project. However, Aspiring Leaders will receive a case study to work on prior to the MSI Aspiring Leaders Forum. Aspiring Leaders will be asked to solve a series of challenges presented in the case studies, which they might work on in conjunction with another Aspiring Leader and/or their mentor. These case studies will be presented at the Forum and each Aspiring Leader will be able to receive feedback on their work.

18. Beyond providing a credential for participation in this program, how will CMSI assist alumni of the program in pursuing nominations for open positions?

All mentors are regularly asked to recommend people for presidencies and the Aspiring Leaders will be on their radar. In addition, the search firms will be exposed to all Aspiring Leaders. Information about the Aspiring Leaders will also be shared with foundations, search firms, and other agencies as aspiring presidents. The CMSI staff provide introductions to search firms, nomination letters, letter and CV review, and other supports.

19. In comparison to some of the other leadership development programs for aspiring presidents, what sets this program apart?

Our program is different due to our emphasis on reducing cost, curriculum, focused mentoring, and a nuanced focus on Minority Serving Institutions:

- This program is free of cost to the selected Aspiring Leaders. Most other programs charge large program fees.
- Our curriculum has been vetted by funders, search firms, presidents, and higher education experts.
- The program includes two years of mentoring that is assessed quarterly as participants are required to participate in a study that will strengthen the program and inform future cohorts and the field.
- Lastly, the focus on MSIs is substantial as all of the sessions focus on the unique issues across MSIs. Above all, the presenters and MSI presidential mentors represent a highly diverse group of professionals.

20. How can I learn more about past Aspiring Leaders?

We suggest reading our 2020 research report on the program. You can access the report [here](#).

Contact for More Information:

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