



Leadership Development Program:

Developing the Inclusive Leaders Our Future Requires.



A transformative 11-week leadership experience designed to develop inclusive, values-driven professionals ready to lead with confidence and impact.

Guidance for Selecting Candidate Pairs

Thank you for your interest in the WE'RE Leadership Development Program. Our goal is to accelerate growth and sponsorship for early-career talent by pairing leaders for a powerful, shared learning experience. **To support your organization in identifying a candidate pair that aligns with the spirit of this initiative, we've provided the following flexible guidance.**

Why Pairing Leaders Creates Real Impact

Pairing a senior leader with an emerging professional creates a powerful dynamic for growth for both individuals and the organization. Through this shared learning experience, mentees gain valuable access, perspective, and skills that accelerate their development, while mentors sharpen their coaching abilities, expand their awareness of emerging talent, and strengthen inclusive leadership practices. When professionals grow together across levels and lived experiences, they return to the workplace with a renewed sense of connection, insight, and commitment to advancing excellence within their organization, ultimately improving retention, performance, and culture for the company.

Mentor/Mentee Overview

Each participating organization is asked to identify a pair of employees to join the program:

- **Senior Mentor/Sponsor:** A seasoned leader who is respected within the organization and positioned to support talent development.
- **Junior Employee:** Someone who identifies as an early-career, emerging talent, or is from an underrepresented background who would benefit from visibility, skill-building, and mentorship.
- **Peer Mentors:** In limited occasions, peer mentors from across the organization may be invited to participate to support cohort connection, model inclusive leadership, and share in the learning experience. Peer mentors are typically mid-level professionals who bring lived and/or professional experience, strong relational skills, and a commitment to inclusive leadership. They serve as bridges between levels of leadership and help foster a sense of belonging across the cohort.

How to Select the Right Pair

Rather than formal criteria, we invite you to use the following considerations as a starting point when identifying your pairs:

FOR THE MENTOR/SPONSOR

- Holds a leadership role or has influence within the organization.
- Values inclusion and the development of future leaders.
- Willing to invest time, share insights, and actively advocate for others.
- Ideally, has cross-functional exposure to help broaden the mentee's network.

FOR THE MENTEE

- Demonstrates curiosity, initiative, and potential for leadership growth.
- May not yet have regular access to senior leaders or stretch opportunities.
- Brings unique perspectives that can help shape your organization's culture and future.
- Open to feedback, learning, and engaging in new experiences.

FOR PEER MENTORS

- Serves as bridge between junior and senior professionals, fostering belonging and connection across the cohort.
- Open to giving and receiving feedback in ways that support mutual learning.
- Models' inclusive leadership behaviors in everyday interactions.
- Willing to share experiences transparently and help others navigate challenges in their development journey.

Things to Keep in Mind

- Pairs do not need to come from the same department or business unit, cross-functional pairings are encouraged where possible.
- Consider including individuals who may not have been tapped for traditional leadership pipelines but who show strong promise and motivation.
- While underrepresentation is a core focus, the program is not limited by rigid definitions, please use your organization's values and context to guide thoughtful selection.

“ This program helped me show up more intentionally as a leader.”

— 2025 Cohort Graduate, Puget Sound Energy

“ The Leadership Development Program gave me tools I still use every day and a mentor I still turn to.”

— 2025 Cohort Graduate, Delta Dental

Next Steps

Once your pair of employees are confirmed, please submit their names, roles, and email address to lauren@employers4equity.org. This helps us tailor the cohort experience and ensure strong alignment across participating organizations. We look forward to welcoming your team and supporting your leaders as they grow in confidence, purpose, and impact.

Learn More or Sign Up: lauren@employers4equity.org



2026 Dates: February 12 – April 23, 2026

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