



Water Leaders Program Frequently Asked Questions

The goal of Water Education Colorado's Water Leaders Program is to positively impact the Colorado water profession by developing a pipeline of water leaders across various fields with the skills to advance the complex world of Colorado water.

Program admission is based on competitive criteria in order to maximize each participant's experience and ensure program diversity. Please note that a maximum of one participant per employer will be admitted each year.

Water Education Colorado defines a leader as someone who is dedicated to and is focused on the greater good of water in Colorado. A leader recognizes the value of collaboration and respect, and is open to diverse perspectives.

Minimum requirements to apply for the Water Leaders Program

Proven Past Commitment: The Water Leaders Program is designed for individuals who have already begun to establish themselves in the water profession. Applicants should have at least three years of work experience in a water-related field, but there is no upper-year limit. Water Leaders will benefit professionals who have spent any duration in the water profession beyond three years.

Proven Future Commitment: Applicants should identify a desire to continue their work in the water profession and demonstrate a commitment to help grow and advance the water community in Colorado by providing leadership and expertise.

Proven "Sphere of Influence": WEco defines Sphere of Influence as an individual's power to impact the water community in Colorado either by managing staff/projects/programs, working closely with a network of external partners outside of your organization, working to influence high-level decision makers, or other job-related connections that elevate your voice in the water community.

Colorado Focused: Applicants should be Colorado residents who work primarily in Colorado

Full Engagement: Participants must be ready to engage deeply in the Water Leaders process including by honestly answering self-assessments, accepting critical feedback from class participants and peer networks, investing time in personal reflection, and being willing to adapt and change personal and professional interactions to become a more efficient and effective leader.

100% Commitment: Participants are expected to be fully invested in the program through attendance at all in-person training sessions, participation in all coaching and cohort calls/meetings, and completion of all inter-session assessments and homework assignments.

(1) Who should participate in the Water Leaders Program?

Anyone within the Colorado water community committed to self-discovery, growth and leadership development. Some guiding questions applicants should ask themselves are:

- Am I a professional whose job is predominantly focused on water-related roles and responsibilities that will impact the future of water in Colorado?
- Do I currently manage or have future ambition to manage staff or large projects?
- Am I looking for an opportunity to assess my leadership styles and skills and explore how to use my particular skill set to advance the professional water community in Colorado?
- Am I open to guidance from an executive coach to learn how I can become a more effective leader?
- Do I have a desire to continue to focus on improvement and to increase my role and responsibilities in the Colorado water community?
- Have I been working in a water-related job for at least three years?

(Note: Water Leaders is not just for emerging water professionals, but the minimum duration in a water-related position demonstrates that applicants have begun to establish their professional identity in the water community.)

(2) What should participants expect from the Water Leaders Program?

Water Leaders is NOT a water-content course. Water is the context that frames the Water Leaders Program's focus on self-assessment, personal growth, and leadership expansion. Expect to dive deep on your personality type and gain extensive self-awareness. Expect to commit to being open and honest, sharing personal and professional challenges, and bonding with cohorts. Expect to learn about yourself with the support and help of professional coaching, be exposed to different perspectives, and identify specific ways to enhance your professional and personal life. Expect to think deeply about and explore key leadership characteristics like managing change and conflict and enhancing communication skills and problem solving in the workplace. Expect to feel uncomfortable (in the best possible way) and to be personally and professionally challenged to grow.

(3) What will participants gain from the Water Leaders Program?

Depending on individuals' past experiences, their level of self-awareness prior to the program, and how deeply they invest in the program, their outcomes will vary. All participants will gain a better personal understanding of themselves and how they can become a more effective leader, as well as exposure to multiple perspectives and positive leadership examples from the Colorado water community. Participants will also gain confidence in their voice and unique space within the water community. And their connections and network within the water world will grow faster and deeper than it has before fast and deep.

Past program participants can't stress enough that the more someone is open, vulnerable, and committed to the Water Leaders process, the more they will get out of the class. Participants can expect substantial sharing of personal and professional challenges. The program fosters a safe space, where participants find it rewarding to share and hear from others.

(4) How is the Water Leaders Program structured and what kinds of assignments are participants expected to complete?

The Water Leaders Program consists of four, two-day sessions. Overnight stays include a group dinner and time for socializing that fosters group bonding and relationship building. All meals are provided, but participants are responsible for their own lodging and transportation costs.

The program uses a variety of personal assessments, peer feedback, and other homework assignments to help participants better understand themselves and explore practical and effective methods to apply enhanced self-awareness to leadership growth for professional success.

Self-Assessments:

- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
- Enneagram
- Harrison Assessment
- Strengths Finder

Other Homework Assignments:

- 360 Feedback from Peers Exercise
- Read 2-3 leadership books (PDFs will be provided; Optional purchase available for an additional cost.)
- 3 one-on-one coaching sessions to work on personal growth plans
- 6 cohort meetings (Participants will be grouped into cohorts of four classmates.)
- Shadowing assignment (Participants will identify two water professionals to shadow during the program.)

The majority of the homework will be assigned before the program begins, with participants completing most of the assessments and reading one leadership prior to the first session. You will receive the first homework assignments one month prior to the first program day and will take about 5 hours to complete. After that, participants can expect to complete about 3-4 hours of homework between each session.

(5) What is the Water Leaders Program NOT?

Water Leaders is not an opportunity to become more water fluent or learn water facts, figures, history, etc. Because the program has been developed for water professionals in Colorado, some of the leadership discussions will center around water topics because that is our common language and context. Bringing perspective on the water industry is helpful, but participants need not be experts in their field of study or on other water topics outside of the subject matter applied in their workplaces. Participants will assimilate a degree of water knowledge by nature of the program, but exposure to that knowledge is not the main focus.

Water Leaders is also not a place for participants to come only to market themselves or grow their network. Yes, participants' networks will grow by participating in this class; however, if an applicant's intent is only to grow his or her network and not commit to the full program curriculum, then this program is not the right fit.