



## **L.E.A.P Academy Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)**

**Spring 2016**

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## **What is the LEAP Academy?**

Launched in March 2015 by Mayor Muriel Bowser, **L.E.A.P.** (Learn, Earn, Advance, Prosper) **Academy** is a network of interconnected partners utilizing the “earn-and-learn” approach that will link the city’s unemployed residents with employment, education and training opportunities. The earn-and-learn approach applies the apprenticeship model to skill development, allowing individuals to earn a wage while participating in an on-the-job training experience and concurrently participating in related technical instruction. This framework allows individuals to earn wages and accumulate work experience thus bolstering their ability to advance along a career pathway and into the middle class.

## **How can I apply for the spring 2016 L.E.A.P Academy cohort?**

To apply for the spring 2016 L.E.A.P Academy Cohort applicants must be referred from the Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of Work Opportunity (OWO) caseload. **If you are a current customer of the Office of Work Opportunity, contact your case manager for more information on how to obtain the application.**

DHS/OWO helps heads of households applying for TANF seek jobs while their applications are under review. DHS/OWO also assists customers in choosing cost-effective and appropriate training that will lead to employment. Customers are assessed and tested prior to being referred to training sites, TANF Job Clubs and Work First Programs. If you are not actively registered with OWO, you will **NOT** be eligible to apply for the spring 2016 cohort.

Eligible candidates must complete the application which includes, but is not limited to: unexpired District of Columbia state identification, official high school diploma or GED certificate, an up-to-date resume, unofficial undergraduate transcripts (if applicable), completion of DC Networks registration, and candidates will be required to complete an essay, (essay topic will be announced with the application). **Incomplete applications will be immediately disqualified.**

## **Who is eligible?**

- Must be a District of Columbia resident
- Must have a high school diploma, GED Certificate or higher
- Must be registered with DCNetworks.org
- Must pass a clean drug screening (*if offered a training opportunity*)
- Must be able to pass a background check (*for certain positions, if offered a training opportunity*)
- Must have basic computer skills (test administered during interview process)
- Must be 18 years or older
- **Must be referred from the Department of Human Services, Office of Work Opportunity Caseload (May 2016 Cohort)**

There is no specific age or degree requirement although the Academy mainly attracts unemployed and underemployed candidates who need additional work experience and transferrable skillsets in order to become more marketable and competitive in the workforce. Applicants must demonstrate a positive attitude, an interest in public service, and commitment to successfully complete the Academy.

### **What does a complete application for the L.E.A.P Academy include?**

In addition to a completed application, eligible D.C. residents must also provide the following documents:

- **Copy of your valid state issued identification**
- **Copy of your high school diploma or GED certificate** (If you have received an Associate's/Bachelor's/Master's Degree or higher you may submit that in lieu of a HS Diploma/GED)
- **Completed [DCNetworks.org](https://www.dcnetworks.org) online registration** (see application instructions)
- **Copy of your resume**
- **150 to 250-word essay answering the question that is posted in the application** (no longer than two pages, typed and double-spaced)
- **L.E.A.P. Application Completion Verification Form** (included in application packet)

### **What is the process for being accepted into the L.E.A.P Academy?**

The L.E.A.P recruitment team reviews all the applications and invites superior applicants to pre-screening interview sessions. **(Note: No calls or emails will be returned regarding application status during the recruitment period. All applicants will be notified of their status once final selections have been made).**

After the pre-screening interview sessions, the recruitment team evaluates applicants based on an individual interview, computer literacy assessment, and overall suitability for the available positions and the L.E.A.P Academy.

### **What types of work do trainees perform?**

Each placement is unique and host agencies that have agreed to partner with L.E.A.P Academy have developed their own training curriculum, process, and projects for trainees to complete during their (12) month internship.

### **Do trainees get to select their placements?**

Not directly. The Department of Employment Services (DOES) maintains the right to make all placements based on a combination of agency needs and the trainees' experience and skills. Trainees are given the opportunity to express their preferences for working in particular areas of the government during the application process and

every effort is made to accommodate these preferences while also meeting agency needs.

### **What agencies have partnered with LEAP Academy?**

Current and past placements include: Executive Office of the Mayor, District Department of Transportation, DC Department of Human Resources, , Department of Forensic Sciences, Department of Employment Services, Department of Human Services, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Public Works, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Department of General Services, Child and Family Services Administration, and District of Columbia Housing Authority, Department of Motor Vehicles and the Office of the People's Counsel.

### **Do trainees receive special training?**

Yes. Before trainees are placed at their agencies they are required to participate in a (2) week professional development training with courses that are specific to District government operations and covers areas such as: business etiquette and professionalism, writing for essential communication, introduction to DC Government, etc. The (2) week professional development training is conducted by the DC Department of Human Resources (DCHR) Center for Learning and Development staff. Trainees are also required to return to DCHR once per month to participate in "Touch Point" sessions. Touch Point sessions were designed to provide ongoing relevant professional development in order to increase the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to be successful in their positions. In addition to the required trainings, L.E.A.P Academy trainees have the opportunity to take online and in-person courses offered by the DC Department of Human Resources Center for Learning and Development.

### **How are trainees evaluated?**

Trainees will be subject to the Performance Management Program which provides a framework for developing the skills of our workforce, defining employee goals and objectives and supporting employee growth through meaningful performance evaluations. In addition to the performance management plans, the L.E.A.P staff will conduct routine site visits in order to monitor and track progress of the trainee. If the evaluations are unfavorable and indicate that the trainee is not meeting the expectations of the Academy, she/he will be dismissed from the Academy at the discretion of the L.E.A.P Academy manager.

### **Are trainees guaranteed a job after completing the twelve month internship?**

No. Assuming that the trainee completes their 12 month commitment, receives favorable performance evaluations, and wants to continue working for the city, every effort will be made by DC Department of Human Resources staff, agency staff, and the

trainee themselves to find appropriate positions at the end of the internship. However, there is no guarantee that appropriate jobs will be available.

### **How much are trainees paid?**

All trainees earn the same rate of \$13.80 per hour, the District's living wage, for the duration of the 12 month internship. The salary is non-negotiable.

### **What benefits are trainees eligible to receive?**

Participants are eligible to accrue sick leave on a prorated basis and earn 1 hour of sick leave per bi-weekly pay period. As a When Actually Employed (WAE) employee, participants are **not** eligible to receive pay for holidays or other administrative closings. Participants will be offered the opportunity to elect health benefits coverage during the next available open enrollment period following the completion of 12 months of service if they receive compensation for an average of 30 hours a week or 120 hours a month. DCHR will notify individuals of their eligibility to participate in open enrollment via email. This information can be found at [www.dchr.dc.gov](http://www.dchr.dc.gov).

### **Are trainees eligible for tuition reimbursement for coursework during the internship?**

The District government does not currently have a city-wide program to cover the cost of academic courses for city employees. The District Government has partnered with select universities to provide discounts on tuition for District Government employees, this information can be found at [www.dchr.dc.gov](http://www.dchr.dc.gov).

### **How many trainees are selected per cohort?**

The number of trainees selected per cohort depends on funding and how many District agencies are able to partner with the Academy. While there is no set number, it is estimated that about 25 trainees will be selected per cohort.

**These frequently asked questions (FAQ's) should address most of your questions about the L.E.AP Academy. If you have any other questions or concerns that are not listed in this FAQ's document, please contact us at 202-442-4646 or send an to e-mail [leap.does@dc.gov](mailto:leap.does@dc.gov).**