Local Government Leadership Academy of Alameda County

Sponsored by the Alameda County City/County Management Association, the Leadership Academy is a jointly planned and funded training and talent development program for city and county agencies in Alameda County. The Academy is aimed at accelerating the development of emerging leaders by promoting "soft" leadership skills (as opposed to "hard" technical or management skills). The target audience is first-line supervisors, mid-managers, division managers and other professionals who desire to advance.

Schedule

The program consists of seven all-day sessions, one session per month, beginning in October and concluding in April.

Goals

The goals of the Leadership Academy include the following:

- *To create a cost-effective talent development program for the participating jurisdictions
- *To enhance the leadership skills of the participants
- *To assist the participating local governments in their succession planning efforts
- *To offer employees positive development opportunities and motivating experiences in tough times

Methods

To promote adult learning, the Leadership Academy utilizes a variety of learning modalities:

- o In-class presentations by instructors and guest presenters
- o Exercises based on the real-life experiences of participants
- Case studies from the participating jurisdictions
- o Readings and discussions
- Webinars (provided by the Cal-ICMA Coaching Program)
- o Team projects of relevance to the participating jurisdictions
- o "Alumni" learning activities and events

Different jurisdictions will be responsible for contributing to the content of each session.

Classroom education will be augmented through "learning by doing."

Selection of Participants

Each participating local government develops its own process of selecting participants, which at the minimum includes a simple application and nomination by its Chief Executive.

Based on the nominations received, the Organizing Committee selects the participants for the upcoming Academy class. The aim of the Organizing Committee is to select a diverse class in order to promote a robust learning experience and ample networking opportunities.

Topics for the Class Sessions

The seven full-day sessions focus on the following topics:

Session #1—The Essential Nature of the Leadership Task (including Ethics)

Session #2—Communication Skills

Session #3—Employee and Citizen Engagement and Community Building

Session #4—The Freedom to Think, The Courage to Act

Session #5—Creative Budget Responses to the Economic Meltdown (including Leading and Motivating in Tough Times and Service Redesign)

Session #6—Talent Development and Coaching

Session #7—Political Astuteness and Resiliency/Graduation Ceremony

Certificate

Upon completion of the seven-month program, each participant receives a certificate signed by the Chief Executive of one's local government. The certificate is presented at the graduation ceremony, which is held at the last session of the Academy.

Participant Fee

Each city and county agency pays a per-participant fee of \$900. The all-inclusive fee covers instruction, materials, meals and all other Academy expenses.

Organizing Committee

The Academy is organized and overseen by a committee of professionals from the participating local governments. Committee members include several City Managers and Assistant City Managers, HR representatives, and emerging leaders.

Staffing

The Academy is staffed by Dr. Frank Benest, the former City Manager of Palo Alto. Dr. Benest develops the curriculum with the Organizing Committee, identifies instructors, assists in the development of case studies from the participating jurisdictions, and secures other resources for the Academy. Frank also serves as the primary instructor.

Alumni Group

It is the intent of the Leadership Academy to create over time an Alumni Group of Academy graduates. Under the auspices of the Academy, the Alumni Group will come together at least once a year for a learning experience. In addition, an email distribution list will be created so that Alums can maintain contact, share experiences and resources, and ask for assistance from fellow Alums.