



Request to Participate: The Lincoln Vibrant Communities Fellows Program

Overview

The [Lincoln Institute of Land Policy](#) and [Claremont Lincoln University](#) are seeking their newest cohort of fellows for the Lincoln Vibrant Communities Fellows Program. Over the next decade, the Lincoln Institute, a globally recognized nonprofit private operating foundation, and Claremont Lincoln University, an accredited private nonprofit university, will partner with municipalities across the US to address common, complex challenges facing counties and cities. The fellows program invests in leadership, policy, and advanced practical skills, with the goal of helping to build vibrant, engaged communities defined by trust, facilitated by resident agency, and focused on positive change.

If you are a leader who aspires to create critical change in your community—or who is already doing so—we invite you to apply to be one of the elite fellows selected from across the country to take part in this program.

Supported by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, the Vibrant Communities Fellows Program is powered by the distinctive leadership framework of Claremont Lincoln University. It harnesses the Lincoln Institute's nearly 80 years of research, case studies, toolkits, and advanced practices, using land policy to help public and private sectors create thriving communities that benefit all people.

The program begins with an immersive convening, which is then complemented by an online leadership curriculum, expert webinars, and peer networking on emerging practices that help communities grapple with local challenges. Upon successful completion, fellows receive a nine-credit graduate certificate in advanced public sector leadership (the Executive CLU Core: Advanced Engagement for Exceptional Leaders—Lincoln Vibrant Communities certificate). Fellows will engage with innovative faculty who will facilitate peer-to-peer community learning, while fellows develop a deep understanding of how ethical leadership and land policy intersect to shape the foundation of community life and shared progress. The program is also supported by professionals with direct experience in the field addressing issues such as planning for infrastructure, land use and zoning, water management, affordable housing, public health, climate preparedness and resilience, and more.

After the program, fellows will be invited to join a national network of catalysts for local change, leaders who engage others from the public and private sector to transform their communities. Fellows will also be invited to join a team-based phase of Lincoln Vibrant Communities, working directly on a critical challenge in their municipalities.

The Executive CLU Core: Advanced Engagement for Exceptional Leaders—Lincoln Vibrant Communities certificate will allow fellows to apply nine credits toward a CLU graduate degree (more details under “Application Instructions”). Topics that will be covered in the certificate program include:

- Methods to drive municipal change:
 - Scenario planning
 - Data visualization
 - Strategic communication
 - Building cases and models
 - Defining policies and systems for intentional change
 - Storytelling to inspire, influence, and advocate
- New, urgently needed leadership for the public sector:
 - Situational awareness
 - Ethical leadership in a fractured world
 - Change and conflict management
 - Resilient and culturally competent professionalism
 - Dialogue and collaboration including diverse perspectives for change

Cost

Through the generosity of the Lincoln Institute and Claremont Lincoln University, this Vibrant Communities Fellows Program is almost entirely underwritten. Fellows pay only \$2,500 plus travel for the launch event. Additional optional programming will be provided at cost. After the launch event, this program's cost becomes nonrefundable.

Timeline

The program will launch on March 18–20, 2026, in Chicago, IL. By submitting an application, applicants agree that they are willing and able to attend.

Upon acceptance, participants will have seven days to create a Claremont Lincoln University student profile to confirm participation. Participants will be sent the link to create said profile in an email notifying them of their acceptance. Fellows will then schedule a short call with a student success manager at Claremont Lincoln University, who can process any paperwork needed for the program and answer questions. After the launch event, fellows can expect to gain access to online program orientation modules, the Lincoln Vibrant Communities Network, and program faculty.

After the launch, fellows will engage in a two-week orientation before beginning work in the courses. The program ends on October 4, 2026. Online instruction is designed for asynchronous learning, which allows students to engage at any time, no matter where they are in the country.

Who Should Apply

- Current, emerging, and aspiring community leaders
- Community leaders working with the public sector
- Business and industry leaders working with the public sector
- Former Lincoln Vibrant Communities Teams Program participants seeking to build individual capacity, execute their plans, or stack certificates for more academic credit

Return on Investment

- Knowledge and practical application of practices and approaches to address complex challenges in your community
- Deepened leadership capacity to create community-based solutions
- Skill in strategic communication and effective engagement of diverse community perspectives
- A network of content experts and colleagues
- A nine-credit advanced practice graduate certificate in leadership designed specifically for public and private sector leaders focused on community change (Fellows may request CLU baccalaureate credits in lieu of the certificate, and academic credit may be applied toward graduate and undergraduate degree programs; see “Application Instructions.”)
- Increased impact and agency as an ethical, engaged leader

Application Instructions

The application form will open on January 7, 2026. The application must be written in

English and submitted via the online form by March 3, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. ET. Please upload a copy of your current resume or CV brief. Your response to the open-ended questions should not exceed 500 words. Fellows will be notified of their acceptance no later than two weeks after they submit an application. Applications submitted within 48 hours of the final deadline will receive a decision within two days of the final deadline.

Applicants must be living and working in the United States during the program. Current and past employees, board members, or family members of Claremont Lincoln University (CLU) or the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy are not eligible for the fellows program. Current CLU degree-seeking students are not eligible to apply unless they have the endorsement of the chief academic officer and are currently working directly with the public sector. Current CLU degree-seeking students should contact CLU staff by emailing LincolnVibrantCommunities@claremontlincoln.edu.

This 24-week program culminates in a nine-unit for-credit graduate certificate from Claremont Lincoln University, titled Executive CLU Core: Advanced Engagement for Exceptional Leaders—Lincoln Vibrant Communities. Fellows can:

- Regard this certificate as an achievement in itself;
- Apply the credits from the certificate to a CLU master's degree; or
- Convert the certificate into 12 baccalaureate credits (only when applied to a CLU bachelor's degree in organizational leadership).

The transferability of graduate credits to other accredited institutions depends upon the receiving institution. Fellows applying without a conferred baccalaureate degree will not be eligible to receive graduate credit but are welcome to participate in the program for a noncredit certificate of completion.

Questions

For questions regarding this request for proposals, please contact us at LincolnVibrantCommunities@claremontlincoln.edu.

