

Overview

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and Claremont Lincoln University (CLU) invite bold, forward-thinking leaders to apply for the Lincoln Vibrant Communities Fellows and Teams Certificates.

The Lincoln Vibrant Communities Certificates—powered by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and Claremont Lincoln University—equip participants with the leadership skills, land policy tools, and national connections needed to create measurable, lasting impact in their localities. Together, these institutions are investing in leadership, land policy, and advanced practical skills to build vibrant, engaged communities defined by trust, resident agency, and meaningful change.

Interested individuals can participate through two different pathways: as individuals through the fellows track or as a team of four to six cross-sector leaders. Fellows are highly encouraged to consider participating in the Teams Certificate following completion of the Fellows Certificate, but it is not required.

Lincoln Vibrant Communities Fellows Certificate

Designed for individual leaders ready to elevate their capacity to create change, the 24-week Fellows Certificate blends immersive, in-person learning with flexible online coursework and applied leadership development.

This cohort of Fellows will explore a range of policy tools related to sustainable data centers and major development proposals. By the end of the program, Fellows will understand how to develop policy solutions unique to each of their communities. All participants will benefit from discussions on risk management, finance and policy tools, community trust building, geospatial visualization, and Community Benefit Agreements.

Program Highlights

- Anchored in the Lincoln Institute’s policy work on sustainable data center siting and community impact
- Immersive learning event (September 30–October 2, 2026, in Chicago, IL)
- Online, asynchronous graduate-level curriculum
- Expert-led webinars and peer networking
- Applied learning focused on real community challenges

What You Will Gain

- Advanced skills in strategic communication and change management
- Tools for scenario planning, data visualization, and policy design
- Ethical leadership strategies for complex environments

- A powerful national network of community change leaders
- The ability to navigate new, complex issues of community growth (such as data center siting, neighborhood revitalization projects, housing developments, sports facilities, etc.)

Upon successful completion, fellows earn a nine-credit graduate certificate: Executive CLU Core: Advanced Engagement for Exceptional Leaders—Lincoln Vibrant Communities. Credits may be applied toward a CLU master’s degree or converted into undergraduate credits where applicable. (Please see “Academic Achievement” below.) Fellows are highly encouraged to consider participating in the Teams Program following completion of the Fellows Program—especially if they are interested in developing a master plan related to the issues they have begun to address as Fellows.

Lincoln Vibrant Communities Teams Certificate

The Teams Certificate is a 24-week, work-embedded experience for teams of four to six professionals committed to solving a critical municipal challenge. Prior participation in the Fellows Certificate is not required, but Fellows are welcome to apply for the Teams Certificate upon completion of the Fellows Certificate if they are interested.

What Makes the Teams Program Unique

- Dedicated coach and project delivery specialist
- Real-time application within your municipality
- Development of professional staff reports and leadership presentations
- Consultant-grade final project delivered to decision-makers and funders

Teams earn a nine-credit graduate certificate: Innovations and Trends in Public Administration—Lincoln Vibrant Communities. Credits may be applied toward a CLU master’s degree or converted into undergraduate credits where applicable. (Please see “Academic Achievement” below.)

Investment

Through the generosity of the Lincoln Institute and Claremont Lincoln University, certificate costs are substantially underwritten.

- Fellows: \$2,500 + travel to Chicago
- Teams: \$2,500 per participant + travel to Chicago

Certificate fees become nonrefundable after attending an event or after courses begin. Please see the CLU catalog for additional information regarding payment.

Academic Achievement

Both pathways culminate in a nine-unit for-credit graduate certificate from Claremont Lincoln University. These certificates can be stacked; taking both programs allows participants to earn a total of 18 credits. Participants may:

- Regard each certificate as an achievement in itself;
- Apply the credits from each certificate to a CLU master’s degree; or

- Convert each 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. Participants 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.

Key Dates

- Application Opens: June 18, 2026
- Application Closes: August 10, 2026
- In-Person Immersive Event: September 30–October 2, 2026, in Chicago, IL
 - Participants are highly encouraged to attend
- Online Orientation Period: October 5–October 26, 2026
- Certificate Courses Begin: October 26, 2026
- Certificate Conclusion: April 25, 2027

Who Should Apply

- Current, emerging, and aspiring community leaders
- Public sector professionals
- Business and industry leaders working with municipalities
- Cross-sector leadership teams aspiring to solve, or already working on, a critical municipal issue
- Local elected officials and municipal staff interested in learning how to navigate the growing demand for data center development in their communities.

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 to participate in Lincoln Vibrant Communities. 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.

Lead the Change

If you are ready to strengthen your leadership, build practical solutions, and join a national movement advancing more vibrant communities, we encourage you to apply.

For questions, contact: LincolnVibrantCommunities@claremontlincoln.edu

Participants 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.

