

Q&A Resource for References:



Emerging Leader Program for Upcoming Leaders

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Application Cycle

When will the application open and when will it close?

The Emerging Leader Program for Upcoming Leaders application timeline is available on the ELP for Upcoming Leaders webpage at www.aphl.org/ELP.

Eligibility & Application Process

If the final submission from the applicant is required by a specific deadline, will applicants need to enter their references' email addresses before that date?

The full application, including applicant and reference responses, is due by the application deadline. Applicants can enter their references' email addresses at the start of the application process, prior to answering any prompts.

What are the eligibility criteria for the Emerging Leader Program for Upcoming Leaders?

To be eligible for the Emerging Leaders Program for Upcoming Leaders, applicants must:

- Be a U.S. citizen, U.S. National, or lawful permanent resident
- Be currently employed full-time at an [APHL Member Laboratory](#) in the United States or its territories
- Have a minimum of three years of laboratory experience
- May possess a degree in microbiology, biochemistry, virology, clinical laboratory science, or a comparable technical field

Is the Emerging Leader Program for lab staff only or managers as well?

Lab staff and current leaders are welcome to apply for the Emerging Leader Program for Upcoming Leaders!

Can I make changes to my reference form after I have submitted it as final?

Once your applicant has entered your information (name and email) into the application system (RQ Awards), you will receive an email notification to complete a linked Reference Form. It is recommended to draft your responses outside the system, as your Reference Form does not save drafts and will time out after 15 minutes of inactivity. **Be sure to review your responses thoroughly before clicking "submit as final".**

If you need to make changes **before the application cycle closes**, you can update a final application by emailing Leadership@aphl.org.

After the application cycle closes, no further modifications can be made. However, if your applicant's situation changes or you have a significant update that could affect the review process, please inform APHL at Leadership@aphl.org as soon as possible.

Organizational & Role Questions

Will reviewers know if multiple applicants are from the same laboratory, and does having multiple current or past participants affect the chances of a participant being selected?

No. Reviewers do not have access to identifying information about applicants or their laboratories, so they cannot see if multiple candidates are from the same lab. APHL ensures that cohorts are comprised of a variety of laboratory types and locations. Having multiple current or past participants does not affect a laboratory's chances of having at least one participant selected

What if the supervisor and the laboratory director are the same person?

If the applicant's supervisor and laboratory director are the same person, there is a section in the application to indicate this. This will ensure that the correct designated individual receives all reference questions to complete on the applicant's behalf.

We strongly encourage applicants to discuss their application responses, timeline, and any necessary requests with their supervisor as early as possible to ensure all materials are submitted by the application deadline.

APHL Leadership Programs

What is the difference between the Emerging Leader Program (ELP) and the Laboratory Leaders of Today (LLOT)?

Although the Emerging Leader Program (ELP) and the Laboratory Leaders of Today (LLOT) are leadership development programs offered by APHL, they are designed for different audiences and career stages.

- **ELP for Upcoming Leaders** is designed for early to mid-career professionals ready to build foundational skills, expand their leadership toolkit and take on new challenges. Offered in both hybrid and virtual formats with a program length of 9 months. For more information, visit <https://www.aphl.org/ELP>
- **ELP for Experienced Leaders** is designed for professionals with an established leadership foundation who are ready to deepen their impact through advanced leadership development. Ideal participants include experienced leaders who have demonstrated success leading teams, initiatives or strategic efforts, as well as graduates of the traditional ELP seeking to further expand their leadership skills. This program is offered fully virtually and runs for 6 months. For more information, visit <https://www.aphl.org/ELP>
- **LLOT** is specifically designed for new public health laboratory directors, assistant/deputy directors and senior laboratorians who may rise into those roles. The program focuses on the operational and leadership challenges associated with running a public health laboratory. Participants engage in interactive discussions on industry trends, leadership strategies and best practices for managing a public health laboratory. LLOT is an 18-month program that includes both virtual and in-person sessions. For more information, visit <https://www.aphl.org/Career-Pathways/Leadership/Pages/Laboratory-Leaders-of-Today.aspx>.

While all programs emphasize leadership development and networking, the ELP is best suited for emerging leaders looking to grow within their careers, while LLOT is tailored for those already seasoned in leadership positions who want to strengthen their skills as laboratory directors or senior leaders.

What are the program expectations & time commitment?

Participants should expect to dedicate 3-4 hours per month to ELP for Upcoming Leaders activities, including:

- Attending virtual leadership sessions
- Completing assignments and project work

- Participating in peer discussions and networking events

Hybrid participants must also attend in-person meetings as scheduled. For in-person sessions, participants may spend 3–4 days on meetings and travel, with an additional 2–3 hours of independent work.

Travel Expenses & Attendance Expectations

Is travel paid for by APHL or the Applicant?

CDC funds all participation costs for APHL members! Travel expenses for the in-person meetings, including airfare, hotel accommodations, meals, and ground transportation, are fully funded through a Cooperative Agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. **Please note that APHL cannot cover travel expenses for federal employees or external partners.**

Does travel availability affect an applicant's chances of being accepted?

Not necessarily. However, if you, the Applicant, are unable to attend in-person sessions, you may want to consider selecting the virtual modality option.

Virtual and Hybrid Modality

What's the difference between Virtual ELP and Hybrid ELP?

Both Virtual ELP and Hybrid ELP offer valuable leadership development experiences, with the main difference being their format.

- **Virtual ELP** is conducted entirely online, providing a flexible structure that allows participants to engage in leadership training, networking, and collaboration without the need for travel.
- **Hybrid ELP** includes both virtual sessions and in-person components, offering opportunities for face-to-face interactions alongside online learning.

Both formats provide the same leadership development content and opportunities to build professional relationships, equipping participants with the skills to make a meaningful impact within their teams and laboratories.

How will APHL know which ELP modality the applicant would like to apply for?

APHL's ELP for Upcoming Leaders utilizes a single application process for all applicants, regardless of the program format. As part of the application (available at <https://apply.aphl.org>), prospective participants can indicate their preferred program format. We encourage you to discuss both options with your applicant to confirm which option (or both) they would like to consider.

Will the virtual program be the same size as the usual hybrid cohort?

The size of the ELP for Upcoming Leaders cohort is determined annually and can vary based on factors such as funding availability and program design. Traditionally, the cohort comprises 18-20 participants, including external partners. APHL plans to expand the cohort size for the virtual program while continuing to include external partners. The goal of offering a virtual program is to expand training and leadership development opportunities for public health laboratorians who may not be able to meet the traditional hybrid program expectations, such as travel.

Will virtual participants have the same networking opportunities as hybrid participants?

Yes! The virtual ELP for Upcoming Leaders includes structured networking opportunities through:

- Small-group breakout sessions
- Coaching opportunities
- Interactive leadership discussions with peers and experts

While the hybrid ELP includes in-person interactions, its virtual sessions are designed to facilitate meaningful engagement and professional connections.

Applicant Selection

How are applicants selected for the program?

Reviewers evaluate applications based on multiple factors, including:

- Demonstrated leadership potential
- Commitment to public health laboratory work
- Quality of responses and examples to application questions
- Support from references through detailed responses to reference questions
- Representation from a broad set of laboratories and geographic regions

Additionally, applicants will indicate their preferred format (virtual or hybrid), and selections will be made based on availability and cohort composition.

How competitive is the application process, and how many participants are typically selected per cohort?

The ELP application process is competitive. In 2024, we expanded the program and in 2025, adjusted our delivery method to increase acceptance rates. Although the applicant count varies, the program changes increased the acceptance rate from 30% to 50%. For the upcoming application cycle, including external partners, we are considering selecting 18 to 20 participants for the hybrid modality and 20-25 participants for the virtual modality.

Additional Questions & Resources

My question is not addressed in this document. Are there more resources or someone I can contact?

Yes, please review the Emerging Leader Program webpage at www.aphl.org/ELP, as the educational recording provides a detailed overview and walks you through APHL's application system, RQ Awards.

There are 15-minute one-on-one Question and Answer sessions with APHL available, sign up here: <https://calendly.com/leadership-nhft/elp-application-qanda>

Alternatively, you can always contact APHL about the Emerging Leader Program at Leadership@aphl.org.