



WASHINGTON STATE
CHARTER SCHOOLS
ASSOCIATION

ASPIRING LEADERS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

ASPIRING LEADERS is a cohort fellowship program which aims to develop the capacity of community, business, education, and policy professionals of color to lead within the Washington charter public school sector. We know we must ensure that charter public school leaders reflect the students and communities of color charter public schools serve because representation influences academic and non-academic outcomes for students and diversity within teams catalyzes innovation.

Aspiring Leaders focuses on building out four core competencies that the majority of education leadership positions prioritize: **critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity**. These competencies will be embedded learning outcomes within several different learning modules, and the program will provide opportunities to apply the competencies in community-specific contexts.

PROGRAM GOALS

Aware that community-driven solutions are the best ones, Aspiring Leaders seeks to address inequities in our education system by creating leadership pathways and providing resources for community stakeholders to generate ideas and solutions together. By the end of the program, participants will be equipped to execute on community solutions and with the tools to find their place in the Washington charter public school sector. They may elect to do one or more of the following:

- Apply to join a founding or existing charter public school team
- Apply for 4.0 Schools' Tiny/Essential Fellowships
- Apply for a role on a charter public school board
- Apply for an operations or community engagement school position, or other roles at operating charter public schools
- Be an advocate for the charter public school sector

WHO WE ARE

The Washington State Charter Schools Association (WA Charters) is a non-profit organization that advocates for and develops high-quality charter public schools that meet the needs of systemically underserved students.

Communities of color, immigrant and refugee communities, low-income communities, and individuals living with disabilities disproportionately shoulder the burden of the impacts of inequitable access to high-quality public schools. Working for and in partnership with impacted communities is a critical priority of our incubation, school services, legal, advocacy, communications, and engagement work to support charter public schools at every stage of their development. By doing so, we believe charter public schools will be a lever to improve educational outcomes across charter and traditional schools for **all** students.

WHO YOU ARE

ASPIRING LEADERS will be community, business, education and policy professionals, with a preference given to leaders who reflect the racial demographics of students that Washington's charter public schools serve, who are:

- Committed to social justice and/or educational equity
- Located in Washington state
- Deeply invested in their communities
- Experienced in working with underserved communities
- Critical, curious, and innovative thinkers about existing educational systems
- Seeking challenges and are eager to grow
- Able to commit to the program schedule

LEARN

In conversations led by current school leaders and professionals of color with relevant experiences, participants will examine data and best practices to learn about:

- Washington state charter sector history and landscape
- Creating a bold school mission, vision, and culture
- Authentic family and community engagement for student success
- Creating an inclusive professional environment for teachers and staff
- Charter public school finance, operations and fundraising 101
- Understanding and analyzing education data
- Building a school design team and governing board

EXPERIENCE

Over eight months, participants will build experience in charter leadership and be supported to set and achieve career goals by:

- Touring high-performing charter public schools inside and outside of Washington state with opportunities to engage current students and families in conversation
- Volunteering at or shadowing a leader at an operating Washington charter public school
- Receiving a \$2500 stipend to enhance their own personal leadership, further their learning about the Washington charter public school sector, and deepen engagement in their communities
- Receiving travel funds to attend program sessions and school visits across the state
- Receiving 1:1 coaching throughout the program to map/plan their personal pathway in the Washington charter public school sector
- Communicating and connecting with a Leader Mentor – a current leader of color in the Washington education sector

COMMIT

The Aspiring Leader (AL) program schedule is very condensed, and attendance for each component is essential to attain the program goals. **The program is planned to run concurrent with academic school year, exact dates TBD.**

Applications will open June 2020. Participants must:

- Attend three to four in-person full-day sessions (start, midway, and end of program)
- Attend three to four 90-minute virtual sessions
- Travel with AL cohort to visit high-performing charter schools and their communities
- Help WA Charters iterate the program by participating in program evaluation activities (end of program)
- Reconnect with the AL cohort annually

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about applying to Aspiring Leaders or becoming a mentor, contact WA Charters info@wacharters.org

ASPIRING LEADER MENTORS

Mentors are community, business, education and/or policy professionals of color who:

- Are committed to social justice, particularly educational equity
- Are located in Washington state
- Have demonstrated leadership in professional capacities
- Are experienced in working with systemically underserved communities
- Are dedicated to working with one or two Aspiring Leaders to advance their development as advocates
- Can help participants think critically around their professional development and personal leadership
- Are able to commit to connecting with fellows in person, virtually, and/or by phone for 60-90 four to eight times between August and May depending on the needs of the Aspiring Leader
- Can help WA Charters iterate the program by participating in program evaluation activities

The program schedule for Aspiring Leaders includes between three and four in-person touch points and three to four virtual touch points. Mentors will connect with fellows between sessions.

- At least four to eight in-person and phone touch points with participants throughout the duration of the program

MENTORS WILL RECEIVE

- \$500 stipend per mentee (limit of 2 mentees per cohort)
- Coaching and training in mentorship best practices