



LEAD Maryland Program Mentors Tomorrow's Agriculture, Natural Resource, and Rural Community Leaders

Education is essential to developing leaders and determining the direction of Maryland agriculture. The University of Maryland Extension has formed a partnership with State agencies and private organizations to provide a leadership development program called LEAD Maryland.

The LEAD Maryland program awards educational two-year fellowships to candidates who have demonstrated emerging leadership abilities and a genuine interest in agricultural, natural resources, and rural community issues. Every two years, a diverse group of 20-25 Fellows complete the educational, training, and

personal development program. Through program participation, Fellows become more equipped to solve problems, identify resources, engage and educate others, and influence public policy.

Fellows attend a series of multi-day seminars held at various locations around Maryland and Washington, DC and complete a domestic and/or international travel study. Since the first class in 1999-2000, Fellows have traveled to the Netherlands, Belgium, Cuba, Brazil, China, Finland, Estonia, Russia, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and Taiwan. The next trip will be to Chile.

LEAD Maryland Provides Tools and Experiences to Make a Positive Difference

The LEAD Maryland Foundation is a nonprofit organization that provides resources and governs the program to help emerging leaders succeed. Over the course of the program, Fellows learn various leadership skills, including public speaking; addressing the media; responding to and leading legislative local, State, and national initiatives; and using diversity to strengthen teams. Fellows also develop a keener awareness of critical issues and can apply their leadership skills to promote their businesses, industries, or communities, and Maryland’s agricultural community at-large, for the benefit of the future.

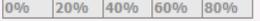
LEAD participants attend seminars featuring business, industry and nonprofit sector leaders; local, State and national agency representatives; farm, natural resources and rural community leaders; and professional trainers and university faculty. Fellows complete a domestic and/or international travel study designed to help them compare and contrast political, economic, social, cultural, trade and other issues.

LEAD Graduates Serve Their Communities

The 2012 survey, with 101 LEAD Fellows responding, found that 95% were active in a community through volunteer work and positions. Almost 77% of the Fellows worked with six or more community, industry, government or other organizations since graduating; 14% were involved with 10 or more organizations. Close to 90% worked with nonprofit organizations, such as FFA, the 4-H Foundation and food banks. Nearly 70% of Fellows increased their volunteer hours after completing the LEAD program.

At a reported monthly average of 14.5 hours each, the survey respondents volunteered a total of 1,429 hours per month.

Nonprofits ranked first in types of organizations where LEAD graduates volunteered

Response	Total	% of Total Respondents	%
Civic associations (such as Rotary, Lions, Ruritan, community improvement groups)	34		34%
Nonprofit organizations (such as United Way, FFA Foundation, 4-H Foundation or 4-H Clubs, Farm Bureau, education foundations, food banks, Boy Scouts, local recreation sports)	90		90%
Faith-based organizations (such as church charities, humanitarian aid groups, missions)	29		29%
Industry-based organizations (such as commodity check-off- program boards, education and promotion boards, trade associations, and marketing boards)	54		54%
Governmental-based organizations (such as planning commissions, education and school boards, city and county councils, state or local advisory commissions)	47		47%
Professional associations (such as institutes and governing groups for trades and professional standards)	30		30%
Political organizations (such as political parties or campaigns)	20		20%
Total Responses: 100			

Using the Independent Sector (www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time) estimate of the per-hour value of volunteer time in Maryland, the surveyed LEAD Fellows contributed over \$32,500 per month worth of volunteer hours--an *annual* total of \$390,000.

Fellows Learned Skills to Enhance Policy Leadership Abilities

LEAD participants are taught critical skills necessary for effective leaders, particularly those who will be active in public policy-making—writing effective communications, making presentations, building consensus, working with public elected and appointed officials and testifying at public hearings.

Almost 50% of the survey participants indicated that LEAD training helped them play a larger role in shaping public policy. Since completing LEAD classes, 17% of participants ran for, applied for, or were appointed to public office, including agricultural commissioner, planning board member, and State representative.

Examples of LEAD participants' accomplishments in public policy include:

- Helping to increase the financial and technical assistance resources available to family farms and other rural businesses;
- Overseeing the plan to build the first totally new poultry operation in Maryland in three years;
- Being appointed to a Farm Bureau national commodity advisory committee and working with people from around the country on national equine issues.



100% of survey respondents reported they have engaged and educated the public about agriculture's and rural communities' perspectives on agriculture and environmental issues."

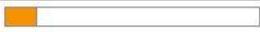
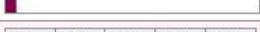
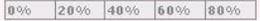
Photos by Edwin Remsberg (LEAD Class VII 2011-12)

Skills Acquired in LEAD Program Also Beneficial in Workplace

Through program participation, Fellows become more equipped to solve problems, identify

resources, and engage and educate others. Almost 98% of surveyed LEAD participants indicated that they gained important skills and confidence that helped them succeed in their jobs, including networking, leveraging resources and improving relationships. Nearly 80% stated that the program honed their strategic thinking, problem solving, and team-building skills.

LEAD Helped Nearly Half of Respondents Improve Work Performance

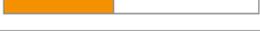
Response	Total	% of Total Respondents	%
Increases my professional networks	87		92%
Helps leverage resources with other organizations	58		61%
Improves relationships with other organizations	71		75%
Increases my strategic thinking, team building, and problem-solving skills used on my job	75		79%
Increases my work performance	44		46%
I was offered a new job or promotion	10		11%
I created a new business venture	12		13%
I have redirected my career	11		12%
I decided to continue my formal education	4		4%
I have increased my participation in informal education	33		35%
Other (please specify)	4		4%
Total Responses: 95			

Farmer, Forester, Grower, Producer Participants Learned to Grow the Bottom Line

Half of the LEAD Fellows were farmers, foresters, growers, or producers. The largest share (84%) of this group of survey respondents indicated that the LEAD experience helped them better connect to resources that are useful in their businesses. Almost one third of these LEAD participants improved the profitability of their operations. While many factors influence profitability, 10% of survey participants added or changed the type of products they produced and 24% accessed new markets.

More than half improved their communications with State and Federal government offices relevant to their operations. Almost half of the producers, farmers, foresters, and growers felt that the program enabled them to make better use of science and technologies.

Over 80% of farmers and other producers indicated that LEAD helped them better connect to useful resources

Improved profitability	11		30%
Improved environmentally or in land use choices	14		38%
Better connected to resources that assist me in my operations	31		84%
Engaged in succession planning for my operation	12		32%
Accessed new markets	9		24%
Added or changed the type of products I produce	4		11%
Improved communication with government offices	21		57%
Better use of technology and/or science	16		43%
Other (please specify)	0		0%
Total Responses: 37			

For More Information on LEAD Maryland...

Contact LEAD Maryland Foundation Executive Director Susan R. Harrison at 410-827-8056 or at leadmd@umd.edu. Information is also available at www.leadmaryland.org.

LEADers Shared Their Experiences

“Since participating in LEAD, I have been asked to serve with more organizations and boards than I would have ever planned... I believe LEAD set me up, so to speak, to appreciate and understand that going outside of my comfort level reaps lifelong learning and experiential rewards.”

“LEAD provided me the leadership training to revive our county Young Farmer (YF) group and I have held leadership positions such as President. I was instrumental in establishing a discretionary fund to provide individuals with financial assistance to participate in agricultural programs. For example, our YF group sponsored numerous 4-H kids and clubs to travel and attend and/or compete at national events.”

“My LEAD Maryland experience substantially broadened my knowledge of the many issues facing rural and urban communities, which has allowed me to become a much more effective advocate for the agricultural industry in Maryland.”

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This information is a series of educational material of the University of Maryland Extension and the LEAD Maryland program. For more information on related publications and programs, visit: www.leadmaryland.org or contact Susan R. Harrison at leadmd@umd.edu. Please visit <http://extension.umd.edu/> to find out more about Extension programs in Maryland.

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