



Lead for North Carolina

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Lead for North Carolina (LFNC) is a pilot program for the School that aims to recruit, train, and place promising young leaders in two-year paid fellowships in North Carolina local governments. It is the first state affiliate of Lead for America. The goal is to strengthen our local governments, support local communities, and cultivate a new generation of public service leaders. This program is a partnership with the NC City and County Management Association (NCCCMA), NC League of Municipalities (NCLM), and NC Association of County Commissioners (NCACC).

Nine months after creating an implementation committee for LFNC, the fantastic news is that we are launching the program this summer! Consider what the committee members and many others have accomplished through their hard work and commitment:

- Our development team raised over \$900,000 for the program.
- Lead for America (LFA) identified over 170 Fellows who are passionate about public service in North Carolina. Thanks to the LFA team for their help in a ton of ways—Joe Nail, Benya Kraus, Maya Pace, and Reed Shafer.
- The local government committee recruited 16 great placements and mentors, which was a major task given our late start and short timeframe.
- The curriculum and support committee has designed a 25-day training program with over 30 instructors and volunteers. It includes a bus tour and a reception at the Governor's Mansion.

Many people deserve special thanks for making this happen—more about them later. Two people



are in a category of their own. Kara Millonzi for volunteering to be the faculty lead for LFNC, and Dylan Russell for serving brilliantly as Executive Director during this challenging inaugural year. Both have gone far above and beyond the call of duty.



Kara Millonzi



Dylan Russell



Here are the local government jurisdictions where the Fellows will be placed, their managers, along with the Fellows and their universities:

- **Anson County**—Manager: Barron Monroe—Fellow: Liam Brailey (Elon)
- **Clinton**—Manager: Tom Hart—Fellow: Sylveonna Holmes (ECU)
- **Edenton**—Manager: Anne Marie Knighton—Fellow: Saoirse Scott (UNC-CH)
- **Elizabeth City**—Manager: Rich Olson—Fellow: Shom Tiwari (Duke)
- **Elkin**—Manager: Brent Cornelison—Fellow: Danielle Key (Wake Forest)
- **Fairmont**—Manager: Katrina Tatum—Fellow: Ryan Fenton (App State)
- **Kinston**—Manager: Tony Sears—Fellow: Sarah Arney (UNC-CH)
- **Pembroke**—Manager: Tyler Thomas—Fellow: Shayla Douglas (UNC-CH)
- **Robeson County**—Manager: Kellie Blue—Fellow: Camryn Locklear (UNC-Pembroke)
- **Spindale**—Manager: Scott Webber—Fellow: Walker Harrison (UNC-CH)
- **Wilson**—Manager: Grant Goins—Fellow: Dante Pittman (UNC-CH)
- **Washington**—Manager: Jonathan Russell—Fellow: Berekia Davinga (Meredith)
- **Greensboro**—Manager: David Parrish—Fellow: Zaynah Afada (Guilford)
- **North Topsail**—Manager: Bryan Chadwick—Fellow: India Mackinson (UNC-CH)
- **Hendersonville**—Manager: John Connet—Fellow: Drew Finley (Wake Forest)
- **Shallotte**—Administrator: Mimi Gaither—Fellow: Allison Marshall (NC State)

In looking at the list of communities where the Fellows are going, most are small and economically distressed. That was one of our goals. According to Dylan, “I often had many conversations with local government managers who were incredulous that a young person would want to move to their jurisdiction.” One manager said “the Fellow reminded him why he moved to the jurisdiction and he felt energized by the Fellow’s enthusiasm and optimism about public service.” Seven are so-called “Hometown Fellows,” which means they are headed back to the communities where they grew up. Overall, 63% of the Fellows are female and 44% identify as a racial minority. I can’t wait to meet this inspiring group!



It truly has required an impressive team of partners to develop LFNC so quickly. Thanks to Jennifer Cohen (NCLM), Laurel Edwards (NCACC), Grant Goings (NCCCMA President), and Rob Shepherd (NCLM) for countless hours providing feedback about elements of LFNC and for working with local government leaders to secure placements. In addition to her tireless efforts on the placements, special thanks to Jennifer Cohen and NCLM for pledging \$25,000 in gap funding to make the program a reality.



I've been using the expression One School a lot lately, and the work on LFNC is another great example. In our finest tradition, people from different parts of the School stepped up to make a major contribution. Carl Stenberg deserves special praise for working so hard on local government recruitment, along with other parts of the program. Anita Brown Graham was a key person on the



implementation committee. Rebecca Badgett jumped in to work on the summer training, along with Shannon Tufts, Bill Rivenbark, Alycia Inserra, and Tracy Miles.



Shannon Tufts



Carl Stenberg



Rebecca Badgett



Alycia Inserra

Heather Duhart and Cara Robinson worked on setting up an online application so that the Fellows can receive graduate credit, which is an important feature of the program. Mary Beswick worked quickly to make them affiliates of the University, and Lexi Herndon used her wizardry to help us navigate the Office of Sponsored Research and necessary reporting requirements. And it simply would not have happened without the development work by Jen, Dylan, and the development team—including Becky Carter who did lots of complicated scheduling. As always, Sonja and her team provided high-level support from Strategic Communications. Michael Vollmer, Lauren Partin, and others contributed in lots of ways behind the scenes.



Jen Willis



Becky Carter



Sonja Matanovic

There were lots of bumps along the way in developing the program, not surprisingly, and we are committed to learning from our experience. We want to better understand why some local governments did not end up hosting a Fellow, for example, and why some Fellow candidates were not seen as good matches with communities. LFNC truly is a pilot program, which means we are evaluating our experience. Shannon Tufts is working on a pre- and post-Summer Academy test, along with a survey to be administered three months after placement to assess how well the Academy prepared the Fellows. Sarah Mye is working with Dylan on a survey to measure current capacity at local government placements and how the Fellows will increase that capacity. (By the way, Sarah Mye is doing a fabulous job in helping us think about how to use data in measuring impact and in informing lots of decisions at the School.)



Sarah Mye

And there are more people who will contribute in still other ways, including participating in the Summer Academy. One School means a lot of things. It means not worrying about status or where you are in the organization when it comes to getting things done. Everyone has a role to play, and none of it happens without both faculty and professional staff. One School also means that once we have made an institutional commitment, such as LFNC, then all of us will do whatever we can to make it successful. The culture of One School happens because we hire talented and generous people who are dedicated to the School's public service mission.

Kara and Dylan will be in Washington, D.C. with the Fellows next week at Lead for America's Changemaker Summit. They will hear from interesting speakers and get to know one another. The Fellows will learn about the nonpartisan and policy-neutral values of the School. Then the Summer Academy kicks off in Chapel Hill on July 7. Congratulations to everyone for making LFNC a reality!



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