

The Bader Leadership Institute

Developing leaders who will take on the community's challenges

Bader Fellows, a diverse network of Milwaukee-based leaders, aim to achieve three specific outcomes:



Leadership

Connect to one's peers through a shared exploration of leadership principles



Philanthropy

Apply skills in innovation and philanthropy by turning theory into action



Problem-solving

Build the infrastructure necessary to address wicked problems

Leadership Development Program Components

Phase 1

Over the course of nine monthly sessions, Bader Fellows will explore, discuss, and debate a series of leadership topics and their relation to philanthropy and problem-solving.

Phase 2

After the first nine months, participants will meet regularly for a year while they leverage the resources of Bader Philanthropies to solve problems in the community.

Alumni Network

At the end of 21-month program, Bader Fellows will graduate and join our growing alumni network to continue their association with Bader Philanthropies and other leaders.

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Phase 1

Our once per month in-person sessions are designed to be interactive, collaborative, and practical. The sessions will be split into morning and afternoon portions that start with a topic-based curriculum and end with a hands-on project.

Prior to each session, it's crucial that you spend time working on your own and collaborating with a small team of other Bader Fellows. The individual work will include reading several articles, watching a few videos, and participating in a discussion board with your peers, which will take an average of 2-3 hours per month. The teamwork will include the practical application of the curriculum and an innovation framework to bring ideas to life, which could take significant additional time, depending on your appetite. Bader Philanthropies will also host informal events between sessions to keep the cohort connected to each other and to the staff at The Foundation.

The time spent between sessions will lay the foundation for our in-person meetings, fostering the most enriching and comprehensive sessions possible.

Mornings

- In the morning of each session, we'll focus on one of eight topics from our Levels of Leadership curriculum. With the background knowledge from the preparatory work, we will encourage each other to think critically and engage in lively debates. Occasionally, outside speakers will join us to share their expertise and perspectives on the topic at hand.
- You will likely find some of these learning approaches more enjoyable than others. In this cohort experience, we will push ourselves to learn in ways that integrate all sensory modalities. The debate and discussion portion of the morning is especially important as it relates to the themes of philanthropic pluralism and democratic participation. If we want to solve problems in our community, we need to encounter diverse perspectives, challenge each other, and find common cause despite disagreements.

Afternoons

In the afternoon of each session, the cohort will break out into small teams which will work together to implement solutions to a real-world problem. You will be assigned to your teams at the September summit and will stay grouped with your teammates for the duration of the program. Each team will be specifically chosen to bring complementary personalities and diverse perspectives to the work. This is a real-world opportunity to practice the leadership concepts explored in the curriculum and a chance to make a tangible difference in the community.

Phase 2

After the first nine-months, the cohort will continue to meet regularly for a year. There will be opportunities to connect outside of these sessions during pre-scheduled networking and other events, and the projects started during the first phase will continue for another year. During the time between sessions, Bader Fellows will be expected to work in their teams to achieve the outcomes of the institute: 1) connecting to one's peers, 2) applying skills in innovation and philanthropy, and 3) building the infrastructure to address wicked problems.

Levels of Leadership Curriculum

This curriculum explores the following eight principles in the context of leadership, philanthropy, and problem-solving. To engage with these ideas, cohorts of leaders will debate, discuss, and explore the controversies, nuances, and applications of each topic. They will also work in small project teams to solve real problems through the implementation of these principles. After an initial summit, cohorts of leaders will spend one month on each of the following topics:



Leadership

A good leader is Proactive. The simplest definition of a leader is someone who moves first or goes forth on their own. During this month, we will explore questions like, “Does a leader need followers? Can we act without responding to something? Is everyone a leader?”



Reciprocity

A good leader is Philanthropic. Good leaders cultivate networks and spaces that transcend market transactions. During this month, we will explore questions like, “What do we owe each other? Can a ‘pure gift’ exist without expectations? How does personhood emerge?”



Value

A good leader is Principled. We all have the same worth, and good leadership uses this ideal as the foundation of a shared morality. During this month, we will explore questions like, “What happens when values are in conflict? Where does economic value come from?”



Vision

A good leader is Intentional. Good leadership requires the ability to interact with unrealized possibilities and manifest them into reality. During this month, we will explore questions like, “Does the present matter more than the future? Can we truly share our vision?”



Power

A good leader is Influential. Despite their dangers, authority, dominance, and hierarchies are essential to good leadership. During this month, we will explore questions like, “Does power always corrupt? Should we create more equitable systems of control?”



Balance

A good leader is Adaptable. Parenthood is the original form of leadership, and good leaders realize the unity in dualities like ‘maternal and paternal.’ During this month, we will explore questions like, “Can we transcend binaries? Is balance actually attainable?”



Culture

A good leader is Receptive. Leaders must be attuned to the unique identities of groups if they want to lead well. During this month, we will explore questions like, “Are some cultures inferior to others? What is the point of diversity? What are the limits of inclusion?”



Actualization

A good leader is Effective. Even the most honest, caring, visionary leader isn’t a good leader if they don’t get things done. During this month, we will explore questions like, “Can we really solve societal problems? Is the scientific method applicable to the civil sector?”