Leaders in Equitable Evaluation and Diversity

MENTOR OVERVIEW

What is LEEAD?

Leaders in Equitable Evaluation and Diversity (LEEAD) is a program of the Expanding the Bench™ (ETB) Initiative led by Change Matrix, and funded by a generous group of ETB Funding Partners. ETB was created to increase diversity in the evaluation and research fields. The inclusion of evaluators from from historically marginalized and under-supported groups increases the likelihood of methods, analyses, and interpretation benefiting the communities they serve.

LEEAD is an evaluation training program for early-career scholars from historically marginalized and under-supported groups designed to develop a pipeline of diverse leaders in culturally responsive and equitable evaluation (CREE) who will advance the field of evaluation. Since the Program began in the fall of 2015, 35 Scholars have completed the LEEAD program. Applicants must be able to commit to a rigorous 12-month training program to develop their evaluation competencies through the following components:

- Mentoring – LEEAD Scholars are matched with an evaluation expert who serves as a Mentor throughout the Program.
- Online curriculum – This includes completion of an online evaluation curriculum that covers core competencies with a focus on CREE through American University.
- Practicum – After completion of the online curriculum, Scholars have the opportunity to apply their knowledge through a paid evaluation project with a host site.

Who are LEEAD Mentors?

LEEAD Mentors are experts in the field of evaluation with 15+ years of experience. We seek diverse evaluators and allies who are committed to the professional development of LEEAD Scholars. This mode of mentoring is encouraged to approximate a close professional relationship, like that of an expert-protégé model.

Are you interested in shaping the professional development of evaluators from historically marginalized and under-supported groups? Are you dedicated to diversifying the evaluation pipeline?

If so, consider serving as a Mentor for the Leaders in Equitable Evaluation and Diversity (LEEAD) program.
Why Serve as a LEEAD Mentor?

To support LEEAD Scholars’ transition from accomplished researchers to successful evaluators committed to integrating a CREE approach, LEEAD provides Scholars with training and mentoring throughout the program. The mentoring component is central to the LEEAD model with most Scholars rating the relationship with their Mentor as valuable to their experience. Many Mentors have had positive experiences and have served as mentors for both cohorts.

Both Scholars and Mentors complete an assessment, which is used to match Mentors with Scholars. The matching process is based on a number of factors including personal background, research interests, mentoring needs and approach, work settings, and geographic location. One-to-one matches are made based on opportunities for strong connections. Thus, Mentors are selected based on the cohort’s overall characteristics and career interests.

Scholars receive help from their Mentors in a variety of areas, including opportunities for career development and advancement in the evaluation field, navigating the field of evaluation, culturally responsive evaluation, and building a network. Mentors specifically offer support during the completion of the online curriculum and placement in the practicum with an evaluation firm. This could involve helping them negotiate their contract, defining the scope of work, or providing guidance on completion of evaluation activities. Mentors are given a modest honorarium for their time and commitment and travel expenses are covered to attend required in-person meetings.

What are the Expectations for LEEAD Mentors?

We aim to surround each Scholar with a vibrant and accessible network in order to provide adequate opportunities to develop valuable relationships that can further their career. In addition to providing each other with peer support, the program also wants LEEAD Scholars to cultivate solid relationships with their Mentors.

Participation in LEEAD requires a commitment to the following:

- Meet regularly with Scholars throughout the Program. Suggested frequency is a weekly meeting either in-person or virtually through such mediums as Skype
- Provide guidance and feedback on work completed as part of practicum host site experience
- Attend two in-person meetings--a kick-off meeting in the fall of 2021 and a culmination event to coincide with the 2022 American Evaluation Association conference
- Communicate openly about areas of strength and weakness in relation to what can be offered to the Scholar
- Bolster networking skills and connections in the evaluation field
- Advise in professional matters, such as preparing manuscripts or seeking evaluation contracts
- Participate in regular check-ins with the ETB Team to provide feedback on their experience
- Complete evaluation surveys to provide feedback on the LEEAD model and experience
How Can I Participate?
We begin outreach to potential Mentors in the Spring. Be sure to subscribe to the ETB newsletter, Bench (Re)Marks to keep informed of outreach activities.

Timeline of LEEAD 2019-2020 Activities Related to Mentors

Scholar applications due 5/1
Scholars selected 6/17 - 6/28
Mentor Recruitment 5/1 - 6/28
Mentor assessments due 6/28

Mentors are matched with Scholars 7/1-7/31
Ongoing mentorship 7/31/19 - 10/31/20*

Scholars complete practicum experiences spring to fall 2020
LEEAD Symposium in Baltimore, MD 9/24 - 9/25

~9/1 - 12/31
Mentor assessments due 6/28

LeeAD Culmination event @ AEA 2020 in Portland, OR 10/26 - 10/31

*While not required, many LEEAD-matched mentor-protégé relationships have lasted past the LEEAD program culmination

Have Questions About Becoming a Mentor?
If you have questions about serving as a LEEAD Mentor, you can send questions to team@expandingthebench.org or phone Sandra Silva, LEEAD Project Director at 571-274-1797.