



**Louisiana Early Leaders Academy
Application Guide
Year 6: 2024 - 2025**

Join the Louisiana Early Leaders Academy!

The work of an early learning leader is complex, demanding, and critically important. Now more than ever, early learning leaders need new skills and thought partners to address challenges and maximize their positive impact on the lives of children and families. If you run a Type III center and are looking for an opportunity to meet and learn alongside Louisiana's finest early leaders, this ten-month executive-level Academy is for you.

The Louisiana Early Leaders Academy (LELA) is geared toward enhancing your leadership and management skills to improve quality in your center(s). The Academy offers a community of peer leaders and is focused on building instructional leadership to best support young learners to achieve their full potential in school and in life. LELA achieves this through online and in-person learning sessions, 1:1 leadership coaching and small group communities of practice.

For cohort 6, directors from all parishes are eligible to apply for and participate in the Louisiana Early Leaders Academy.



The Louisiana Early Leaders Academy Guide is designed to help you answer these questions & more. Read on to learn more about:

- The schedule for online and in-person LELA meetings.
- Frequently asked questions and answers.
- The application checklist and selection timeline.
- Application questions.
- The scoring process for the application and interview.

WHAT IS THE LOUISIANA EARLY LEADERS ACADEMY?

The Louisiana Early Leaders Academy is a competitive Fellowship program designed to build the instructional leadership skills of directors of Type III centers. Fellows collaborate and learn from and with their peers through online and in-person learning sessions, coaching, and meetings with their peers in a small group community of practice sessions that we call Home Team meetings. By completing the fellowship, leaders will develop new skills, networks, and motivation for the important work ahead. Additionally, they will implement new practices in their centers that will transform adult relationships and the quality of instruction that children experience every day.

WHAT IS A FELLOWSHIP?

A fellowship is designed for leaders who are ready to join a community of colleagues that will challenge and support them to grow in new ways. A “fellow,” as the Louisiana Early Leadership Academy participant is called, has a growth mindset, views themselves as a lifelong learner, and recognizes that every person has something to learn and something to teach. The fellowship provides opportunities for a group of lifelong learners to engage in new approaches to learning and sharpen their skills.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS?

Early learning center directors pursue an ambitious vision for the children in their programs. However, the everyday tasks of a center can sometimes distract leaders from their bold vision. Time management, teacher retention, and budgeting are necessary and sometimes overwhelming tasks. These tasks can overshadow parts of your leadership that have the potential to make a huge difference in the lives of children. LELA helps leaders refocus on their vision, while providing them with the knowledge and tools to guide quality instruction in their centers. This means building skills to guide teachers’ growth and improvement through interactions with children in their classrooms.

HOW DO I BENEFIT FROM LELA?

As an early learning leader, you will receive leadership training that is essential for driving positive change in your center, community, the state and nation. Content is designed to support directors to improve teacher job satisfaction, program operations, and the quality of teacher-child interactions. Individualized coaching will be provided to directors on related leadership and management goals.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

LDOE will select thirty directors of Type III centers who are ready to improve instructional leadership in their centers, and increase their influence in the early childhood field across the state and country. Participants will come from a wide variety of life experiences, backgrounds, and experience levels in early childhood education. They will share a sense of purpose, vision of excellence for children, and a commitment to their own professional and personal growth.



HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ACADEMY?

- Join LDOE for one of these optional Q&A sessions about LELA and your LELA application. Office hours will be held between June 5 - June 26, 2024.
 - [All office hours will be virtual and accessible through this link:](#)
 - Meeting URL:
<https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/4418921159?pwd=amlVRHB4Qm5KSzR4bERlWWFBMnUxdz09&omn=97450878216>
 - Meeting ID: 441 892 1159
 - Passcode: Educate24
 - Wednesday, June 5, 2024 between 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
 - Monday, June 10, 2024 between 10:00 am - 11:00 am
 - Wednesday, June 12, 2024 between 10:00 am - 11:00 am
 - Tuesday, June 18, 2024 between 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
 - Monday, June 24, 2024 between 10:00 am - 11:00 am
 - Wednesday, June 26, 2024 between 10:00 am - 11:00 am
- Read the Early Childhood Connections newsletter. [Subscribe here.](#)
- Please contact Shallan.Jones@la.gov , Monica Yudron (myudron@anlar.com), or Dina Shehata (dshehata@anlar.com) with any questions about LELA.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS?

The LELA program is designed to meet early learning leaders where they are. LELA is a hybrid academy with nine virtual sessions and two in-person meetings. The schedule can be found below. Both in-person meetings will be in Baton Rouge, LA.

All other LELA activities including live learning sessions, coaching, and home team meetings will be virtual. Fellows are expected to:

- Engage in all 9 live, virtual learning sessions—one in each of the following months: August 2024, September 2024, October 2024, November 2024, December 2024, January 2025, February 2025, March 2025, and April 2025.
- Attend and engage in 2 in-person sessions - August 27 - 28, 2024 and May 8 - May 9, 2025.
- Participate in all monthly Home Team calls.
- Participate in monthly 1:1 coaching.
- Complete all required monthly assignments.

To receive the full benefits of the program, we strongly suggest that participants evaluate their ability to engage in roughly 4.5 hours of Academy work per month (excluding the months with in-person sessions).

LELA COHORT 6: OVERVIEW

Application and Selection Schedule

- May 30, 2024: Application opens.
- June 5 - June 26, 2024: LDOE LELA Application Office Hours
 - Join LDOE for one of these optional Q&A sessions about LELA and your LELA application. [All office hours will be virtual and accessible through this link:](#)
 - Meeting URL:
<https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/4418921159?pwd=amlVRHB4Qm5KSzR4bERlWWFBMnUxdz09&omn=97450878216>
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 - Tuesday, June 18, 2024 between 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
 - Monday, June 24, 2024 between 10:00 am - 11:00 am

- Wednesday, June 26, 2024 between 10:00 am - 11:00 am
- June 24, 2024: All applications must be submitted by 11:59 pm.
- June 24, 2024: All recommendations must be submitted by 11:59 pm.
- July 29, 2024: Year 6 Cohort Announced.

Application Checklist

- Using the schedule below, you have confirmed your ability to fully commit and participate in the Academy.
- Using the application questions listed below, you have prepared your responses before opening the online application form.
- You have reached out to a trusted colleague to provide you with a recommendation.
- You have submitted your application responses to the online application form.

Academy Schedule

July 29 - August 20, 2024: Coaches will conduct “Get to Know You” Interviews with Year 6 Cohort members. We use information from these interviews to create Home Teams and make adjustments to our curriculum and coaching support.

There will be in-person training sessions on August 27 - 28, 2024 in Baton Rouge and May 8 - 9, 2025 in Baton Rouge. All travel is the responsibility of the fellow.

Module	Live Session Date and Time & Time Commitment
Orientation to LELA	Wednesday, August 21, 2024 <u>Virtual:</u> 11:30 pm - 1:00 pm CST (1.5 hours)
Module 1: Preparing for Success in LELA and Beyond & Key Skills and Mindsets for Instructional Leaders	Tuesday, August 27, 2024 - Wednesday, August 28, 2024 <u>In-person:</u> 9:30 am - 4:00 pm CST (Tuesday and Wednesday) (21.5 hours including the 1:1 coaching session, needs assessment interview, in-person sessions, online work, and home team meeting)
Module 2: High Leverage Leadership and Instructional Leadership	Wednesday, September 25, 2024 <u>Virtual:</u> 11:30 am - 1:00 pm CST (4.5 hours including the 1:1 coaching session, online work, live session, and home team meeting)
Module 3: Time Management and Communication for Continuous Improvement	Wednesday, October 23, 2024 <u>Virtual:</u> 11:30 am - 1:00 pm CST (4.5 hours including the 1:1 coaching session, online work, live session, and home team meeting)
Module 4: Core Knowledge for Instructional Leaders - Instructional Frameworks, Curriculum Implementation, and High Quality Practices - Part 1	Wednesday, November 20, 2024 <u>Virtual:</u> 11:30 am - 1:00 pm CST (4.5 hours including the 1:1 coaching session, online work, live session, and home team meeting)
Module 5: Core Knowledge for Instructional Leaders - Instructional Frameworks, Curriculum Implementation, and High Quality Practices - Part 2	Wednesday, December 18, 2024 <u>Virtual:</u> 11:30 am - 1:00 pm CST (4.5 hours including the 1:1 coaching session, online work, live session, and home team meeting)
Module 6: Growing Leadership in Your Team with Delegation and Distributed Leadership	Wednesday, January 29, 2025 <u>Virtual:</u> 11:30 am - 1:00 pm CST (4.5 hours including the 1:1 coaching session, online work, live session, and home team meeting)

Module 7: Designing, Facilitating or Finding High Quality Professional Development	Wednesday, February 26, 2025 <u>Virtual:</u> 11:30 am - 1:00 pm CST (4.5 hours including the 1:1 coaching session, online work, live session, and home team meeting)
Module 8: Community Engagement and Partnerships	Wednesday, March 26, 2025 <u>Virtual:</u> 11:30 am - 1:00 pm CST (4.5 hours including the 1:1 coaching session, online work, live session, and home team meeting)
Module 9: Building Effective Partnerships with Families	Wednesday, April 23, 2025 <u>Virtual:</u> 11:30 am - 1:00 pm CST (4.5 hours including the 1:1 coaching session, online work, live session, and home team meeting)
Module 10: Building Equity and Leadership in Your Center & Graduation	Thursday, May 8 - Friday, May 9, 2025 <u>In-person:</u> 9:30 am - 4:00 pm CST (Thursday and Friday) (16 hours including the 1:1 coaching session, in-person sessions, and home team meeting)

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

HOW DO I KNOW LELA WILL ADDRESS MY CHALLENGES?

The first two tasks that each fellow will complete with their coach will drive planning for the LELA experience. A leadership coach will work with each fellow to complete a *Get to Know You* interview and plan for and conduct a survey of each fellow's teaching staff. Information from each activity will be used to guide action planning for the fellowship program.

WHAT DO PAST FELLOWS SAY ABOUT LELA ?

- In general, LELA fellows report learning a great deal from the Academy and from time with their peers to address challenges of their work.
- From an anonymous survey: "LELA is really helping me to identify all of the areas that I need to address or improve. So thanks for developing this, it [has] really gotten me evaluating my leadership."
- From an anonymous survey: "Every time the fellows meet whether in-person or for an online session, I enjoy hearing from people who are passionate about early childhood education. I also appreciate the opportunity to network with other leaders in my field and share useful tools for running our centers."

- From an anonymous survey: “As a result of participating in LELA, I have developed a time management system for my center and myself. I am also transitioning into advocacy in early childcare within my community.”
- 100% of participating fellows rate the content and resources as helpful.
- 91% of participating fellows rate the LELA faculty as very responsive and helpful.

WHAT MAKES THE LOUISIANA EARLY LEADERS ACADEMY SPECIAL?

Directors are used to addressing complex challenges alone. LELA provides opportunities to work with peers who understand and who can provide new approaches.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM A STRONG CANDIDATE FOR LELA?

If you can answer “yes” to the questions below, you should consider applying for LELA.

- Is the majority of your role administrative (director, assistant director, with no regular teaching responsibilities) in a Type III early learning center?
- Are you interested in expanding your leadership role in your center, community, state, and nation?
- Do you supervise teachers as part of your typical responsibilities?

I AM A CENTER OWNER, AND I HAVE A DIRECTOR WHO RUNS THE PROGRAM. WHICH ONE OF US SHOULD APPLY?

The person who is best-suited for the fellowship program is one who is in your center every day, and responsible for guiding teachers. Two individuals from a center can apply, but both must be available at the same time to attend virtual and in-person sessions.

HOW ARE PARTICIPANTS SELECTED FOR THE EARLY LEADERS ACADEMY?

Interested applicants will participate in a competitive selection process to gain a spot in the Academy. The online application is open now and due June 24, 2024.

Applications will only be accepted online via the Google Form. No paper applications will be accepted. This guide lists the online application questions. All finalists will be notified of the status of their application by July 29, 2024.

CONSIDERING APPLYING TO LELA?

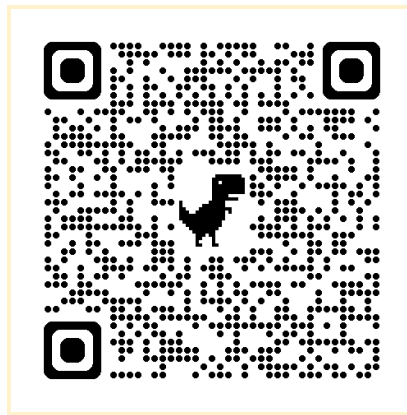
Check out this [short commercial](#) to hear from Year One fellows about the benefits of the program.

Applying Is Easy!

Ask a Colleague for a Recommendation

Ask a trusted colleague for a professional recommendation. Your colleague will submit a [short recommendation letter using this link](#).

Recommendation Form link: <https://forms.gle/MoEnhEnKW64rHeso6>



Recommendation Form Questions

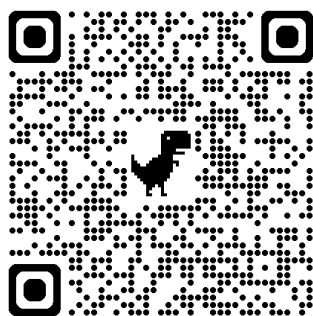
1. Why is your colleague a good candidate for the Louisiana Early Leaders Academy?
2. What is your colleague's biggest strength?
3. What is an area of improvement for your colleague?

Complete the Online Application

Complete the [online application](#)* to be considered for a place in the Year 6 cohort. The online application is a Google form and easy to access and use.

- PLEASE NOTE THAT WE ARE ONLY ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS ONLINE*.
- Please do not email or submit hard copies of your application as they will not be considered.

Application Link: <https://forms.gle/PCMYmppLXL3hEndx7>



APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Please use this to prepare for the online application.

Please allow 45-60 minutes to complete a thoughtful and thorough application.

This application is the first step in the competitive process of applying to be a Louisiana Early Leaders Academy fellow. We want to understand what fuels your leadership and drives your interest in supercharging your leadership skills. Please be sure to take your time to answer the essay questions as incomplete responses will not be considered. Your responses will determine if you are invited to advance to the interview stage.

1. Please list the name of the parish (or parishes if you have more than one center) in which your center is located.
2. What is your full name?
3. Please enter your preferred email address for all future correspondence.
4. Cell Phone Number
5. Home Address (Please be sure to include the town and zip code.)
6. What is the best way to reach you during the day?
 - a. Email
 - b. Phone Call
 - c. Text Message
7. What is your gender?

- a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Non-binary
 - d. Gender nonconforming
8. Do you identify as a person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
9. Please select your race from the list of options below.
- a. White
 - b. Black or African American
 - c. Asian American
 - d. Other
10. Which category below includes your age?
- a. 17 or younger
 - b. 18 - 20
 - c. 21 - 29
 - d. 30 - 39
 - e. 40 - 49
 - f. 50 - 59
 - g. 60 or older
11. Please select the option that best describes you.
- a. This is my first time applying for the Louisiana Early Leaders Academy.
 - b. I have applied to LELA before but was not accepted into the program.
 - c. I was previously accepted into LELA but could not participate or complete the Academy.
12. Please select the role that best describes you.
- a. Director and owner
 - b. Director, not owner

- c. Assistant director
 - d. Other
13. How many years have you worked in early childhood education as a director or assistant director?
 14. How many total years of experience do you have in the early childhood education field (including being a director and teacher)?
 15. In 3 - 5 sentences, tell us your vision for early childhood education and care.
 16. In 3 - 5 sentences, describe what inspired you to lead an early learning center.
 17. In 3-5 sentences, what do you hope families say about your center?
 18. In 3-5 sentences, what do you hope to learn from participating in LELA?
 19. Please describe one improvement at your center you would like to complete in the next year.
 20. In 3-5 sentences, why is right now the time in your life to participate in LELA?
 21. We provide individualized support for LELA fellows. Your response to this question will help us determine how to best support you if you join the LELA Cohort 6.

Think of a time when you quit something. What led you to quit? What support would have prevented you from quitting?
 22. Who on your team will cover for you when you attend LELA events (virtual and in-person training sessions, coaching sessions, and Home Team meetings)?
 23. What comments and questions do you have?
 24. How many centers do you direct?
 25. What is the name of your center or centers?
 26. What is the address of your primary center? (Please make sure you include the town and zip code.)
 27. In what parish is your center located?
 28. Is at least one of your centers a Type III center? The Louisiana Early Leaders Academy is for directors or administrators of Type III centers only.
 29. Do you spend most of your time working on site at a Type III center?

30. How many employees do you have at all of your centers?
31. How many children are served in your center(s)?
32. Do children enrolled in your center receive public funding of any kind for their early care and education?
33. Do children enrolled in your center receive CCAP funding for their early care and education?
34. How many children enrolled in your center receive CCAP funding for their early care and education? If none, please enter N/A.
35. Do children enrolled in your center receive LA 4 funding for their early care and education?
36. How many children enrolled in your center receive LA 4 funding for their early care and education? If none, please enter N/A.
37. Do children enrolled in your center receive Early Head Start (EHS) funding for their early care and education?
38. How many children enrolled in your center receive EHS funding for their early care and education? If none, please enter N/A.
39. Do children enrolled in your center receive Head Start (HS) funding for their early care and education?
40. How many children enrolled in your center receive HS funding for their early care and education? If none, please enter N/A.
41. Do children enrolled in your center receive Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development Program (NSECD) funding for their early care and education?
42. How many children enrolled in your center receive NSECD funding for their early care and education? If none, please enter N/A.
43. Do you have your Early Childhood Ancillary Certificate (ECAC)?
44. Have you received any kind of Directors Credential (National Administrators Credential [NAC] or similar)?
45. If you have received any kind of Directors Credential (National Administrators Credential [NAC] or similar), please list which ones. If you have not, please enter N/A.

46. Are you a Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) reliable observer who is certified to rate teacher-child interactions?
47. Are you a member of any early childhood organizations or councils? If so, which one(s)?
48. Please list the professional development and training that you have completed in the last 12 months.
49. What is your highest level of formal education?
50. Do you have any other formal or informal training that you would like to describe? Please do so below.
51. In order to be eligible for LELA, you are required to ask a colleague to submit a professional recommendation. Have you asked a trusted colleague to submit a recommendation on your behalf at this website?

<https://forms.gle/5wkoVTfiyuLaykkg6>

If not, please do so now.

EARLY LEADERS ACADEMY: SELECTION RUBRIC

APPLICANT'S NAME: _____ CENTER: _____

CRITERIA FOR APPLICANT	APPLICATION	INTERVIEW	NOTES
Vision. The applicant is committed to an ambitious vision for the children, families, and teachers from their center and community	___/20	___/20	
Readiness. The applicant is interested in implementing organizational change and clearly articulates areas of improvement.	___/5	___/5	
Effort. The application and interview reflect thoughtful, personal responses.	___/5	___/5	
TOTAL			

APPLICANT DASHBOARD:

	SERVICE	RELIABILITY	CERTIFICATES
	___ # Children served ___ # Publicly funded ___ % Publicly served	Current CLASS reliability areas: ___ Infant ___ Toddler ___ Pre-K	___ ECAC ___ NAC ___ Other: _____
NOTES:			