

Center for Equity, Effectiveness and Efficiency

Learning to Operationalize and Realize Equity (LORE)

2026-2027 Program Booklet



Center for Equity, Effectiveness and Efficiency

LORE

2026–2027 Cohort Launch



ABOUT LORE

LORE is an 8-month executive certificate program focused on supporting executive leaders in public institutions to build and articulate the business and governance case for implementing equity-centered systems change. Offered by the Center for Equity, Effectiveness, and Efficiency (C3E) and co-designed with the Illinois City/County Management Association, the program runs across two four-month sessions. The fall session focuses on communication and decision-making processes, while the spring session focuses on project implementation and process change. A core component of the program is the development of a pilot project based on an existing challenge or opportunity within participating organizations. These projects are used to apply concepts from the curriculum and guide a structured process change analysis.

WHAT IS EQUITY-CENTERED SYSTEMS CHANGE?

Equity-centered systems change involves recognizing the unequal impacts of outdated, inefficient, or ineffective local government systems on staff and the communities they are meant to serve. This approach is grounded in an understanding that local government leaders today are tasked with leading organizations which still carry the legacies of policies and practices which were designed to exclude, and that the consequences of these inherited organizational structures impact not only the efficiency and effectiveness of public services and programs, but also the public's perception and trust in government. Change happens when leaders engage in deliberately redesigning the institutional conditions that produce persistent challenges and inequitable outcomes so that fairness and inclusion become the standard by which your organization's performance is measured.

C3E's approach to equity-centered systems change uses small-scale, iterative pilot projects to test innovative solutions to persistent organizational challenges before scaling them across an institution. It is grounded in the belief that those closest to a problem (i.e. frontline staff, middle managers, and community members) often hold the most important knowledge about what is and isn't working. By testing and learning in real time, organizations build both the evidence and the internal capacity needed to sustain meaningful change over time.

Program Details



WHO SHOULD APPLY?

Organizations must send a minimum of two participants:

- One executive- or senior-level leader (City Manager, County Administrator, Assistant City Manager, Department Head, etc.)
- One or more staff directly involved in pilot project implementation

Ideal candidates are leaders ready to:

- Address a persistent internal challenge
- Build internal capacity for equity-centered systems change

WHAT YOUR TEAM GAINS

- 12 hours of in-person instruction per semester at NIU Naperville Campus
- Access to an online learning platform for coursework, peer learning, and coaching between sessions
- A real pilot project designed and tested during the program
- A certificate upon completion
- Peer network of public sector leaders across the region

PROGRAM DATES & TIME COMMITMENT

In-Person Session Schedule
9am–12pm at NIU Naperville Campus

- **Fall 2026:** Sept 2, Oct 7, Nov 4, Dec 2
- **Spring 2027:** Feb 3, Mar 3, Apr 7, May 5

Monthly Time Commitment

- Approximately 4–5 hours per month: One 3-hour, in-person monthly session + 1–2 hrs per month of online coursework, readings, and project work

COST & FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Participants	Per Semester	Full Program	With ~10% Discount*
Participant 1 (required)	\$840	\$1,680	\$1,500
Participant 2 (required)	\$840	\$1,680	\$1,500
Participant 3 (optional)	\$720	\$1,440	\$1,300
Participant 4 (optional)	\$720	\$1,440	\$1,300

* ~10% discount applied when full program cost is paid by September 1.

Scholarships are available for members of ILCMA and IGFOA (max. 2 per organization). Sliding scale pricing and payment plans are also available for organizations facing financial barriers. For more information, contact Katie Friedman at kfriedman@c3elocalgov.org.

HOW TO APPLY

Submit your application by Friday, July 31, 2026 (June 30 for scholarship consideration)

For more information: c3elocalgov.org/lore | Questions: kfriedman@c3elocalgov.org

Additional Information





ABOUT C3E

Founded in 2023 by Dr. Kathleen Yang-Clayton, the Center for Equity, Effectiveness and Efficiency (C3E) is a pioneering force in public sector transformation dedicated to embedding equity as a foundational principle of governance.

C3E reimagines what learning and organizational transformation can look like for leaders and staff in the institutions that most directly impact communities. Since its founding, the center has helped local government leaders drive meaningful change through a research-based approach to creating real, sustainable transformation.

Traditional training on diversity, equity, and inclusion raised awareness but has failed to address deeper structural barriers. C3E was built to give forward-thinking leaders a clear roadmap for lasting change.

LEARN MORE & FOLLOW OUR WORK:

-  c3elocalgov.org
-  kfriedman@c3elocalgov.org
-  linkedin.com/company/c3elocalgov
-  233 S Wacker Dr Suite 4400, Chicago, IL 60606

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Kathleen Yang-Clayton

Founder & President, Center for Equity, Effectiveness, and Efficiency in Local Government (C3E)

Senior Visiting Scholar & Civic Innovation Fellow, DePaul University's Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development



Dr. Yang-Clayton is an applied scholar of organizational change and performance management in the public sector. Her work focuses on the operationalization of equity practices inside large public organizations with the aim of increasing public trust in government and improving government performance for all. She has published scholarly and professional articles on organizational change and partnered with over 20 local government entities to improve performance within an equity framework.

Prior to founding C3E, Dr. Yang-Clayton served as a Research Fellow at the Great Cities Institute and taught at the University of Chicago and UIC. She is currently a Senior Visiting Scholar and Civic Innovation Fellow at DePaul University's Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development.

OUR PARTNERS

Illinois City/County Management Association (ILCMA)

ILCMA is the professional home for city and county managers across Illinois, dedicated to supporting excellence in local government management and public service. ILCMA has been a founding partner of LORE since the program's first launch in 2022, helping shape the curriculum to meet the real-time needs of city and county managers. Their ongoing partnership includes outreach and recruitment support, and professional development collaboration.



Illinois Government Finance Officers Association (IGFOA)

IGFOA supports excellence in public finance across Illinois, helping finance professionals strengthen fiscal stewardship, resource allocation, and organizational performance. C3E invited IGFOA into partnership for the 2026 relaunch of LORE in recognition that finance professionals play a central role in shaping the operational systems that equity-centered change depends on. IGFOA's partnership brings their membership into the LORE community and helps ensure the program's content is relevant to the full range of leaders driving change inside local government.

