

LORE Curriculum

LORE runs in monthly cycles across two phases. Each in-person session opens with a framing session led by Dr. Yang-Clayton. The framing session sets the shared analytical ground for the full cohort, so every participant works from the same foundation and the same vocabulary. The cohort then divides into two tracks.

This document outlines the parallel work of the two tracks across each cycle of the LORE program. The Governance and Leadership track serves city managers and executive leaders. The Operational Strategy track serves staff who carry out program and project implementation. Both advance the same capstone: a pilot project that participants design and test inside their own organization. Each cycle also notes its alignment to the ICMA Practices for Effective Local Government Leadership and the professional-development hours it contributes toward the ICMA Credentialed Manager commitment.

Cycle 1 • Understanding Equity in the Context of Public Institutions

Governance & Leadership	Operational Strategy
Leaders examine how equity connects to organizational performance, treated as a measure of whether systems work for everyone they are meant to serve. The cycle introduces the REDI framework and asks leaders to define what equity leadership looks like in their specific role and organization.	Implementers explore what equity means in the daily work of local government: who benefits from current systems, who does not, and why that shapes how work gets done. Teams establish shared norms and a working definition of equity that anchors the pilot project.
ICMA alignment: Equity and Inclusion; Strategic Leadership; Community and Resident Service · ~4.5 documentable PD hours toward the 40-hour annual commitment	

Cycle 2 • Emotional Intelligence in Change Work

Governance & Leadership	Operational Strategy
Leaders use empathy and inquiry as instruments of management, deliberate strategies for understanding what is actually happening inside their organizations. The cycle focuses on listening across power differences and using what you hear to inform decisions.	Implementers conduct empathy interviews with staff and stakeholders, learning to ask the questions that surface the real barriers to change. Teams use what they find to test their assumptions about the problem the pilot project addresses.
ICMA alignment: Community Engagement; Equity and Inclusion; Staff Effectiveness; Communication and Information Sharing · ~4.5 documentable PD hours toward the 40-hour annual commitment	

Cycle 3 • Policy and Root Cause Analysis

Governance & Leadership	Operational Strategy
Leaders apply an equity lens to an existing departmental policy, examining what the policy produces: who it benefits, who it burdens, and whether those outcomes are intended. The cycle builds the skill of separating surface problems from the systemic conditions that produce them.	Implementers conduct a structured equity impact analysis on a real policy, using root cause tools to trace persistent problems to their source. Teams identify which parts of their pilot challenge are policy-driven and which are practice-driven.
ICMA alignment: Equity and Inclusion; Strategic Leadership; Policy Facilitation and Implementation · ~4.5 documentable PD hours toward the 40-hour annual commitment	

Cycle 4 • Project Management and Planning for Impact

Governance & Leadership	Operational Strategy
Leaders connect planning frameworks to equity outcomes, using improvement cycles and a structured accountability matrix to build change efforts that are measurable and sustainable. The cycle focuses on building the internal case for a pilot and communicating it to decision-makers.	Implementers apply planning frameworks directly to their pilots, developing an action plan with defined roles, timelines, and success indicators. Teams leave with a working draft of the pilot plan.
ICMA alignment: Equity and Inclusion; Strategic Leadership; Strategic Planning; Financial Management and Budgeting; HR Management and Workforce Engagement · ~4.5 documentable PD hours toward the 40-hour annual commitment	

Cycle 5 • Applied Research and Cross-Functional Collaboration

Governance & Leadership	Operational Strategy
Leaders examine how silos and power dynamics shape what gets implemented. The cycle focuses on building the internal partnerships an equity initiative requires, including how to make the case across departments and bring skeptical colleagues along.	Implementers practice co-design facilitation, bringing together staff from different functions to work a shared problem. Teams map the relationships the pilot depends on and identify where they need to build buy-in.
ICMA alignment: Equity and Inclusion; Staff Effectiveness; Strategic Leadership; Policy Facilitation and Implementation; Communication and Information Sharing · ~4.5 documentable PD hours toward the 40-hour annual commitment	

Cycle 6 • Process Mapping and Measuring Impact

Governance & Leadership	Operational Strategy
Leaders connect process improvement to equity and efficiency outcomes, learning to find where existing organizational assets can support change without new resources. The cycle introduces the Five Whys as a tool for understanding why processes produce the results they do.	Implementers map the processes tied to their pilot, identifying where breakdowns occur and what a more equitable process would look like. Teams develop a measurement approach for tracking whether the pilot is producing the intended change.
ICMA alignment: Equity and Inclusion; Strategic Planning; Service Delivery; HR Management and Workforce Engagement · ~4.5 documentable PD hours toward the 40-hour annual commitment	

Cycle 7 • Case Simulations and Strategic Communications

Governance & Leadership	Operational Strategy
Leaders practice making the case for equity-driven change to the audiences most likely to resist it: elected officials, skeptical department heads, and community members with competing concerns. Simulations build the language and the composure to navigate high-stakes conversations without losing the substance.	Implementers present pilot findings in structured simulations, learning to communicate data and process change to non-technical audiences. Teams refine how they tell the story of the work and field hard questions.
ICMA alignment: Equity and Inclusion; Strategic Leadership; Community Engagement; Policy Facilitation and Implementation; Communication and Information Sharing · ~4.5 documentable PD hours toward the 40-hour annual commitment	

Cycle 8 • Iteration and Scaling What Works

Governance & Leadership	Operational Strategy
Leaders develop a plan for embedding what worked into governance structures, budget processes, and decision-making, and for communicating that trajectory to elected officials and the public.	Implementers identify what the pilot produced, what they would change, and what the work needs to continue beyond the program. Teams develop a sustainability plan and document lessons learned in a form the organization can use.
ICMA alignment: Equity and Inclusion; Strategic Leadership; Strategic Planning; Community and Resident Service · ~4.5 documentable PD hours toward the 40-hour annual commitment	

Across the eight cycles, LORE delivers 24 hours of in-person instruction and 8 virtual coaching sessions, totaling 36 documentable professional-development hours aligned to the ICMA Credentialed Manager 40-hour annual commitment.

ICMA Competency Alignment: In-Depth

LORE directly addresses 11 of ICMA's 14 core competencies. The table below describes what each competency covers and how specific LORE cycles build toward it. Competencies 3 (Equity and Inclusion) and 6 (Strategic Leadership) run as program-wide threads across all eight cycles. All credits are self-reported.

#	Competency	What ICMA Says It Means	How LORE Builds This Competency
1	Personal and Professional Integrity	Fostering ethical behavior through exemplary actions, ensuring decision-making reflects honesty and openness, holding staff accountable, and communicating ethical standards throughout the organization.	<i>Not directly addressed by this curriculum. Ethical practice is modeled throughout LORE's facilitation and peer coaching structures but is not a named learning objective in any cycle.</i>
2	Community Engagement	Building relationships with elected and appointed officials, ensuring robust public outreach, advocating for diverse viewpoints in the policy-making process, and employing a range of engagement and conflict resolution methods.	Cycles 2 and 7 directly build community engagement skills. In Cycle 2, participants practice empathy-based inquiry by learning to listen across power differences and surface perspectives typically excluded from decision-making. In Cycle 7, participants practice stakeholder mapping and strategic communication with elected officials and community members through role-play simulations.
3	Equity and Inclusion	Proactively bringing traditionally excluded individuals into processes and decision-making, driving measures and goals around diversity and inclusion, addressing implicit bias, and taking a proactive approach to service delivery that accounts for underlying differences in opportunities and needs.	Equity and inclusion is the central organizing framework of the entire LORE program and the lens through which every cycle is taught. Cycle 1 establishes the definition of operational equity and its relationship to organizational performance. Cycle 3 applies that lens to policy analysis. Every subsequent cycle applies equity thinking to planning, collaboration, process design, communication, and scaling.
4	Staff Effectiveness	Taking responsibility for the development, performance, and success of employees throughout the organization.	Cycle 2 focuses on empathy and inquiry as management tools, giving leaders and implementers concrete skills for understanding what's working for their staff. Cycle 5 addresses co-design and facilitation, teaching participants how to engage staff across levels and functions in shared problem-solving.
5	Personal Resiliency and Development	Modeling healthy work habits, encouraging a personal and professional growth mindset, periodically assessing personal development goals, and identifying areas for skill development.	<i>Not directly addressed by this curriculum. LORE's peer coaching structure and cohort model support professional growth and reflection, but personal resiliency is not a named learning objective.</i>
6	Strategic Leadership	Defining and communicating a vision and leveraging all resources and tools to achieve it.	Strategic leadership is developed across the full arc of LORE. Cycle 1 asks leaders to define and articulate equity as a strategic value within their organizations. Cycles 3–5 build the analytical and relational skills needed to lead through complexity. Cycle 7 prepares leaders to communicate that vision under pressure. Cycle 8 focuses on embedding the vision into governance structures and sustaining it beyond the program.
7	Strategic Planning	Developing a plan of action that brings the community together, provides clarity of purpose and priorities, and guides the organization's actions in achieving its goals and objectives.	Cycle 4 is the primary strategic planning cycle: participants use PDSA (plan-do-study-act) cycles, the DARCI accountability matrix, and other frameworks to develop a structured, measurable pilot project plan. Cycle 6 returns to planning through a process measurement lens. Cycle 8 extends strategic planning to sustainability.
8	Policy Facilitation and Implementation	Engaging with elected officials and other community stakeholders to create and execute policies that achieve common goals and objectives.	Cycle 3 teaches participants to apply an equity lens to existing policy by identifying root causes and conducting equity impact analysis. Cycle 5 focuses on navigating power dynamics and building cross-departmental coalitions. Cycle 7 prepares participants to make the policy case to elected officials through structured simulation and role-play.

9	Community and Resident Service	Discerning community needs and providing responsive, equitable services.	The program's foundational argument, introduced in Cycle 1, is that internal equity is the precondition for equitable service delivery to residents. Cycle 8 addresses community and resident service most directly by asking participants to develop sustainability plans that connect their pilot project outcomes to the communities they serve.
10	Service Delivery	Understanding the basic principles of service delivery and using strategic decision making and continuous improvement to serve the organization and community.	Cycle 6 is directly focused on service delivery improvement by asking participants to map the specific processes tied to their pilot project, identify where breakdowns occur, and develop measurement approaches to track whether changes are producing the intended results.
11	Technological Literacy	Demonstrating an understanding of information technology and ensuring that it is incorporated appropriately in service delivery, information sharing, and public access.	<i>Not directly addressed by this curriculum. Technology is not a focus area of LORE's current curriculum design.</i>
12	Financial Management and Budgeting	Implementing long-term financial analysis and planning that integrates strategic planning and reflects a community's values and priorities.	Cycle 4 introduces budgeting as a planning tool. Participants learn to connect equity pilot projects to existing resource frameworks and build the financial case for systems change. For Track A, a core learning objective is communicating the return on investment of equity-centered initiatives to elected officials and finance staff.
13	HR Management and Workforce Engagement	Ensuring that the policies and procedures of the organization are applied consistently and fairly, and motivating and engaging the workforce to its highest potential.	Cycles 4 and 6 both address workforce and HR systems as key levers for equity. In Cycle 4, participants examine how HR practices can advance or undermine equity goals. In Cycle 6, participants map HR-related processes to identify where gaps or inequities exist and how to redesign them.
14	Communication and Information Sharing	Effectively facilitating the flow of ideas, information, and understanding.	Communication is developed across three cycles. Cycle 2 builds emotional intelligence as a communication foundation. Cycle 5 focuses on facilitation and co-design across departmental and role boundaries. Cycle 7 is the most intensive communication cycle in which participants practice high-stakes presentations and stakeholder messaging through structured simulations.