

LORE

An Executive Certificate in Operationalizing Equity for Local Government

Co-sponsored by the Chaddick Institute at DePaul University. Led by Dr. Kathleen Yang-Clayton.

Program overview

LORE prepares working local-government leaders to operationalize equity inside the systems they already run. It is an executive certificate program organized around a single discipline. Each participant identifies a real problem in their own organization and spends the program diagnosing it, designing a response, and testing that response in practice. The work is applied from the first session, drawn from the material of each participant's own job.

LORE is non-degree. It is designed as a recognized pathway toward an executive Master of Public Administration offered through accredited university partners. The certificate carries professional weight on its own, and it prepares the participants who choose to continue toward a degree.

Who LORE is for

LORE is built first for municipal government. It serves two kinds of participants, and the program is structured so that both learn together before working at the altitude their roles require.

- **Senior and executive leaders**, including city managers and department heads, carry the strategic case for equity and the internal case for change. They need language and evidence that hold up in front of elected officials, skeptical colleagues, and the public.
- **Implementation staff** carry the daily work. They need tools that withstand contact with real constraints, real timelines, and real people.

As the program expands beyond its municipal core, it opens to the broader public-sector professional weighing an executive MPA. For that participant, LORE is the applied front door to a degree.

Alignment with the ICMA Credentialed Manager program

The ICMA Credentialed Manager designation is the recognized mark of professional standing for local-government managers, and it is maintained through an annual commitment to professional development. Every ICMA member is bound by the Code of Ethics to complete at least 40 hours of professional development each year, and credentialed managers document those hours for peer review.

LORE is built to serve that commitment directly. The program delivers 24 hours of in-person instruction and 8 virtual coaching sessions over the full course of the program. Its content is mapped to the ICMA Practices for Effective Local Government Leadership, the competencies behind the credential. Participants leave each cycle able to document what they learned in the form the annual report requires. For a credentialed manager or candidate, LORE supplies a substantial, defensible share of the yearly obligation earned through work that advances a real project.

How the program is structured

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.

Every cycle advances the same capstone. From the first month to the last, participants build a pilot project inside their own organization, and each cycle adds the diagnosis, the tool, or the test that moves it forward.

The two tracks

Governance and Leadership serves city managers and executive leaders. Its work centers on communicating the strategic value of equity, building the internal case for change, and embedding what works into governance and budget.

Operational Strategy serves staff who work directly on program and project implementation. Its work centers on diagnosis, process, measurement, and the cross-functional collaboration that implementation requires.

Shared framing holds the cohort together. The tracks let each group go deep where its responsibility lies.

The two phases

Phase One establishes the foundation and the diagnosis. Participants build a shared understanding of what operational equity looks like in practice, develop the skills of empathy-based inquiry and policy analysis, and arrive at a working diagnosis of the problem their pilot project will address.

Phase Two moves from diagnosis to action. Participants apply frameworks, map processes, design and test the pilot, measure its effect, and build the communication needed to sustain and scale the change.

The capstone pilot project

The pilot project is the spine of LORE. It is what makes the program applied, and it is what a participant carries out of the room. By the end, each participant has diagnosed a real organizational problem, designed a response, tested it inside their own agency, and built a plan to sustain or scale what worked. This is the executive equivalent of the master's project that the strongest executive MPA programs require, completed and applied inside the participant's own government.

The cycles

LORE moves through eight cycles. The map below is the high-level arc, with the ICMA practice areas each cycle addresses. Full cycle-by-cycle detail, by track, appears in the LORE Curriculum Appendix.

Cycle	Focus	ICMA Alignment
Cycle 1	Understanding Equity in Public Institutions. Equity as a measure of whether systems work for everyone they serve. Introduces the REDI framework.	4.5 PD hrs Equity and Inclusion; Strategic Leadership
Cycle 2	Emotional Intelligence in Change Work. Empathy and inquiry as instruments of management, and emotional intelligence as institutional capacity for frontline equity work.	4.5 PD hrs Staff Effectiveness; Public Engagement
Cycle 3	Policy and Root Cause Analysis. Separating surface problems from the systemic conditions that produce them.	4.5 PD hrs Policy Facilitation; Equity and Inclusion
Cycle 4	Project Management and Planning for Impact. Planning frameworks tied directly to equity outcomes.	4.5 PD hrs Strategic Planning; Strategic Leadership
Cycle 5	Applied Research and Cross-Functional Collaboration. Building the internal partnerships that implementation requires.	4.5 PD hrs Collaboration and Partnering; Facilitative Leadership
Cycle 6	Process Mapping and Measuring Impact. Connecting process improvement to equity, effectiveness, and efficiency. Identifying and measuring KPIs to assess impact.	4.5 PD hrs Service Delivery; Strategic Planning
Cycle 7	Case Simulations and Strategic Communications. Making the case to the audiences most likely to resist it.	4.5 PD hrs Community Engagement; Strategic Leadership
Cycle 8	Iteration and Scaling What Works. Embedding the pilot into governance, budget, and decision-making.	4.5 PD hrs Strategic Leadership; Financial Management and Budgeting

Each cycle contributes roughly 4.5 documentable professional-development hours. Across the program, 24 hours of in-person instruction and 8 virtual coaching sessions each month total 36 hours, aligned to the ICMA Credentialed Manager 40-hour annual commitment and mapped to the ICMA Practices for Effective Local Government Leadership.

What participants leave with

- **The LORE executive certificate**, co-sponsored by the Chaddick Institute at DePaul University and ILCMA.
- **A tested pilot project**, designed and ready to implement inside their own organization.
- **A documented professional-development record** aligned to the ICMA Credentialed Manager commitment and the ICMA Practices for Effective Local Government Leadership.
- **Standing on a recognized pathway** toward an executive Master of Public Administration through accredited university partners.