

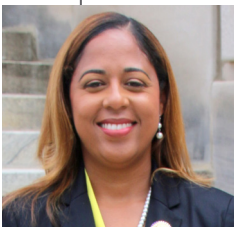
The Milbank Memorial Fund's **Emerging Leaders Program (ELP)** is a 10-month leadership development program for early and mid-career legislative and executive branch state, large-county, or large-city government officials who are committed to improving the health of all people in their communities.

The program will provide participants with opportunities to:

- Develop practical, applied leadership skills and personal insights that will enhance their capacity to improve population health
- Partner with colleagues from states across the country who have different life experiences, professional expertise, and cultural norms than their own
- Expand their network of colleagues, both from within the cohort and the broader Milbank State Leadership Network
- Access and apply evidence, best practice, and experience to their work as leaders and health policy decision makers

Convened by Milbank Memorial Fund in partnership with a nationally recognized expert in leadership development, ELP sessions will feature guest faculty who bring experience and insight into state and local policymaking. **The Fund will invite up to 24 participants and cover all costs of sessions and materials, including three in-person meetings.**

Zakiya Summers, State Representative, Mississippi  
House of Representatives



"I brought evidence-based resources shared by my peers and subject matter experts to the Mississippi Public Health Committee, and it informed how we approached a bill on reducing homelessness in Mississippi."

## Program Format

ELP participants will have an opportunity to gain insight into their leadership styles and preferences. Further, they will learn from nationally recognized leaders in state health policy, as well as expert trainers, on topics such as developing strategic priorities, addressing health disparities, building negotiation skills, and connecting across branches and with a broad range of partners.

ELP sessions will be highly interactive and will feature presentations, experiential learning exercises, and small group engagement. ELP participants will represent states, counties, and cities from across the nation and have unique opportunities for nonpartisan dialogue. Watch this [video](#) to hear from past Emerging Leaders on their experiences in the program.

Participants in ELP take part in a continuous learning cycle that features:

- three in-person meetings
- seven virtual sessions
- individual leadership assessments
- an optional mentorship program that connects cohort members with national experts
- connections to the Milbank State Leadership Network and population health resources

## Nomination & Selection Process

The Fund will select up to 24 participants for the 2025-2026 cohort. Participants can apply using the [online form](#). The process also requests that applicants submit a short letter of recommendation from a senior health leader in the state in which they work and a current resume. All materials must be submitted no later than **Friday, June 13, 2025**.

## Who is a strong ELP candidate?

Milbank Memorial Fund invites applications from professionals who have:

- An interest in expanding their health policy knowledge base and leadership skills
- A commitment to learning from and working with those with differing viewpoints and backgrounds
- Curiosity and enthusiasm that fosters engagement with others and sparks lively discussion
- A deep commitment to improving the health of all people in their communities and addressing health disparities
- Capacity to lead in a complicated and complex policy environment

ELP will be a good fit for:

- Legislators who are either newly elected or in the early years of their tenure, who serve on committees that have jurisdiction over health, human services, and related budget matters
- Executive branch staff of health and human services, public health, insurance, or Medicaid agencies who are responsible for direction of a major program or initiative



Stacey Pietropaolo, Director of Policy and Project Management, Vendor Drug Program, Texas Health and Human Services Commission

“Being a part of Milbank has been eye-opening. I’m thinking and considering things I never thought possible, like believing that I belong in this space and aspiring to the highest possible positions for the purpose of serving. Milbank is turning out to be a huge part of preparing me for that.”

## Selection Criteria

The Milbank Memorial Fund will focus on the following characteristics in selecting participants for the ELP:

- **A commitment to improving** the health of all people in their communities with the use of evidence-based practices
- **Demonstrated leadership**, as reflected by experience in positions of significant responsibility as well as public impact
- **Inquisitiveness**, as evidenced by interest in continuous learning and self-improvement
- **A focus on impact**, with an emphasis on developing and implementing innovative, practical policy solutions that will demonstrably improve the health of people and communities
- **Collegiality and receptivity**, as exemplified by eagerness around exchange of ideas and interest in building lasting relationships with colleagues

## Our Network

Our participants have found that the ability to interact with extraordinary leaders who they would not have otherwise known has been one of their greatest learning tools. The breadth of backgrounds and experiences challenges participants to think differently and to learn from different approaches.

The Fund is committed to creating a cohort of participants that includes:

- **Leaders with differing backgrounds and experiences** — we strongly encourage nominations of people with a variety of demographic backgrounds
- **Regional representation** — we strive to have participants from a broad range of states and regions
- **A range of political perspectives** — we include a range of political perspectives from all sides of the aisle
- **Position and role** — we strive to have a mix of legislators and executives from state and large-county and large-city government

## Key Dates for the 2025–2026 ELP Cohort

All participants who are accepted into the 2025–2026 cohort must commit to the following:

- Fall 2025 introduction meeting, **September 15–17, 2025, in Nashville, TN**
- Winter 2025 meeting, **November 12–14, 2025, in St. Louis, MO**
- A final meeting to be scheduled in early **June 2026** (Date and Location TBD)
- Seven virtual (1–2 hour) sessions to be scheduled monthly between October 2025 and May 2026
- Optional monthly virtual/phone meetings with a mentor (for participants who opt in to the mentoring program)



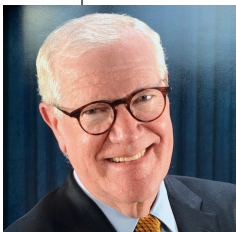
Melanie Stinnett, State Representative, Missouri House of Representatives

“I’ve had very practical takeaways from the program. For example, I’ve been working on paid caregiver Medicaid benefit for kids with disabilities and received very helpful input from others in the Milbank network.”



Jamie Carmichael, Assistant Director of Community Planning and Collaboration, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

“The Milbank program has been a tremendous opportunity and experience to learn, grow, and connect with people with different backgrounds and experiences. I can’t overstate how impactful this has been for me professionally and personally. I believe this experience will pay dividends all across the country in policies, programs, and investments that arc towards justice and service.”



Martin Hickey, State Senator, New Mexico Senate

“I appreciate the range of support in this program that helps me address the complexities of health care legislation that I carry. The meetings in person are enjoyable, and my colleagues in the program bring enthusiasm and commitment.”



Justin Turner, Chief Medical Officer, Mississippi State Department of Health

“Milbank creates an environment where it’s effortless to want to connect with each other, a cultivated environment of unification and collegiality. We’re different, come from different backgrounds, yet we have a sense of unity around population health with no agendas.”

## For More Information

If you are interested in participating in the Emerging Leaders Program and would like to learn more, please contact Rich Callahan, Lead Program Consultant, at [rich@tapinternational.org](mailto:rich@tapinternational.org) or call 916-803-7022.

## About the Emerging Leaders Program

This program is designed and run by the Milbank Memorial Fund Director of Population Health Leadership Morgan McDonald and Program Associate Sofia Espinosa in collaboration with the Lead Program Consultant Rich Callahan. The Milbank Memorial Fund believes that state policymakers are key agents of change in improving health outcomes, reducing health care costs, and improving population health overall. Launched in 2015 to support the development of health policy leaders, the Emerging Leaders Program alumni serve in a variety of critical health policy leadership roles across the country.

The Milbank Memorial Fund is a nonpartisan, trusted foundation whose mission is to improve population health and health equity by connecting leaders with evidence and sound experience. For more than 100 years, the Fund has connected leaders with the expertise of policymakers and the evidence that they need to advance policies and practices that improve health. Our work is guided by core values of collaboration and community; diversity, equity, and inclusion; humility and optimism; objectivity and non-partisanship; and stewardship and leadership. Our organization has had a unique journey that has shaped our values; we invite you to learn more at [www.milbank.org](http://www.milbank.org).

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*Using evidence to improve population health*