

2025 NASPEs AWARD

Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Award Nomination Innovative State Human Resource Management Program

Nominations from dues-paying states are considered for eligibility. Nominated leaders and programs should have a positive effect on the administration of state human resource programs. A state's central human resource department or line agency human resource operations may administer nominated programs.

Programs and projects must have been operational for at least six months and must be transferable to other states. Selection criteria are based on the questions asked on the award application. Included in this packet are the specific criteria for each award and their categories. Nominations are encouraged in all areas of human resource management administration.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Title: Mississippi Leadership, Excellence, and Development (LEAD) Program State: MS

Contact Person: Michael Finley

Contact's Title: Director of Training and Development

Agency: Mississippi State Personnel Board

Mailing Address: 210 East Capitol St Suite 800, Jackson, MS 39201

Telephone: 601-359-2718

E-mail: Michael.finley@mspb.ms.gov

NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Nominator: Michael Finley Title: Director of Training and Development

State: MS Agency: Mississippi State Personnel Board

Telephone: 601-359-2718

E-mail: Michael.finley@mspb.ms.gov

ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST:

- Meet all eligibility requirements • Meet deadline requirements
- Include a complete nomination packet • Conform to all copyright laws

2025 NASPEs AWARD

Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Award Nomination Innovative State Human Resource Management Program

DETAILS

Mississippi LEAD (Leadership Excellence And Development) is a two-year program designed to strengthen the leadership skills of state government executives through monthly webinars and quarterly events. Participants explore leadership topics including accountability, change management, and problem-solving. Quarterly events focus on topics specific to Mississippi state government like the legislative process, legal updates, and understanding appropriations bills.

Mississippi LEAD participants must:

- Be an employee of a Mississippi state government agency
- Be in one of our Top 3 pay grades of each pay plan
- Be willing to commit to the two-year commitment to finish the course
- Agree to complete all course requirements entirely and on time
- Be nominated by his or her agency head
- Complete the application stating why he or she should be considered for this program

The two-year curriculum includes:

YEAR 1		YEAR 2	
Jan	Accountability Leadership in the Public Sector	Jan	Crisis Leadership for Senior Leaders
Feb	Ethical Leadership in State Government	Feb	Negotiations and Conflict Management
Mar	Communication Skills for Effective Leadership	Mar	Performance Management and Building a High-Performing Team
Apr	Navigating Government Leadership with Emotional Intelligence	Apr	Building a Strong Organizational Culture
May	Strategic Time Management for State Leaders	May	Innovation and Creative Problem Solving for Process Improvement in the Public Sector
Jun	Decision Making for Senior Leaders	Jun	Collaborative Leadership and Building Strategic Alliances
Jul	Problem Solving for Senior Leaders	Jul	Adaptive Leadership
Aug	Enhancing Critical Thinking for Senior Government Leaders	Aug	Executive Presence and Influence
Sep	Strategic Risk Management	Sep	Leadership in a Digital Era
Oct	Strategic Thinking and Planning for the Public Sector	Oct	Leadership Resilience and Well Being
Nov	Leading Change: Strategies for Senior Leaders	Nov	Succession Planning in the Public Sector
Dec	Project Management for Senior Leaders	Dec	Capstone Exercise

ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST:

- Meet all eligibility requirements • Meet deadline requirements
- Include a complete nomination packet • Conform to all copyright laws

2025 NASPEs AWARD

Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Award Nomination Innovative State Human Resource Management Program

1. Please provide a brief description of this program.

The Mississippi Leadership, Excellence, and Development (LEAD) program is a two-year virtual initiative designed to equip senior leaders in Mississippi state government with advanced leadership skills. This program aims to build a community of visionary leaders capable of driving change, fostering collaboration, and enhancing the effectiveness of state government operations.

Details about the program may be found here: <https://www.mspb.ms.gov/training-development/mississippi-lead>

Video explaining the program: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dW7MINDwT3k>

2. How long has this program been operational (month and year)?

The program has been operational for 16 months. It started in January 2024. The first cohort will graduate in December 2025.

3. Why was this program created? (What problem[s] or issues does it address?)

In June 2023, MSPB hosted its first Leadership Summit for agency heads and senior executive leaders in state government. This one-day event was the first leadership event for leaders at the executive level.

Because MSPB received overwhelmingly positive feedback from Leadership Summit attendees, the Mississippi LEAD program was created to address the leadership skills training gap for senior state government leaders. Previously, there were no course offerings for senior state government leaders.

4. Why is this program a new and creative method?

The unique combination of asynchronous and synchronous modules requires technology such as a course creation platform, a Learning Management System, and virtual hosting such as Zoom. With approximately 45% of state workers working outside the Jackson metro area, we wanted to address the needs of all participants, no matter their location. The asynchronous monthly course covers strategic leadership topics such as change management, critical thinking, crisis leadership, and negotiation skills. The quarterly training is offered in-person or via a virtual platform and covers topics germane to Mississippi state government, such as an overview of the legislative budget process and meetings with state senators and representatives.

ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST:

- Meet all eligibility requirements
- Meet deadline requirements
- Include a complete nomination packet
- Conform to all copyright laws

2025 NASPEs AWARD

Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Award Nomination Innovative State Human Resource Management Program

5. What were the program's startup costs? (Provide detailed information about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs, and other expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology, and staff already in place.)

The Mississippi State Personnel Board already had an existing license for the course creation software. We did not have a learning management system (LMS). After reviewing vendor offerings, we decided on LearnWorlds, which costs approximately \$2,500 per year. In-house training specialists create the course content.

6. What are the program's operational costs?

Operational costs such as course creation and LMS management are covered by in-house personnel. As explained, the ongoing yearly cost is approximately \$2,500.

7. How is this program funded?

The Mississippi LEAD program is funded through the budget of the Mississippi State Personnel Board. Each year, the legislature allocates funds for MSPB to conduct training.

8. Did this program originate in your state?

9. Are you aware of similar programs in other states?
If yes, how does this program differ?

We are aware of senior leadership training in other states, but not with a program that is set up for the length of time ours is, as well as the monthly/quarterly style format training being offered.

10. How do you measure the success of this program?

Currently, the program's success is measured by in-house evaluations utilizing Kirkpatrick's Level I and Level II evaluation format. Each quarter, a survey is sent to each participant, asking for their reaction to the course. For the Level II evaluation, each module has quizzes throughout to test the participant's knowledge. Each module also has a final exam at the end of each module. Each participant must pass the final exam to complete the course successfully.

11. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

Due to the success, we have internally reorganized our training department to meet the program's needs. We recently started our second cohort in January 2025, and we are eager to learn their thoughts and evaluations of the course.

Recently, a new participant asked if we could organize a field trip to the state capitol while the legislature is in session. This was a wonderful idea, and we plan to include a trip soon.

ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST:

- Meet all eligibility requirements • Meet deadline requirements
- Include a complete nomination packet • Conform to all copyright laws