

Public Matters: Empowering Lowell's Leaders

c/o The Lowell Plan, 11 Kearney Square, Lowell, MA 01852

<http://www.nps.gov/lowe>

Program Description

Public Matters: Empowering Lowell's Leaders is an initiative of the Paul E. Tsongas Center, an educational and civic partnership of Lowell National Historical Park, The Lowell Plan, Inc., Middlesex Community College and UMass Lowell. Coordinated by The Lowell Plan, Public Matters integrates the experiential education, public policy, civic engagement; and leadership strands of the Tsongas Center programs. The mission of the Public Matters: Empowering Lowell's Leaders program is to foster and enhance the knowledge and skills of leaders in Lowell, Massachusetts. We invite qualified individuals to become members in a rigorous and challenging program in civic engagement. Throughout this program, members will learn how to contribute more effectively to a diverse and mutually supportive community. Our goal is to ensure that the Lowell of tomorrow will be served by inspired stewards of our history, natural resources, social and cultural capital and economic and government institutions.

For generations, Lowell has produced committed individuals who have assumed leadership roles in shaping our city. Central to Public Matters is an acknowledgement of the important role played by those past and current leaders, along with an equal awareness that the future of Lowell depends on a new generation. Successful public/private institutional partnerships have been the cornerstone of Lowell's success, and partnerships require leaders. Public Matters fosters inventiveness and creativity to ensure that Lowell's tradition of meeting the challenges posed by contemporary society will continue.

Program Goals

Public Matters combines an extensive orientation to the resources and networks in Lowell coupled with skill development and a practicum in organizational development. Goals include:

- Creating a network of new leaders fully engaged in the future of Lowell;
- Providing a forum for emerging and existing leaders to develop a vision for community development that strengthens the whole community;
- Promoting an understanding of and appreciation for the history, cultural diversity, and economic and government resources of Lowell;
- Encouraging resource sharing and collaboration;
- Building the capacity of the public and private sectors through the development of leadership and experiential learning; and
- Ensuring diversity among the leaders of Lowell.

Topics of Study

Public Matters provides a setting for experiential learning in the context of the City of Lowell. We focus on Lowell National Historical Park as we seek to examine, understand, and appreciate the City's industrial past, the current cultural revitalization, and historic preservation efforts. Using the City of Lowell's 2003 Comprehensive Master Plan as an instruction tool, we will explore ten thematic areas: Community Profile – Historic and Contemporary; Education; Neighborhood Quality of Life; A Lifetime of Housing Opportunities; Unique Waterfront Environments; a Vibrant and Diverse Downtown; Institutional and Cultural Development; Economic Growth; Transportation; and Sustainability. Members will observe, define, analyze and practice leadership skills through a variety of tools, methods and activities. The course will encompass demonstration, lecture, video presentation, simulation, cooperative learning, class discussion, observation and analysis of Lowell-based case studies, interviews of community leaders, and field trips.

Program Requirements

Public Matters is designed as a six-month program of study for individuals who work or live in Lowell. Members will meet 4 – 7 pm on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month beginning January 7, 2009, and concluding June 18, 2009. Two extended sessions will be held on Saturdays, dates to be determined. Members are expected to commit themselves to the meeting schedule and participate in meetings, lectures, presentations, and field trips. Members should be accessible to their cohort who seek professional advice and counsel and be willing to share their experiences regarding working and/or living in Lowell and the challenges facing leaders in the city.

Fee

The tuition for Public Matters is \$800.00. Members are provided with meals for the duration of each session, and all course materials. Scholarships are available on a limited basis to those whose ability to attend the program is limited by financial constraints. Tuition is due upon acceptance to the program and is payable to The Lowell Plan, 11 Kearney Square, Lowell, MA 01852.

Lifelong Connections

Public Matters will facilitate a lifelong exchange of information, support and collaboration among its membership. An alumni network will allow past and current members to share professional experiences, test new ideas, and identify colleagues for joint ventures.

Who Should Apply

Members of Public Matters are accomplished individuals who have compiled a record of exemplary work and have been identified as leaders in Lowell. Applicants may have experience in a wide array of disciplines, but successful candidates typically share a passion for improving the quality of life in Lowell and a commitment to improving their own skills in pursuit of that goal.

Application Process

Candidates may apply directly to the program or be nominated.

Nominations are due Friday, October 24. Nomination Forms are available online: www.nps.gov/lowe; and by contacting The Lowell Plan, 978-459-9899.

Applications are due Friday, November 14. Application Forms are available online: www.nps.gov/lowe; and by contacting The Lowell Plan, 978-459-9899.

1. Application Form: Review the instructions on page two of the form.
2. Letters of Recommendation: Two letters of recommendation are required with the completed application and submitted by the deadline.

All material must be submitted to Rosemary Noon, Director, Public Matters, c/o Lowell Plan, 11 Kearney Square, Lowell, MA 01852. Contact information: rosemary@prospeed.net.

Notification of selection will be made by mid-December, 2008.