

AFB Blind Leaders Development Program

*Advancing leadership Opportunities for People
Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision*

At-A-Glance

The AFB Blind Leaders Development Program provides an excellent opportunity to cultivate confidence and leadership skills for high-potential employees who are blind or have low vision. Participants, referred to as Fellows, engage in a ten-month high-impact professional development training program designed to increase their performance and expand opportunities for success as a leader.

This unique professional development model encompasses leadership training, peer mentoring, and strategies to successfully work and lead as a person with vision loss. The program offers proven leadership and mentoring models in a fully accessible and empowering environment.

Rooted in the renowned benchmark for leadership training designed by James Kouzes and Barry Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* anchors the program's curriculum, which runs from August through May. This professional development course -- combined with regular mentoring, peer development, and networking opportunities -- allows the Blind Leaders Fellows to develop professional competence and confidence as leaders ready to move to the next level.

Program Impact

Since its inception in 2020, the Blind Leaders Development Program has served three cohorts, with over 100 participants. The professional and personal impact has been profound, as shared through the following testimonial:

"I attribute much of my success to the AFB Blind Leaders Program. The academic leadership training, mentoring, encouragement, and confidence from the AFB team in my abilities as I travel this journey of blindness allows me to focus on my ABILITIES, as opposed to my disability," said a past Blind Leaders Fellow and now mentor who manages development for a nonprofit in Kansas City, Missouri.

The program continues to recruit from a diverse pool of candidates, allowing for strong racial, gender, economic and geographic representation. This furthers the program's mission to create an environment that embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion. Studies continue to show that organizations embracing these values experience not only greater creativity, performance, and productivity, but also maintain

higher retention of skilled employees. What is special about the Blind Leaders Development Program is that it empowers each fellow through celebrating what it is that makes that person unique.

Who Can Participate?

The AFB Blind Leaders Development Program is designed for employed individuals who are blind or have low vision, and who have at least 3 years of work experience in their chosen field with a desire to grow in their career. Professions include all sectors of the workforce, including corporate, small business, government, self-employed, and nonprofit sectors.

Tuition & Financial Support

Tuition for the 4th cohort, which will begin in August 2023, is \$6,000. Competitively priced, the program is an excellent way for companies and organizations with employees who are blind or have low vision to assure their professional development efforts are fully inclusive. For those unable to secure corporate or organizational sponsorship, scholarships up to \$4,500 are available.

Application process

The application process opened in March 2023. Please submit a resume and references with the completed application for consideration no later than June 15th, 2023. Participants who are selected will be notified in July.

To apply or learn more about the program, visit: www.AFB.org/BlindLeaders. Have questions or need further information? Email: BlindLeadersStaff@AFB.org.