



# **Program Description**

January 2012

**Executive Leadership Development Program of the Pacific and Virgin Islands**

Pacific and Virgin Islands Training Initiatives (PITI-VITI)  
Graduate School

<http://eldp.pitiviti.org>

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

The Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP) was developed in response to the insular areas' growing concerns for continuity in management and technical expertise as senior leaders retire or leave government service.

### **Why is it important to establish an Executive Leadership Development Program?**

The insular areas have experienced many challenges to developing and retaining qualified, skilled staff. Additionally, many career senior leaders and managers in the insular governments are expected to retire within the next several years, leaving a potential gap in managerial and technical capability. The insular areas need to establish a pool of staff with potential for promotion into these key positions and groom them through training programs, special assignments, and systematic mentoring.

### **Who will organize and manage the ELDP?**

The Insular governments recognize the need to identify and develop staff to ensure that turnover of key individuals does not adversely impact government operations. However, the insular governments lack the funding and resources to establish an inter-government initiative. The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs (DOI/ OIA) has turned to its partner, the Graduate School, to assist with developing and managing the Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP) through the Pacific and Virgin Islands Training Initiative.

### **Which insular governments can participate?**

All of the US-affiliated insular areas are invited to participate in the ELDP, including the flag territories (American Samoa; Guam; U.S. Virgin Islands; Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands) and freely associated states (Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia). The ELDP is open to all government agencies and government enterprise organizations.

## **2. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INSULAR AREAS**

The insular areas must play a key role if the ELDP is to be successful. The governments can tailor many aspects of the participant developmental process to their unique needs. For example, governments will identify projects that are important to the government that can also serve as a developmental assignment for participants. Government mentors will provide insular-specific career guidance and advice. Participants will be required to bring government data, policies, and other public information to use in training sessions.

### **What is required from the insular governments?**

During its inaugural year many policies and procedures were developed for subsequent years. In 2012 the insular governments are expected to:

1. Disseminate information on the program and application process throughout the government and independent agencies.
2. Encourage potential candidates to apply.
3. Support the participants throughout the year by encouraging projects, development assignments, and other professional experiences.
4. Insular governments will ensure the participants have support from their immediate supervisors to participate in both the on-island and off-island activities.

Once the ELDP is fully implemented the governments are expected to have signed an agreement indicating they acknowledge their role and responsibilities:

1. Governments will complete an overall needs assessment prior to submitting the names of program participants. The needs assessment will report information such as anticipated turnover rates in key positions and the developmental needs (e.g. technical, managerial, leadership) of key staff positions. A template will be provided by the Graduate School, to each government to guide the needs assessment.
2. Each participating insular government will establish in writing the process for announcing the ELDP program to their agencies, and receiving, evaluating and selecting applicants. The governments must also establish and report selection criteria.
3. Once employees are accepted into the program, the insular government will commit necessary travel funds and other resources as required during the twelve month period. Because of the unique geographic locations, different staff development needs, and the legal relationships with the U.S. government, the insular government's financial commitment will be negotiated with the Graduate School on an individual basis.
4. Insular governments will establish clear expectations for participants' continued employment after completion of the program and communicate those expectations in writing to the program participant.
5. Insular governments will appoint a program coordinator and provide the coordinators with an explanation about why the government selected individuals for the program, including formal education, prior work experience, performance assessment, how selected individuals fit into the government's succession plan, and a recommendation from the highest ranking official from the participants' departments.
6. Insular governments will provide a point of contact for the program.
7. After the first ELDP meeting the governments will receive, evaluate, and, to the greatest extent possible, meet the participants' request for a high-level mentor and developmental assignments.

### **Who is eligible to participate in the ELDP?**

ELDP application criteria are flexible. The selection panel will evaluate applicants based on their:

- Potential for professional development.
- Formal education.

- Likelihood of remaining with the government after the program.
- Commitment to government service and personal growth.

It is recommended that candidates:

- Hold a bachelor's degree or have equivalent professional experience.
- Have worked for the insular government for a minimum of two years prior to the start of the program.
- Received outstanding performance evaluations for the past two years.
- Received a nomination to the program by the highest level official in the department and the immediate supervisor.
- Expressed an interest in, and demonstrated personal commitment to, public service.

### 3. COMPONENTS OF THE ELDP

The ELDP will offer five major components: formal training, mentoring, developmental assignments, reading assignments, and a major project. Each cohort training session, scheduled one time per quarter for approximately twelve months, will blend technical knowledge with managerial and leadership concepts and skills. Participants will be assigned projects and assignments that must be completed between training sessions. Projects and assignments will have a strong practical application and reports will be given in the next meeting.

#### What are the components of the ELDP?

Participants in the ELDP will experience five major components:

1. **Formal training.** ELDP participants will meet as a cohort approximately four times over a twelve month period for one week of training each time. The training will focus on managerial and leadership skills, as well as technical training in areas such as audit, project management, and financial management.
2. **Mentoring.** During the first formal training session each participant will complete a self – evaluation and identify one or two individuals within the government that he or she thinks would be a good mentor for them throughout the program. The program participant and the mentor will meet regularly to discuss the individual's progress, challenges, or other topics of interest. The program participant will be encouraged to learn how the mentor achieved success and think about how the mentor's characteristics, habits, or philosophies can be incorporated into the mentee's own style. Participants will be asked to report on the mentoring experience when they meet as a cohort for formal training.
3. **Developmental assignments.** As part of the self-assessment in the first formal training session, participants will identify and describe possible developmental assignments that they would like to complete during the twelve months. The development assignment will focus on real-world issues in their organization, and give participants the opportunity to hone technical skills and apply their learning in selected project areas. Governments will coordinate and support participants in the developmental assignments by providing a

project mentor and committing support to the project in writing. Participants will be asked to report on the developmental assignments when they meet as a cohort for formal training. Participants will not be allowed to continue in the ELDP program if the insular government does not assist with and support developmental assignments.

4. **Reading and group assignments.** Participants will be provided with books and reading assignments to be completed prior to the formal training sessions. Participants will be provided with a reading list from which they can choose books of interest. Participants will also be tasked to complete group assignments between cohort training sessions. This will encourage cross-government sharing of information and provide participants with the opportunity to work closely with other members of the cohort.
5. **Team project.** Under the supervision of the PITI/VITI Project Coordinator, the ELDP Program Manager and ELDP faculty, each ELDP participant will participate on a team to define and complete a major project for the insular governments. The project will likely be a project that the government wants to do but lacks the resources to initiate or complete.

#### **What formal training is planned for the ELDP participants?**

Four formal training sessions are planned throughout the twelve months. All members of the cohort will meet for one week for each of the four sessions. During the first week participants complete several self-assessment activities and plan for some of their assignments. For example, they identify potential mentors, project topics, and unique government issues or challenges. The second week covers core leadership skills. The third week participants learn how to manage people and organizations to continually improve their effectiveness and efficiency. In the last week each participants present their team projects and other activities completed during the previous twelve months.

#### **What are the Proposed Modules and Course Descriptions?**

The ELDP schedule, course descriptions, session modules, and graduation requirements can be found online, under the program description of the ELDP website. Please visit <http://eldp.pitiviti.org/program.php> for additional information.

#### **4. MANAGING THE ELDP**

The ELDP will require shared responsibility for insuring smooth and successful implementation. All travel and administrative expenses associated with the ELDP class of 2013 will be funded by OIA and managed on a day-to-day basis by the Graduate School, PITI. The ELDP will draw heavily on the expertise and interests of the insular areas when curriculum is developed and courses are organized.

#### **What are the tuition costs?**

All costs associated with the first two cohorts are funded by the Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs, including travel, instructional materials, and program administrative costs. In

future years the insular governments may be expected to pay a portion of the program expenses, such as travel, lodging, and meals for participants from their respective governments.

### **What is the anticipated size of each cohort group?**

Ideally, each insular government will send two to three individuals to each cohort, resulting in a class of approximately 18 to 21 individuals.

### **Are all applicants accepted into the ELDP?**

Not all individuals who apply to the program will be accepted. ELDP applicants go through a rigorous review and selection process, and only the most highly qualified applicants will be admitted into the program.

### **How are ELDP Participants Selected?**

Completed applications must be received by the PITI-VITI office no later than April 15, 2012. Applicants to the Executive Leadership Development Program submit five documents supporting their application—the application form itself, a resume, a letter of intent, a brief biography suitable for public release, and a letter from their supervisor. Applications are first reviewed by the application screening committee. The 2012–2013 application screening committee consists of two representatives from the Graduate School, PITI-VITI program. The screening committee reviews the applications to ensure they are complete and the applicants meet minimum qualification standards. If more than fifty applications meet these criteria, the screening committee rates the applicants and narrows the pool of applicants to the fifty most highly rated application packages. The applicants cleared by the screening committee are forwarded to the final selection committee.

The selection committee comprises two representatives from the Graduate School, PITI-VITI program, two representatives from DOI/OIA, and one independent reviewer. The selection committee members independently review and rate each application package. Although rating applicants is inherently a subjective process, the selection committee uses a structured process and scoring guidelines to rate each application. The scoring guidelines are intended to provide a broad framework within which to make the acceptance decision. The scoring system and guidelines for each document comprising the applications are presented below:

<b>Document</b>	<b>Maximum Points Possible</b>
Application Form	10
Resume	25
Letter of Intent	25
Letter from Supervisor	10
Biography	10
Assessment of Potential	20
<i>Maximum Total Points Possible</i>	<i>100</i>

The selection committee strives to create a diverse class that appropriately represents all of the insular governments, technical areas, gender, and ethnicity.

**What is the timeline for implementing the second cohort and the schedule for subsequent cohorts?**

Currently, cohorts will meet one time per quarter over a twelve month period. The number of training sessions and overall timeline will be adjusted to meet the needs of the insular governments and other factors that could influence the schedule. The schedule for the 2012-2013 ELDP cohort is:

**5. SCHEDULE FOR EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

**What is the schedule for the 2012-2013 ELDP?**

February 1, 2012	Announce the ELDP 2012 - 2013 application process
April 15, 2012	Application process closes
May 15, 2012	Candidates for the ELDP class of 2013 announced
July 23-27, 2012	<u>Session #1</u> - Assessment and Kickoff. Class hosted by Government of Guam
November 5-9, 2012	<u>Session #2</u> - Leadership. Class hosted by the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (Saipan)
February 11-15, 2013	<u>Session #3</u> - Managing Organizations - People and Processes Class hosted by the Federated States of Micronesia (Pohnpei)
Late May, 2013	<u>Session #4</u> - Capstone - Facing the Future. Class held in Honolulu, HI