



CORO LEAD PROGRAMS FAQs

(Lead LA & Lead SoCal)



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1. What is Coro Southern California?

Coro believes that Southern California needs a community of leaders who can engage in systems thinking and possess the ability to collaborate with other innovators across sectors, ideologies, and backgrounds. To accomplish that vision, Coro’s programs blend experiential, classroom, and cohort-based learning to develop key leadership competencies. Founded in 1957, Coro Southern California (Coro) runs a variety of in-house and customized programs all toward a goal of providing emerging leaders with critical thinking, self-awareness, communication, collaboration, and network-building skills to impact change.

2. What are Coro Lead Programs (Lead LA & Lead SoCal)?

Solutions to complex challenges in Greater Los Angeles and more broadly, Southern California require leaders who understand its unique civic and political landscape, have the cross sector network to leverage resources, and skill sets to work within and through systems. **Coro Lead Programs are designed to cultivate such leaders.** Over these nine-month, part-time programs, participants will use Greater Los Angeles (Lead LA) or Southern California (Lead SoCal) as their classroom, leveraging a unique blend of facilitated instruction, collaborative small group teamwork, and hands-on experiential learning to gain the skills, networks, and knowledge to lead change within their organizations, communities, and the region.

3. What can I expect from my participation in one of the Coro Lead Programs?

Coro Lead Programs are highly experiential, requiring participants to engage with their cohort and stakeholders to push their own and each others’

boundaries across three key and core skills areas: 1) Effective Inquiry, 2) Civic and Political Awareness, 3) Group Effectiveness. While expanding their individual and collective abilities to better understand their surroundings and themselves, participants will also gain new insight into the challenges facing Greater Los Angeles (Lead LA) or Southern California (Lead SoCal), solutions to those challenges, and how to better collaborate with others to make positive change and impact in their communities.

As a professional development program - not just a civic leadership program - participants will return to their organizations ready to broaden the organization’s ability to achieve its mission.

4. What are the differences between Lead LA & Lead SoCal?

While the core skills areas and intended impact are similar across both Coro Lead Programs, there are differences candidates will want to assess.

	Lead LA	Lead SoCal
Cost	\$5,250	\$4,000
Mode	In-Person*	Fully Virtual
Hours	~120 hours	~90 hours
Applicants	LA Metro Area	All SoCal**
Issues Focus	Greater LA	SoCal

Both programs represent great value at under \$45 per facilitated hour. While both programs will run September to May, Lead LA (as an in-person program) features an additional 30 hours of facilitated learning, spread across an additional

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Issue Day and longer Leadership Retreats. Lead SoCal’s issues focus could be (*based on cohort decisions*) regionally based, examining challenges from a broad Southern California lens, or focus more on targeted non-Los Angeles area challenges, such as issues facing San Diego, the Inland Empire, the southern Central Coast, south San Joaquin Valley, Orange County, or Imperial County.

**Coro is committed to ensuring the public health of our participants and community. While Coro plans to launch and deliver Lead LA in-person, we have developed a virtual program calendar in the event public health guidance precludes in-person meetings. See the Lead LA and Lead SoCal calendars posted at corola.org/lead-programs for more details.*

***We define Southern California as the northern border of San Luis Obispo, Kern, & San Bernardino Counties south to Imperial & San Diego Counties. Applicants from Los Angeles County are welcome to apply to both Lead LA or Lead SoCal. Applicants from outside of Los Angeles County are also welcome to apply for Lead LA, but should recognize that programming will require physical attendance at locations in or around Downtown Los Angeles.*

5. How are the Coro Lead Programs different from other executive leadership programs?

University-based executive leadership programs: Aside from being significantly less costly, the biggest difference is in structure. The Coro Lead Programs are rooted in experiential learning. While most executive leadership programs based at major universities follow a similar lecture-seminar classroom format (whether online or in-person), both Lead LA and Lead SoCal use facilitated exploration of leadership techniques and

tools in a constant state of discovery and practice. Facilitators are not teachers, but rather cultivators of the knowledge and experience for the cohort to drive the exploration.

As a result, the content is less theoretical or abstract and allows for individuals and the cohort as a whole to leverage the frameworks and skills to respond to real-life situations present in the cohort’s day-to-day professional and personal responsibilities. Moreover, the content and experiences build on and reinforce each other rather than sit as stand alone courses.

The second difference is the cohort design. As with all Coro programming, the cohort serves as a force multiplier of the facilitator’s training. Since cohorts are selected to be representative of leadership styles, backgrounds, experiences, and sectors, and since each member of the cohort has indicated an intent to be present not only for their professional development, but also for the entire cohort’s development, both Coro Lead Programs can provide a deeper and more fast-paced exploration of leadership and public affairs tools, techniques, and knowledge.

Non-university based leadership/professional development programs: Coro’s proven model for program development and delivery sets it apart from other civic leadership and professional development programs. At the core of Coro’s programming is the belief that meaningful impact comes from collaboration across sectors and backgrounds and shared interest and dedication to effective inquiry (both internal and external) and systems thinking.

Coro Lead Programs are as much about individual development as they are about regional development. Lead LA and Lead SoCal, unlike other

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similar programs, will simultaneously enhance the participants' knowledge about themselves and others, about civic challenges and possible solutions, and how they can, individually, collectively as a network, and through their organizations, impact and improve their communities in a positive way.

This proven model is why Coro programs nationally train over 1,000 people per year with more than 10,000 program alumni actively serving as leaders across all sectors and fields. Lead LA and Lead SoCal does not just provide you access to a Los Angeles or Southern California network, but to a nationwide network.

6. What can I expect from a virtual program (i.e. Lead SoCal)?

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way we, as a society, conduct professional activities and provide services. Since pivoting to virtual delivery in the Spring 2020, Coro has focused on how to deliver highly experiential, highly impactful virtual programs. Our success in doing so is one of the reasons we were inspired to expand our Coro Lead Programs to offer the virtual Lead SoCal.

Virtual programs enable the participants to gain access to an increased array of diverse perspectives. Whether it is increased access via allowing participants, who otherwise might not have had the time or means to participate in a professional development and civic leadership program, or via the ability for participants to engage with additional stakeholders, who might not have been available if not for virtual congregation, participants in a virtual Coro program can and will engage with a broadened and vibrant range of

points of view and expertise, increasing the opportunities to learn, grown, and develop.

Moreover, virtual learning expands our geographical footprint, enabling a cohort representative of Southern California and exploring issues facing Southern California.

Following a year of delivering the Lead LA program in virtual mode, **Coro has found that what has the deepest impact is social proximity, not necessarily physical proximity**, and how to craft learning spaces that are interactive and experiential, providing space and opportunity for cohort-members to build long lasting relationships and bonds.

7. How much do the Coro Lead Programs cost & what sort of financial support is available?

As mentioned, both Lead LA and Lead SoCal represent exceptional value at less than \$45 per facilitated hour of programming.

Moreover, do not let financial concerns prevent you from applying to either program. Coro activity is seeking cohorts of multiple perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences and we will work with you to the best of our ability if you are accepted into either Lead LA or Lead SoCal.

For the 2021-2022 programs, Lead LA tuition is \$5,250 and Lead SoCal tuition is \$4,000. We have identified various methods to assist with the financial cost of participation.

Employer and Sponsor Assistance: Many Coro Lead Programs participants secure full or partial financial assistance from their employers as part of the organization's professional development efforts

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or from third-party sponsors eager to assist in your civic leadership and professional development.

We encourage applicants to speak with their employer or to engage their network about potential support. We have provided a **Program Benefits Guide** (posted at corola.org/lead-programs) to assist with employer and/or sponsor conversations.

Additionally, Coro has sponsorship opportunities available to organizations seeking to develop visible partnerships. Coro program sponsorship includes a reserved seat in the sponsored program(s). To learn more about program sponsorship, organizations can connect with Natalie Samarjian, President and CEO, at natalie@corola.org.

Coro Scholarships: Applicants interested in being considered for partial, need-based scholarships should complete the scholarship questions on the application.* Scholarships, with consideration for applicants paying out of pocket and with the highest need relative to the request pool, are determined during the decision-making process only and awarded amounts are considered final. Coro strives to provide financial support to all accepted candidates demonstrating need, but scholarships are not guaranteed and may differ from the amount requested.

**If applicants do not complete the scholarship questions on the application, Coro will not consider the applicant for scholarship assistance, even if accepted to either program.*

Deposit and Payment: Coro has available a variety of payment plan options for Coro Lead Programs to spread the tuition across the program length. Plans will be communicated to accepted candidates at the time of decision.

Accepted candidates will be required to submit a \$500 tuition deposit to secure their spot in the cohort (which is debited from their outstanding tuition balance). Once a participant has confirmed their participation after acceptance, all payments are final and non-refundable, regardless of program completion. Payments may be made by check or credit card.

8. What is the application process?

Interested candidates may contact Callie Spaide at callie@corola.org to learn more about the programs, complete the linked [Interest Form](#) to be notified of important dates and upcoming events, and/or attend a one of our lunch time information sessions on Tuesday, April 20 or Wednesday, July 7 (registration details posted at corola.org/lead-programs).

Applications open on April 1, 2021 with an application deadline of 11:59 pm PT on Sunday, July 11, 2021. Applicants may apply for either or for both Lead LA and Lead SoCal. Since the selection committee aims to build diverse and representative cohorts for both programs, decisions will be only for one program if a successful applicant applies to both Lead LA and Lead SoCal.

Applications are online and include basic demographic information, three essays, and a professional reference. If you are interested in being considered for limited, need-based scholarship support, be sure to complete those questions prior to submission.

The application form is not extensive and can be completed in - at most - a few hours, but **the application cannot be saved and therefore, must be completed and submitted in one sitting.** It is recommended that you type your essay responses

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in your word processing software of choice and copy and paste your responses into the application.

9. I have submitted my Coro Lead Programs application. What happens next?

After the July 11 deadline, the selection committee will meet to review all received applications. If deemed necessary, a member of the selection committee will contact professional references. Following or prior to a conversation with the provided reference, Coro reserves the right to schedule and conduct phone or Zoom interviews with candidates. If necessary, more details will be provided regarding interviews.

After the selection committee has made their decisions, Coro will contact candidates via email by the end of July or early August. All decisions are final (including scholarship awards).

If accepted, candidates must secure their spot in the cohort by confirming their participation via a signed tuition commitment form within 3 days of notification and submitting a non-refundable program deposit of \$500 within 7 days of notification. Confirmed participants will be asked to provide a headshot and short bio, which will be put on the Meet the Cohort website. Participants will also be informed of other program items to prepare for the Program Orientations and Opening Retreats.

Waitlisted candidates will be notified as/if spots become available and will have 3 days to confirm participation via returning a signed tuition commitment form and submitting the \$500 non-refundable program deposit.

Regardless of the payment plan selected, the first payment due date will be prior to the programs' Opening Retreat. Please review the Lead LA and

Lead SoCal program calendars for when the programs' Opening Retreat will occur.

10. What are the Coro Lead Programs' attendance policies & other requirements?

Coro uses experiential learning methodology. Being present at and actively participating in sessions and being responsive between sessions to other cohort members and the program facilitator are vital components to your civic leadership and professional development and the program's success. **As any Coro alum will tell you, "you get out of a Coro program what you put into a Coro program."** If you apply to the Coro Lead Programs, we are expecting you to commit to the program. Please be sure to review the Lead LA and/or Lead SoCal calendar(s) ([posted at corola.org/lead-programs](http://corola.org/lead-programs)) thoroughly.

Lead SoCal: If a participant accumulates a total of **eight (8) session absences** (*arriving more than 30 minutes from the start of the session or leaving more than 30 minutes prior to the end of the session will be counted as a half absence*), they may be asked to leave the program. Session absences refer to program sessions, not program days (*i.e. Leadership Retreat 1 has two sessions on a single day; missing both sessions would yield 2 absences*).

Due to the amount of content covered and the foundation laying for the program and cohort's development, attendance at the entire Program Orientation, Issue Day Orientation, and both Opening Retreats is required with no arriving late/leaving early. **Participants should contact Coro immediately if there are any scheduling conflicts, particularly with the Program Orientation, Issue Day Orientation, and Opening Retreats, to discuss accommodations.** Aside

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from the calendared program components, participants will need to schedule (*with their Issue Day teams*) Issue Day planning meetings with the Lead SoCal program facilitator totalling 8 hours spread across four (4) meetings that span the program's duration (*the longest meeting lasting 3 hours*). Participants should also expect additional hours planning with Issue Day teams, completing minimal pre- and post-assignments, and attending other (optional) events.

The 2021-2022 Lead SoCal program is a fully virtual program, meaning participants will not be expected to be in-person at any particular location for any of the Coro-scheduled programming. Issue Day teams may decide and agree to meet in-person for planning meetings, but all facilitated Issue Day planning meetings with the program facilitator and the program's calendared Issue Days will be conducted virtually. Coro may schedule optional events open to the Coro community, which may be in-person. Attendance to such events is not mandatory for participation in Lead SoCal. **Lead SoCal participants should be prepared to actively participate virtually with access to Zoom, GSuite, and a stable internet connection.** If these pose any issues, please contact Coro so that we can make suitable arrangements to ensure your successful participation. To the best of their ability, Coro asks participants to be on-camera during program sessions.

Lead LA: If a participant accumulates a total of **five (5) absences** (*arriving more than 30 minutes from the start of the session or leaving more than 30 minutes prior to the end of the session will be counted as a half absence*), they may be asked to leave the program.

If operating in virtual* mode, the absences will be handled on a per session basis (*i.e. if a program component includes two sessions, missing Session 1 would result in a half absence and arriving more than 30 minutes late to Session 2 would be a quarter absence*).

Due to the amount of content covered and the foundation laying for the program and cohort's development, attendance at the entire Program Orientation and the Opening Retreat is required with no arriving late/leaving early. **Participants should contact Coro immediately if there are any scheduling conflicts, particularly with the Program Orientation and Opening Retreat, to discuss accommodations.**

Aside from the calendared program components, participants will need to schedule (*with their Issue Day teams*) Issue Day planning meetings with the Lead LA program facilitator totalling 8 hours spread across four (4) meetings that span the program's duration (*the longest meeting lasting 3 hours*). Participants should also expect additional hours planning with Issue Day teams, completing minimal pre- and post-assignments, and attending other (optional) events.

**The virtual calendar is provided in case County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health guidance limits the ability of the Lead LA program to launch or continue in person due to the continued COVID-19 impacts. Lead LA participants should be prepared to move between the in-person & virtual calendars and commit to both obligations. In the event of virtual delivery, participants will need access to Zoom, GSuite, and a stable internet connection. If virtual delivery becomes necessary and these latter requirements pose any issues, please contact Coro so that we can make suitable arrangements.*

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