

 **ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

**NACCHO's Adaptive Leadership Academy
2024 Cohort Fact Sheet**

Are you facing challenges that require collaboration and innovation? Do you find yourself leading your organization through continual upheaval and change? Do deeply rooted and systemic challenges continue to surface without much progress? Does your leadership approach need reinvigorating to succeed in today's public health landscape?

NACCHO, with the support of CDC and HRSA, is pleased to announce the **2024 Cohort of the Adaptive Leadership Academy, a 7-month long virtual program** geared towards helping leaders identify and deal with consequential change in uncertain times. The Adaptive Leadership Academy was designed in response to the unique needs of local public health and healthcare leaders by combining Adaptive Leadership and several other leadership theories in an action-oriented, cohort-based curriculum.

What leadership skills will I gain?

National resources outlining the critical capabilities of public health professionals today, including the [Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals](#) and Chief Health Strategist role within [Public Health 3.0](#), demonstrate a need for local public health leaders to work outside the traditional bounds of public health practice to drive collaborative change and improve population health. According to the 2017 report, Public Health 3.0 relies on “leaders who can work in new ways to build structured coalitions, leverage actionable data and evidence, and communicate new approaches within and outside the traditional health sector.”

Combined, these skills and the adaptive challenges that local public health professionals face today demonstrate eight categories of knowledge, skills, and abilities where greater practice is needed to drive change. They form the foundation of the Adaptive Leadership Academy.

- Create collaborative environments.
- Facilitate group dynamics.
- Draw from multiple perspectives.
- Promote valued behaviors.
- Manage successful change.
- Invest in relationship building.
- Seek out strategic partnerships.
- Engage in strategic communication.

What are past participants saying about the Adaptive Leadership Academy?

“The Adaptive Leadership Academy led participants to rethink how to look at challenges and develop solutions to the most pressing and long-term issues that forces leaders to question what they think they know, look in the mirror, and practice accountability” Past Adaptive Leadership Academy Participant

In our evaluation of the first Adaptive Leadership Academy cohort:

- 100% of participants reported their overall leadership capability improved
- 100% of participants reported their level of comfort in addressing adaptive challenges improved
- 100% of participants reported the Academy fully met its curriculum goal
- 90% of participants reported knowledge gained across all 11 core concepts

What are the goals of the Adaptive Leadership Academy?

1. Practice honest introspection to assess and address their contributions to the challenges they face, confront work avoidance behaviors within themselves and others, draw upon core values, and make critical choices about where to invest their time.
2. Redefine leadership in action by differentiating between the roles of leadership and authority in confronting an adaptive challenge, acknowledging the use of changing habits while implementing organizational change, and prioritizing vulnerability and genuine two-way communication in leadership moments.
3. Conduct comprehensive diagnoses of challenges using diagnostic questioning, disaggregating the technical and adaptive aspects, and ‘getting on the balcony’ to consider challenges holistically.
4. Improve their ability to communicate authentically by taking stock of the deeply held values, loyalties, and losses of individuals, groups, and organizations involved in a challenge.
5. Enhance their ability to move forward to address an adaptive challenge strategically through smart experimentation and risk-taking, change management, and learning the value of failure.

What are the core components of the Adaptive Leadership Academy?

Synchronous Learning:

- **Live Learning:** 90-minute live sessions with NACCHO coaches; includes didactic presentations, guided discussion, and breakout group exercises
- **Peer-to-Peer Learning:** 45-minute live unmoderated peer-to-peer discussions, ranging from partner exercises/discussions to small group exercises/discussions

- **Peer Advising:** 60-minute live peer advising with NACCHO coaches and peers to get feedback on a specific adaptive challenge
- **Adaptive Challenge Open Workshop:** 60-minute live sessions with NACCHO coaches and peers to apply unit concepts to make progress on your adaptive challenge

Asynchronous Learning:

- **Reading Materials:** concise, meaningful, thought-provoking book excerpts or articles
- **Mindfulness Guide:** guided mindfulness activities to be completed by participants to set the stage for more intentional leadership practice
- **Journal Practice:** guided, individual reflection to process and internalize concepts
- **Case Study:** a realistic public health focused story with associated activities and worksheets that highlight key course concepts and provide opportunities for practice

How much time is required to participate in the Adaptive Leadership Academy?

The Adaptive Leadership Academy will require approximately 10 hours each month for 7 months, including 4 hours of live sessions each month. Each unit of the Academy spans one month and includes weekly live, synchronous sessions, and asynchronous assignments to complete individually at your own pace over the course of the month.

How do I choose an adaptive challenge to work on throughout the Adaptive Leadership Academy?

In your application you will be asked to select and describe an adaptive challenge to work on over the seven months of the Adaptive Leadership Academy. Adaptive challenges are those that are difficult to define and do not have one clear solution. The problem within your adaptive challenge might be murky and undefined, the solution might be unknown or not have been applied before in your local setting, and making progress will require the input and collaboration of multiple stakeholders, including your staff. Select a challenge that you care deeply about, that is critical to the success of your organization and achieving its mission, and close to your heart. Additionally, it should be manageable enough to make progress on in seven months, but still of significance to you and your work. Most importantly, the adaptive challenge you select should be one that you have the power, influence, and support to work on.

You will apply what you learn throughout the Academy to make progress on your adaptive challenge. Each month you will apply the unit's concepts to design small experiments and interventions on your challenge, to better understand the problem and to make incremental progress. During Unit 3, you will have the opportunity to refine your challenge or commit to working on a different challenge. During Units 5 and 6 you will use an adaptive plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycle to design a more impactful action with the input of your cohort peers and adaptive coaches and reflect on the results that follow.

Past participants have chosen a wide range of challenges including creating a culture of equity and anti-racism in their organization, improving staff wellbeing and resiliency after the pandemic, aligning departmental structure to take a Public Health 3.0 approach, building a staffing plan to include people with lived experience, initiating a better data sharing plan with local, national, and state partners, and navigating fractured relationships with funders.

Who is eligible to participate in the Adaptive Leadership Academy?

The Adaptive Leadership Academy is open to anyone in public health or healthcare who holds an executive level leadership position (local health officer, executive director, chief executive officer or equivalent). In addition, executive level leaders who have a high level of formalized power, oversee multiple departments, or report to the top executive, are encouraged to apply. There is no cost for participation in the program, due to generous support from CDC and HRSA.

What are the topic areas that will be covered in the Adaptive Leadership Academy?

There are seven core units in the Academy. Each focuses on a key component of adaptive leadership and includes leadership theories and techniques to support an adaptive approach to leading your teams and organizations.

- 1. The Context:** Explore the foundation of adaptive leadership, learn about how multiple interpretations can improve understanding of challenges, and build habits that will support you in your leadership learning journey.
- 2. The Role:** Learn more about yourself as a leader through the leadership moments you face every day, explore the use of authority and leadership in your role, and become adept at authentic vulnerability and the connection it creates.
- 3. The Work:** Differentiate between adaptive and technical work, understand work avoidance and how to identify it, and learn diagnostic questioning techniques to identify the types of change.
- 4. The People:** Gain a more empathetic understanding of the people related to adaptive challenges and learn and practice richer, more effective communication methods that preserve your relationships that are vital to making progress on adaptive challenges.
- 5. The Balcony:** Learn and practice tools that allow you to step back from the work, observe the adaptive nature of change, and plan for and begin to take actions on the challenges you are facing.
- 6. The Dance:** Experiment with leadership and authority roles in relationship to your adaptive challenges, learn from your smart experimentation before taking actions.
- 7. The Commitment:** Identify and plan for the ongoing adaptive work and build the resolve and accountability to stay adaptive.

Thank you for your interest in the Adaptive Leadership Academy. If you have any additional questions, please contact Deya Greer at dgreer@naccho.org.

