

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What is the purpose of the Corporate Employee Development Board (CEDB)?

The CEDB was established to help identify the best qualified employees from *across VA* to attend specified training and professional development programs and opportunities. It is responsible for following a competitive, fair, and transparent process to solicit applicants and select participants to build a cadre of VA leaders. The CEDB process is the primary mechanism for VA's senior leadership to take a *corporate approach* toward leadership and workforce development decisions and promote equality across VA.

2. What is the goal of sending VA employees to these leadership development programs?

The goal is to develop a cadre of VA leaders as corporate assets who are prepared to play a part in VA's overall success and mission accomplishment. The Secretary and Chief of Staff are focused on developing strategic leadership skills among senior members of the organization who will play an increasingly important role in implementing change initiatives and addressing VA challenges.

3. Why were these particular leadership programs selected?

These programs include Federal Executive Institute (FEI), Senior Service Colleges (SSC), School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS), and Army Intermediate Level Education Program (ILE). These are high impact programs known to be effective at developing leadership skills. Programs may be added or removed as time goes on based on feedback about their effectiveness and alignment with VA's leadership development requirements.

4. Are these the only leadership development programs offered by VA?

No. VALU offers other leadership development trainings and opportunities (see <http://www.valu.va.gov/Home/Leadership>). In addition, VA organizations may also sponsor leadership development opportunities that are funded by their organizational budgets.

5. Can people apply to more than one program?

Yes, people can apply to more than one program. However, they will need to submit separate pre-screening questionnaires and full applications for each program for which they are applying. The reason that separate applications are needed is that different programs have different areas of concentration. An applicant should emphasize different qualifications, particularly on the open-ended questions in the application, for each program. Applicants for Senior Service Colleges (SSC's) will also be asked to prioritize their preferences for the specific SSC programs they would like to attend. Applicants' prioritization will be a factor in the final decision; however the decision will also be based on program fit, availability of seats, and organization needs.

6. How many program seats are available?

In all, there are approximately 35 program seats to be filled by VA participants as part of the CEDB process each academic year. About 25 seats are available for the Federal Executive Institute's 4-week Leadership in a Democratic Society program. There are generally 1-2 seats available for the SSC's, School for Advanced Military Studies (SAMS), and Army Intermediate Leadership Education (ILE) program (approximately 10 total seats for all SSCs, SAMS and ILE combined).

7. What happens if there are not enough qualified applicants to fill all the available program seats?

In this situation, the CEDB would move forward without filling all available program seats, rather than recommending an unqualified applicant. As appropriate, a decision may be made to re-announce the program to encourage additional employees to apply to fill the remaining seats.

8. If I am selected to attend one of the SSC's, can I be guaranteed to be placed in one of my preferred programs?

No. Although candidates may identify a specific program preference, all who apply acknowledge that they are applying for all SSC programs and will attend the program they are determined to be the best fit for as determined by the VA senior leadership.

9. What happens if someone is selected for a program but later chooses not to attend?

There can be a major consequence for VA when selected applicants decline these opportunities; accordingly, there is a serious penalty for declining. VA engages in partnerships with the institutions providing these leadership training programs (particularly the SSCs, SAMS and ILE), with the agreement that VA will send qualified candidates to attend each program seat that is offered. If selected candidates decline the opportunity to attend, VA may not be able to fill these seats, and there is a possibility that the institutions will be unwilling to offer program seats to VA again in the future. Therefore, candidates who are selected but turn down the opportunity to attend a program will not be considered for future attendance to a program absent an exceptional reason for declining.

10. How long does it take to complete the CEDB application process?

You should allow approximately 5 hours to complete the online application. The application consists of a few demographic questions about yourself, a few questions related to the program for which you are applying, a resume and an essay question. The resume and essay are limited to approximately 2 pages each. The resume and essay will probably be the most time consuming parts of the application.

11. What are my organization's deadlines for completing the application and obtaining the leadership endorsements?

If you are interested in completing an application, you should begin the process and contact the Human Resources Point of Contact (HR POC) in your Administration/Office immediately. Different organizations have established their own internal deadlines, depending upon the procedures and time required to obtain the leadership endorsements before the final deadline December 7. In most cases, your deadline for completing the application will be well in advance of this December 7 deadline. In order to be sure you allow sufficient time to follow your organization's procedures, you must coordinate with your HR POC as you prepare your application. Your HR POC will inform you about organization-specific deadlines for the application process and the protocol to be followed for the leadership endorsements. A contact list for the HR POCs is provided at the bottom of the CEDB website (<http://www.valu.va.gov/Home/CEDB>).

12. When I am finished filling out the application, is it sent automatically to my supervisor to begin the endorsement process?

No, you will need to notify your supervisor when the application is ready for endorsement. Further instructions are provided on the application. VALU's CEDB Program Administrator and your HR POC can help answer any questions you may have.

13. I have more than 3 levels of leadership who could endorse my application. How do I identify the correct endorsers?

Your HR POC will inform you of the endorsement procedures for your organization. You **MUST** work with your organization's HR POC to confirm the individuals who will endorse your application and follow your organization's procedures for obtaining their endorsements.

14. I have less than 3 levels of leadership to endorse my application. Is this acceptable?

Yes. Some applicants do not have 3 higher levels in their supervisory/management chains. In these cases, there may be only two or even just one higher-level supervisor who can provide the endorsement. For example, if the Principal (i.e., Assistant Secretary or Under Secretary) is an applicant's direct supervisor, then there would be only one leadership endorsement on the application.

Please note that, given variation in organizational and leadership structures across VA, administrations and staff offices/organizations are responsible for clarifying the appropriate supervisory/management chain for the endorsements, and for ensuring that the administrative procedures/protocol for their particular organizations are followed in the endorsement process. Therefore, there may be some variation between

organizations in the endorsement procedures. Please contact your Human Resources Point of Contact (HR POC) with any questions about the appropriate endorsement procedures for your organization. The list of HR POCs is available at www.valu.va.gov/Home/CEDB.

15. How much is the CEDB influenced by the leadership endorsements when they are reviewing applications?

The leadership endorsement does not serve as a “proxy” for the CEDB’s objective, independent review of the qualifications reflected in the application. Fairness is one of the most important tenets of the CEDB application review process. Therefore, the process was designed so that leadership may not “screen-in” or “screen-out” any application based solely on their endorsement. Rather, leadership endorsement will be considered as an information point, along with all the other information provided in the application package, to help CEDB reviewers form their own objective, independent assessment of the applicant’s qualifications.

16. What criteria are used to assess the applications?

CEDB members use criteria and rating benchmarks that are closely based on the VA Leadership Competencies to assess the applications. The VA Leadership Competencies are available on the CEDB website (www.valu.va.gov/Home/CEDB) and at www.valu.va.gov/content/pdf/va_leadership_competency_model.pdf.

17. If I am selected, how will VA support me while I am attending the program?

VA will continue to pay your salary while you attend the program. VA will also pay for your travel, meals and other incidentals, according to VA policy on Temporary Duty Allowances. In addition, an administrative liaison at VA will be available to assist you with questions about travel, reimbursements and other logistics while you are attending the program. SSC participants will also be assigned a mentor with whom to discuss the academic content of the SSC program. Please contact David Austin (David.Austin2@va.gov) for more detail.

18. If I am selected, how will my organization be affected?

As a selected participant, your regular VA position will remain encumbered while you are participating in the programs. Also, you may be subject to a directed reassignment when you have completed the program. Program participants are considered to be on a Temporary Duty assignment while participating in the program; therefore, you will not continue performing your regular VA job duties during that time.

19. Who can I contact if I have more questions or need help or more information about the application process?

The HR POC for your organization (see list at www.valu.va.gov/Home/CEDB) and VALU's CEDB Program Administrator, David Austin (David.Austin2@va.gov), are available to help you.