



# Leadership Institute 2026

# About the Leadership Institute

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The NHA Leadership Institute is an initiative that is made up of a comprehensive curriculum that combines core leadership competency working sessions and multiple layers of applied practice in health care. Coursework focuses on the unique challenges and organizational management techniques facing hospitals.

The Institute is geared toward providing middle management and up-and-coming leaders within your hospital with the necessary skills to become exceptional leaders and puts them on the path to senior management positions. It is vital for CEOs to develop the leadership pipeline to ensure effective succession planning while enhancing employees' contributions to the organization.

Each year, approximately 40 health care professionals from across Nebraska come together for a nine-session program designed to instruct, inspire, and invigorate. Participants in the NHA Leadership Institute improve their leadership skills and enhance their effectiveness in the health care field while preserving the care and compassion critical to quality health care delivery. Participants also establish peer-to-peer connections and lifelong bonds with classmates and faculty.

The Nebraska Hospital Association Leadership Institute's mission is to advance the effectiveness of hospitals by providing a quality environment for professional development and support for health care leaders.

## Expert Faculty

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Leadership Institute participants have expert faculty to guide them through the program. Knowledgeable instructors from Bellevue University are ready to steer participants toward professional success and engage them on the pressing issues hospitals encounter. These experts are drawn from diverse departments of the University including management, human services, leadership development, business administration, and health care administration.

## About the NHA

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The Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA) is a statewide health care trade association representing Nebraska's hospitals and health systems. The NHA was organized in 1927 as a result of an informal meeting called by Miss Homer Harris, superintendent of Clarkson Hospital, to discuss pending legislation that affected hospitals in the state of Nebraska. At that meeting, the NHA founded and appointed its first Board of Directors. Rev. Emil G. Chinlund of Immanuel was named President; Miss Blanche Fuller of Methodist Hospital was named Vice President; Miss Ida Isaacson of Evangelical Covenant was named Secretary; and Miss Homer Harris of Clarkson Hospital was named Treasurer.

Since that time, the NHA has been representing and supporting the needs of Nebraska's rural and urban hospitals and health systems. The NHA supports and encourages its members in developing various health care delivery systems geared toward improving the health and well-being of each community.

The NHA is governed by a board of directors that works closely with its membership to provide information, education, advice, and collaborative leadership to advance Nebraska hospitals' ability to provide exceptional health care. Hospitals are the stewards of good health. Through our partnerships with representatives in the health care industry, legislators, government, and citizens, the NHA is able to assist in the development of strong, healthy communities. The NHA serves as the influential voice of its members in the health care legislative and public policy arenas, promoting delivery of quality health care and influencing public opinion of hospitals and health networks.

# What You Need to Know

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## 360° Assessment

Participants identify their own set of leadership competencies and then develop their own 360° assessment. This assessment provides participants with a clear perspective on their strengths and areas of improvement related to leading and managing in a hospital setting. Participants will have a private, one-on-one coaching session to discuss the results of their 360° assessment with a certified executive coach through Bellevue University.

## Executive Leadership Coaching

Participants will receive one-on-one executive coaching from a Leadership Institute faculty member. The coach will work with each participant to develop a detailed action plan. Each participant will have two individual coaching sessions—one at the beginning of the program and one at the end. Completion of both coaching calls is required. If faculty is unable to contact you for a scheduled call, it is the participant's responsibility to contact the NHA or faculty member to reschedule.

## Core Courses & Curriculum

The NHA Leadership Institute has ten core courses that are designed to build upon each other. Participants complete these required courses throughout the nine-month program, building camaraderie with classmates. The NHA Leadership Institute is proud to offer in-depth courses and expert faculty to keep your organization moving with the current health care industry trends. Both academic and practical instruction help students implement cutting edge ideas and best practices into their organizations immediately. Leadership Institute curriculum is aligned with management and leadership concepts, allowing you to reach all of your career goals.

## Leadership Institute Portfolio

Participants can stay connected with the contact information included in this portfolio and also keep materials from each session.

## NHA Download Center

Participants will be able to download session presentations, handouts, and lodging information from the NHA website. The NHA does not provide copies of presentations for the sessions, so participants are encouraged to print out and bring materials with them or download to a laptop or mobile device.

## Hospital Tours

Tours are provided of the hospital where each session is held. Institute participants are allowed to participate in tours of these facilities and various departments. The tours provide participants the opportunity to explore different sectors and departments of another hospital, and share their experiences with co-workers back home.

## Recognition

Upon completion of the program, the class is recognized during an Awards Banquet in Lincoln dedicated to the Leadership Institute Class of 2026.

The NHA Leadership Institute is made possible through:



# General Information

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## Attendance Policy

Attendance at the Institute sessions is essential for participants to successfully complete the program and receive an award of completion. Participants are allowed one excused absence from the program. If a participant has to miss more than one session, NHA will work with the participant and his/her facility on a mutually agreeable solution to either catch up on the material or restart the class the following year.

## Dress

Casual dress for the sessions is acceptable. Business casual dress is recommended for the graduation event.

## Participant Conduct

The NHA Leadership Institute is intended to be a safe, educational, and productive professional development experience for all participants. Any concerns should be brought to the attention of the faculty or the Nebraska Hospital Association staff promptly. These individuals will do their best to quickly resolve a participant's concerns.

## Promotional Materials

By enrolling in the NHA Leadership Institute, participants grant the Nebraska Hospital Association the right to use their likeness in promotional media and in promotional materials.

## Special Needs

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Nebraska Hospital Association seeks to make the NHA Leadership Institute accessible to all. If you have a disability that may require special accommodations or have any dietary restrictions, please e-mail your needs to Brian Noonan, [bnoonan@nebraskahospitals.org](mailto:bnoonan@nebraskahospitals.org) or call (402) 742-8140.

# Enrollment Information

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- NHA Leadership Institute program registration fee is \$3,975.
- Enrollment form can be found online at [www.nebraskahospitals.org/education/leadership\\_institute/](http://www.nebraskahospitals.org/education/leadership_institute/).
- The 2026 Leadership Institute enrollment deadline is January 15, 2026. Space is limited. Enroll early to secure your seat. You will receive confirmation information after enrollment. Email enrollment form to Shana Anthens at [santhens@nebraskahospitals.org](mailto:santhens@nebraskahospitals.org).

## Questions?

For general questions regarding the NHA Leadership Institute, please contact Brian Noonan, Executive Director, NHA Research & Educational Foundation, at [bnoonan@nebraskahospitals.org](mailto:bnoonan@nebraskahospitals.org) or call (402) 770-9408.

# Course Instructors

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## Mike Freel, PhD

Dr. Mike Freel has more than 20 years of experience developing leaders. He's worked with IT security groups, hospitals, business processing firms, and various other organizations to design and deliver leadership and development initiatives that target improved performance at the individual and organizational levels. His expertise has led to award-winning programs that integrate organization-based strategy with learning outcomes.

In his current role as the program director for the Masters of Healthcare Administration program at Bellevue University, he has administrative and faculty responsibilities at the graduate level. He has served in several health care roles in the clinical and academic fields including adjunct instruction at the Creighton University School of Law. Dr. Freel is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives and serves on the Education Advisory Board for the Nebraska Hospital Association, the Bellevue Public Schools Foundation Board of Directors, and the Millard Public Schools Special Education Parent Advisory Group.

He earned his Ph.D. in Human Resource Development from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln with a focus in leadership and organizational change. His doctoral research involved the exploration of emotional intelligence and clinical nurses.



## Angie Longe

Angie Longe has been in the Human Resources field in a management capacity for over fifteen years and has a diverse background in both the types of companies she has worked for, as well as the activities she has engaged in. She has worked for Fortune 500 companies, as well as small to medium sized companies. Her HR experience includes: due diligence/integration activities during mergers and acquisitions, executive and managerial level training and coaching, incentive program design and implementation, recruitment and selection, reduction in force administration, diversity initiatives, and employee relations. Her current position is the Program Director for the Human Resource Management Bachelors Program and the Masters of Human Resource Strategic Management Program at Bellevue University, and she is also an Instructor for the Society for Human Resource (SHRM) Certification Preparation Courses. Her educational background includes a Bachelors degree in Business Administration from University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a Masters of Business Administration from Drake University. She holds a SHRM - Senior Certified Professional certification, as well as the "People Analytics" credential from SHRM.



## Nicole Winkler

Nicole Winkler facilitates leadership and coaching workshops for Bellevue University. Her background includes 15 years of individual and team training and counseling in the correctional and health care industries. Nicole is obtaining a doctorate in education and leadership. Nicole is the founder and owner of Lift Your Future (LYF) Coaching and Development.

# Agenda At-A-Glance 2026

<b>March</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>April</b>
<b>SESSION 1</b> <b>Orientation &amp; Building a Foundation of Leadership</b> March 11, 2026 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. CT NHA Headquarters Lincoln	<b>SESSION 2</b> <b>Round &amp; Round: Using 360° Assessments for Improved Leadership</b> March 25, 2026 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. (Facility Tour) 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. CT York General York	<b>SESSION 3</b> <b>What's My Type? Traits at Work</b> April 8, 2026 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. (Facility Tour) 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. CT Lexington Regional Health Center Lexington
<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>	<b>July</b>
<b>SESSION 4</b> <b>Talent Management: Recruitment, Onboarding &amp; Managing Generational Diversity in the Workplace</b> May 13, 2026 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. CT Virtual via ZOOM	<b>SESSION 5</b> <b>Working with Conflict</b> June 17, 2026 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. (Facility Tour) 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. CT Grand Island Regional Medical Center Grand Island	<b>SESSION 6</b> <b>Analyzing &amp; Addressing Performance Issues</b> July 8, 2026 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. (Facility Tour) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. CT Great Plains Health North Platte
<b>August</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>October</b>
<b>SESSION 7</b> <b>Coaching for Improved Performance – Leadership Resilience</b> August 12, 2026 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. (Facility Tour) 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. CT Methodist Fremont Health Fremont	<b>SESSION 8</b> <b>Leading Teams</b> September 9, 2026 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. (Facility Tour) 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. CT Columbus Community Hospital Columbus	<b>FINAL SESSION</b> <b>Emotional Intelligence Leadership in Action – What's Next</b> October 14, 2026 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. CT NHA 1927 Club Lincoln

\*Dates/Times/Locations subject to change.

# Course Descriptions

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## SESSION 1 | MARCH 11, 2026

### Orientation & Building a Foundation of Leadership

**Instructors:** Mike Freel & Nicole Winkler

There is a difference between management and leadership. During this interactive workshop, we will explore several of the most widely applied leadership styles and models, and consider how and why they work. Knowing when and how to utilize an appropriate leadership style is the key to getting the individual performance and organizational results you want.

## SESSION 2 | MARCH 25, 2026

### Round & Round: Using 360°Assessments for Improved Leadership

**Instructor:** Mike Freel

Self-assessments are valuable in identifying your leadership strengths and opportunities for development. During this very interactive course, participants will identify their own set of leadership competencies and then develop their own 360 degree assessment. You will actually implement and evaluate your 360 and use the results to develop an individual development plan to be used throughout the NHA Leadership Institute.

## SESSION 3 | APRIL 8, 2026

### What's My Type? Traits at Work

**Instructor:** Angie Longe

This session is designed to align the DEI efforts for consistency, commitment, and engagement with the mission and values of your organization. Other topics include unconscious bias, micro aggressions, changing demographics of the workforce, as well as the external forces that impact diversity initiatives including focus on generational diversity. This session is designed to help you make a great first impression and design a world-class employee onboarding process. Identify what is the most important information a new employee needs to know to be successful in your organization. This workshop will help you create an outline, timeframe, and overall approach to your onboarding experience.

## SESSION 4 | MAY 13, 2026

### Talent Management: Recruitment, Onboarding & Managing Generational Diversity in the Workplace

**Instructor:** Nicole Winkler

Leadership development is about improving your skills and examining your attitudes about leadership, management, relationships, career, and yourself. However, before you can decide on where to go, it is important that you know where you are. Your preferences for doing things one way may conflict with how others like to do things. This session gives you the opportunity to reflect on your own personality traits for communicating, solving problems, and working with others.

## SESSION 5 | JUNE 17, 2026

### Working with Conflict

**Instructor:** Mike Freel

Conflict is everywhere. However, not all conflict is bad. Participants will complete a conflict self-assessment and discuss how their results affect how they deal with conflict. We will consider the benefits of conflict and explore the causes and types of conflict that a leader is likely to come across.

# Course Descriptions

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## SESSION 6 | JULY 8, 2026

### **Analyzing & Addressing Performance Issues**

**Instructor:** Nicole Winkler

The ability to maximize employee performance is a key competency for any leader. Yet, we often see a gap between the level of performance we expect, and the level of performance we get. So why don't employees do what we want them to do? How do you motivate employees? Sometimes, leaders actually de-motivate employees when they intend the opposite. This session reviews what works and why with regard to employee motivation and performance.

## SESSION 7 | AUGUST 12, 2026

### **Coaching for Improved Performance – Leadership Resilience**

**Instructor:** Nicole Winkler

In this workshop, we will learn how to integrate effective coaching into a leadership toolbox! Coaching is a manager's number one priority for employee and organizational performance, yet very few managers ever receive the opportunity to learn how to be a good coach. Learn what steps and skills it takes to become a good coach and how to create a culture of coaching within your organization.

## SESSION 8 | SEPTEMBER 9, 2026

### **Leading Teams**

**Instructor:** Mike Freel

The ability to build and maintain high performing teams is one of the fundamental elements of true leadership, and an important skill to process. In this session, participants will learn the characteristics of effective teams and why teams need strong leaders. We will discuss the stages of team development and consider the interaction between different team player styles leading to improved performance

## FINAL SESSION | OCTOBER 14, 2026

### **Morning Session | Emotional Intelligence**

**Instructor:** Nicole Winkler and Mike Freel

This session is designed to align the DEI efforts for consistency, commitment, and engagement with the mission and values of your organization. Other topics include unconscious bias, micro aggressions, changing demographics of the workforce, as well as the external forces that impact diversity initiatives.

### **Afternoon Session | Leadership in Action – What's Next**

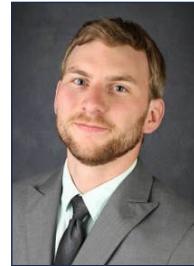
As one noted leadership author has said, "You can be given leadership, but you cannot be given a following – you must earn it." This workshop focuses on leadership, followership, and interpersonal skills. Participants will consider how they engage followers and the dynamic nature of the leader-follower relationship. We will discuss what has propelled them into a leadership role and their plans for what's next after Leadership Institute!

**Participants will graduate after this session.**

# Success Stories

NHA's Leadership Institute was a fantastic experience. With each session, we gained skills and tools to become more effective both personally and professionally. I especially liked the self-assessments that helped me gain a more thorough understanding of my own behavior and personality. Those helped me gain insight into what my "default" reactions might be in various situations and how to manage myself and others utilizing different perspectives.

Outside of the classroom, we had a ton of fun as a group. I highly encourage those involved to attend the social gatherings the night before each session and take time to get to know your classmates. I met some wonderful people that I stay in contact with and occasionally see at NHA conventions and other meetings. Thanks for the great experience!



**Kyle Teel, CPA, CHFP, Corporate Controller**  
**Community Hospital, McCook**

The NHA Leadership Institute is an excellent opportunity for growth, both professionally and personally. The curriculum provided exposure into many facets of leadership and, even more than that, offered applicable approaches that I was able to put into practice right away. The instructors were knowledgeable and created connections with participants allowing us to understand and hone our own leadership attributes while recognizing and appreciating the attributes of others. I especially enjoyed the peer-to-peer discussions and the valuable network that we created during the ten-month course. This program gave me the tools and the confidence to grow as a leader within my organization.



**Megan McGown, Chief Development Officer**  
**Great Plains Health, North Platte**

I feel the Leadership Institute is a valuable tool to enhance and grow leadership skills and competency that will benefit not only the emerging leader, but also the experienced employee. This process launched me down a path that allowed me to experience new opportunities that have directly contributed to my success and the opportunity to achieve my goal of becoming a CEO.



**Treg Vyzourek, BS, MDI, RT (R) (CT)**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Brodstone Memorial Hospital, Superior**

The Leadership Institute was a priceless experience for myself as a newer leader. There are so many things to learn and in most leadership roles, they need to be learned at a fairly fast pace. The Institute faculty were warm, inviting and always kept the group engaged. The topics we discussed were relevant and are issues leaders deal with daily. The sessions were both fun and interactive. I always felt I had great tools to take back and apply to my role. There was a great focus on understanding who you are as a leader and what your strengths and weaknesses might be. Being able to understand yourself as a leader equips you to better lead and mentor others. The sessions were organized, well run and the experience of seeing so many hospitals across Nebraska was an awesome benefit. I would highly recommend the Institute for any new and emerging leader, and even those who have been in leadership for awhile, but want to re-invigorate their career!



**Rachel Thompson, MSN, RN, CRRN, Director of Maternal Services**  
**CHI Health CUMC-Bergan Mercy, Omaha**

# Testimonials From Our Graduates

- Whether you are aspiring to be a health care leader, are a new leader in health care, or have been a leader in health care for quite some time, the NHA Leadership Institute is an excellent opportunity to acquire new skills and build on current skills and strengths. The NHA Leadership Institute provides current and future health care leaders meaningful dialogue and networking opportunities as well.

- Joni Sautter, Box Butte General Hospital, Alliance

- The Leadership Institute provided useful information, whether it be new or a refresher. Met some really great people to network with, just spoke to one of them today!!! If you get the opportunity, don't pass it up, it's a great growth experience.

- Candice Bell, Harlan County Health System, Alma

- The NHA Leadership program offers a very broad framework of tools and material for any individual in a leadership role. The material presented was excellent and the speakers provided a wealth of expertise and knowledge. An individual counseling session was included as part of the class. I was provided with tools that I would never have found on my own time (which is scarce!). Meeting with staff from other hospitals and seeing all of the great things happening in our great state of Nebraska was another plus.

- Julie Baumgart, Columbus Community Hospital, Columbus

More than 600  
graduates from  
Leadership  
Institute since  
its inception in  
2004.



# unlock your potential with these education benefits

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**NHA Member**  
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**Members**



Our generous tuition assistance program  
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