



**Carl Vinson  
Institute of Government  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

**Georgia Mayors Leadership Academy  
Georgia Center for Continuing Education  
University of Georgia  
Athens, Georgia  
August 28 – 30, 2024**

Description

The mayor of a city - regardless of population size - plays an important role in community life. Mayors lead the celebration during good times and console during times of struggle. Mayors also have an important role in determining the vision and direction of the city no matter the form of government. This highly interactive and engaging learning opportunity will help these important elected officials reflect on their role and how to exercise influence from the chair, not just to survive but thrive.

Program Learning Objectives

When mayors complete the three-day academy, they should be able to:

- Understand the role they play as convenor, collaborator, consensus builder and advocate.
- Build and maintain effective relationships.
- Respond effectively during crises.
- Organize opportunities for community building.
- Differentiate between technical and adaptive challenges.
- Develop strategies for leading significant change initiatives.
- Recognize the impact they can have on their community.

**Tentative Agenda**

Wednesday, August 28, 2024

11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. Check-in and Lunch on Your Own

1:00 p.m. Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Overview of Academy

1:30 p.m. The Various Roles of the Mayor

Presenter: Jim Thornton, Director  
Governmental Relations  
Georgia Municipal Association  
Mayor of LaGrange 2012 – 2022

Panel Discussion with Experienced Mayors

Moderator: Walt McBride, Leadership Development Unit Manager  
Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia

As the chief elected official, mayors serve in a multitude of roles, ranging from convenor and relationship builder to advocate, chief booster, spokesperson and economic developer, all while serving as the face of the community.

This session will set the stage for the Mayors Leadership Academy with discussion on the many responsibilities that define the role of a mayor. A panel of seasoned mayors will offer insights and real-life examples of how different roles come into play in the day-to-day life of a mayor and how important each role is to city leadership.

2:45 p.m. Break

3:00 p.m. The Role of the Mayor During Crisis

Presenter: James W. Satterfield, Founder & President  
CrisisRisk

During crisis situations the mayor has several roles they must fulfill. While they are making sure staff have the resources necessary to respond to the situation, they must be the face of the city to the community. They also need to leverage relationships with state agencies and other entities to help procure those resources. All the while they must respond to the community's needs with empathy and confidence and work with the media to get important messages out to those in need.

This session will include an interactive exercise providing participants an opportunity to engage in small group discussions to think critically about what decisions, actions and words need to be considered in a crisis event.

4:30 p.m. Wrap-up and hotel check-in

5:15 p.m. Board Buses for Sanford Stadium - West End Zone

5:30 p.m. Networking and Football Locker Room Tours

6:15 p.m. Dinner and Remarks

High-Profile, High-Pressure Leadership

Speaker: Coach Caryl Smith Gilbert, Director  
UGA Men's and Women's Track and Field

7:45 p.m. Board Buses for return to Georgia Center

Thursday, August 29, 2024

7:00 a.m. Buffet Breakfast

8:15 a.m. The Role of the Mayor in Leading Change

Instructor: Andrew S. Pennock, PhD  
Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy  
University of Virginia

Identifying and Addressing Technical and Adaptive Challenges

Technical problems, while often challenging, can be solved by applying existing know-how and the organization's current problem-solving processes. Adaptive problems resist these kinds of solutions because they require individuals throughout the organization to alter their ways; as the people themselves are the problem, the solution lies with them. Responding to an adaptive challenge with a technical fix may have some short-term appeal. But to make real progress, sooner or later those who lead must ask themselves and the people in the organization to face a set of deeper issues—and to accept a solution that may require turning part or all of the organization upside down.

Practical tools for determining and addressing these challenges will be shared and small groups will practice with them during the session.

10:00 a.m. Break

10:15 a.m. Identifying and Addressing Technical and Adaptive Challenges - cont.

12:00 p.m. Lunch and Panel Discussion with Experienced Mayors

Leading Past Partisanship

1:45 p.m. Overcoming the Immunity to Change

Resistance to change does not reflect opposition, nor is it merely a result of inertia. Instead, even as they hold a sincere commitment to change, many people are unwittingly applying productive energy toward a hidden competing commitment. The resulting dynamic equilibrium stalls the effort in what looks like resistance but is in fact a kind of personal immunity to change.

As above, practical tools for determining and addressing and overcoming the immunity to change will be shared and small groups will practice with them during the session.

2:45 p.m. Break

3:00 p.m. Overcoming the Immunity to Change - cont.

4:30 p.m. Wrap-up

*Dinner on Your Own*

Friday, August 30, 2024

7:00 a.m. Buffet Breakfast

8:15 a.m. Trends, Challenges and Emerging Issues in Municipal Government

Presenter: Larry Hanson, CEO & Executive Director  
Georgia Municipal Association

Cities face a variety of constantly evolving issues that impact all facets of local governing. How mayors respond to these issues will go a long way in shaping the future viability and prosperity of their communities. This session will provide an insightful overview of ten of the most significant trends, issues, and challenges facing cities today.

9:30 a.m. Break

9:45 a.m. The Role of the Mayor in Governing

Presenter: Rev. John Unger, Senior Advisor and Professor  
White House Executive Office of the President

Community-building for Success

How do you bring together groups with diverse socio-economic, ethnic, and faith backgrounds to build a strong, thriving, and sustainable community?

Effective practices for community-building and civility will be shared and discussed in small groups. Participants will also receive encouragement from this highly effective presenter.

11:15 a.m. Closing Remarks

11:30 a.m. Adjourn