

Overcoming Barriers Into Leadership

Driving Transformation Through Innovation and Resilience:
what the representation and earnings data show, and how
one certificate program is built to close the gap.

Leadership development can help managers prepare for broader responsibilities, whether that means leading a larger team, taking on a cross-functional role, or pursuing senior leadership.

The skills involved include communicating effectively, working across different perspectives, guiding teams through change, and building support for new ideas. Emory Continuing Education's online **Women in Leadership: Driving Transformation Through Innovation and Resilience** certificate addresses these areas through five core modules covering innovation, cultural awareness, engagement, resilience, and self-advocacy.

Although the program carries the title Women in Leadership, it is designed for professionals of all genders who work in management and aspire to move into higher tiers of management and leadership, including C-suite positions.

The program combines live virtual instruction with self-paced learning, includes an asynchronous industry-expert component, and is intended for professionals who want to:

- Move into higher tiers of leadership
- Build a culture of innovation
- Advocate for themselves and their teams

This whitepaper draws on current research on leadership representation and earnings, alongside the structure and objectives of Emory's certificate program, to provide context for why this work matters and how the program is built to address it.

Women's representation provides important context for a program focused on leadership, advancement, and professional development. McKinsey & Company's *Women in the Workplace 2025*, produced in partnership with LeanIn.Org, found that women's representation narrows steadily at each rung of the corporate ladder.



At the C-suite level, women of color represented 7% of roles, while white women represented 23%.

The report also identified a gap at the first promotion into management, which it calls the "broken rung." For every 100 men promoted to manager, 93 women were promoted. For women of color, the figure was 74 women for every 100 men.

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MCKINSEY & COMPANY / LEANIN.ORG, WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE 2025

These numbers show how representation can change as professionals move through an organization's leadership pipeline. They also provide context for conversations about advancement potential, management development, and workplace practices. The research does not mean that leadership development applies only to women. Managers of all genders may need to develop skills in areas such as innovation, collaboration, communication, resilience, and self-advocacy.

Women have also made progress in reaching the highest leadership positions at major U.S. companies.



Women also hold leadership positions in government. The Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University reports that 26 women serve in the U.S. Senate, 124 serve in the U.S. House of Representatives, and 14 women serve as governors, matching the record high. CAWP also reports that women hold 33.6% of state legislative seats nationwide.

Representation figures can change following elections, appointments, resignations, and vacancies. Current figures should be confirmed with the latest data from CAWP before the information is reused.

Leadership representation is one part of the broader discussion about workplace opportunity and advancement. Earnings data provide another measure of differences between women and men in the workforce.



The statistic compares the median earnings of women and men who worked full-time, year-round. It is not a direct measure of unequal pay for

people performing the same job, because the calculation does not control for occupation, industry, work experience, or other characteristics. Those limitations are important when interpreting workforce statistics: aggregate data can show broader patterns, while individual career experiences can differ based on professional role, industry, organization, and other factors.

Leadership development involves more than preparing for a particular job title. Managers who take on greater responsibility may need to coordinate across functions, manage competing priorities, communicate with different audiences, and make decisions in changing environments.

Emory's certificate focuses on five core areas, delivered across six modules:

- Growing a Culture of Innovation
- Innovating Across Culture
- Driving Engagement
- Leading with Resilience
- Advocating for Yourself

MODULE 1

Growing a Culture of Innovation

Practice innovative strategies, learn best practices in innovation, reflect on your experiences, and envision ideal cultures of innovation.

Led by Kimberley Lyles-Folkman, PhD, MEd: integrated advertising and innovative design expert

MODULE 2

Innovating Across Culture

Increase your understanding of how culture impacts success in the marketplace and workplace, as well as its impact on the world.

Led by Soumaya Khalifa, MBA: President and CEO, Khalifa Consulting

MODULE 3

Driving Engagement

Learn best practice tools and techniques to increase you and your team's engagement.

Led by Nancy Green, MBA: performance strategist and owner, iinteg Inc.

MODULE 4

Leading with Resilience

Learn the qualities, attributes, and skills that make resilient leaders, as well as their impact on teams, organizations, and culture.

Led by Katie Karppala, MSOL, PCC, BCC: founder, Authentic Dimensions Consulting

MODULE 5

Advocating for Yourself

Gain skills to effectively advocate for yourself, including understanding the importance of identifying professional strengths, interests, and values. Learn how to take self-ownership over your vocational life and future, and articulate your unique professional strengths, values, and vision.

Led by Sarah D. Carlson: career transformation and self-advocacy expert

MODULE 6 · ASYNCHRONOUS

Industry Experts

A professionally curated asynchronous module offering the opportunity to learn from industry experts across diverse fields and leadership roles, featuring compelling stories and distinct viewpoints on innovation, resilience, and transformation.

Lisa Mangel

Boeing Leader · Emory Women in Leadership Participant

Lisa Mangel, a Boeing leader and former Emory Women in Leadership participant, described the program as an opportunity to strengthen her leadership skills and confidence. Her Emory participant spotlight also describes how she included the certificate among her qualifications when interviewing for an executive leadership position.

Read Lisa Mangel's Emory participant spotlight →

Mangel's experience reflects her individual professional circumstances. It should not be interpreted as a guarantee that completing the program will result in a promotion, executive position, compensation increase, or other specific career outcome.

Women continue to be underrepresented at many levels of corporate and public leadership, even as representation has reached record levels in some areas. Research on advancement and representation provides useful context for understanding why women's leadership remains an important subject in the workplace.

Leadership development itself is broader than gender. Managers preparing for greater responsibility may need to strengthen their ability to foster innovation, engage teams, collaborate across organizational boundaries, work with different perspectives, respond to change, and communicate their professional goals.

Emory Continuing Education's Women in Leadership: Driving Transformation Through Innovation and Resilience certificate brings these subjects together in an online program designed for professionals of all genders who work in management and aspire to higher levels of management and leadership. The program's title reflects its focus on women's leadership. Its stated audience and curriculum make it relevant to managers across genders who are preparing for greater responsibility in their organizations.

Sources for the research and figures referenced in this paper:

Emory Continuing Education: Women in Leadership: Driving Transformation Through Innovation & Resilience. Program audience, objectives, curriculum, format, and digital badge information.
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