

# 2026 EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM

## ACEC/Michigan

ACEC/Michigan's Emerging Leaders Program is for individuals committed to developing their leadership abilities. Ideal for emerging professionals with 8–11 years of experience seeking to grow into leadership roles, this program develops specific skills and competencies identified by top ACEC/Michigan principals as critical for leadership success. These highly interactive sessions are taught by experts in the field of business administration and people management in professional services firms.

Participants will gain practical leadership tools, strengthen business acumen, and build a professional network across Michigan's engineering community.

The course fee includes all sessions, materials, meals and 25.5 PDHs.  
Lodging and travel are not included.

This program is only open to ACEC/Michigan member firms.

## EAST LANSING SESSION

September 10 & 11 • The Graduate — 133 Evergreen Avenue, East Lansing

### Thursday, September 10

9:30 – 11:00 AM

#### Orientation

*Ron Brenke, PE - Executive Director, ACEC/Michigan*

Do you think 25 engineers will be too shy to get to know each other in a short time? Think again! ACEC/Michigan Executive Director Ron Brenke will deliver a high-energy presentation, and interactive sessions will have class members working and laughing together in no time at all. This critical session sets the stage for class members to work together for the program.

11:00 AM –  
12:00 PM

#### Governmental Affairs

*Ron Brenke, PE - Executive Director, and Troy Hagon - Deputy Director, ACEC/Michigan*

Government decisions directly influence the business climate and firm success. Business leaders need to know how to participate effectively in the public arena and build consensus. They also need to understand how government affairs activities can help their business succeed and how to encourage active participation at the grassroots level in the firm.

12:00 – 1:00 PM

*Lunch and Networking*

1:00 – 5:00 PM

#### Risk Management

*Mike Cosgrove - President, Professional Concepts Insurance Agency*

*Craig Thompson, JD - Senior Counsel, OHM Advisors*

Carefully wording contract provisions minimizes risk to design professionals. We'll discuss how contract provisions allocate risks between parties and the legal effect of specific contract provisions. Getting contracts right the first time can be the difference between a profitable project and incurring more liability than your firm can afford. Participants will learn how to identify, allocate and mitigate contractual risk.

6:00 PM

*Dinner as a group — Jolly Pumpkin, East Lansing*

## Friday, September 11

8:30 AM – 12:30 PM

### Economics of Private Practice

*Yousuf Taufiq - Senior Vice President, US Transportation & Infrastructure Business Operations Leader, WSP*

Understanding the role and importance of financial project management is a critical attribute of emerging leaders. It is equally important that they understand fundamental metrics of successful firms, which financial indicators matter most, and how to interpret them for future growth. In this session, we will discuss these important financial management issues.

## ROCHESTER SESSION

October 8 & 9 • Royal Park Hotel — 600 E. University Drive, Rochester

### Thursday, October 8

1:00 – 3:00 PM

### Strategic Planning

*Steve Carlisle, PE - President, Wightman*

Strategic planning is essential for assessing a business and creating a flexible roadmap for future success. The critical components of a successful planning effort include preparation, establishing a plan baseline and creating the plan. We'll examine the major elements of a strategic plan, including organizational vision, schedule, responsibilities, accountabilities and metrics.

3:00 – 3:30 PM

*Break*

3:30 – 6:30 PM

### Business Development

*Amy Trahey, PE - President, Great Lakes Engineering Group*

Good business development skills are considered by many in the consulting industry to be the most sought-after quality. If there are no projects to work on, then people don't have jobs. Unfortunately, engineers typically have very little formal education relative to business development. The goal of this session is to clarify some of the myths surrounding business development, develop an understanding of the 'art and science' of good business development execution, and to increase the participants' confidence in their business development skills.

7:00 PM

*Dinner as a group — Rochester Mills Beer Company, Rochester*

### Friday, October 9

8:30 – 11:00 AM

### Leadership

*Jon Kramer, PE - President, OHM Advisors*

Leadership is the process of influencing people by inspiring them to achieve, by communicating effectively, motivating toward a common vision, and building trust to embrace the challenges ahead. A leader's ability to see themselves as others do is challenging but essential. Leaders must continually evaluate their value proposition, enhance their skills, and obtain feedback to remain effective. In this module, we will study leadership from multiple perspectives, all with the intent of building our leadership skills and abilities and readying ourselves for greater responsibilities.

## GRAND RAPIDS SESSION

November 5 & 6 • Courtyard Marriott Downtown — 11 Monroe Avenue NW

### Thursday, November 5

1:00 – 5:30 PM

#### Listening and Negotiation Skills for Engineering Executives

*Dan Oblinger - Sole Proprietor, Leadercraft Corporate Education*

The most valuable things produced by great leaders and managers in modern engineering firms are strong agreements! When we make durable and resilient deals with our colleagues, resolve conflict instead of avoiding it, and are willing to talk about uncomfortable or unpopular topics related to strategy, culture, and performance, we create a healthy place for employees to thrive. Learn practical, real-world, negotiation and listening techniques from a hostage negotiator with years of experience.

6:30 PM

*Dinner as a group — Uccello's Ristorante, Grand Rapids*

### Friday, November 6

8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

#### From Management to Leadership – Secrets of Success

*Senior Leaders Roundtable*

**Panelists:**

1. *Scott Lockwood, PE - Executive Vice President, Anderson, Eckstein & Westrick*
2. *Rebecca Smith, PE, PMP - Senior Vice President, Wade Trim*
3. *Mark Smolinski, PE – Principal, G2 Consulting Group*

This session is an opportunity to network with a diverse panel of leading industry professionals, which culminates the Emerging Leaders Program experience. The facilitated session gives participants a chance to ask questions concerning industry, practices, and management.

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

*Graduation Celebration and Lunch*

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

- ▶ Attendees must be present at all sessions.
- ▶ If more than half of one session is missed, that session must be attended the following year to graduate.
- ▶ Only the registered attendee may attend the sessions. Substitute attendees will not be accepted.