



GREATER NAPLES LEADERSHIP

MASTERS CLASS PROGRAM GUIDE FOR SPONSORS AND APPLICANTS

- GNL was founded over three decades ago, with the same mission it has today, “To provide proven leaders with a unique opportunity to learn firsthand about the issues and needs in Collier County and to encourage the use of their skills individually and collectively in bettering the community.” GNL is non-political. It does not take positions on public policy issues and does not support or oppose candidates for elective office.
- Since its founding, over 1000 community members have been through GNL’s Masters Class, and there are currently nearly 500 active members. Most GNL members are retired and maintain residences in Collier County.
- Current GNL members are engaged in over 200 different community not-for-profit and civic organizations. The networking amongst our members is one of the greatest advantages of being part of the GNL program.
- Upon completion of the program, most GNL members contribute between 11 and 25 hours a month to volunteer work in the community. A majority of members volunteer with more than one community organization.
- GNL also offers opportunities for volunteers on the GNL board and its operating committees. See the section that follows entitled, “ABOUT GNL MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION”.
- A sample of community organizations where GNL members have been on boards or leadership positions: Champions for Learning, Collier Community Foundation, Conservancy of Southwest Florida, David Lawrence Center, Immokalee Fair Housing Alliance, Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization, Naples Art Association, Naples Botanical Garden, Naples Civil Air Patrol, Naples Council on World Affairs, Naples Zoo, Naples City Council, The Shelter for Abused Women & Children, and The Naples Players.
- GNL members also participate in GNL sponsored “Done-in-a-Day” projects for various community organizations. These are one-day only events where we partner with a non-profit and assist as needed. Habitat for Humanity and the Botanical Gardens are recent examples. It is a great way to give back while enjoying time with fellow GNLeers.
- In addition to its focus on community volunteerism, GNL offers its members the opportunity to interact socially, make new friends, and to build a network of community leaders in both the civic and business spheres as well as in the not-for-profit community.

ABOUT THE MASTERS CLASS

GNL's Masters Class requires a two year commitment, and begins with two events: an Orientation Lunch in March 2024 and an Opening Retreat in October 2024.

YEAR ONE - LEARNING:

- The first year includes 9 required session days beginning in October 2024 and ending in March 2025. There are no session days between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.
- Session day presentations are typically delivered by leaders in their field and in the community. Session days include visits to venues and locations not always accessible to the public. The class travels to some session day venues by bus, while other venues are reached by personal cars or carpooling.
- Session days are focused on the following issues regarding Collier County:
 - **Naples and Collier County:** historic events, places, and people that influenced development of SW Florida
 - **Cultural Arts:** the breadth of Naples' cultural arts offerings and the contributions/challenges of these not-for-profit organizations
 - **Healthcare:** the healthcare environment in SW Florida and the impact of healthcare on the community
 - **Education:** how Collier County is organized to educate students from pre-k to post secondary education to attain student success
 - **Environment:** critical environmental issues that affect Southwest Florida, including water and balancing preserving of the environment with quality of life
 - **Government:** an overview of the structure of local, county, state and federal government
 - **Growth & Economic Development:** the challenges and status of growth and economic development in SW Florida
 - **Human Services:** information about the needs in Collier County and the collaboration across agencies that aim to meet these needs
 - **Immokalee:** learn the challenges and successes in the Immokalee community.

YEAR TWO - LEADING:

- The primary Year 2 responsibility involves small teams of class members to plan and execute one of 9 educational sessions for the following year's Masters Class.
- Year 2 planning starts in March 2025 when the Masters Class participants attend 2 planning sessions with the Class Leadership Team to develop their assigned session day for the following year's class.
- The Class Leadership Team provides continual guidance to each Session Day team throughout the planning and execution.

ONGOING:

- GNL regularly receives notices from various non-profit agencies of open positions at all levels allowing our members to efficiently stay informed.
- A variety of optional social activities take place involving class members, both during and after the class year, providing GNL members the opportunity to maintain contact with their classmates, as well as meet other GNLeers.
- Classes also can engage as a group in activities to help the community. Some examples are beach clean-up and working in food pantries.

ABOUT THE APPLICATION PROCESS

IMPORTANT DATES

- **October 16, 2023** -- Application form will be available online at GNL website: www.GNLwebsite.org. The form must be completed online by the applicant, and also by the Sponsor, if any. It is not necessary to have a sponsor, and in the past many successful applicants have been unsponsored.
- **November 2, 2023 - January 19, 2024** -- Interviews will be scheduled in the morning or afternoon on weekdays during these periods. Each applicant will have an interview which will be conducted by two GNL members, in person at a Naples venue. Applicants should specify on their application which days they will be unavailable. The Membership Committee Chair will schedule a proposed interview date and time.
- **December 31, 2023** -- Applications must be submitted by the earlier of receipt of 60 applications or the close of business on this date.
- **January 22 – February 2, 2024** -- A committee of 7 GNL members, led by the Chair of the Membership Committee, will review each application form and the feedback from each interview to select the best candidates to form a class.
- **Early February 2024** - Applicants will be advised of the results of the application process. Historically, GNL has accepted between 45 and 50 applicants.
- **March 1, 2024** - Applicants must respond affirmatively to the offer to join GNL and pay the Master Class tuition.

ABOUT GNL MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

- The GNL governing board and officers are all member volunteers.
- The governing board may have up to 23 directors, elected for 3-year terms. There are 5 officers, elected annually by GNL's Board: President, Immediate Past President, President-Elect, Treasurer and Secretary.
- There are 11 committees filled by GNL members: Alumni Continuing Education, Alumni Social, Class Representatives, Communications, Community Service, Finance, Governance, Membership, Distinguished Leadership, Strategic Planning, and Class Leadership Team.
- GNL revenues are a mix of the Masters Class tuition and the annual dues thereafter. Expenses are direct program costs (venue costs, food, etc.), program support and external contracted membership administrative support.
- The GNL fiscal year is May 1 through April 30.