



Organizational Excellence

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

2026-27 Application: USC Improvement Leader Program

Please complete this application together with your department head.

Email your completed application to Olivia Cable (cableo@mailbox.sc.edu) by 5 p.m. July 31.

Applicant	
Name	
Job Title	
Department*	
USC Email	
Phone	

Department* Head	
Name	
Job Title	
Department*	
USC Email	
Phone	

* Department, Division, or College/School as appropriate

Tell us about yourself

1. Why do you want to participate in the USC Improvement Leader Program? (up to 200 words)

2. Briefly describe a project or initiative where you used facilitation, change management, and/or project management skills – and describe the results. (up to 200 words)

Improvement opportunity in your unit or area

During the program, each participant takes an improvement opportunity in their area and develops it into a structured improvement project. They use tools and techniques to understand the current state, gather input from stakeholders, identify root causes, and develop an action plan. Office of Organizational Excellence staff provide guidance along the way. This is learning by doing, with each participant achieving meaningful results.

3. Discuss this with your department head. Together, identify an improvement opportunity in your work area that could serve as the basis for an improvement project. Describe it below. Important: Do not propose a solution. Focus instead on describing an issue, challenge, or situation that could be improved. This could be:

- a process in your unit that may need improvement
- a function, service, or program in your unit that may need better coordination or use of resources
- an experience that seems unclear, inconsistent, delayed, or difficult to navigate

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Examples:

- **Good fit:** “Departments often submit incomplete information, causing follow-up emails, delays, and frustration for reviewers and department staff.”
- **Too solution-oriented:** “Create a new online form.”
- **Good fit:** “Three teams collect similar information from departments, but timing and format are not coordinated.”
- **Too solution-oriented:** “Build a shared dashboard.”

To be completed by the department head

4. In what ways will the applicant and the department benefit from this program? (up to 150 words)

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Participation agreement

By entering their names below, the applicant and department head confirm the applicant’s commitment to:

- Attend all learning sessions (16 hours over six months – see below for session dates and times)
- Lead an improvement project (about 30 hours)

After completing all eight sessions, participants will receive an Improvement Leader Program Certificate in recognition of the knowledge, skills, and tools they’ve gained to lead improvement efforts and drive meaningful results.

Type first and last name for signature:

Applicant	

Date	
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Department Head*	

* Department, Division, or College/School as appropriate	Date	
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Key Dates:

- **Deadline for applications:** July 31, 2026, by 5 p.m.
- **Notification sent to applicants:** Week of August 3
- **Learning sessions – required for all participants**
 1. Thursday, September 10, 2026 • 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. (in person)
 2. Wednesday, September 23 • 9:00 a.m. - noon (in person)
 3. Friday, October 2 • 9:00 a.m. - noon (in person)
 4. Thursday, October 22 • 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. (in person)
 5. Friday, November 13 • 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. (Teams)
 6. Tuesday, December 8 • 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. (Teams)
 7. Friday, January 8, 2027 • 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. (in person)
 8. Thursday, February 11 • 9:00–10:30 a.m. – Closing ceremony
- **Project presentations in March 2027**