

## Accelerate Your Development: Training And Development Reimagined



To thrive in a business world that’s constantly changing, it’s a professional imperative to build skills to respond to the new complexities and challenges that arise almost every day. Organizations and individuals alike need better resilience, stronger communication and more innovation in creating solutions for today’s problems and the challenges to come.

In the fall of 2020, FCCS launched the Accelerate Center, powered by our strong history, driven by our clients and developed by experienced thought leaders. In 2021, we’ve activated the Center through our people and our programs, introducing leadership development and learning opportunities to prepare our clients for a more uncertain and volatile world.

### Start your Journey.

Successful leaders continually learn and reinvent themselves and stay open to new and different ways of doing things. Professionals who take responsibility for their own learning are strategically better positioned to design their career and help their organization grow.

A personal learning strategy – an individually defined and structured series of learning steps, taken over a period of time to gain in-depth knowledge about a specific topic – promotes both personal and professional growth. More importantly, it puts the learning process into the control of the individual.

Defining the goal is the first step, which means identifying knowledge gaps and recognizing where improvements are needed. Individuals should start with assessing where they are today and where they want to be, and then be very thoughtful about setting a learning goal. Self-assessment is difficult, and there are assessment tools available to help define areas for improvement, but it’s also often helpful to involve a manager, mentor or HR in defining a learning goal.

“Sometimes people are passionate about a specific topic, other times a learning strategy is defined by what someone needs to know to be successful in their jobs, and sometimes it’s both,” says Michele Padilla, Director and Senior Consultant, FCCS Learning and Consulting. “Regardless of how the goal is identified, the key thing is to keep making progress toward achieving it.”

Once the goal is set, the individual identifies the best learning opportunities to reach it, whether these be courses, videos, conferences or finding a mentor. A timeframe is also established based on the complexity of the topic or goal and the availability of learning opportunities.

“We all can use a tune up, and a learning strategy provides a framework for self discovery and gaining new knowledge and insight,” says John Regentin, Director of the Gettysburg Leadership Experience. “You have a start point and an end point, and you create the path for yourself to reach a goal that you define.”

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EXPERIENCE, FCCS

One area gaining increasing importance is emotional intelligence, or core interpersonal skills that guide and enhance interpersonal relationships and personal performance outside of functional and operational activities.

“In the last few years, and the past year especially, leaders have recognized the importance of interpersonal skills like flexibility and making decisions quickly amid uncertainty,” says Jeannie Clinkenbeard, Director and Senior Consultant, FCCS Learning and Consulting. “These abilities focus on people and culture more than policies, practices and technical skills, and will become more and more critical moving forward.”

### Leadership Experiences Reimagined.

*FCCS Accelerate Center Launches Enriched Leadership Development Portfolio*

Utilizing our deep expertise in leadership development and experiential learning alongside our thought leaders and external authorities, the FCCS Accelerate Center has launched our suite of reimagined leadership development experiences, a comprehensive portfolio of programs that provides the *right skills* at the *right time* in any career: individual contributor, first-time and skilled manager, team leader, department or function leader or executive. Delineated by these “leader levels,” the skills, concepts and discussions will directly apply to each group’s challenges and experiences:

- Leading Self: *Develop your strengths and grow your contributions*
- Leading Others: *Strengthen your abilities to empower your team*
- Leading Leaders: *Inspire vision and develop strategy for optimal business results*

The enriched leadership development portfolio builds on FCCS’ unmatched, 45+ years of experience with Farm Credit and cooperative organizations and its expert staff’s understanding of and ongoing research into business and learning trends. The enhancements to the program structure, content and delivery format were also all informed by the diverse Client Advisory Boards formed last year specifically for this purpose. The boards will remain in place to provide further feedback and support as FCCS continues to improve the learning experience.

“Our consultants are experts in adult learning and professional development, and have also applied our understanding of neuroscience, psychology, group dynamics and other fields to the new portfolio of leadership development programs,” says Jean Cantey Segal, Chief Learning Officer at FCCS. “We also understand our clients’ industries after decades of supporting them, and with the Client Advisory Boards’ input, we’ve tailored our programs to directly address their real-world challenges.”

The revitalized content addresses the most critical competencies for today’s Farm Credit and cooperative leaders: courage and resilience that lead to **growth**; network building and self-awareness to support **relationships** that foster collaboration; and valuing differences and communicating effectively to achieve team **results**.

“Carried through each program and across the portfolio are our underling goals to deliver leadership development that is transformative, empowering and personal,” says Lisa Cavanaugh, Vice President of Leadership Development Experiences.

Leading Others and Leading Leaders are each 18-month learning journeys, with four in-person, multi-day meetings held in different U.S. locations. This duration and meeting structure is similar to the predecessor Leadership Development Program (LDP) I and II programs. What's new – in addition to 75% new content – is shorter in-person events to reduce time away from the office, and more connection points throughout the journey through short, live, online sessions between the in-person events, designed to sustain development and ensure learnings are being applied.

Learners will undertake role-specific networking, including smaller peer groups within each learning group that will meet throughout the journey. Learners will take an active role in leading workshop debriefs and ice breakers and bringing back information and sharing lessons learned. The programs will also include the involvement of participants' managers, with pre- and post-program meetings to identify specific goals to support organizational goals and the individual's personal learning strategy. Leading Self is a three-day learning journey designed to foster personal growth and learn how individual actions contribute to the team's success.

Recognizing the impact of experiential learning, each of these programs will include a challenging and engaging team experience, which will also further strengthen the group's networking bond.

Joining the Leading Self, Leading Others and Leading Leaders learning journeys in the FCCS leadership development portfolio are the engaging and enriching experiential programs of the Gettysburg Leadership Experience and the Lewis & Clark Experience, as well as the FCCS Leadership Academy introduced in 2021, which features skill-based, stand-alone courses.

"Designed for Farm Credit and other cooperatives, with extensive client input and experience, and strengthened with our learning and development expertise, the FCCS leadership development experiences will elevate individual leaders' performance and increase the organization's bench strength for the future," says Lisa.

For more information on FCCS leadership development experiences, contact an FCCS expert:

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***FCCS Leadership Development Experiences –  
Leadership Growth at Every Level***