



DIRECTION of ADULT TRAINING PROGRAMS

What's on the Horizon

Adult leadership is the biggest factor affecting success in the cadet mission. Adult training programs such as Training Leaders of Cadets (TLC), Cadet Protection Program (CPP) and the Cadet Programs Specialty Track are the main resources for Cadet Programs Officers to gain professional development. As we endeavor to strategically position CAP for the future to *Shape lives, build character, and ready young people for futures in aerospace and beyond*, a goal in the strategic plan is *to broaden adult leaders' capabilities as youth development professionals, equipping them to be champions of positive youth development practices proven effective in other youth organizations*. With this in mind, we wanted to know how our CP adult training programs stacked up against other youth development organizations, while also determining if the programs meet the unique needs of our members.

INITIAL RESEARCH

In our initial research phase, we investigated and mapped our adult training programs against professional standards for out-of-school-time youth programs. We also conducted 33 one-hour interviews with members of the field. These interviews provided us with the following insights:

- I like the idea of a TLC course that is more focused on group discussion, where I can exchange ideas and challenges with colleagues, problem solve and network.
- In order to gain that time in the 'classroom' I would be happy to take more online modules ahead of time, at my own pace, freeing up classroom time for related discussions.
- I didn't get to take TLC for more than a year after I joined. By then some of the information was repetitive. I wish I had access to some of the lessons sooner.
- I would like a TLC Refresher course that I can take on my own schedule that is relevant to my particular needs.
- I would like some choice in what courses I take; I'd love multiple pathways to get to the same destination.
- I would like National to centralize TLC.
- I like having TLC at the local level.
- There should be a baseline training for each CP duty position.

To read more about the process Cadet Program took to reach these insights, [read the full article](#).

ANALYSIS

Next, we reviewed the insights from member interviews and from the NAA gap analysis. We decided how to best solve the problems that were presented, while evaluating what parts of the [NAA Core Knowledge and Competencies](#) should be integrated into CAP's adult training programs.

There were many innovative ideas presented by members during the interviews, and much overlap in the members' needs/desires and the best practices for training adult leaders who work with youth, found in the NAA gap analysis.

Once we explored which ideas/topics would be the most beneficial to our members and which ones are possible given the organization's capabilities, a large-scale survey was composed and sent out to all Cadet Programs Officers. 1351 individuals responded. The goal of this survey was to determine if the insights gleaned during the interviews were representative of the larger population of Cadet Program Officers, and to determine if the direction NHQ is moving is in alignment with the desires of the field.

The survey results indicated:

- **Flexibility & Choice:**
 - I would like to see more flexibility in how I take TLC.
 - It is important to me to have a choice in what training I receive, based on what topics are relevant to me.
 - I would be more interested in taking the training if I could select the course content.
 - I would like training that is specific to my duty position.
 - I would like to see more youth development topics like mentoring, helping cadets in crisis, engaging youth, etc.
 - I would like a system of continuing education credits. Similar to how the aviation field works, I would like short, self-paced online modules and webinars hosted by NHQ count towards earning my TLC credit.
 - The top barriers to taking TLC are time commitment, schedule conflicts, infrequency of local offerings, and distance/cost to get to courses that are offered.
 - Members didn't show a strong preference towards in-person or on-line courses.
 - An optional, short welcome course that new members can take early on would be helpful to orient them to Cadet Programs.

- **Time Spent in Lecture**
 - I would like more group discussion during the in-person/synchronous piece.
 - I would like less lecture and less time in person/in a virtual synchronous setting.

- **Quality & Compliance**
 - I think it is very important that the instructors are trained to teach TLC.
 - TLC compliance should be renewed every 2 or 3 years.

Based on these findings, and the initial research, we are moving forward with several opportunities to make TLC more accessible and flexible, to provide more choice and to offer varying options to meet different learning preferences.

THE NEXT STEP

Self-Paced, Online Course

A fully self-paced, online training pathway is currently being developed. This is the first phase in the release. There are some enhancements to the eServices Accomplishments system that are needed before this is rolled out. Members can use this as a refresher course or take it as an alternative to TLC.

In-Person & Virtual TLCs

In-person and virtual TLC courses will remain as they are today, during this phase.