



Dear Chairman, Mike Taylor,

I am writing to express my profound gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the Certified Education Foundation Leader (CEFL) Certification Program. This experience has been transformative, equipping me with practical tools and insights that I have already begun to apply in my extensive career spanning over twenty-five years in the not-for-profit sector.

Throughout my professional journey, which has encompassed community and economic development, business incubation, technology startups, affordable housing, and historic development, I have participated in numerous nationally recognized certification programs. However, the CEFL program stands out due to its unique and impactful approach.

Unlike other programs I have engaged in, such as those from Cornell and the National Trust, which often emphasized theory over practice, the CEFL program excels in its practical, real-time application of learning. This hands-on approach, blending theory with practice, has been a novel and highly effective learning experience for me. The course structure allowed me to immediately apply the insights gained from the instructors to my current work environment, breaking the recurring pattern of struggling to integrate new knowledge amidst professional responsibilities.

The program's focus on practical application in areas such as Leadership & Planning, Marketing, Legal & Finance, Resource Development, Board Development, and Collaboration has been invaluable. It has enabled me to make immediate and tangible improvements in my work, significantly enhancing the effectiveness and reach of our initiatives.

I am particularly appreciative of the caliber of instruction and the quality of interaction with both instructors and cohort members. The leadership and knowledge imparted by Sara, Bill, LA, Wayne, and Robin have been instrumental in my development. Their ability to challenge us, provide meaningful input, encouragement, and skill refinement has been invaluable. The personal attention and tailored

guidance offered by these instructors have greatly contributed to the program's effectiveness and my personal growth.

This certification has not just been another academic exercise; it has been a catalyst for real change. The skills and knowledge I have acquired are being actively used to drive progress in the various domains I am involved in, particularly in the areas of community development and educational support.

I am excited about the potential of this program to grow and positively impact more educational professionals and, by extension, the communities they serve. I see tremendous potential for the CEFL program to grow and serve as a financial resource for the national organization. Its unique approach and the high caliber of instruction make it an attractive proposition for professionals across various sectors.

Expanding this program could not only increase its impact on individuals and communities but also provide a sustainable revenue stream for the organization. I strongly advocate for the continued support and expansion of this program, so that more professionals in the education foundation sector can benefit from its practical, impactful approach.

Thank you for your dedication to advancing educational excellence and for supporting such innovative and effective professional development programs. I look forward to seeing the CEFL program expand and continue to make a significant difference in the not-for-profit sector.

Sincerely,

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Renee Oldham

Executive Director

Mt Vernon Education Foundation